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**STATIVE SENTENCES IN JAPANESE
AND THE ROLE OF THE NOMINATIVE MARKER
"GA"**

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ABSTRACT

The Japanese nominative particle *ga* is normally associated with the marking of subjects. However, there are several constructions involving stative predicates, where it has been claimed, notably by those working within a generative framework, that a *ga*-marked NP can be an object and that such sentences are transitive. Such an analysis has particularly arisen in the case of sentences with more than one *ga*-marked NP, exhibiting so-called double *ga* marking.

The following study makes two claims. Firstly, that one of the functions of *ga* in such sentences is to provide a discourse frame akin to the topic marking function of the postpositional particle *wa*. Secondly it argues that stative sentences associated with double *ga*-marking are in fact intransitive and that the *ga*-marked NP's that have been claimed to be objects are in fact subjects.

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A Note on Conventions

A few common linguistic conventions have been used

* marks non-occurring sequences

? indicates questionable sequences

Abbreviations or other symbols familiar in the linguistic literature are mostly assumed.

With the exception of the names of authors, books or publishers, where a differing transcription appears on the work concerned, all Japanese has been transcribed in Hepburn romanisation no matter what the original source.

Thus, long /o:/ is written with a doubling of the letter i.e. "kakimashoo" not "kakimashou" . But a long /e:/ is written according to the convention in Hiragana, "sensei" teacher, has been written not "sensee".

In accord with conventional practice, the object marker has been romanised as <o>, not <wo>, the directional marker as <e> not <he> and the topic particle <wa> not <ha>.

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INTRODUCTION

The Japanese nominative particle *ga* is normally associated¹ with the marking of subjects. However, there are several constructions involving stative predicates, where it has been claimed, notably by those working within a generative framework², that a *ga*-marked NP is an object. Although this can be seen as the generally current view, other linguists³, particularly structuralists, have taken the position that these NP's are in fact subjects of some kind. This also seems to be the position of Japanese grammarians working outside a generative paradigm⁴. Thus the role of *ga* in such constructions is a controversial one. Indeed even among generative grammarians of Japanese, there is no overall agreement on many major issues concerning case marking or the actual role of the postpositional particles that are said to mark case.

As the arguments advanced touch on many fundamental areas of grammatical analysis, there is a rather long preliminary section that has been labeled PART ONE. This deals particularly with various grammatical categories in general and sets Japanese within a broader framework, although discussion of transitivity is left until the end. The general thrust of this section can be seen from the list of contents. PART TWO deals in more detail with more specific arguments, which relate to the various stative sentence types. These can be seen as the core of the study and the role, that *ga* plays within them.

A mention must be made as to the theoretical position of this study. A great deal of the work done on Japanese in recent decades has been done within the framework of transformational grammar in one or other of its many guises. The fact that some of these shifts have been quite major makes a coherent exposition, which of necessity contains references to ideas presented over several decades, much more difficult. It is not possible either to provide a critique of this material without employing some of the terms that are associated with the various models and in fact assuming the validity of the concepts these represent. A deconstruction of these models is not possible

¹ Makino, Seichi and Tsustui, Michio (1986) p.118 ff.

² Kuno, S 1973 p.79 ff. Tsujimura, Natsuko (1996) p. 211 Shibatani, M (1977) p.791.

³ Jorden, Eleanor Harz, (1963) Makino, Seichi and Tsustui, Michio (1986) Alfonso, Anthony (1989) p.148.

⁴ cf. Oono et al. (1975), Yuzawa (1977)

within the limited compass of this work but this study tries to adopt to the degree possible a theory neutral stance or at least one which is not to be closely identified with a particular model. This of course is never really possible, and the rather long preliminary section is an attempt to at least make the issues explicit within a wider framework. It also tries to keep the argument in simpler terms than much of the more technical literature, and as such tries to relate arguments closely to meaning.

PART ONE

PRELIMINARIES

In this section the concepts of subject, topic and focus will be considered. First the notion of subject will be examined from a traditional perspective and then from a more contemporary, mostly generative point of view. Brief mention is also included of theories of case in traditional grammar and case marking in generative grammar.

Then the various tests, which have been used in generative grammar to try to distinguish subjects in Japanese are described. The notion of topic is considered and contrasted with that of subject. A brief mention of the use of the term focus is made, as this is one of the functions that is frequently ascribed to *ga*.

The two particles *wa* and *ga* are briefly examined and it is asserted that one of the roles of *ga*, that of a focus particle, is similar to that of *wa*.

THE NOTION OF SUBJECT

Although it would seem that the notion of subject is well-rooted in grammatical theory, there no longer appears to be complete correspondence between traditional and more recent schools of linguistic analysis in the use of the term. McCloskey¹ underlines the decline in the notion in generative grammar, while Kuroda (1976:5) dryly points out that the "logical concept of subject does not, at present, seem to a focus of active attention either for logicians of natural language or for linguistics." The issue has been complicated by significant changes in the generative paradigm especially relating to notions of agent and other thematic roles, and the existence of so-called ergative languages² in which the notion of subject is equivocal. Recently too, it has been suggested that all languages may not have a subject category separate from that of topic.

¹ McCloskey (1997) p.197 "...in the tradition that extends from the "Standard Theory" through the "Extended Standard Theory" to "Principles and Parameters Theory" and then to the "Minimalist Program", the notion of subject plays no formal role at all. Not only is subject not a primitive term in these theories, but in their most recent instantiations it is not even clear that there is any derived or defined notion which captures the traditional intuition of what a subject is. What we have seen, in a sense, is a progressive deconstruction of the traditional category "subject" so that the properties, which are supposed to define it are distributed across a range of distinct (but derivationally linked) syntactic entities and positions. This theoretical eccentricity may turn out to have been foolish or wise, but it is certainly grounded in some of the deeper methodological instincts of generative grammar."

² Comrie (1981) p.98ff.

TRADITIONAL VIEWS OF SUBJECT

The notion of subject in traditional grammar arose as a primitive term derived from classical Aristotelian logic in which a sentence is seen as a proposition asserted about an entity (subject). Thus a declaratory sentence would be analysed with a binary cut between subject and predicate. This was seen as representing the subject and the assertion made about it. Based as it is on Greek and Latin models, traditional grammar further closely associates the notion of subject with nominative case marking³ typically of the first noun of the clause. This notion of subject may sometimes be further delimited as meaning the grammatical subject⁴. Such notions were easily transferred to other western European languages, which no longer mark cases with nominal inflection, by noting the correlation of subject and position in the clause. This analysis is, of course, in most western European languages shored up by residual case marking in pronouns. Thus in French, English and Gaelic, which have lost separate nominative/accusative marking in the noun, the subject NP is generally clause initial or at least the first NP in the clause in Gaelic. In the case of Gaelic, as opposed to the closely related Irish case, even the pronouns have lost a specifically nominative marking, but other criteria – in particular the rigid post-verbal position of the subject in main clauses - can be adduced to preserve the essential integrity of the notion of subject.

A psychological and logical subject are sometimes distinguished in traditional grammar and these mostly correspond to the concept of agent. The term, logical subject, is also well established in traditional grammar; for example to signal the agent in passive sentences in English⁵, but the grammatical subject is still recognised as the subject of the clause. For the most part, nevertheless, the psychological and logical subjects correspond⁶ with the grammatical subject in European languages. Thus in traditional grammar, subjects are seen in both semantic, structural and morphological terms with no great cleavage between form and function.

³ This is still a major consideration according to Comrie (1981) and Keenan (1976) .

⁴ McArthur Tom (ed.) (1992) p.996.

⁵ Lyons (1968) p.343.

⁶ McArthur Tom (ed.) (1992) p.996.

THE ROLE OF CASE MARKING

The centrality of the notion of subject in Western grammatical tradition is of course underpinned by the morphological features of Indo-European languages and indeed of the Semitic languages which western scholars had come in contact with. These are case marking and the personal endings on verbs. This latter feature, together with marking of number, makes transparent the importance of the subject through the so-called agreement of subject and verb and adjectival case marking. This latter feature also includes gender marking which with case and number agreement in older European languages not only of attributive adjectives but also of predicative ones, serves to make obvious the central role of the subject noun. Traditionally called government, the subject also controls the specific marking of person, number and sometimes gender of the verb⁷ in a way that no other functional part of the sentence does.

The role of inflectional case in classical languages, long familiar to educated westerners, has given rise to such distinctions as complement versus object according to whether the nominative or accusative case is used overriding purely semantic considerations. Thus in Latin and Ancient Greek the nominative case is used after the copula which is called a complement in contradistinction to the accusative marking that is found in the object of typical transitive verbs. The standard explanation for such facts is to point out indexical identity between subject and complement. Nevertheless, this is not necessarily always the case for, in English, the objective form of the pronoun is the most natural form – "It's me". In German on the other hand, verbs like *sein* "be", *werden* "become" or *bleiben* "remain" are said to take complements because they are followed by the nominative, while *geben* "give" which overlaps in existential sentences with *sein* is said to take an object, because of its accusative case following.

Letzte Woche war in Hamburg ein Streik. There was a strike in Hamburg last week.⁸

Letzte Woche gab es einen Streik in Hamburg.

In Mainz war ein Aufenthalt von fünf Minuten. There was a five minute stop in Mainz.

⁷ This is observed in the past tense of Russian verbs for example. Of course the subject frequently controls the form of a predicative (and attributive) adjective as well in many IE languages.

⁸ Durrell, M. (1996) p.358

In Mainz gab es einen Aufenthalt von fünf Minuten.

Russian too deviates from the classical pattern with the nominative case if the copula is suppressed, the instrumental if it is present and typically the genitive with a negative copula⁹.

Apart from such infelicities however, case marking and verbal agreement morphology have traditionally been seen to be the key to grammatical analysis and the location of the grammatical subject.

SUBJECT IN GENERATIVE GRAMMAR

What McCloskey (1997) has termed the "deconstruction of the subject" in generative grammar has resulted from several features of the various models developed. Syntactic Structures, Chomsky's first significant work (1957), simply assumed the subject as the leftmost NP generated by the initial string: $S \rightarrow NP + VP$. Early in the further development of generative grammar a distinction arose between surface and deep structure¹⁰ which had as one consequence a shift away from notions of what became known as surface case. There was also a serious attempt to separate semantic and structural components in a grammar.

Within the Aspects¹¹ framework, as in its predecessor, the subject was identified as the NP immediately dominated by S and it was assumed that this was the position at which agent and experiencer occurred at deep structure for English transitives and verbs encoding perception. Various operations such as passivisation or subject raising might then be performed on this NP to shift its position in relation to the assumed daughter of S initial position¹².

Subject then was a notion derived from the initial NP, considered a primitive in the theory, through, what were deemed to be, formal operations on initial strings. In some ways this was not so far removed from traditional conceptions but it conflated logical and grammatical

⁹ cf. Borras, F.M. and Christian R.F. (1971) .

¹⁰ The role of the level of deep structure in the current generative model seems to have a less secure footing. cf. Chomsky (1995) pp.186-191.

¹¹ Chomsky (1965).

¹² McCloskey (1997) p.202 points out the tendency in generative grammar to associate each relationship with a canonical position and that hence a unitary subject position - subjects specifying more than one relationship - is an anomaly in such models.

subjects, downgraded the latter and was tied to notions of English word order. Part of its legacy has been the repeated attempts to show that various languages have similar underlying word orders, which do not correspond with their so-called surface orders¹³. Subsequently, the notion, subject, has been partially displaced as one of central importance.

An IP model, which assumes that S itself is a projection of inflectional information such as person, number and tense, once more emphasising features prominent in English but not so important in a language such as Japanese was developed in the 80's. While in X-bar theory, the subject of a clause is the NP immediately dominated by the Sentence node or in more recent terminology is a specifier of a VP¹⁴. In such thinking INFL (the bundle of inflectional categories) becomes far more important than the subject, an apparent reversal of the traditional position. In Government-Binding Theory¹⁵ subject is a derivative term that can be defined in different ways. More recent work has seen the introduction of what can be seen as semantic primitives, referred to as θ -roles, but these too are seen as operating at deep structure and so do not always unequivocally detect subjects. In θ -theory, the subject is the element assigned the verb's external θ -role. Within case theory, the subject can be defined as the NP defined by the nominative case. These definitions of subject are not always compatible¹⁶.

More recently an Internal Subject Model has been developed¹⁷ in which the subject is thought to be generated inside the VP and then moved out of it. Such a model puts the subject NP on a par with other arguments of the verb.

CASE MARKING IN GENERATIVE GRAMMAR

There has also been a radical shift in the treatment of case assignment rules between the two models. In the GB framework, the nominative was said to be licensed by the functional head, INFL while the accusative was licensed by a lexical head, the verb. In the minimalist model

¹³ Cram (1984) is a typical example where it is suggested that Scottish Gaelic, which has very rigid VS order in main clauses, has underlying SVO order which is adjusted by a rule called verb-fronting.

¹⁴ Fukui (1995) p.104ff. has argued that in fact Japanese lacks the category SPEC.

¹⁵ Chomsky (1981, 1982).

¹⁶ cf. Farrell et al. (1991) p.431f. cf. also Perlmutter (1979).

¹⁷ Burton and Grimshaw (1992).

both are licensed when the DP's (Determiner phrases) are placed in the Specifier¹⁸ position of the functional heads AgrS and AgrO.

There have been various theories developed within various models of generative grammar to account for case marking but it is not clear to what extent they are tenable within the current minimalist model.

The distinction between structural and inherent case has been maintained from the time of the Extended Standard Theory to the Minimalist Hypothesis to some degree. Kuroda's linear case marking (Kuroda 1965, 1978) marks the first unmarked NP with *ga* and the remaining unmarked NP with *o*. Sentences with complex verbs and adjectives are analyzed as involving embedded complement sentences with affixal predicates (verbs and adjectives) like *sase*, -Causatives, Passives, Desideratives - as matrix predicates. Linear case marking is proposed to apply cyclically following syntactic operations like Equi-NP Deletion (or Counter Equi-NP Deletion) and Verb Raising.

There have been alternative theories of case marking in Japanese, like the one applying case marking to S-structure on the basis of structural information (Inoue 1988, 1991), or the one using configurational case marking (Takezawa: 1987) or Morikawa's (1993) Parametric Approach. However, these are all based on the assumption that case marking involves the closely interrelated syntactic operations such as Equi- and Counter Equi-NP Deletion and Verb Raising.

Thus structural case marking is seen as a strictly syntactic operation that introduces case particles in syntax. This is certainly counter to the Minimalist Programme condition of inclusiveness as well as to the traditional notion of universal abstract Case.

In languages like English in which there is subject-tense agreement, nominative Case checking by the head of the Tense Phrase is well motivated. In languages like Japanese without agreement of this type, agreement based Case checking is less securely motivated. Kuroda (1988) claims that "the parametric difference between English and Japanese consists

¹⁸ The fact that linguists are not in agreement as to whether Japanese even has SPEC(Fukui (1995) p.104ff.)

simply of the following: Agreement is forced in English; it is not in Japanese." Kuroda in addition argues that "there is little direct evidence of Case theory in Japanese," and claims, "In English, Case marking is forced, but in Japanese it is not. It can be left unenforced in Japanese since (or, since it is not forced,) there is another lower-case case marking mechanism to license Max(N)'s, which assigns *ga* and *o* to them." Thus it can be said that the whole issue of case marking in Japanese is far from settled even within the generative paradigm.

In Japanese, the grammatical subject is generally claimed to be marked by the particle, *ga*. Generative views of subject and the use of *ga*, as mentioned above, can be characterised as formal, in that *ga* marking is assigned to an NP on the basis that it is the first or left-most in the sentence at some chosen level of analysis. Thus the characteristics of generative grammar sketched above in relation to the notion of subject can be found in work on Japanese as well. This can be contrasted with the view that the notion subject is a primitive not derived from notions of formal structure. Kuroda (1965) who called this view the "substantial interpretation" rejected it on the grounds that subject and *ga* often seem incompatible as in the case of the potential, which can have a double *ga*:

John ga nihongo ga/o hanaseru.

John can speak Japanese.

The lack of agreement on the place of subject can be seen also in Kuroda's claim that the grammatical subject is marked by *wa*.

"...the grammatical concept of subject may now be formulated in Japanese. The sentence-initial *wa* phrase may be called "the subject of the sentence". The subject of the sentence represents the subject of the judgement that the sentence represents."¹⁹

He later goes on to state though that this is the L-subject (logical subject) which "has a concrete manifestation as the sentence-initial *wa* phrase." (p.9) No doubt Kuroda's views are based on the copula sentence in Greek, which played a prominent role in logic, and which

makes these shifts in models all the more difficult.

corresponds to the *NP wa desu* pattern in Japanese. However, neither modern generative nor traditional Japanese grammarians regard *wa* as a case particles.

Kuroda then makes the important point that ultimately, what is regarded as a subject has to do with the grammatical model used.

"A constituent of a sentence satisfying some syntactic characterisation represents the subject of the judgement that this sentence represents, and, conversely, a judgement with a subject (categorical judgement) is represented by a sentence containing a constituent satisfying this syntactic characterisation....I leave the term SYNTACTIC CHARACTERISATION deliberately vague. Syntactic characterisation is a characterisation one can give in terms of one's syntactic theory"

¹⁹ Kuroda (1976) p.8 in Shibatani (ed.) 1976.

OTHER MODERN VIEWS

Two of the major modern attempts to define the concept of subject, those of Comrie (1981) and Keenan (1976), have followed a similar path to each other. Subject is basically seen as an intersection of topic and agent - the last feature being the link between the subject and predication. This claim that there is a special relationship between the subject NP and the verb is of course central to traditional thinking. However the usage equating agent with subject is very problematic, particularly from a cross-linguistic perspective.

Both Comrie and Keenan have further tried to define subject by means of a cluster of characteristics (Keenan lists 32), with the possibility of a NP having degrees of subjecthood depending on the number of criteria fulfilled.

Keenan does not rank his features. He prefixes most of them by terms such as "usually" or "generally" and includes a mixture of features where both syntactic and semantic considerations and what those working within a generative framework would call surface structures have been taken into account. This approach owes something to the generative notion of atomistic decomposition and is also associated with the concept of prototypes; that there may be typical and less typical manifestations of various syntactic categories.

Such an approach has been widely applied in Japanese to try to solve some seemingly intractable problems in case marking. The primary problem with this approach is that it is not possible to say at what point an NP doesn't have enough features to be considered a subject, particularly as no one bundle of features is deemed to be diagnostic. Others might argue that grammar always will be to some degree fuzzy.

Givon²⁰ succinctly defines subject as a grammaticalised topic. Such a conception may have distinct advantages especially cross-linguistically where the existence of topics in some languages seems to be on a sounder footing than that of subject. However the problem with the notion of a grammaticalised subject in the case of Japanese is that the topic has itself been

²⁰ Introduction in Givon (1983) pp.5-31.

grammaticalised by various topic particles. We are then left with the issue of how to distinguish these two putative cases of grammaticalisation.

There is also the question of which way grammaticalisation is moving. It has tended to be assumed in works such as Givon that a topic (formally marked or not) may move towards becoming a case marker but the change need not be in this direction. Mihara (1994: 148) for example, suggests that what is below termed as topic *ga*, is grammaticalised away *from* being a structural case particle *to* being a postposition, and there is no doubt that this position reflects the historical situation. In Japanese presumably, grammaticalisation to subject could be expected to involve a greater degree of cohesion between a grammaticalised subject and one that is not i.e. a grammaticalised topic. To do this the question of working out the constituent structure of the Japanese sentence which is still not clear after several decades of persistent effort would need to be settled. Thus the question of grammaticalisation in the differentiation of topic and subject is more complex than it might appear.

DIXON'S ANALYSIS OF SUBJECT

More recently Dixon²¹ in his work on ergativity has broached the problem of finding a universal definition of subject. He points out that in so-called ergative languages, semantic and grammatical criteria for subject don't coincide and that this has led to linguists emphasising one aspect at the expense of the other. He then goes on to assert that although subject is a universal category, irrespective of the whether a language follows an accusative, ergative or mixed type pattern, it is not the most fundamental category²², but simply links functions from transitive and intransitive clause types. He reserves S as the notation for subject of an intransitive clause only, while A designates the subject of a transitive clause - O is used for a transitive object, which Dixon equates with Comrie's P for patient (Comrie : 1978). Thus for Dixon, subject is the grouping of S and A as opposed to O. A is distinguished from O in having potential agency, while in an intransitive clause notions of agency are neutralised.

²¹ Dixon 1994 Chapter 5.

²² Dixon refers cites evidence from child language acquisition to support this contention cf. Schiefflin 1985.

Dixon's proposals are quite suggestive in relation to Japanese, in particular with regard to the role of *ga*. In actual Japanese spoken usage, it seems that *ga* is not particularly common in any but intransitive sentence types²³ and typically many of these are locative or ergative in nature. The suggestions that Japanese is a partly ergative language²⁴ also need consideration. However Dixon's general schema is open to criticism because it obscures the incommensurable ways in which participants may be related to events or states. As in most aspects of language involving meaning, there is often a cline, where one of the categories, set up a priori, seems to merge into another.

DISCOURSE STRUCTURE VERSUS SUBJECT

Another major trend, important to Japanese, has been that of looking at language from a discourse perspective. There have been several drivers of these developments. One is the range of empirical studies that indicate that real Japanese, at least in its spoken form, does not correspond to the language that grammarians base their analysis on. As happened in English, the data that generative grammarians consider crucial for an argument in favour of this or that refinement of a model are frequently contentious to native speakers²⁵. No less importance have been the attempts to discover universals that have led to the rediscovery of linguistic variation. Of relevance here for example is the claim that Chinese is a Topic Comment²⁶ language with no real subject, and the parallels that have been drawn with other East Asian languages. This raises a serious challenge to the generative enterprise of establishing the nature of Universal Grammar. Some of these issues are referred to below.

²³ In the data for adult use presented in Mayes and Ono (1993) the ratio of *ga* use in intransitive sentences is six times more than in transitive sentences.

²⁴ Miyagawa (1989) p.93ff.

²⁵ This is of course a contentious statement in itself and would need extensive documentation. The example of disagreement on the grammaticality of double *ga* sentences though is an apposite example here. cf. Tateishi (1994) p.23.

²⁶ cf. Huang, Yan (1994).

SPECIAL DIFFICULTIES WITH JAPANESE

In the case of Japanese, the generative notion of subject presents several additional problems. Some linguists²⁷ have argued that Japanese does not in fact have any constituent structure (i.e. no VP node), while others claim it is not clear what the case is at present²⁸. If this should prove to be the case, then because of scrambling, subjects could only be identified by overt nominative case marking²⁹ or by an appeal to some semantic model along the lines of Fillmorean case³⁰.

In addition, Japanese being a pro-drop language need not have any overt subject but does frequently have a formally marked topic. Considerations such as these have even lead some grammarians to argue against the existence of the category subject in Japanese³¹.

Japanese also doesn't routinely mark number either in the verb or the NP and thus one of the overt syntactic links between subject and verbal, familiar in many European languages is missing³². However this does not mean that semantic linkage is not sometimes overt and this must be seen as a key criterion for defining the subject. A further complication is that *ga* is often dropped in speech and is perhaps rarer, outside formal written styles, than many of the standard treatments of Japanese grammar suggest.

Japanese moreover has another marker, *wa*, which is said to mark topics. These typically have a similar distribution to subjects. Indeed there are many sentences in which either *wa* and *ga* seem to be possible with little apparent difference in meaning. Kuroda³³ has asserted

²⁷ Inoue (1978) Hale (1980) Farmer (1984) Miyagawa (1980) This notion to some degree continues to resurface even in the work of those who obviously believe in a configurational structure in general. Shibatani (1990) Chapter 11 is a case in point.

²⁸ Fukui (1995) "Japanese has a somewhat peculiar status in generative grammar in that while a tremendous amount of descriptive work has been accumulated, it is still not known what its configurational structure looks like." p.93.

²⁹ It can of course be claimed that the existence of scrambling implies a configurational structure, but this isn't necessarily the case. cf. Fukui (1995) p.100.

³⁰ Fillmore (1968).

³¹ cf. Shibatani (1978) for his discussion on Mikami's work. This position has been argued vigorously for Chinese notably by Huang (1994) and it has been claimed that the same arguments apply to other East Asian languages including Japanese. cf. Chapter 6.

³² Shibatani (1978) argues that Japanese like European languages does have phenomena controlled solely by the subject NP, but his examples, relying on *jibun* reflexivization and honorification are open to challenge.

³³ Kuroda (1976) p.6 "The sentence-initial *wa* phrase may be called the "subject of the sentence". The subject of the sentence represents the subject of the judgment that the sentence represents. This is a grammatical concept

for example that *wa* does mark a subject and that the distinction between *wa* and *ga* is that *wa* marks a judgement and so is akin to the subject of traditional logic while *ga* marks a thetic subject. A great deal of debate has involved the distinction between *wa* and *ga* and there is a broad consensus that one of the functions of *ga* is that of a focussing particle, which can be interpreted as a form of topicaliser³⁴.

Finally, Japanese tends to make rather careful distinctions between animate and non-animate arguments, and precludes non-animates from many constructions, in particular, those which are often advanced as tests for subject. This means that the distinction between agent and subject can be seen as problematic in some constructions.

There have been a number of attempts to deal with the problem of the subject in Japanese, in particular in those sentences where two nominatively marked NP's are found³⁵. Such attempts have taken the line of either seeking to show that one of the NP's is not really a subject but a mutation of some other case marker, or to distinguish different categories of subjects. It must be added that double *ga* sentences are not at all common. Ono et al. found that in their corpus they are "extremely rare"³⁶ and some speakers reject them categorically³⁷.

There is another problem that affects Japanese linguistics carried out through the medium of English and that is the role of English translations. It is well known that over the last century or so written Japanese has been greatly influenced by translations of western works. This has led to the acceptance of English structures in Japanese, which are not natural to the language. Among these are the overuse of pronouns such as *kare* and *kanojo* in certain styles, and studies of Japanese in Japan itself have been heavily influenced by models of language more appropriate to European languages³⁸. This problem is even more difficult to avoid in writing in English as in offering translations of Japanese sentences into English it is natural to present

of subject with respect to Japanese".

³⁴ A recent study by Ono et al. (2000) based on a corpus of conversation in fact claims that *ga* is not primarily a case marker at all but a pragmatic marker and so closely resembles *wa*.

³⁵ The question is further complicated by the fact that for some speakers doubly marked nominatives are ungrammatical anyway. cf. Tateishi (1994) p.23 where he points out that some speakers entirely reject double *ga* sentences and that some even reject those with *no* (genitive) marking. It could be argued that this is evidence of the primacy of NP₂ as the prime subject.

³⁶ Ono et al. (2000) p.75.

³⁷ One of the informant group used here rejected them even in the face of other speakers assuring him the sentences were perfectly all right. There are also various references in the literature to this position.

the most normal English equivalent but this does necessarily reflect the structure of Japanese. It has been intimated above that there may be a tendency among generative grammarians too, to see English structures reflected in that of other languages and this problem is of particular relevance in the area under discussion here. In a sense the issue is whether the structures dealt with are really like their English equivalents or not.

³⁸ cf. Miller (1967) p.311ff. for a discussion of this question.

TESTS OF SUBJECTHOOD

The double *ga* construction in Japanese has been prominent in the search to find a syntactic test, which would identify the true grammatical subject in sentences, which exhibit it. The debate involving such identification has involved several key areas.

The more general issue in turn has two aspects – whether the notion of subject is useful in Japanese at all and the less controversial area of the delimitation of the boundary between subject and topics of various kinds.

Equally important is also the question of the claimed lack of fit between overt case marking and sentence roles. In particular there are the claims that the nominative marker *ga* may be used to mark objects and that the subject may also sometimes be marked by the particle *ni* – normally associated with indirect object.

It is normally assumed that the particle *ga* marks a subject and so it is routinely glossed as a nominative case marker:

Taroo ga kita.

NOM came³⁹

Taro came.

According to Shibatani⁴⁰, there exists a "normal correspondence between the nominative *ga* and the syntactic subject" but that this correspondence is "disrupted" in certain environments.

To resolve the problems that have arisen in respect to these issues, there has been an attempt to establish a set of tests that would reliably distinguish subjects. The most frequent of these are called subject honorification and *jibun*-reflexivization.

Shibatani has claimed that there is a set of tests for subjecthood that cannot be applied to a certain class of *ga* marked NP's but can be applied to other NP's which are marked by *ni* or

³⁹ Shibatani (1990) p.306.

optionally by a second *ga*. To an extent the argument is tautological. This is a test for subjecthood, it doesn't apply to a given NP, therefore that NP is not a subject. Another criticism that can be levelled at such tests is that they are rather selective. According to Shibitani (1977), quantifiers may be floated off a nominatively marked subject NP but not off a dative or genitive marked subject NP. If quantifier float was asserted as a valid test of subject, the argument could be used as evidence that the dative or genitive marked NP's are not in fact subjects⁴¹. Thus Shibatani's notion of subject is an operational one based on syntactic tests (with an appeal to agency) other tests may give different results. If Shibatani's tests prove not sound then his model collapses.

REFLEXIVIZATION

Reflexives must have a subject antecedent in European languages and this idea has been carried over to Japanese. In many European languages reflexive pronouns as a class often overlap with normal accusatives particularly in the second and third person - French and German are obvious examples or with emphatics, as in English and Gaelic, and so must be defined using logical rather than morphological criteria.

In Japanese, *Jibun*, which is said to be a reflexive, is often advanced as a test for subjecthood. It differs from reflexive pronouns in European languages in two important ways however⁴². It may be used as the subject itself - thus it is often used where English would use a first person pronoun in particular⁴³ and, if used reflexively, it requires a higher animate antecedent⁴⁴. Japanese has considerable restrictions on the use of inanimates as subjects with transitive verbs.

**Kaze ga mado o kowashita.*

The wind broke the window.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ Shibatani's observation is not in fact adequate cf. Ono (1992) Chapter 1 for a discussion of the question.

⁴² *Jibun* seems to have occasioned considerable debate as to how it can be c-commanded by its antecedent. Fukui (1995) has an interesting theoretical discussion of the issues p.20-23 and the impact *jibun* has had on views of binding theory.

⁴³ Kuroda (1979) p.155, Inoue (1976) p.119.

⁴⁴ Kuno (1973) p.291.

If *jibun* can never apply to an inanimate NP such as *Doa* in an intransitive sentence such as:

Doa ga aku.

The door opened.

then it is a test of limited application and cannot be claimed that it is a definitivity if applied to sentences such as:

Me ga ookii.

Its eyes are big.

Nihongo ga dekimasu ka.

Can you speak Japanese?

It has been claimed that *jibun* must have a subject as an antecedent⁴⁵. This claim however requires qualification for in a complex sentence any subject or topic may be referred to⁴⁶.

Satoo_i wa Tanaka_j ga Nakamura ni Hara_k ga jibun_{i,j,k} no ie de korosareta koto o hanashite shimatta no o satotta.

Sato_i realised that Tanaka_j had already told Nakamura that Hara was killed in self's house.⁴⁷

Backward reflexivization is also possible.

However, *jibun* itself can occur in non-object positions, that is it does not need to appear in an object NP, unlike conventional reflexives:

Taroo ga jibun no heya de benkyoo sita.

Taro studied in his room.

⁴⁵ Kuno (1973) p.292 where he adds "in the ordinary style."The Subject-Antecedent condition seems to have first been claimed by Kuroda (1965).

⁴⁶ Kuroda (1965) p.155 first points out the much wider application of *jibun* reflexivization in Japanese than English.

⁴⁷ sentence from McCawley (1976) p.53.

and can have an antecedent in a preceding sentence which is not itself a subject⁴⁸

Dareka John no kawarini sono party ni itta n desu ka.

*Iie, jibun ga kita n desu*⁴⁹.

Did someone come to the party instead of John?

No, he came himself.

As already stated, a topic rather than a subject may be referred to, although there may be an underlying subject in the main matrix clause:

Takashi_i wa Yoshiko ga jibun_i o tazunetekita node ureshigatta.

Takashi was happy because Yoshiko came to visit him.

or an oblique NP in the same sentence may be the antecedent:

Taroo wa Takashi_i kara itoshii Yoshiko ga jibun_i o nikunde iru koto o kiita.

Taroo heard from Takashi that his beloved Yoshiko hated him.⁵⁰

or an object in the same sentence⁵¹:

*Yoshiko ga jibun_i o mushishita koto ga Taroo_i o yuuutsunishita.*⁵²

That Yoshiko ignored him distressed Taroo.

or *jibun* may be a genitive qualifying an object referring to an object in the matrix clause.

*John ga jibun_i no kuruma o kowashita koto ga Mary_i o odorokaseta.*⁵³

⁴⁸ Tsujimura (1996) p 222 ff.

⁴⁹ One native speaker has pointed out that this sentence sounds unnatural and should be *Iie, John ga jibun de kita n desu.* However presumably Tsujimura would accept this sentence.

⁵⁰ There is some disagreement as to the antecedent of *jibun* with some native speakers here.

⁵¹ There are apparently additional complications here for speakers differ to the degree they allow various usages of *jibun*. Sakaguchi (1990) p.315 claims, "Some speakers do not allow *jibun* but do allow the pronoun in object control structures. For these speakers, the subject-orientation of *jibun* clashes with the object-control property of the predicate and neither of the properties wins."

⁵² These last three sentences are taken from Iida and Sells (1988).

⁵³ Nemoto (1999) p.125.

The fact that John broke her car surprised Mary.

In causatives, *jibun* has ambiguous reference between object and subject, although it can be claimed that the object is an underlying subject in a clause it is derived from.

Shibatani argues that what he considers a dative subject may be the antecedent of *jibun* and hence claims that this is evidence that such *ni*-marked NP's are therefore subjects. There are cases, however, where a *ni*-marked NP which is more clearly a dative also can be an antecedent for *jibun*.

Sono keiken wa Mary_i ni jibun_i ga baka dearu koto oshieta.

That experience taught Mary that she was a fool.⁵⁴

This may suggest that it is a *ni*-marked NP itself that it is more likely to be one of the determining factors that allows the use of *jibun* rather than the NP's putative subjecthood. Or it may be that *jibun* can apply to any suitable NP if no ambiguity is involved⁵⁵.

Shibatani claims that in double nominative constructions the second nominative cannot be an antecedent of *Jibun*. Although this may be true, it may also be the case, as in some of the examples above, that *jibun* has as its role, reference to the most important topic in the sentence which must be animate whether that topic is marked or not. As was made clear above topic and subject do not always coincide.

Furthermore Iida and Sells (1988) provide examples that suggest that the grammaticality of *jibun* is controlled by additional factors such as verb aspect as well as any case considerations. Their conclusion is that discourse factors play an important role⁵⁶.

Thus *jibun* does not closely correspond to reflexives in European languages and because of its restriction to animate antecedents. It has a range of uses with differently marked NP's, it is

⁵⁴ Kuno (1972) ex.117a .

⁵⁵ See the reference below to the role of pragmatic factors operating with *jibun*.

⁵⁶ cf. also Inoue's remarks (1976) p.125 Inoue also produces several important arguments against the standard transformational cyclic analysis of *jibun*.

sensitive to various discourse factors and as its antecedent need not be a subject, it is not a robust test for distinguishing subjects from objects.

HONORIFICATION

Japanese has a series of morphological changes to the verb known as honorification. In what is termed subject honorification, the verb complex becomes *o-verb ni naru*.

Sensei wa hanasu. → *Sensei wa o-hanashi ni naru.*

The teacher speaks → The teacher speaks

Here it is argued that honour is being paid to the subject, in this case identical to *sensei*, and that this test can be used to locate the subject. A similar role for animacy can be claimed in regard to non-subject honorification⁵⁷. That is, the object of respect must be a person, usually of higher status.

⁵⁸*Yamada sensei ga gakusei no hon o oyomini natte iru*

Prof. Yamada is reading the student's book.

**Furyoo shoonen ga Yamada sensei o onagurini natta.*

A juvenile delinquent hit Professor Yamada.

The fact too that the second example above is unacceptable - here as in Shibatani no serious attempt is being made to distinguish acceptability from grammaticality - shows that the controlling mechanism for honorification must be a pragmatic one rather than one of grammatical relationships. If all inanimate subjects cannot trigger subject honorification, it cannot be classed as a robust test for subject. Further, nominative marking is not necessary to trigger subject honorification.

Yamada sensei ni gakusei no kimochi ga owakari ni naranai.

Prof. Yamada doesn't understand the student's feelings.

Yamada sensei ni shakkin ga takusan oari ni naru.

⁵⁷ Ono (1992) p57f. discusses non-subject honorification.

Prof. Yamada has a lot of debt.

It can be of course be argued that in these cases *Yamada sensei* is the underlying subject, although the case is harder to make for the second sentence, where *shakkin* must be the selector of the verb *aru* rather than *iru* and so is more obviously the subject⁵⁹.

In fact it is easy to find additional examples where the honorification trigger is plainly a genitive:

Anatagata no nenrei ga ochigai ni naru

Your ages differ⁶⁰.

Kuno (1978) would claim that in this case *anatagata* is a subject of a matrix clause in which *nenrei ga ochigai* is embedded. Presumably then *ga/no* conversion applies to arrive at the sentence above. Such an interpretation seems implausible on several grounds. Firstly *Anatagata no nenrei ga ochigai ni naru* is derived from *Anatagata no nenrei ga ochigai*. This is clearly one clause. (It is actually debatable whether *ochigai ni naru* should be considered one or two verbal complexes anyway. A case can be made for it as being no more two verbs than *chigaimasu*, if a grammaticalisation of *ni naru* is assumed.) In such a sentence *Anatagata* clearly stands in a genitive relationship with *nenrei*. Of course *Anatagata ga nenrei ga ochigai* is also possible but it will be argued below that this structure is different from the genitive one. Secondly the *no* in *ga/no* conversion is not the same as *no* of genitive marking, which always connects two nouns, while *ga/no* conversion involves a subject and its verb. *Ga/no* conversion as seen in relative clauses is in fact an historical relic, the last surviving trace of the former role of *no* as a marker of a subject with low agency in classical Japanese⁶¹.

For now it will simply be pointed out that it is the ages that differ not necessarily the possessors of the ages. This argument will be pursued below.

⁵⁸ The following four sentences are from Tsujimura (1996) p. 232 ff.

⁵⁹ It was of course exactly this sort of inconsistency that led Kuno (1973) p.87 to assert that there must be two different verbs *aru*. This will be discussed below.

⁶⁰ Martin (1987) p.338.

⁶¹ Takeuchi (1999) p.173.

Shibatani (1990 : 300) has pointed out that, in double *ga* sentences, the trigger of honorification must be the first NP in the following.

Takehi sensei ga seitotachi ga osuki da.

Prof. Takehi likes the students.

Gakuseitachi ga Takehi sensei ga suki da.

The students like Prof. Takehi.

**Gakuseitachi ga Takehi sensei ga osuki da.*

The students like Prof. Takehi.

A similar claim is made for *jibun* reflexivization. The essence of this argument is that as subject honorification is only triggered by the subject, and, as the first NP must be the trigger, the first NP must then be the subject. However the validity of this argument hinges on the claim that subject honorification is only triggered by the subject and it has been suggested above that a genitive may trigger subject honorification as well. If this is the case, Shibatani's claim is merely that the trigger must be sentence initial. If, as one would assume on pragmatic grounds, *sensei* is the only possible trigger here and if subject honorification is associated with only subjects, it is also curious that preposing is not allowed, giving a unitary interpretation of all three sentences. Kuno of course considers *Takehi sensei* in the last sentence an object⁶². For according to Kuno⁶³ non-subject elements can be freely preposed as long as this is not out of the embedded clause left of the matrix subject, hence accounting for the non-grammaticality of the following transposition.

Yamada wa [Tanaka ga tensai de aru] koto o shiranakatta. ==>

**Tanaka ga, Yamada wa [tensai de aru] koto o shiranakatta.*

Yamada didn't know that Tanaka was a genius.

But that the transposition in singular clauses

⁶² The reason such a transposition is not possible is of course obvious. Both arguments have the same marker and *suki* has double polarity in that it may simultaneously apply to both the experiencer and the experienced.

⁶³ Kuno (1976) p.26.

Boku wa Mary ga daikirai da. →

Mary ga boku wa daikirai da.

I really dislike Mary.

is perfectly acceptable.

In sum we are left with a series of tests that are asserted to be tests of subjecthood and hence indicators of grammatical relationships, but which are controlled by both semantic considerations - animacy - and pragmatic considerations rather than grammatical ones. In short they are not reliable tests of subjecthood at all and are of course at variance with the explicit case marking system of the language.

TRADITIONAL TESTS FOR SUBJECT

Within the mainstream of grammatical analysis the notion of subject can be used to devise some simple tests of subjecthood, which might have quite wide application.

Firstly of course is the overt case marking which might be present. If this is clear it will often override other considerations. Thus in German, where only nominals of masculine gender have separate subject and object then the case marking will override word order cues⁶⁴.

⁶⁴ Thus *Die Katze sieht den Hund* "The cat sees the dog", may be reordered as *Den Hund sieht die Katze*, while *Die Katze sieht das Kaninchen*. "The cat sees the rabbit" may not. That is *Das Kaninchen sieht die Katze* will be interpreted as "The rabbit sees the cat" given the lack of inflectional clues that suggest otherwise. The case is never this simple of course as there are pragmatic considerations and contrastive stress:- *Das Kaninchen isst die Katze* "The rabbit eats the cat" may well be ambiguous depending on stress and context.

WH-QUESTIONS

Traditionally a well-known test of subject, that seems to have considerable cross-linguistic validity, is to form a Wh-question with the appropriate nominative marker. Often its validity rests on the morphological case marking system where present, as in the Japanese example below.

The man sees the woman.	<i>Otoko ga onna o miru.</i>
Who sees (whom)?	<i>Dare ga miru?</i>
The man * the woman.	<i>Otoko * onna</i>

This test has obvious limitations, as both Japanese and English distinguish person from things. The dog came. *Who came? What came?

Otoko ni onna no kimochi ga wakaranai.
Nani ga wakarani? Onna no kimochi
Dare ga wakarani? ???

CLEFTING

Clefting is another test that may highlight the subject. This Japanese equivalent of the well-known English construction was pointed early out by Kuroda (1965) and is to be found in his republished thesis⁶⁵ where he notes that

<i>John ga ano hon o katta.</i>	John bought the book.
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can be clefted to

<i>Ano hon o katta no wa John da.</i>	The one who bought the book is John.
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⁶⁵ Kuroda (1979) p.75.

PREDICATE ENCAPSULATION

As was claimed above, the subject and predicate have a particularly close relationship. This relationship can be exploited in devising another useful test of subjecthood. Many languages allow the predicate to be shifted into the subject NP by processes that vary considerably cross-linguistically. In Japanese this is associated with relativisation. The equivalent process in English is rarer but possible.

The book is red.	<i>Hon wa akai.</i>
The red book	<i>Akai hon</i>
The man sees the woman.	<i>Otoko ga onna o miru.</i>
The (woman) seeing man	<i>(Onna o) miru otoko</i>

These two tests have the advantage of wider applicability than the range of tests described in the preceding section that have been deployed by Shibatani, in particular they are suitable in intransitive sentences regardless of animacy.

THE NOTION OF TOPIC

Topic, like subject, is often assumed as a given. As in a sense the participants in a linguistic transaction must know what the transaction is about, there will always be some topic - Topic is what the discussion is about.

Topic marking may be regarded as an explicit setting up of a frame or universe of discourse within which an interchange can take place. Lyons⁶⁶ emphasises a modern use of topic in linguistics which is defined "in terms of contextual dispensability or predictability: the topic, or 'subject of discourse' is described as that element which is given in the general situation or in some explicit question to which the speaker is replying." Often some formal device may be used with an NP before the sentence which is the main communication. Often too, more than one topic may be marked in an identical fashion and these may have different degrees of "newness".

Frequently the term topic is reserved for signalling a frame, which is said to contain old information only, and this seems frequently to be the assumed position with regard to the use of *wa* in Japanese. Here the term topic will be used in the wider sense of a frame-setting device irrespective of whether the frame is old or new.

There are several reasons for this approach⁶⁷. It is not at all clear how one can easily distinguish new in many contexts, and what may happen is that there may be topic shifting backwards and forwards - the old becomes new. Moreover when the actual topics are examined, new versus old becomes entirely relative. Thus it is desirable here also to bring both of these areas within the one term although for convenience the term frame-setting will not be used. Secondly we would wish to emphasise the frame-setting function of topic marking particularly in regard to grammatical devices which mark the topic as being outside the structure of the clause.

⁶⁶ Lyons (1968) p.335.

⁶⁷ cf. Tomlin (1995) for reference to the general "weakness in definitions of the central pragmatic notions like theme and topic." p.517ff. Tomlin replaces the term theme by the "cognitive notion of focal attention" drawing attention to the closeness between the concepts of topic and focus.

If one looks at such devices in English, particularly colloquial forms, the difficulties can be appreciated. Here too, multiple topics are possible:

"You know that park. You know this new motorway. The Council won't pay any money."

Here "you know" functions as a topic marker to build two frames – a park and a motorway, before the new information is conveyed – that presumably the Council has decided not to fund a motorway through a park. Here it does not make sense to label the topic new information or old. It is probably the case that the topic is being brought up for the first time in this particular discourse but it is also clear – by the use of some deictic device at a formal level – that in another sense the topic is already known. It will be noted also, that such devices have a different falling intonation contour from the superficially similar question, with elided "do".

"You know that park?"

In this case one can categorise the information contained in the topic as known, but a frame containing new information can also be established. Halliday⁶⁸ has defined topic as the intersection of the "theme" and "rheme" – and the "given" and "new" oppositions. Here the most usual device in English is "There's".

There's a house in New Orleans. It's called the rising sun.

Topic then, is a discourse function but it may be realized at varying levels of structure, it may be at clause level or higher than clause level. In many languages there is a strong correlation between topic and subject⁶⁹ and because this is the case in many Western languages, the study of topic has probably been neglected. Although to a degree, the subject can always be seen as a kind of topic, the term topic will be reserved for a structure which does not also function as a subject - that is one that is marked above clause level, without specifying what its ultimate origins may be.

⁶⁸ Halliday (1967-68).

Devices involving some kind of left dislocation are ignored here as the position is adopted that the topics to be discussed in Japanese are not derived from some movement transformation. This proposition is arguable but suits our purpose for the moment. It may be noted though in passing there has recently been the claim that left dislocation in English should be equated with scrambling in Japanese.

Chafe distinguishes different kinds of topics, arguing too, against the view that topicalisation is always associated with left dislocation or initial position. According to Chafe⁷⁰ though, a topic in a topic prominent language⁷¹ is not necessarily what the sentence is about, but it "sets a spatial, temporal, or individual framework within which the main predication holds."

This distinction seems unnecessary as in a sense the term "about" is rather vague and the "frame" is what a sentence is about as well.

Li and Thomson⁷² try to distinguish the difference between subject and topic on the basis of discourse strategy, noun-verb relationships and various grammatical processes.

They claim that the subject has a minimal discourse role serving⁷³ "as the centre of attention of the sentence and must be definite." They continue "As for noun-verb relations and grammatical processes, it is the subject rather than the topic that figures prominently. Thus subject is normally determined by the verb, and is selectionally related to the verb; and the subject often obligatorily controls verb agreement. ..the topic is a discourse notion, whereas the subject is to a greater extent a sentence-internal notion. The former can be understood best in terms of the discourse and extra-sentential considerations; the latter in terms of its function within the sentence structure."

In sum the term topic has semantic, discourse and structural implications. The first two of these are of course inherently linked.

⁶⁹ Givon (1983) Introduction pp.5-31.

⁷⁰ Chafe (1976) pp.50-51.

⁷¹ cf. Cole, Herman and Sung (1990) for a discussion of this issue concerning Japanese.

⁷² Li and Thomson (1976) pp.561-466.

⁷³ *ibid* p.466.

Moreover, for Japanese, a discourse structure may be set up of the form:

Topic + {Sentence}⁷⁴

Sentence = Subject + predication + X

We may still, however, wish to distinguish among topics on various grounds such as whether the information presented is new or old⁷⁵ which is frequently said to be one of the contrasts between *ga* and *wa*. The claim that *wa* is a topic marker in Japanese is uncontroversial. Below it is claimed that *ga* may also mark a topic in some sentence types. As already stated, there may also be more than one topic.

The discourse structure above can then be modified to have the form⁷⁶

N Topic *wa / ga* { Subject *ga* + + predication }

This is essentially the underlying form Kuno suggests for :

(Taroo ga) (kuru koto ga kimatte imasu.)

It is Taro for whom it is determined that he will come.

Deriving this by deletion of the subject from a deep structure:

*(Taroo)_{Theme/Focus} ((Taroo (ga) kuru koto (ga))_{NP} (kimatte imasu)_{VP})_S*⁷⁷

⁷⁴ This is of course in no way original. It reflects a topic comment analysis but with explicit conventional clause structure within the comment. It essentially follows Saito's (1985) views and continually crops up in passing in the works of Japanese linguistics who otherwise seem to accept a conventional GB model.

⁷⁵ cf. however Rochemont and Culicover (1990) p.21ff. for a discussion on the misconceptions about focus and the equating of focus with new information or some form of presupposition.

⁷⁶ This structure is similar to the one proposed by Saito (1982) p.5, who uses the term focus "I will somewhat tentatively, call elements such as *nihon ga* in '*nihon ga dansei ga tanmei desu*', "focus" with nominative case in order to distinguish them from the subject, although the term "focus" may not be the most appropriate in this context."

⁷⁷ Kuno (1976) p.23.

THE QUESTION OF FOCUS

The notion of focus is briefly discussed here as it is commonly asserted that one of the roles of *ga* is to act as a focussing particle.

The term focus has a very wide application. Gundel (1999) in her review of the literature claims there are three main types, Psychological, Semantic and Contrastive. Lambrecht (1989:3) however, states that focus is not a question of identifiable vs. unidentifiable NP's but is "an indicator of a semantic relation holding on the level of the sentence or proposition as a whole, not ...an expression of information properties of individual sentence constituents." Lambrecht (1989:57) further distinguishes several types of focus predicate focus, narrow focus and sentence focus, giving the following Japanese examples respectively:

(Kuruma wa) koshoo shita.

My car it broke down.

Kuruma ga koshoo shita.

My car broke down.

Kuruma *ga koshoo shita.*

My **car** broke down.

In the case of predicate focus, the *wa* phrase can be omitted, as it is already known, while in narrow focus the topic is said to be grammaticalised⁷⁸. Sentence focus shows contrastive emphasis, which for Lambrecht is usually on the object and so when switched to the subject "detopicalises" it.

Although in the above and in Lambrecht's conception, it has been suggested that the terms topic and focus may have considerable overlap, it is still perhaps useful to keep a distinction. Actually they can be seen as sufficiently different. Topic is associated with the setting up of a frame while focus is associated with giving some special emphasis. Part of the confusion seems to arise because various grammatical processes, which involve high-lighting have been called topicalisation⁷⁹ while here the term, topic, is being used in a discourse framing sense. This does not of course mean that the two may not coincide, but topic is seen as an extra-sentence, grammatical phenomenon while the term focus can be reserved for what is an

⁷⁸ It is not quite clear what is intended by grammaticalised here. Lambrecht is dealing with a variety of languages and is perhaps unaware that *wa* is a device for grammaticalising topics. This being the case as pointed out in the remark about Givon it is hard to see what the distinction Lambrecht has in mind is.

essentially psychological process that may be expressed by a variety of linguistic devices, including phonological ones. Thus a topic may also have focus.

This distinction may help us disentangle cases such as the double *ga* construction, where the status of the respective NP's is not necessarily obvious. Herring and Paolillo⁸⁰ state, for example, in their study of Focus Position in SOV Languages, that in such languages the position of greatest focus is immediately preverbal. While Kim claims that "If a language has a harmonious head-final property, the information flow principle will not apply beyond the verbal head of the sentence."⁸¹ These two points allow us to make some distinction between focus and topic in Japanese. The point of focus will be near the verb while topic will be further removed, typically at the beginning of the sentence.

Despite these general principals however, as suggested above the two may coincide. In a typical sentence such as:

Taroo wa inu ga daisuki da.

As far as Taroo goes, dogs are really nice.

We describe Taroo as a topic on the grounds that it is marked with *wa* and that it can be omitted : *Inu ga/wa daisuki da*. If *ga* replaces *wa* we have a highly marked sentence with greater focus on Taroo but Taroo is in some sense still a topic.

Taroo ga inu ga daisuki da.

However typically this sentence has contrastive stress, and hence focus, on both *ga*-marked NP's , or at least stress on both *ga*'s and focus on the NP's as a whole.

⁷⁹ cf. Rochemont and Culicover (1990) p.74ff. for the linking of various topicalisation transformations to focus.

⁸⁰ Herring and Paolillo p.164 Kuno (1978) is cited as a reference that is true for Japanese.

⁸¹ Kim (1988) p.150.

TOPIC AND SUBJECT CONTRASTED

The above discussion can be summarised by the following table.

TOPIC	SUBJECT
Independent of verbal	Tied to verbal
Not part of clause	Part of clause
Major scope	More limited scope
Discourse oriented	Grammar oriented
Non-agentive	A Agentive in transitive subjects S not agentive

It can be seen from the above that the differentiation of Subject and Topic in intransitive sentences is less marked than in transitive clauses. Focus as has been said is more a psychological phenomenon although of course it does have grammatical and phonological correlates.

THE PARTICLES *WA* AND *GA*

In this section reference is made to some of what has been said about the particles *wa* and *ga*. There often seems an apparent inconsistency in how they are treated. On the one hand it is frequently claimed that *wa* is a discourse particle marking a topic and not part of the case marking system that *ga* is usually claimed to belong to. On the other, *wa* and *ga* are contrasted as though they are similar and belong to the same grammatical system.

CONTRASTIVE *WA*

Many linguists have distinguished two differing usages of *wa* which Kuno labels thematic and contrastive uses⁸². This distinction has been recognised by Japanese grammarians since the 18th century where the terms emphasis and separation are employed.⁸³ There appears then, following Kuno, a large measure of agreement that *wa* has two separate functions.

It is not altogether clear however that this is a discrete distinction and there are cases where it would be possible to state either use may be involved. Generally thematic *wa* is associated with sentence initial position while contrastive *wa* is not thought to be so constrained.

As stated above, it is usual to distinguish two main usages of *wa*, thematic *wa* and contrastive *wa*, although there have been dissenters from this view.

Contrastive *wa* always implies a contrast and often this will be explicit. The contrastive usage frequently corresponds to contrastive stress in English and further differs from the thematic in that two *wa*'s may occur in the same sentence. There is also claimed to be a difference in use of contrastive stress between thematic and contrastive uses⁸⁴.

John wa sono hon o yonda ga Mary wa yomanakatta.

John read this book but Mary didn't.

⁸² Kuno (1973) p. 159.

⁸³ Shibatani (1990) p. 264.

⁸⁴ Kuno (1973) p. 47 "While noun phrases preceding the thematic *wa* do not precede prominent intonation,

In such cases phrases such as "on the one hand", "on the other hand" or "while" fulfil a similar function in English.

A common use of *wa* is with negatives, particularly after *de*, and some elementary Japanese texts give this as a rule that the beginner may apply⁸⁵. This usage often corresponds to *ga* or *o* in the positive sentence and it is not altogether clear whether any contrast is involved although it seems to be subsumed under contrastive *wa*. This usage is not generally thought to be topic marking.

Watashi wa sashimi ga suki desu.

I like sashimi.

Watashi wa sashimi wa suki de wa arimasen.

I don't like sashimi.

We will not be concerned here further with contrastive *wa*.

THEMATIC *WA*

Thematic implies that a topic is marked out and this usage can be further subdivided into one where the topic is first introduced (what Kuno calls generic use⁸⁶)

Kujira wa honyuu-doobutsu desu.

Whales are mammals.

and an anaphoric use

John wa gakusei no tomodachi desu.

John is the student's friend.

those preceding contrastive *wa* do."

⁸⁵ Corder et al. n.d. p.37.

⁸⁶ Kuno (1973) p. 44.

Shibatani⁸⁷ has pointed out that many studies have compared the topic marking function of *wa* with the nominative particle *ga*. Referring to the earliest Japanese studies on *wa*, he mentions that *wa* was often said to be associated with separation and emphasis and that it "separates an entity from the rest of things and has the effect of making an emphatic judgement." He however points out that in many cases little emphasis applies.

This latter use has been the source of the parallels drawn between *ga* and the English indefinite article and between *wa* and the definite article. This can be seen in the beginning of the *Urashima Taroo* story given by Maynard (1987).

Mukashi mukashi aru tokoro ni ojiisan to obaasan ga imashita. Ojiisan wa yama e shibakari ni obaasan wa kawa e sentaku ni ikimashita.

Once upon a time there lived an old man and an old woman. the old man went to the mountains to collect firewood and the old woman went to the river to do the washing.

⁸⁷ Shibatani (1990) p.264.

THE PARTICLE *GA*

Following Kuroda⁸⁸, Kuno⁸⁹ makes a distinction between three functions of *ga*, which he labels descriptive *ga*, exhaustive listing *ga* and objective *ga*.

Descriptive *ga* he states is used in neutral descriptions of actions or temporary states as in the sentence:

Ame ga futte imasu.

It is raining.

It is not altogether clear what the difference between actions or temporary states might be as his illustrative sentence might suggest. Is rain falling an action or is it a temporary state?

Exhaustive listing *ga* is said to be involved, when its argument is unique and so according to Kuno here "*X ga*" means "X and only X".

John ga gakusei desu.

Of all the people here only John is a student.

In these usages he also argues that *ga* signals that the information is new. This does not apparently apply to Kuno's Objective *ga*. Objective *ga* is used where *ga* is said to mark an object rather than a subject and such cases will be discussed more fully below.

Shibatani largely follows this analysis but takes Kuno to task on the issue⁹⁰ of uniqueness and claims that *ga* never has the sense of "only X" and the prominence that the dual reading that Kuno gives to sentences such as *John ga kita*. (John came) or (It was John that came) is a function of the prominence that the subject has at the beginning of the sentence. He further adds a contrast between *wa* and *ga*,

⁸⁸ Kuroda (1965).

⁸⁹ Kuno (1973) pp.38-39.

⁹⁰ Shibatani (1990) p. 270ff.

Hi wa noboru.

Hi ga noboru.

The sun rises.

claiming that the *wa* sentence shows a lesser degree of cohesion. This can be taken to mean that the NP *wa* is not part of the core of the sentence.

Kuroda⁹¹ claims that a sentence with a neutral *ga* is one where "the subject can be considered neither the premise of some judgment nor something about which a predication is made. Rather the subject of the sentence is nothing more than an item that stands in a particular relation to the verb of the sentence, just as the object."

Are, Taroo ga terebi o mite iru yo.

Look, Taro is watching the TV.

He however claims that sentences, which he describes as containing, what he terms following Kuno, "exhaustive *ga*" such as

John ga byooki da

John is sick

exhibit a relationship in which the "sentence characterises John by the property of sickness, rather than just attributing this property to him."⁹²

The distinction between these two uses of *ga* according to Kuroda is one of semantics not syntax and that "a sentence with a *ga*-phrase as a subject is in general semantically ambiguous."⁹³

⁹¹ Kuroda (1965) p49.

⁹² Kuroda (1965) p49.

⁹³ Kuroda (1965) p.52.

This tripartite analysis, with some of the minor disagreements mentioned above, has been widely accepted. Some linguists⁹⁴, however, have rejected the claim that *ga* marks a subject and see it as part of the system in which *wa* and *ga* belong to the same structural system with *wa* marking high focus and *ga* low. This claim does not seem correct as *ga* may show higher focus than *wa*. What seems to be a more satisfactory explanation is that focus *ga* has higher focus than *wa*, while neutral *ga* has lower focus. Here it is maintained that there are two distinct types of *ga*, a thematic *ga* (focus-*ga*) which is a discourse particle with a higher focus than *wa*, and a case marking *ga* which has lower.

There is a certain commonality in what seem to be incompatible positions here. On the one hand *ga* seems to be a conventional case marker that marks the subject of the sentence but on the other hand it also seems to function in a way similar to topic *wa*.

There also seems to be an underlying agreement that in fact, *wa* and *ga* contrast in some way even if it is not clear exactly how⁹⁵.

The general position taken in this paper is that *ga* does in fact have two different functions. One to mark a topic and the other as a conventional case-marker. The use of the term needs some explanation as the word topic in Japanese is generally reserved for whatever topic *wa* marks. Here topic is used for a structure that signals the larger world of discourse in which the sentence is set. As such it is not part of the grammatical part of the sentence itself⁹⁶ where topic may be marked by *wa* or *ga*, and indeed other topic markers and the subject may, when present, also be marked by *ga*.

Although double *ga* sentences are rare with action predicates, that is true transitives they can sometimes provide evidence for the subjecthood of the second NP, with respect to the property of agency which is usually absent in statives. In

⁹⁴ Aoyama (1983).

⁹⁵ Thus although frequent claims are made that *ga* marks new information, *wa* old – there is some evidence that this might not be the case cf. Maynard (1980, 1981) Suzuki and Ono (1991).

⁹⁶ Debate as to how such structures might be generated will be ignored here as they are often tied to which particular model is in vogue at a particular time. It is admitted that the term topicalisation carries connotations of some transformational operation involving foregrounding of some kind but that issue is too complex to broach at this time.

John ga musuko ga sensei o nagutta.

As for John, his son hit the teacher.

There is a possible reading of this sentence as the translation suggests, where *musuko* is given a reading as agent i.e. the son deliberately hit the teacher, but an agency reading is not possible for the first (topic) NP. (Mihara 1994 : 145)

The topic NP also must have an exhaustive reading as well while the subject NP may take either an exhaustive or a neutral reading⁹⁷. Thus certain parallels can be drawn between topicalising *ga* and exhaustive *ga*, while subject *ga* corresponds at least to some degree to Kuno's neutral *ga*.

In his study of the difference between *wa* and *ga*, he states that the role of *wa* is to delimit a set while one of the functions of *ga* (topicalising *ga*) is to set up a set.

Such a model of *ga* would predict that topicalising *ga* would be more common as it contrasts with *wa*, while subject *ga* would be rare, both because of zero anaphora in Japanese and because of *ga*⁹⁸ deletion.

⁹⁷ Ueyama (1989).

⁹⁸ Ono et al. (2000) p.62 state that a *ga*- marked NP only occurs in 10% of the positions it could occur in and if the NP occurs, *ga* is more often than not deleted.

WA AND GA CONTRASTED

In this section we will sketch briefly what has been said about the main functions of *wa* and contrast *wa* with *ga*.

It has been claimed that the two particles are of quite different types, *ga* being a case-marker while the variety of functions of *wa* can be lumped under the term discourse marking⁹⁹. That is, *ga* functions solely within the sentence, whereas a discourse marker may have a scope that extends beyond its immediate sentence. Backhouse has used the term range marker¹⁰⁰ for *wa* as well as *mo*¹⁰¹ which closely resembles *wa* in the range of collocations it can occur in. Of *wa* it has been claimed that as a discourse particle it stands outside the internal structure of the sentence. Its prime role as a topic marker is to remove its accompanying NP from the sentence¹⁰².

Kubo draws parallels between exhaustive *ga*-phrases and thematic *wa*-phrases.¹⁰³ He however claims that NP-*ga* "is legitimised strictly by structural case marking assigned by a head X⁰ through government or agreement, while NP-*wa* is rather an indication of structural predication."¹⁰⁴

However, *wa* and *ga* have often been contrasted perhaps partly because foreign learners find the distinction between them one of the more difficult points of Japanese grammar. This may indeed be the case¹⁰⁵. They can appear in sentences in which there seems to be a quasi-paradigmatic contrast. Kuroda (1992 : 278ff.) refers to the fact that many examples of topic-*wa* can be replaced by *ga* and remarks how many of these in a root context can be interpreted without focus. He then goes on to conclude that if *wa* phrases are generated in situ, *ga* phrases that alternate with them must also be generated in situ.

⁹⁹ Kuroda (1979) however mentions that *wa* and *ga* "are often understood to denote the subject."p.33.

¹⁰⁰ Backhouse (1993) p. 131 He also notes a further difference between case markers and range markers. Range markers also occur after verbal, copular and adjectivals.

¹⁰¹ Martin (1975) also treats *wa* and *mo* as a pair p. 52ff.

¹⁰² Rubin (1992) states "We cannot repeat too often that *wa* NEVER marks the subject of the verb. It doesn't mark the object either. And it certainly doesn't unpredictably "substitute"for other particles such as *ga* and *o*."p. 40.

¹⁰³ Kubo (1994) p.14.

¹⁰⁴ Kubo (1994) p.20.

¹⁰⁵ As there seems to be considerable difference in usage of *ga* and *wa* between children and adults, it is likely

Kuno¹⁰⁶ emphasises the contrast between the two, however

John wa gakusei desu.

John is a **student**

John ga gakusei desu.

John is a student

pointing out that traditionally the difference in meaning between the two sentences depends on whether *John* or *gakusei* is emphasised.

Kuno (1972) studied *wa* and *ga* showing the association between new and old information and this was followed by Hind and Hinds (1979) who found in an oral folktale that a topic is first marked by *ga*, on second mention by *wa* and in subsequent occurrences is unmarked. Thus Kuno's claim above that *ga* is, at least here, more emphatic. Watanabe (1990) in a related discourse study adds a further function to what she calls presentative *ga* and that is to say something new about the already presented NP – what she terms "reintroduction of the participant" (p.133) or the emergence into "the psychological frame"(p.134). Maynard (1981) though, cites a story in which one character is consistently marked with *wa* while another is consistently marked by *ga*. Such studies provide evidence that the discourse functions of *wa* and *ga* are close and that these functions are intimately associated with framing topics and adjusting them.

Makino argues that the distinction between *wa* and *ga* is really one of communicative orientation, with *wa* being listener orientated and *ga* speaker-orientated¹⁰⁷, but is difficult to follow what this claim might mean when particular examples are examined. Makino also¹⁰⁸ suggests that *ga* in sentences, where Kuno claims it marks an object, in fact marks something that spontaneously comes into existence primarily involving the speaker.

that these two particles are more closely related than many adult native speakers would have us believe.

¹⁰⁶ Kuno (1973) p. 37.

¹⁰⁷ Makino (1987).

¹⁰⁸ Makino (1987) p.302.

Ono¹⁰⁹ has claimed that *ga* is used to describe a temporary or accidental (irregular) relationship.

Shoogo no yasumi jikan ni, kinjo no jimusho kara dete kita tutomenin ya jimuin ga mure ni natte, ohoi no koi o nagamete imasu

'During the lunch hours office workers and clerks who have come out of nearby offices are flocking together and watching carp in the moat'.

Ga here is claimed to have the sense of *ima* 'now' or *kono shunkan ni* 'at this moment'.

In other words, it means, *Shoogo no yasumi jikan ni, kinjo no jimusho kara dete kita tsutomenin ya jimuin ga ima (kono shunkan ni) mure ni natte....* 'During the lunch hours office workers and clerks who have come out of nearby offices are now at this moment flocking and '

Whereas it is often pointed out that *wa* is closely associated with permanent states and hence generic statements¹¹⁰.

Inu wa hashiru.

Dogs run.

A generic reading is often only one that is available for a particular sentence however.

Inu wa neko o oikakeru.

The dog chases the cat/ Dogs chase cats.

It can be seen here that the generic reading is more associated with tense than the particle *wa* per se. The same applies equally to the particle *o*.

¹⁰⁹ Ono (1966).

¹¹⁰ Shibatani (1990) p. 263.

The two claims for *wa* of contrast and permanent are consistent if it is borne in mind that *ga* seems to often indicate a greater degree of contrast and so is more likely with the unusual or temporary.

There is a paradoxical situation here as it is claimed that *wa* is associated with contrast and *ga* is in contrast, said to be neutral. On the other hand *ga* is associated with the unusual, temporary and new information.

One of the other possible implications of these views is that this function of *ga* is associated with low transitivity and hence minimal control.

As a particular class of sentences showing low control and we would argue, low transitivity, Makino draws attention¹¹¹ to the use of descriptive *ga* in exclamations:

A! Netsu ga aru!

Gee, you have a fever!

Aa, biiru ga nomitai!

Aa, I'd love a beer!

Boku wa kimi ga suki da!

I really like you!

WA AND GA AFTER NON-SUBSTANTIVES

In contrast to *ga*, *wa* more frequently occurs with other particles and with parts of speech other than nouns.

Takai kara, ano resutoran ni wa ikimasen.

Because it's dear, we won't go to that restaurant.

Sore wa kantan ni wa dekimasen.

That can't be done easily.

Haru to wa ie mada samui desu.

¹¹¹ Makino (1987) p.302.

Although it is spring, it is still cold.

However, there are cases where *ga* also can occur with other particles and with other parts of speech. In such contexts *ga* appears closer to a topic marker than a case marker

*Kono toshokan kara ga hon o nusuminiku!*¹¹².

This library is hard to steal books from.

Asahayaku ga (suzushii node) benkyoo shiyasui.

It is easier to study early in the morning because it's cool.¹¹³

Martin¹¹⁴ presents additional examples, which he describes as literary, adding that they "might call in question our treatment of all instances of *ga* as marking a basic case and all instances of *wa* as some secondary process". He claims that they all involve time or place and rather improbably adds that they "are probably best explained by ellipsis of somewhat unusual sentences..."

Akari no tsuku made ga myou ni ochitsukenakatta.

Until the light came on I was strangely upset.

..koko ga ichiban suzushii kaze ga kimasu wa.

Here is where the coolest breeze comes.

K. Ono (1996: 87) regards phrases with *kara wa* or *made wa* as topic phrases and those with *kara ga* and *made ga* as focus phrases. Presumably this is in keeping with the view that *ga* here cannot be regarded as a case particle but as a discourse marker. Uehara (1998:42) though claims that typically such expressions have semantic nominality as a whole as in his example:

Niji kara ga ii.

From two o'clock would be good.

¹¹² My informants gave this sentence with omission of *kara* and with *wa* instead of *ga* as being identical in meaning. In this and the following, the sentences with *ga* were said with more prominent stress and a more marked pause that equivalents with *wa*.

¹¹³ These two examples from Farmer (1984) p.83 presumably the bracketed elements are deletable.

¹¹⁴ Martin (1975) p.66.

but the fact that predicate encapsulation does not apply marks these as somewhat different from grammatical subjects and can be seen as providing additional evidence for *ga* as a discourse rather than case marker in these contexts.

These cases do not seem so far removed semantically from those in which, what seems to be a straightforward topic may also be marked by NP + *ga*. Although this view has not been the one held by generativists after Kuroda's and especially Kuno's pioneering studies, recently Mihara working within a more recent Government and Binding model has reached the same conclusion. Mihara (1994 :145) makes the claim that this topic *ga* (or extra nominative NP in his terminology) "Semantically speaking,..., functions as a situational location for the state described in the lower IP. The reader will immediately see that this function is very close to those of situational topics and VP-topics. And importantly, the first *ga* is not assigned by INFL [+Tense]. In other words, this is not a morphological realisation of structural cases but a postposition performing a presentational function."

*Kono atari ga tochi ga takai.*¹¹⁵

It is this area where land is expensive.

What seems to be the case is that deletion of other particles is commoner before *ga* than *wa*. Thus in

*Gakkoo (ni) wa ki ga takusan aru*¹¹⁶.

There are a lot of trees in the grounds.

For *Kono atari ga tochi ga takai*, the alternative **Kono atari ni ga tochi ga takai* was rejected.

According to those working within a generative model, it has been claimed that there are significant differences between NP + topic *wa* and PP + topic *wa*¹¹⁷. These seem to be concerned with the lesser integration of NP + topic *wa* into the sentence (claimed violation of

¹¹⁵ Sugamoto (1982) p.425.

¹¹⁶ A group of six natives informants claim that the two sentences are identical in meaning.

¹¹⁷ Saito (1985).

the subadjacency principle and unusual licensing of resumptive pronouns). If such differences are more than an artifact of the model, then it should not surprise that PP + *ga* might be much rarer than NP + topic *ga*.

These arguments can be seen as suggesting that functionally there is not so great a difference between the long recognised thematic marking function of *wa* and some occurrences of *ga*.

Conversion of thematic *wa* to *ga* in relative clauses also suggests that the difference between *wa* and *ga* is insignificant. In fact the whole nature of the internal structure of what are conventionally thought of as relative clauses has recently been questioned. Sakai (1994) maintains that some sentences may be structurally ambiguous and points out that in sentences such as

Mary ga tsukatte ita computer ga kowarete shimatta.

The computer which Mary was using has broken.

Sono shinshi ga kite iru yoofuku ga yogorete ita.

The jacket, which the gentleman was wearing, was soiled.

An adverbial, which modifies the main clause can be inserted after the first NP.

Mary ga saishoni tsukatte ita computer ga kowarete shimatta.

The computer which Mary was using has broken first.

Sono shinshi ga fushigina koto ni kite iru yoofuku ga yogorete ita.

Strangely the jacket which the gentleman was wearing was soiled.

Sakai claims that this is evidence that the two NP's are therefore both main clause constituents having the structures

Mary_i ga [NP[S e_i tsukatte ita] computer ga] kowarete shimatta

Sono shinshi_i ga [NP[S e_i fushigina koto ni kite iru] yoofuku ga] yogorete ita¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Sakai (1994) p.183.

A similar argument is presented involving ambiguity of scope with *daremo* as quantified NP's cannot take wide scope if they are located in relative clauses.

Daremo ga tsukatte ita computer ga kowarete shimatta.

The computer that everyone used has broken.

For each person the computer which he used has broken.

[NP[S Daremo ga tsukatte ita] computer ga] kowarete shimatta.

Daremo e_i ga [NP[S e_i tsukatte ita] computer ga] kowarete shimatta.

Although Sakai refers to the two NP's as being in the main clause, this essentially is a case of the first *ga*-marked NP being a topic or frame, which of course has scope over the whole sentence. This analysis, if accepted implies that double *ga* sentences may be more common than is generally thought. It is not clear however why *wa* cannot also be used in these sentences here.

There is also evidence from language acquisition for the parallels between *ga* and *wa*. According to Nakamura¹¹⁹ in her study of the acquisition of narrative structure, children at quite a young age are able to mark referent introduction and maintenance with appropriate devices - basically this is equivalent to topic marking. This deviates significantly from adult usage which according to Hinds¹²⁰, uses NP + *ga* for the first mention of a referent then NP + *wa*, then ellipsis. However unlike adults they tend to use *wa* at a much lower rate than adults, tending either to omit it or to use *ga* instead. Nakamura suggested that this was either simply overusing *ga* through overmarking referents or using *ga* to give the referents greater prominence.

In conclusion, it is claimed here that *ga* has two functions; one to mark a grammatical subject, the other to mark an element that is outside the clause in a similar way to *wa*. In the following section we will examine particular those stative clauses which allow double *ga* and indicate the respective functions of the NP's they mark.

¹¹⁹ Nakamura (1993).

¹²⁰ Hinds and Hinds (1979).

PART TWO

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This section examines first describes the general nature of statives in Japanese and then investigates specific constructions. All of these constructions can occur with double *ga*-marked NP's, and the roles that *ga* plays in such sentences is explored.

STATIVES

Although the term stative is used for a word that marks a state and hence is often defined semantically, frequently it is defined in a particular language by morphological or syntactic means. In English grammar a stative verb is often opposed to a dynamic verb¹²¹ and list verbs of perception or cognition or verbs of relation, which describe the relationships between things. It is also claimed that these verbs cannot be used in the progressive forms, and a similar claim is made for Japanese. It is not always easy to decide which of these criteria are paramount however, semantic or syntactic or what weighting to give to each. Thus *hate* is given as a stative verb but may be used in the progressive - "I'm hating every minute of this." which shows essentially the same meaning as "I hate every minute of this."

The term dynamic too, can be rather vague. In Gaelic for example certain verbs such as *ruith* "run", which might be expected to be "dynamic" or "active", can be used as either as stative or a normal verb with little difference in meaning, while in other verbs such as *seasamh* "stand" or *suidh* "sit" the difference in meaning is clear.

<i>Tha i na ruith</i> [+ stative]	She is running
<i>Tha i a'ruith</i> [- stative]	She is running
<i>Tha i na seasamh</i> [+ stative]	She is standing
<i>Tha i a' seasamh</i> [- stative]	She is standing up

On the other hand in a language like Maori, stative verbs can be distinguished from non-statives by their inability to take a passive suffix¹²² and so fall neatly into a distinct

¹²¹ Quirk and Greenbaum (1993). 46-47.

¹²² Bauer (1997) p.75.

morphological class. There is thus a close association too, between action verbs and transitivity and statives and intransitivity.

There are additional more subtle markers of stativity however. Kolln (1994 : 89) suggests that we think of the difference between stative and dynamic in terms of "willed" and "non-willed" qualities and this notion of controllability is of considerable importance in Japanese. There is thus a close association between stativity, low control (or agency) and intransitivity.

Controllability also is a rather arbitrary matter, which varies from one lexical item to the next. For example *miru* (often translated as "see") in Japanese is a controllable verb while *see* is not.

THE NOTION OF STATIVE IN JAPANESE

A stative predicate by definition, as stated, expresses a state rather than an action. Adjectives are by their nature stative¹²³ where they indicate a quality. For Japanese verbs, there have been several grammatical criteria that have been advanced as demarcating the category in Japanese¹²⁴: tense interpretation, object-marking and the use of a progressive form in *-te iru*.

1) The present tense of a stative verb has present reference while that of action verbs has future reference.

Koko ni kodomo ga iru. (+ stative)

There's a child here.

Kodomo ga yomu. (- stative)

The child will read.

This difference does not always seem to apply in a straightforward way however as in the verbs *wakaru*, *mieru* and *kikoeru*.

2) There are different case marking patterns with statives. Some claim that *ga* can be used for marking objects - but whether this is the case or not, case marking patterns such as the double *ga* pattern do provide evidence that the distinction is a real one.

3) Stative verbs cannot be used with the progressive while action verbs can. This of course turns the verbal into a stative because of the stative nature of *iru* itself.

**Koko ni kodomo ga ite iru.* (+ stative)

*There's a child being here.

Kodomo ga yonde iru. (- stative)

The child is reading.

¹²³ Soga (1983) p.86 claims all adjectives and nominal adjectives are inherently stative.

This characteristic is highly constrained however as in fact there are only three statives, which don't allow the progressive; *iru*, "be" *aru*, "be" and *iru* "need"¹²⁵.

4) The *-to suru* construction can be used with active but not stative verbs¹²⁶.

**Kodomo ni hon ga iroo to shite iru.* (+ stative)

The child is trying to need a book

Kodomo ga yomoo to shite iru. (- stative)

The child is trying to read.

It is not quite clear whether this fact relates to stativity itself. In the second sentence, the sentence is stative by virtue of the *-te iru* construction.

5) Stative verbs have also limited use in the imperative.

**Nihongo ga wakare*

Understand Japanese.

This last feature is associated with the lack of controllability associated with statives. Because of the lack of control associated with statives, there is also a strong association between stativity and low transitivity.

6) All stative verbs are non-self-controllable.¹²⁷ This last point explains why statives are incompatible with expressions of intent or the *-tai* form and why some verb forms that are usually stative can be non-stative, as control is in some circumstances a matter of degree. Thus *wakaru*, which is usually stative may occasionally be used with the *-tai* form and may sometimes be used with *o*-marking for what seems to be a conventional object.

There have been attempts to sub-classify Japanese statives further with Kindaichi (1976) recognising two main classes, one incompatible with *-te iru*, the other requiring it. Jacobsen

¹²⁴ Kubo (1994) pp.42ff.

¹²⁵ McClure (1993) p. 258.

¹²⁶ Sugioka (1984).

(1992) however has pointed out that many statives in Japanese relate to an achievement referring to either a state resulting from a change or the change itself, and that many such verbs are in fact ambiguous in relation to these two possibilities. *Shinu* is a case in point meaning either to have died or to be dead. *Wakaru* “understand” and *niru* “resemble” also behave this way. On these grounds, McClure (1993) has claimed that only the verbs incompatible with *-te iru* are statives. These complications serve to alert us to the varied behaviour of the verbs dealt with below but as we are interested mostly in the double *ga* construction, we will deal with the wider class.

Statives and Quantifier Float

There has been a set of arguments deployed¹²⁸, involving quantifier float, that seek to show that the underlying word order of statives with *ni*-marked NP's is NP *ni* NP *ga*. In turn this has been used to suggest that the NP *ga* phrase is an object based on the claim that the underlying order of the Japanese sentence is SOV.

The essence of the case is the following. In the sentences

John ni gaikokugo ga mittsu hanaseru (koto)

*Gaikokugo ga John ni mittsu hanaseru (koto)*¹²⁹

John can speak three foreign languages.

Mary ni chigatta oto ga mittsu kikoeta (koto)

Chigatta oto ga Mary ni mittsu kikoeta (koto)

Mary heard three different sounds.

it will be observed that the *ga*-marked head can be detached from its quantifier *mittsu*, presumably by scrambling. It can also be observed the same floating off is possible from the object with the conventional NP *ga* NP *o* V pattern.

John ga kodomo o sannin tsuretekita.

¹²⁷ Soga (1983) p.86.

¹²⁸ These arguments have been taken from Takezawa who claims to base his case on Haig (1980) and Kuroda (1983).

Kodomo o John ga sannin tsuretekita.

John came with three children.

But that this is not possible with non-stative sentences, which have what appears to be a *ni*-marked object.

Gakusei ga sannin Yamada Sensei ni atta.

**Gakusei ga Yamada Sensei ni sannin atta.*

Three students met Professor Yamada.

Ijimekko ga sannin John ni itazurashita.

**Ijimekko ga John ni sannin itazurashita.*

Three bullies bullied John.

Takezawa concludes that the stative *ga*-marked NP at deep structure lies second in the sentence and when fronted by scrambling, leaves as a trace its quantifier. But that the *ga*-marked subjects in the above two sentences have not been moved and so can not be separated from their quantifiers. In other words in statives, the *ga*-marked NP behaves like an object in conventional active SOV sentences in being generated at the site of an object and in having the same fronting possibilities leaving its quantifier as a trace.

There are several flaws with this argument. Firstly underlying SOV order is not violated if these sentences are intransitive with the *ga*-marked NP as the subject. Nor is scrambling across a *ni*-marked NP evidence that the *ga*-marked NP must be an object.

Niwa ni hito ga sannin iru.

Hito ga niwa ni sannin iru.

There are three people in the garden.

It is not particularly surprising either that there may be varying word order patterns with different sentence types. Kuno (1973 : 354) points out that in locative sentences, a sub-class

¹²⁹ sentences are taken from Takezawa (1987) p.46ff.

of stative, the locative generally precedes the subject, unlike the case with most Japanese sentences.

As argued above, many statives are intransitive and can be characterised as ergative¹³⁰. It is interesting to note that such sentences are often associated with a distinct word order pattern in English too, called the locative inversion construction. It is recognized by inversion of subject and verb, and secondly, a locative PP is topicalised. This results in a non-canonical sentence pattern as below.

In the distance appeared the towers and spires of a town. (PP VP NP)

Now although it has been claimed that locative inversion is a diagnostic for ergative verbs in English¹³¹, Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995) argue that although the construction appears to be an ergative diagnostic, the presence of several unergative verbs (e.g. agentive verbs of manner of motion such as *crawl*, *fly* and *run*) and the observation that not all ergatives (e.g. verbs of change of state such as *break*, *melt* and *dry*) are acceptable in the construction challenge this conclusion. Instead, they propose that the construction serves a particular discourse function, and that this can explain the presence of these particular intransitive verbs in the construction as in

Inside the bowl swam fish from an iridescent spectrum of colours.

The authors therefore claim that instead of considering the locative inversion as an ergative construction, it can be given a certain discourse function, which accounts for the frequent appearance of ergative verbs. In short, the discourse function implies that the post-verbal NP must always be less familiar to the discourse context than the information conveyed by the NP within the preverbal PP, although it need not be discourse new. This idea may also offer some explanation for the usual order of constituents in the Japanese existential sentence.

¹³⁰ Radford (1997) p.199.

¹³¹ Hauge (1996).

In actual fact locative inversion is mostly associated with statives rather than solely ergative verbs in English (as well as verbs of motion¹³²)

In the garden stands a beautiful fountain.

In the cave was believed to dwell a mighty Cyclops.

These sentences are of course a little literary and quite marked although the normal spoken variants with dummy "there" are quite normal. They do, nevertheless, illustrate the interface between high focus and topic in English. This pattern is interesting partly because a locative can often be seen as an equivalent to a framing device or topic, and we will argue that in many cases with stative sentences in Japanese, where there are more than two NP's the first fills this role.

¹³² It is interesting to note that typically *ga* is used with either statives or verbs of motion such as *kuru*. cf. Ono, Tsuyoshi, Thomson, Sandra, Suzuki, Ryoko (2000).

SOME STATIVE PREDICATES

This section is only concerned with stative sentence types, which may exhibit the so-called double subject construction, that is a sentence which contains two *ga*-marked NP's. It may be remarked at the outset that such constructions are not at all common, with the most usual equivalents, where two NP's are present, with *wa*-marking of the initial NP. In addition, some native speakers reject outright double subject constructions and they do not figure in the speech of Japanese children in the early acquisition phase¹³³. Because of this the double *ga* sentence can always be seen as a marked variant of some other. As suggested above, the present work holds that the first *ga*-marked NP is in fact similar in nature and derivation to the *wa*-marked variant but with high focus on the first NP. Tateishi (1994: 32) claims that *wa* can always replace *ga* in the first NP with no difference in grammaticality. There are in also cases of multiple *ga*-marking and some, following Kuno (1973)¹³⁴ have sought to explain these as cases of *no/ga* conversion:

John ga musuko ga okane ga takusan aru.

John has a son, who has lots of money.

Whatever the relationship of this sentence to *John no musuko ga okane ga takusan aru* or indeed *John no musuko no okane ga takusan aru*, the first two *ga*'s have high phonological prominence, the former having at least as much and perhaps even greater prominence than the second, which seems incompatible with subordination.

¹³³ Reference has already been made to adult usage above. In addition one of my informant group, rejected double subject constructions. For children cf. Matsuoka (1998) p.85. No double nominatives were found with statives in her study although there were some with non-statives in the AKI corpus cited, gathered by Miyata.

¹³⁴ For a critique, with counter examples, of Kuno's Subjectivisation rule see Shishido (1985) p.40ff.

SINGLE ARGUMENT PREDICATES

The adjective, *nagai*, belongs to a class of descriptive adjectives which require a single argument.

Kawa ga nagai.

The river is long.

It is instructive to look at this class first of all as various issues appear which have some bearing on more controversial cases. If we take the sentence:

Chiisa na zoo ga hana ga nagai.

It's the small elephant that has a long trunk.¹³⁵

We see that the marker *ga* may appear twice. Here the predicate *nagai* is closely linked to the NP *hana*.

If we apply the test of Wh-question formation

Nani ga nagai ? → *Hana ga nagai*

That is, if the term subject is kept for that, which is predicated - it is not the elephant which is long - then clearly *hana* is the subject NP not *Zoo*. Kuno claims that in such sentences there are two subjects. Such an analysis is not permitted within current transformational models. It is a violation of the case filter and the Theta Criterion¹³⁶ one of the governing principles. Consequently various other analyses have been proposed to explain such sentences.

¹³⁵ Kiyoharu Ono (1999) p.17f. discusses the claim as to whether two arguments are necessary. His examples have *wa* after the first NP, the most usual pattern. He considers the first NP, as here, to be outside what he calls the embedded clause.

¹³⁶ Haegeman (1994) p.181ff.

One proposal is that *Chiisa na zoo ga* is derived from *chiisa na zoo no* and that therefore the sentence has a unitary subject. This very process is described as subjectivisation by Kuno¹³⁷, who claims that the sentence then has a single subject. Tateishi, Fukui and Kuroda¹³⁸ also claim that there is a *no* → *ga* conversion rule that generates such sentences. This analysis has been further developed by Kawamoto and Kuroda¹³⁹ who distinguish two different types. on semantic grounds. Shibatani (1977) rejects the notion that it is a subject however and so uses the term "Nominativization" instead.

Chiisa na zoo no hana ga/wa nagai.

The small elephant's trunk is long.

Here it is claimed that there is a partitive relationship between N₁ and N₂ and that therefore a single subject is involved. Mikami suggests that topicalisation occurs first followed by detopicalisation:

A no B ga → *A wa B ga* → *A ga B ga*

However it is possible to have a sentence such as: *Hana wa zoo ga nagai*. As far as trunks go, that elephant has got a long one. Which does not have the same meaning as *Zoo ga nagai*. "The elephant's long." Here clearly *no/ga* conversion or other ad hoc solutions will not do.¹⁴⁰ The dislocation of *zoo ga* indicates that it is a separate constituent but it still cannot be the subject of *nagai*, which is the topicalised *hana*. Thus if it is not a subject or a genitive in a one argument predicate, it must be an extra-sentential element namely a focused theme.

Another major objection to *no/ga* conversion is that it is possible to have sentences in which a corresponding *no* version is not possible:

Imooto wa ki ga chiisai.

¹³⁷ Kuno, S (1973) p.70 ff.

¹³⁸ Tateishi (1994) p.6 Fukui (1986) Kuroda (1988).

¹³⁹ Kawamoto (1976) Kuroda (1978) p.47f. Kuroda claims that these types have different derivations - one resulting from Chomsky adjunction of a major subject (one derived by subjectivisation), the other by sister adjunction of a major subject. This distinction, it is claimed is essentially a semantic one.

¹⁴⁰ Saito (1982) argues that the claim that *ga* can be derived from *no* does not cover the whole range of data. A major critique of this device can also be found in Morikawa (1993) p28ff.

My little sister's timid.

Imooto ga ki ga chiisai.

It's my little sister that's timid.

**Imooto no ki ga chiisai.*

My little sister's courage is small.¹⁴¹

Similarly it is possible to have sentences in which a simple genitive relationship does not seem to be applicable:

Nihon no tabemono wa fugu ga umai.

Blowfish is a great type of Japanese food.

Nihon no tabemono ga fugu ga umai.

Blowfish is a great type of Japanese food.

**Nihon no tabemono no fugu ga umai.*¹⁴²

*Japanese food's blowfish is a great type of Japanese food.

Or where a locative, rather than a genitive relationship, seems more natural, and would presumably also contain two subjects according to Kuno's analysis.

Ookurando ga kankokujin ga ooi.

As for Auckland, there are many Koreans.

Another line of approach has been to see *Chisa na zoo ga* is in fact a topic generated outside the sentence¹⁴³. Such a solution is supported by the similar (and more frequent sentence)

Chiisa na zoo wa hana ga nagai.

The small elephant has a long trunk.

Mikami (1960) in his book length study of this construction claimed that in such sentences *Zoo* is a topic and only *hana* is a subject. A very similar position, using different terminology

¹⁴¹ These sentences and grammatical judgements are from Shiamori p.38.

¹⁴² This sentence is taken from Tateishi (1994) p.5 although he treats it in a different way.

¹⁴³ Shimamori (1991) p. 35.

seems to be held by those transformationalists who like Tateishi use the separate term "major subject" for this type of structure. Tateishi¹⁴⁴, however, makes a distinction between a topic marked with *wa*, which he claims is attached to the argument at deep structure, and a major subject – a *ga*-marked NP in a double *ga* sentence, which he claims is base generated in SPEC(IP). It is unclear whether such a distinction is motivated by the linguistic model being adopted or indicates a substantive difference.

As stated above, although Kuno thought that such sentences have two subjects, he sought to explain this by a process he called subjectivisation. If we apply the test of Predicate Encapsulation we find that there is a great deal to be said for the intuition that two subjects may be involved.

*Zoo ga hana ga nagai. → nagai hana ~ hana ga zoo ga... *nagai hana*

Clearly although *Zoo* is not the immediate subject controller of *nagai*, it nevertheless can be seen as being closely related at a higher level. This relationship has given rise to the terms major vs. minor subject. This corresponds to what is termed here topic or frame vs. (grammatical) subject.

This analysis seems to be conceptually close to a third line of attack, which suggests that the sentence is complex. This seems to be the position in Ono (1999: 18) where in *Hanako wa me ga kawaii*. (Hanako has lovely eyes.), *me ga kawaii* is described as an embedded clause. The main clause in this interpretation is represented only by a topic however, which seems a problematic extension of the term clause.

The first two analyses would require some extension of the notion of *ga* as some additional type of topic marker, which is the position taken above, while the third is unclear without greater details but seems not essentially incompatible with the approach taken here.

¹⁴⁴ Tateishi (1994) p.5

Similar sentences can be found with verbal predicates, which would be normally be considered to be derived by *no/ga* conversion, as mentioned above.¹⁴⁵

John ga otoosan ga shinda.

As for John his father died.

PSYCH-STATIVES

There is another class of sentences, which seem to exhibit a similar structure to those with descriptive adjectives, which have sometimes been termed tough sentences. In addition the suffixes, *-nikui*, *-yasui* (difficult to / easy to), which are added to the verbal root are often considered to be a sub-class of this class¹⁴⁶ occurring in so-called tough sentences. These have variable marking, and will be treated below. This area of Psych-statives is quite controversial and in particular, it is widely held by those working within a transformational framework that *ga* is an object marker.

Before looking at these, it must be pointed out that it is by no means clear that the psych-class represents a discrete class in any syntactic or semantic sense.

Makino¹⁴⁷ and Tsutsui for example, who recognise a class, which "involves a human A and B *ga* C expresses A's physical or mental state" explicitly bracket sentences such as

Zoo wa hana ga nagai.

The elephant has a long trunk.

Watashi wa onaka ga suita.

I'm hungry.

¹⁴⁵ Kuroda in his article "What Happened after the Movement of NP's in Japanese in La Jolla?" (1992 :306ff.) discusses the issues involved in the derivation of these constructions. Dealing with the two major analyses proffered. The first a movement one described promoted by Kuno, which includes *no/ga* conversion but which in some cases violates the subadjacency principle, and the second Saito's base generation theory. He concludes "the pure movement theory of subjectivisation is, apparently, untenable." He then goes on to state that although he has defended movement theories the base-generation of topics is "almost unassailable" but can be argued against on the grounds of descriptive adequacy.

¹⁴⁶ Kuroda (1992) p.257 who however says that there are both tough and non-tough sentences of this type.

together although the latter is clearly a physical and probably mental state. Inoue (1978 :151) includes this in her psych predicates.

Secondly it has been claimed¹⁴⁸ that psychological predicates are divided into two classes on the basis of whether one or two arguments are required. It is stated that *omoshiroi*, *tsumaranai* and *kowai* require only one argument, but that *kirai*, *suki*, *hoshii* and *-tai* require two. There are also differences between some of these in whether they allow an alternative pattern with *o* instead of *ga* with the innermost argument.

The argument for this is obviously not a semantic one but is based on the seeming claim that two arguments must be expressed¹⁴⁹. It is hard to reconcile this claim with the fact that such adjectives are regularly used on their own. It may of course always be argued, that the subject is understood and has been deleted or suppressed but such arguments can be applied to the first class as well.

Kuroda¹⁵⁰ in his work on case marking begins his discussion of this sentence type with

Jon wa/ga gengogaku ga nigate da.

John is weak at linguistics.

He derives this from *Gengogaku wa/ga Jon no nigate da*. In this sentence the predicate consists of what Kuroda seems to see as a noun¹⁵¹ and the copula. It is clear that it is linguistics and not John that is the weak point. That is that *gengogaku* and not *Jon* is the grammatical subject.

¹⁴⁷ Makino and Tsustui (1995) p.525.

¹⁴⁸ Inoue, K (1978) pp. 132-154.

¹⁴⁹ Inoue, K (1978) p. 137 gives *Yamada-san wa bihuteki ga suki da (soo da)*. but **Bihuteki ga suki da*. It is not clear that this argument holds water as *Bihuteki wa suki da* is perfectly normal..

¹⁵⁰ Kuroda (1978) p.47.

¹⁵¹ It is not actually clear what part of speech *nigate* is here. Of three recent dictionaries, Vance (1993) treats it as a *na*-adjective while Nakao (1995) and Kindaichi et al. (1998) define it as a noun.

Kuroda claims the same structure for sentences with as a similar semantic content but with an adjective rather than a noun in the predicate¹⁵².

Jon wa/ga gengogaku ga tokui da.

John is good at linguistics.

As in the above example, most of the items that fill the predicate slot are adjectives and it is the analysis of the immediately preceding *ga*-marked NP which has been the focus a major and on-going disagreement. It has been claimed, notably by those working within a generative framework¹⁵³, that a *ga*-marked NP may be an object. Although this can be seen as the generally current view, other linguists¹⁵⁴, particularly structuralists, have taken the position that these NP's are in fact subjects. This also seems to be the position of Japanese grammarians working outside a generative paradigm¹⁵⁵.

Kuno has been a major proponent of the interpretation of the *ga*-marked arguments listed above as being in fact objects and he devotes a chapter of his substantive description of Japanese to "*Ga* for Object Marking"¹⁵⁶. He adduces a variety of arguments for such analyses and these have been added to by other scholars who have accepted his basic position.

Kuno starts with the question as to what *dare* and *watakushi* can be in the following two sentences if not subjects. He rules out the possibility that both *dare / eiga*, *watakushi / eiga* can both be subjects, despite accepting the possibility of sentences with two subjects and therefore concludes that *eiga* can only be an object.

Dare ga eiga ga suki desu ka.

Who likes the film?

Watakushi ga eiga ga suki desu.

I like the film.

¹⁵² Kuroda is not always explicit on this but in Kuroda (1992) he says that in sentences like *mizu ga hoshii*, *mizu* must be the subject because the sentence can stand alone p.278 and that an additional *ga*-marked phrase must be a similar structure to a topic.

¹⁵³ Kuno, S (1973) p.79 ff. Tsujimura, Natsuko (1996) p 211 Shibatani, M (1977) p.791.

¹⁵⁴ Jorden, Eleanor Harz, (1963), Makino, Seichi and Tsustui, Michio (1986) Alfonso, Anthony (1989) p.148

¹⁵⁵ cf. Oono (1975), Yuzawa (1962).

¹⁵⁶ Kuno, S (1973) p.79 ff.

He also makes a distinction between what he calls transitive and non-transitive adjectives. Among the latter he numbers *suki*, *kowai*, *umai*, *heta*, *nigate*, *tokui*, *joozu*¹⁵⁷.

This is however no argument at all. These sentences are of course difficult as *dare* is not typically used with *wa*, and *watakushi* also requires *ga* in an echoing function. If Predicate Encapsulation is applied, as in the case of *nagai* above, we must conclude that *Suki* describes *eiga* not *dare* - *suki na eiga* **suki na dare* ??*eiga ga suki na dare*. It has been argued that *suki* can apply either to that liked or the liker¹⁵⁸ but such an approach does not resolve the status of the *ga*-marked NP's here.

This case can be seen more clearly if we use a less ambiguous example. The sentence below provides such an example:

Sensei ga eiga ga suki da.

Shibatani¹⁵⁹ claims that one of the tests for subject is subject honorification. There are two problems with this proposal. The first is that all possible subjects according to Shibatani's schema are not subject to this rule but must be worthy of deference.

Sensei ga eiga ga suki da can become *Sensei ga eiga ga osuki da* but *Watashi ga eiga ga suki da* can become **Watashi ga eiga ga osuki da*. Clearly here, pragmatic considerations figure more largely than grammatical ones.

Secondly, as pointed out by Shishido¹⁶⁰ the trigger for honorification need not be a subject NP. In his example he shows that deference can be transferred from a subject specifier (i.e. from an NP with *no* marking) to a subject which without such a specifier cannot undergo honorification.

¹⁵⁷ Heycock and Lee (1990) argue that these adjectives have in fact only one argument.

¹⁵⁸ Vance (1993) says precisely this in his dictionary but the seven example sentences he gives do not show such a putative distinction.

¹⁵⁹ Shibatani (1977).

¹⁶⁰ Shishido (1985), p.48.

Further the *ga* marked putative object behaves in many ways like a subject.

If we take as an example the sentence

Sensei ga eiga ga suki da.

We note that it is not possible to scramble these sentences as would be the case with a normal transitive sentence such as *Sensei ga eiga o miru*. → *Eiga o sensei ga miru*. The teacher sees the film. Thus the two NP's do not function in the same way and do not function as a subject and object as Kuno claims.

We also note that the second NP behaves the same way as a normal subject. Saito (1982) has pointed out that *ga/no* conversion is possible with thematic *ga*, so providing evidence for their subjecthood.

Keiko no eigo no hanaseru koto.

It seems less likely that a *ni* marked NP could be a subject.

In a relative clause *ga/no* conversion is also possible – a characteristic of subjects.

Eiga ga suki na sensei wa yasashii.

Eiga no suki na sensei wa yasashii.

The teacher, who likes films, is nice.

Sensei ga eiga o mita.

The teacher saw the film

Sensei ga mita eiga wa omoshiroi.

The film the teacher saw was interesting.

Sensei no mita eiga wa omoshiroi.

Eiga o mita sensei wa George desu.

**Eiga no mita sensei wa George desu.*

The teacher who saw the film is George.

It is true that the same processes can be applied to the first NP as well.

In Sentences like

John ga aisukurimu ga suki da.

John likes ice cream.

Ga/no conversion can be applied to both NP's¹⁶¹.

John ga aisukuriimu ga suki na koto...

John no aisukuriimu ga suki na koto

John ga aisukuriimu no suki na koto

John no aisukuriimu no suki na koto

The fact that John likes ice cream..

An additional fact about some of these psych-adjectives is that they may have double polarity with respect to the stimulus or stimulated¹⁶². Thus *kowai* may mean either "frightening" or "frightened".

Raion wa kowai.

The lion is frightening / frightened¹⁶³.

Because of this feature the sentence may have what appear to be two subjects simultaneously. The first NP may also be marked with *ga* although *wa* would be more usual.

Watashi ga raion ga kowai.

I am afraid of the lion.

¹⁶¹ These examples are taken from Miyagama (1993) p.229.

¹⁶² The points below are derived from Uehara (1998) p.198ff.

¹⁶³ Uehara (1998) p.203 suggests that *wa* favours a stimulus subject reading while *ga* favours the "experiencer".

Here the sentence can be conceived as having two underlying propositions: The lion is scary and (because of this) I'm scared. This sentence is partly similar to but also partly different to English sentences like: The story is really sad. In a sense it can be argued that a story cannot in itself be sad because it is non-sentient and therefore there is an unexpressed argument along the lines of: *The story is really sad and so, so am I.* The English sentence though requires two clauses because of personal endings but sad is being used as both stimulus and stimulated simultaneously. However there is no doubt that story is a grammatical subject of its clause. Of course in English the story may be thought of as *intrinsically* sad and hence sentences such as: *The story is really sad but I'm not (it doesn't make me sad.)* are possible.

To construct a case for *raion* being the grammatical subject in the above Japanese sentence is a little more difficult.

Firstly, it can be noted that the stimulus meaning is in a sense the prime one as is shown by predicate encapsulation.

Watashi ga raion ga kowai. → kowai raion
(not **kawai watashi* which means that I'm scary)

Secondly this stimulus reading is more permanent as an iterativity test shows.

Watashi ga kowai. →
Watashi ga nido kowakatta.
I was scared twice.
Raion ga kowai. →
**Raion ga nido kowakatta.*
The lion was scary twice.

It could be argued here that the more permanent trait is more closely associated with the subject, while a less permanent trait is associated with action and lower statitivity.

There are also other adjectives, which don't allow a double subject, which show the same variation, but where it would not be claimed that the stimulus might be an object.

<i>Koko wa abunai.</i>	→	?? <i>Koko wa nido abunakatta.</i> ¹⁶⁴
This place is dangerous.		This place was dangerous twice.
<i>Kare ga abunai.</i>	→	<i>Kare ga nido abunakatta.</i>
He was in danger.		He was in danger twice.

¹⁶⁴ Uehara (1998) p.200.

TOUGH SENTENCES

Tough constructions in Japanese are formed by the addition of the morphemes *-nikui* difficult and *-yasui* easy to the verbal stem. Inoue (1978) classified such sentences into four types, which she in turn subdivided into two sub-types depending on the controllability of the verb. Examples of her four types are:

Type 1 *Gakusei ni totte kono jisho ga tsukaiyasui.*

This dictionary is easy for the students to read.

Type 2 *Saikin watashi wa netsukinikui.*

It has been hard for me to get to sleep recently.

Type 3 *Momenmono ga kawakiyasui.*

Cotton textiles dry easily.

Type 4 *Eriito ga tsuyoi zasetsukan o ajiwaiyasui*

Elites easily feel a strong sense of frustration.

Inoue claims that Types 1 and 2 require that the complement predicate must be self-controllable. However other linguists¹⁶⁵ have pointed out that Type 1 is different from the others in that only in Type 1 does the *ga*-marked NP correspond to an *o*-marked object of the corresponding active sentence *Gakusei wa kono jisho o tsukau* "The students use this dictionary" and that therefore only this type cannot be called a tough construction. The self-controllable nature of the verb is marked also by *ni totte*, which is an index of agency, whereas in Type 2, agency is weak.

Inoue (1978) illustrates the self-controllability distinction by pointing out the ungrammaticality of sentences where the verb stem that the tough morpheme is suffixed to is non-controllable:

**Atarashii ryuukoo ga wakamono ni totte konomiyasui.*

The new fashion is easy for people to like.

¹⁶⁵ Kuroda (1987), Takezawa (1987), Kaneko (1994).

As *konomi* is not self-controllable, the sentence is ungrammatical. However if there is no agent marking as in

Wakamono ga atarashii ryuukoo o konomi yasui.

It is easy for young people to like this new fashion.

the sentence has normal transitive marking and corresponds to Inoue's Type 4.

Returning to type one, an explanation for the *ga* marking of *jisho* is needed. If it is assumed that *tsukaiyasui* is a derived form, a sequence such as the following might be posited¹⁶⁶.

Gakusei ga kono jisho o tsukau.

Gakusei ga kono jisho o tsukainikui.

Kono jisho ga (gakusei ni totte) tsukainikui.

Here it is suggested that the role of *ga* in the final sentence is exactly the same as in a passive sentence. It throws higher focus on its NP and it becomes the grammatical subject, in exactly the same way as we call the *ga*-marked NP in a passive sentence the grammatical subject. There are various formal devices that might be pressed into service to account for this process such as raising to subject or equi-deletion, but the two latter sentences can be assumed to have the following structures.

[Gakusei ga kono jisho o tsukai]nikui.

Kono jisho ga[Gakusei ga kono jisho o tsukai]nikui.

Kono jisho ga[o tsukai]nikui.

Interesting parallels could perhaps also be drawn between this structure and the *ni yotte*¹⁶⁷ passive, which also permits the agent to be deleted.

¹⁶⁶ No assumption is being made here as to the mechanisms such a sequence might involve, only that there is an obvious semantic relationship between these sentences.

¹⁶⁷ Kuroda (1979a) for the distinction between *ni* and *ni yotte* passives and Hoshi (1999) for a further development and rationale of the distinction.

THE EXISTENTIAL STATIVES *ARU/IRU*

These two verbs both denote existence and so a state. Traditionally it is claimed that the distinction between these is that of inanimate versus animate although it has recently been argued that the distinction is one of control of movement¹⁶⁸. This hypothesis explains why both *aru* and *iru* may occur with family members. However it will be assumed here that the inanimate versus animate distinction is close enough.

Kyooshitsu ni tsukue ga aru.

There are desks in the classroom.

Kyooshitsu ni seito ga iru.

There are pupils in the classroom.

But such sentences as

*Uchi ni wa okyakusan ga arimasu.*¹⁶⁹

We've got guests at home.

are also possible as well as the frequently cited examples involving family members.

It can be noted that the usual order of constituents in Japanese sentences with *aru/iru* is for the subject to follow the locative phrase¹⁷⁰ although the subject can be topicalised in which case it is usually fronted.

Seito wa kyooshitsu ni iru.

The pupils are in the classroom.

This pattern contrasts with the usual active non-stative pattern in which the unmarked order is subject first with locatives closer to the verb.

¹⁶⁸ Strauss, (1993) pp. 271-287 cites a range of sentences to justify this view although her terminology is one of + or -MOVEMENT. Ono (2000) p.53 also points out that *aru* "can still be used to refer to the existence of an animate entity, if it is described from a static point of view and with no reference to specific location."

¹⁶⁹ cf. Alfonso (1986) pp.104-109.

¹⁷⁰ Kuno, (1973) p.352.

Although there is agreement that the *ga*-marked NP functions as a subject here, there is a controversy over those sentences, where corresponding English translations use "have". In these a double *ga* may occur. Kuno¹⁷¹ discusses the following example:

Anata ga okane ga aru koto wa minna ga shitte imasu.

Everyone knows that you have money.

He asks, "if *okane* were the subject of *aru*, then what would *anata* "you" be?"

He then goes on to argue that because *aru* varies with *iru* in cases, where family members are involved, there must in fact be two different verbs *aru*, one of which marks subjects with *ga*, the other of which uses *ga* to mark an object. In this manner he arrives at the conclusion that *anata* must be a subject and *okane* an object. Shibatani (1977:799ff.) takes up Kuno's analysis and tries to show by means of relexification and subject honorification the *ni*-marked NP is a subject in the related sentence.

Anata ni okane ga aru.

You have money

This argument is disingenuous to say the least. In effect Kuno is claiming that the second *aru* is really a transitive verb. As such it would not be a stative in the same way as *motsu* (hold, carry) is not. And yet it does not occur with normal *o* object marking. Nor does it collocate with the *soo suru* construction, a test for stativity.¹⁷²

**Eòghann ga kane ga iri, Ìle mo soo suru.*

Eòghann has money and so does Ìle.

As statives are non-controllable, the expression *tsumori*, which with non-statives has the reading "intention", has the reading "misapprehension" for statives. This supplies a further test to disconfirm Kuno's active hypothesis.

Okane o toru tsumori da.

¹⁷¹ Kuno (1973) p.86.

I intend to take money.

Okane ga aru tsumori da.

I am under the impression that we have money¹⁷³.

Aru is also incompatible with *hajimeru* and *owaru*, which Moriyama (1988) gives as diagnostic tests for achievement and hence non-stativity. On the other hand it is compatible with *tsuzukeru* which denotes a continuing state.

*arihajimeru	begin to have
*ariwaru	finish having
aritsuzukeru	continue having

As was mentioned above, the real distinction between *aru* and *iru* seems to be one of controllability or spontaneity of movement. This happens to usually correspond with animacy but in the case of family membership, there is little control involved – hence both patterns are possible in the same way as in such expressions as *aru hito* no control is asserted and hence *aru* rather than *iru* is chosen.

Secondly, *anata ga* is probably derived from a sentence with an overt topic by obligatory *wa/ga* conversion in a relative clause. This is an automatic change that does not seem to affect meaning in any way.

Anata wa okane ga aru.

Having arrived at the conclusion that *anata* must be the subject, it is a small step to claiming that *ni* also marks subjects, as frequently the *wa* varies with *ni*. The NP *ni* cannot be governed by the verb however, while the *ga* NP can.

Okane ga aru koto wa ii koto da.

To have money is a good thing.

**Anata in aru koto wa ii koto da.*

¹⁷² Soga (1983) p.85.

For you to have [...] is a good thing.

This provides us also with an additional argument against Kuno's analysis. As Japanese makes an animacy distinction between *aru* and *iru*, when we consider the sentences:-

Yamada sensei ni shakkin ga takusan aru.

Mr Yamada has a lot of photographs.

Yamada sensei ni musuko ga takusan iru.

Mr Yamada has a lot of sons.

we have a grammatical argument for the subjecthood of *shakkin* and *musuko*. As subject is defined in relation to control of the verb and as these here control the verbs selected, we must assume they are the grammatical subjects.

Finally Kuno's transitive *aru* also conforms to the canonical stative pattern in regard to tense interpretation, and the failure to occur in the *-te iru* construction. Therefore we must reject his claim as unlikely.

In general it may be added that this type of sentence is extremely common in many languages¹⁷⁴ where the possessor is marked with some typically dative (or locative) marking and the possessed is marked as a nominative. Often mental states and physical attributes employ similar devices, particularly where uncontrollability is concerned.

In particular the structure of such sentences seems not unlike the descriptive sentences above:

Watashi wa kimochi ga ii.

I feel good / I've got a good feeling about this.

¹⁷³ Soga (1983) p.96.

¹⁷⁴ Typical examples range from Latin *Mihi est liber* - I have a book (note that Latin does have a verb have, *habere*) Maori *He pukapuka i ahau*, Russian *Y menya kniga* -same meaning. In the case of Russian, there is a separate verb, *imyet'*, for have and this seems to be particularly associated with acts of will - *imyet' b vidy* keep in view, *imyet' dyelo c* have truck with *nichyevo imyet' protiv* to have nothing against cf. Airlie.

There seems to have been less disagreement that the NP marked by *ga* is a subject in this construction than with the following type. However, there are sentences with two *ga* marked NP's and in these there is some controversy as to the status of each.

Watashi ga kane ga nai.

I have no money.

Here *nai* applies to *kane*, which must therefore be the subject. If the first *ga* is considered a case of *no/ga* conversion the reading would be specific. "My money's not here/ is gone." Therefore *watashi* must be analysed as a high focus topic.

Thus no difference is seen between *iru* and *aru*. Both are intransitives with a *ga* marked subject immediately preceding the verb. They may typically occur with locatives and this pattern is also used to mark possession or association. Like many other sentences they may also occur with an initial *ga* or *wa* marked topic.

MIERU TYPE VERBS

There are only two verbs of this type, *mieru* and *kikoeru*. Dictionary entries usually translate these as "to be visible" to "to be audible" but they both also can be used with animate subjects as well as non-animates in cases, where they are usually translated as "seem" and "sound". If the *ga*-marked NP is considered a subject, this distinction can be seen to be an English one only. It is sometimes claimed that these verbs must have a first person experiencer¹⁷⁵ but this does not seem to be true. Kuno (1973) claims that these two verbs can represent both subjective feelings and objective properties, in a similar way to adjectives such as *omoshiroi*. As he considers subjective feelings to be diagnostic of transitivity he therefore concluded that these verbs can be either transitive or intransitive. However, in contradistinction to potentials and desideratives, they never take *o* marking and so such an analysis lacks grammatical motivation. *Mieru* then, is close in meaning to "appear" as the two examples below show. The subject may be a noun or a nominalised clause.

Chiisa na shima ga miete kita.

A small island came into sight.

Tori ga naite iru no ga kikoeru.

Birds singing can be heard.¹⁷⁶

These two examples are inherently impersonal in that no experiencer is implied, nor do they ever admit an *o*-marked NP. It can always be argued that for something to be visible or audible there must be an animate (or pseudo-animate) perceiver, but it is the specificity of the alleged perceiver that must be taken into account. Thus when the cabin boy in Treasure Island sights the island and says "*Shima ga mieru!*" there is no real ambiguity between "I can see an island" and "An island is in sight" one or other reading needn't be chosen. It means both those things but it has one and only one grammatical subject.

These verbs can also show *ga/no* conversion in subordinate clauses, a characteristic of subjects not objects.

¹⁷⁵ Shishido (1985) "*mieru* is used only for the verb predicated of first person" p.46.

Dokoka umi no mieru tokoro e ikitai.

I want to go somewhere, where we can see the sea.¹⁷⁷

The analysis of the *ga*-marked NP as an object would mean there would be little difference in meaning between *miru* and *mieru*. In fact these pairs, like *kiku* and *kikoeru* differ in that the first of the pair is controllable, while the other is not. We have the usual correlation.

controllable	←—————→	non-controllable
high agentivity	←————→	low or no agentivity
transitive	←————→	intransitive
active	←————→	stative

Both these verbs then behave as stative intransitives.

These two verbs seem to be morphologically potentials (see below) and semantically could be considered very close to normal potentials, but they behave slightly differently and there is a distinction between the normal potential *mirareru* and *mieru*.

¹⁷⁶ Vance (1993).

¹⁷⁷ Kawamoto and Osaki(1994) p.637.

IRU AND WAKARU

There is another class of verbs, which can take a double *ga*. The two most common are *iru* and *wakaru*. These tend to be glossed in various ways¹⁷⁸. The pattern with *ga*-marking usually with a single argument is by far the usual one. In Matsuoka's study of very young children's Japanese (1998:102) she observes that more than 60% of early use of the nominative particle, is found with these verbs. If a human argument appears in the clause the typical marking is with the dative *ni* in combination with *ga*. *Iru* and *wakaru* differ considerably however in the range of constructions each appear in.

Iru tends to be used less frequently with two NP's and can be considered intransitive in the same way as *hitsuyoo da* can be, in that only one argument is necessary.

Kono konma wa irimasen.

That comma is not needed.

Kane ga iru no wa tashika da.

It is evident that some money is necessary.¹⁷⁹

It also can take a quasi purpose complement where, in the following case, an animate and controlling subject for the embedded verb *tsumeru* may be implied.

Ryukusakku no tsumekata ni wa kotsu ga iru.

Skill is needed to pack a rucksack.

It is unclear to what degree these characteristics are related to the concept itself¹⁸⁰.

¹⁷⁸ thus for *iru*, Vance (1993) glosses it both as "to need, to be necessary" and adds that "What is needed is treated as a grammatical subject and marked with *ga* rather than with *o*." He appends the same note to *wakaru*.

¹⁷⁹ Tonoike and Sano (1998) p.228.

¹⁸⁰ cf. the ambiguity and shift from stative to active and hence even moral imperative in "Patience is needed." "You have need of patience." "You need patience." "You need to be patient." or In Scottish Gaelic, where statives typically don't involve verbals other than a tense holder *Tha feum* (N Subj) *agad* (oblique locative at you) *air foighidinn* (oblique locative on?) "You need patience" *Tha feum* (N Subj) *agad* (oblique locative) *a bhith* (to be) *foighidneach*(adj.) "You need to be patient." *Feumaidh* (modal verb) *tu* (subj.) *bhith* (to be) *foighidneach*(adj.) "You need to be/ must be patient." The first two are clearly stative while in the last with a shift to some responsibility on the sufferer, it becomes a subject and the sentence has reduced stativity. There is reduction not an absence of stativity. cf. Clyne (1985) for the Gaelic expressions involved. There are no published analyses of these features Gillies (1993) is the best overview.

The verb *wakaru* seems to be both a transitive and intransitive verb, but the intransitive use seems to be the most common. *Wakaru* often has two NP's and often the meaning of "understand", is distinguished from "get to know". Whether this is a fundamental difference in meaning or not is uncertain.

Hamadasan wa kono bun no imi ga wakaru daroo.

Miss Hamada probably understands the meaning of this sentence.

Yamadasan ga yameta riyuu ga wakarimashita.

I found out the reason why Mr. Yamada resigned. (Vance 1993)

Wakaru can also occur with *o*-marking as a normal transitive. Kubo (1994: 55f.) who uses the terms active versus stative claims these are, although semantically "almost indistinguishable", different syntactically, with the stative not allowing VP pre-posing.

Hanako ni kodomo no kimochi ga wakaru. →

**Kodomo no kimochi ga wakari sae Hanako ni shita.*

Hanako ga kodomo no kimochi o wakaru. →

Kodomo no kimochi o wakari sae Hanako ni shita.

Hanako understands children's feelings.

She then goes on to claim they have different derivations with the active pattern being base-generated while this stative, like others according to Kubo, is derived by raising. Kubo also supplies further syntactic evidence that the sentence with the *ga*-marked NP is stative while the other is not.

This line of reasoning suggests that *ga* and *o* are not merely free variants and yet according to Kubo there is no difference in meaning between the two. Nor does the notion of action versus state seem to be applicable here, if the sentences are identical semantically, except in the sense that the *o*-marked one emphasises the human actor while the *ga*-marked one does not. In other words the *ga*-marked sentence is intransitive and it is precisely the variant marking that allows, what is here a delicate distinction, to be made. *Ga* allows a shift in grammatical

subject to be made in exactly the way a passive does, without any great shift in meaning other than this..

Further evidence for the intransitivity of *wakaru* is furnished by the fact that like potentials, *wakaru* cannot be passivized¹⁸¹.

**Nihongo ga gaikokujin ni mo hanaserareru.*

Japanese is able to be spoken by foreigners too.

**Sonna koto ga minna ni wakarareta.*

Such things are understood by everyone.

This can hardly be a semantic feature as the verb *shiru* "know" can form passives freely.

Sonna koto ga minna ni sirareta.

Such things are known by everyone.

Unlike most of the statives treated here, *wakaru* can also be used in the *-te iru* form, and this is also true with transitive usage.

Taroo ni wa sono kotae ga wakatte ita.

For Taro, that answer was known.

Taroo ga eigo o wakate iru.

Taro is understanding English.¹⁸²

In the case of the first of the pair here, according to Kubo, the sentence even fails Kuno's *jibun* test.

**Taroo ni wa sono kotae ga jibun no chikara de wakatte ita.*

For Taroo the answer was known by his own ability.

The interpretation of tense too, does not seem to fall into the canonical stative pattern.

¹⁸¹ cf. Dubinsky (1993).

Taroo ni wa hooritsu ga wakaru.

Taro understands law.¹⁸³

Taroo no kangae ga wakaru.

Taro's thinking will become obvious.

However these sentences can be seen as differing slightly in transitivity and control. The former is more limited in its application in that only *Taroo* is affected by the event. The affected party in the latter is less certain, there is less control of the event and hence less certainty as to time, the state becomes more universal and suitable contexts can be constructed to make such an interpretation more obvious.

Hon o yomu to, Taroo no kangae ga wakaru.

When you read the book, Taro's thinking will become obvious.

A further example of this cline in control can be seen in cases where there is high control such as the intentionality marker *(y)oo* is used and *ga* becomes unacceptable.

*Watashi wa anata no kimochi o/*ga wakaroo to shita.*

I tried to understand your feelings¹⁸⁴.

In sum then *wakaru* can be either stative or active and is marked accordingly. Which option is chosen will be determined by a range of factors, prominent among which will be the degree of controllability possible exerted by the human experiencer, how specific such an experiencer might be and most of all the focus of interest, which will generally be the subject. Generally because of the low control in understanding, the stative is preferred but if high prominence is given to the experiencer, this may be marked by *ga*-marked focus. The most common variants are set out below.

Watashi ga [*eigo ga* *wakaru*].

¹⁸² both from Kubo (1994) p.65.

¹⁸³ both from Kubo (1994) p.67.

¹⁸⁴ Sugamoto (1982) p.436.

-

+ focus	+ subject	+ intransitive
+ topic		+ stative
- control		- control

<i>Watashi wa</i>	<i>[eigo ga</i>	<i>wakaru].</i>
- focus	+ subject	+ intransitive
+ topic		+ stative
- control		- control

<i>Watashi wa[e</i>	<i>eigo o</i>	<i>wakaru].</i>
+ subject	+ object	+ transitive
+ topic		- stative
+control		+ control

DESIDERATIVES

These sentences have as their predicate an auxiliary adjective, *tai*, which expresses a desire to do something. However the *tai* form differs substantially from the verb *want* in English, in that typically *want* in English has in its commonest use the idea of an act of will. This corresponds more closely to Japanese expressions such as *tsumori* when used with a human subject, or various other forms in giving invitations. Whereas *tai* usually implies that the desire has come unbidden. Put another way English "want" shows higher controllability than *tai*.

Of course both expressions operate on a cline. *Want* in English may exhibit lower or higher degrees of stativity or control, typically marked by degrees of stress on *want*. Thus "I want to go to Japan next year" focuses on the future and shows will or intention more than emotion, while "I want to die" is more emotive and expresses more the state of desire. The contrast can be seen more clearly in sentences such as "I want to go but I can't", which exhibits low control, high stativity and emphasizes the present. Similarly, the *tai* form can also exhibit various degrees of intention and hence control and stativity. It is suggested here that the case marking involved signals these potential differences.

With regard to structure, the *tai* form can be seen to behave grammatically somewhat similarly to the suffixes *-yasui*, *nikui* treated above. Both sets of expressions are added to the verb stem resulting in an adjective, which takes similar case marking. We will not go into the origins of these sentences although a case can be made for a complex origin that parallels *-yasui* and *-nikui*. With *-tai*, as in the expressions above a personal theme may be present with topic marking. We will only concern ourselves with sentences related to transitive verbs.

Kyoo wa nani ga/o tabetai?

What do you want to do today?

The usual marking, in keeping with the base stative meaning, is with *ga* but forms derived from transitive verbs may have an object marked with *o*. The topic may also be marked with *ga*.

Kuroda (1992: 278) claims that the *ga*-marked NP is a subject as sentences such as *mizu ga nomitai* may stand alone and states that because *wa* and *ga* in sentences like

Watashi wa/ga mizu ga nomitai.

I want to drink water.

can occur in free variation, that they both mark a theme. Whether the *watashi wa/ga* is considered a theme or a subject is a matter of model to a degree. Thus in a sentence such as "The money, I won the money" although "I" is clearly a grammatical subject, it is not at all clear that "The money" is not also some sort of subject. The tendency is to immediately call it a theme, but if "I" is given contrastive stress "The money, I won the money", then the thematicity of "The money" is reduced and the theme will become "I". This is not in keeping with a grammatical model that a priori assumes only one subject is possible on internal technical grounds, but is in keeping with how language is actually used and works.

In contradistinction to Kuroda, Kuno (1973: 94ff.) claims that in such sentences *ga* is used to mark an object. There is a certain logic to this as these desideratives may correspond to transitive verbs. Kuno then sees desiderative expression as conceptually similar to an English verb such as *want*, that is inherently verbal. That the *tai* form is an adjective and not a verb is evidenced by the normal array of adjectival rather than verbal inflection, by the fact that other inflections such as *-garu*, which can only be added to adjectives, can be added to it and that it may be modified by adverbials such as *totemo*. Clauses based on the *tai*-form too, can be nominalised by the adjectival nominaliser *-sa*.

sake o nomitasa ni

out of desire for drinking sake¹⁸⁵

It does also share many properties with verbs notwithstanding¹⁸⁶. Parallels can be drawn for instance with the negative ending *-nai*, which would normally be considered a verbal

¹⁸⁵ Shibatani (1990) p.220, who mentions that the particles are usually suppressed. *sake nomitasa*.

¹⁸⁶ such forms which are verb-like to some degree but behave morphologically like some other part of speech are not unprecedented. In the Celtic languages there has been a major split between transformationalists, who

inflection although it still retains adjectival features, but not to the same extent as the *tai* form.

Maynard, who is more oriented to discourse analysis, describes desire in Japanese in this way; "Japanese describes the object of desire as a source that requires one to respond to it...something which one desires simply exists there and one responds to it"(1990:212). In other words desire is not an action but the result of a state of an independently existing object, the experiencer reacts but does not initiate. Maynard also points out that the desiderative form is not used in invitations, presumably because control by the experiencer is involved.

If we apply the tests of predicate encapsulation also, the *ga*-marked phrase seems to be a subject¹⁸⁷.

Kodomo ga mizu o nomu.

The child drinks water.

*Nomu kodomo / *Nomu mizu*

The drinking child/ *The drinking water

Kodomo ga mizu ga nomitai.

The child wants water to drink.

*Nomitai mizu/ *Nomitai kodomo*

The *nomitai* water/ ?The wanting to drink child

Thus the desiderative with *ga*-marking is not viewed as a transitive verb and therefore the agent of the related transitive verb can not be seen as a subject.

Further, if we topicalise "*nomitai*", a way of applying the Wh-question formation test, while avoiding having to choose between an animate or animate interrogative, we find that *mizu* is by far the commonest response.¹⁸⁸

consider the verbal noun to be a verb, and more traditional linguists who regard them as nouns. cf. Borsley (1993). This dispute has given rise in turn to the further one of whether these languages have an underlying VSO or SOV order.

¹⁸⁷ My informants were unanimous in the topicalisation test, apart from one subject, who rejects categorically double *ga* sentences. This seems to be an individual rather than regional distinction as another informant from

Nomitai no wa? → mizu

What is "nomitai" → water

Makino and Tsutsui¹⁸⁹ note that *ga* is associated with a strong sense of desire. This can be considered a sign of low control and hence low transitivity. They also point out that if a long element comes between the argument and the desiderative, *ga* is not possible.

*Watashi wa mizu o *ga dekakeru mae ni nomitai.*¹⁹⁰

I want to drink water before I leave home.

In this sentence, the agent predominates with the high control verb *dekakeru* and control is then asserted over *nomitai*. It is then seen as a transitive and *mizu* is encoded as an object.

If the *ga*-marked NP is in high focus "the psychological subject" then it cannot have an *o* variant. This is the case with comparatives among other expressions.

Boku sakana ga niku yori tabetai.

I prefer fish to meat.

Boku ga kono eiga ga ichiban mitai.

I want to see this film the most.

Boku ga kono eiga ga totemo mitai.

I want to see this film a lot.

Nor is *ga* found if and the desiderative is based on a passive, as passivisation implies an underlying object, and hence transitivity.

*Watashi wa sensei ni kono e o *ga homeraretai.*¹⁹¹

I want to have this picture praised by my teacher.

the same city (Osaka) was perfectly happy with such sentences.

¹⁸⁸ informant group.

¹⁸⁹ Makino and Tsustui (1995) p. 444.

¹⁹⁰ Makino and Tsustui (1995) p. 444.

¹⁹¹ Makino and Tsustui (1995) p. 444.

McGloin (1989: 72) has made the claim that, if an action can be controlled by the agent, then only *o* is used¹⁹². Contrasting

Kuruma ga kaitai.

I want to buy a car.

Denki o keshitai.

I want to turn the light off.

The second sentence is an expression of intent and refers to a future action while the first reflects a spontaneous desire that comes across the speaker. Other examples of this phenomenon can be found with other expressions plainly signalling will or intent.

*Boku wa kono hon o /*ga yonde mitai.*

I want to try reading this book.

*Boku wa kono hon o /*ga yomasetai.*

I want to cause someone to read this book.

*Boku wa kono hon o /*ga yomihajimetai.*

I want to begin to read this book.¹⁹³

It will be recalled that one of the criteria for differentiating active from stative is the time reference to the verb. The second of McGloin's sentences can be viewed as a non-stative transitive while the first is stative. The case marking reflects exactly this situation. Similarly Miyagawa's sentences can also be viewed as non-stative. In other words, if a situation is viewed transitively then the usual case marking is found, whereas it is precisely those cases where an action is conceived to be intransitive, beyond the power of any human agency, that may be affected by the situation, to control, that the inanimate is marked as the subject. According to Ono (1999: 21) this seems to have been the situation in older Japanese. The distinction between *o* marking and *ga* marking for the NP's under discussion seems to be quite old nevertheless, and well-established in Japanese.

¹⁹² This has also been pointed out by Sugioka (1984) and Miyagawa (1989).

A related expression is the adjective *hoshii* which also takes *ga* with its preceding NP, it refers to either a first or second person, argument which need not be expressed.

Kuruma ga hoshii.

I want a car. A car is desirable.

Kuroda (1992 : 268) has made the claim that *kuruma* must be a subject because the sentence can stand alone. The tests mentioned above also seem to indicate that *kuruma* is a true subject rather than an object. *Hoshii kuruma. *hoshii watashi* but it is not clear whether it might not have double polarity too as in the following:

Kore wa watashi ga nagai aida hoshikatta sutereo da.

This is the stereo I wanted for a long time.

Shibatani (1990: 301) mentions that an *o* marking with *hoshii* is also possible but is reluctant to say it is an object or a subject and proffers a structure that seems to imply a non-configurational structure for Japanese. The *o*-marking need not surprise us as *hoshii* has a similar semantic profile to *-tai* as discussed below.

In sum the desiderative form can be seen as typically stative and intransitive but with the potential also to be an active transitive. In the former case a framing topic may also appear and exceptionally this may with contrastive stress be marked with *ga* also as well as the grammatical *ga*-marked subject. In sentences where the element of control is strong the sentence is transitive and shows the typical transitive case pattern. The presence of *ga* or *o* generally marks these differences.

¹⁹³ Examples from Miyagawa (1989) p193-194.

POTENTIALS

There are two expressions for indicating potentiality in Japanese, one is the verb *dekiru* to be able, which must take a nominal argument the other is an inflected one. They are discussed together here because of their semantic parity but they have differing syntactic properties, particularly in relation to case marking. *Dekiru* is will be dealt with first.

DEKIRU

Dekiru as mentioned must take a nominal argument and if occurring with a verb, the verb is nominalised with *koto*.

Watashi wa/ga tenisu ga dekiru.

I can play tennis.

Watashi wa/ga hanasu koto ga dekiru.

I can talk.

Kuroda (1965:180) claims a complex derivation for these sentences, along with psych states, with a process starting and ending with the following:

John ga doitsugo o hanasu koto ga dekiru. →

John ni doitsugo ga dekiru.

John can speak German.

The steps posited however are rather awkward, a point admitted by Kuroda himself, and otherwise ad hoc, especially his explanation for deletion of *o*, with the generated *o ga* at one stage of the derivation.

A second meaning is often distinguished for *dekiru*, that of being made or finished in which the intransitive nature of the verb is more agreed¹⁹⁴. However, this seems to be partly

¹⁹⁴ Tanimori (1994) p.37.

occasioned by a need for appropriate English translation and partly a cline in the knowability of any affected human participant.

Shigoto ga dekimashita.

The business is finished.

Watshi no shigoto ga dekimashita.

My business is finished.

Watashi ni shigoto ga dekimashita.

I was able to finish the business.

Itsuka Kasei ni iku koto ga dekiru deshoo.

One day we'll probably be able to go to Mars.

Ituska watashi ni iku koto ga dekiru deshoo.

One day I'll probably be able to go.

The various glosses here could be subsumed under the one "be accomplishable" in the same way as "*wakaru*" can be interpreted as "be intelligible." In spoken Japanese, the forms *wakatta!* and *dekita!* often seem to encompass both a transitive and intransitive meaning at the same time, with context usually suggesting a first or second person agent but with greater emphasis on the accomplishment of the act of understanding or accomplishment of a task.

THE POTENTIAL PROPER

As has already been mentioned a complex, origin has been posited for sentences with a *koto*-nominalised verb and *dekiru*. A similar origin has plausibly also been proposed for the potential proper. But again we will not concern ourselves here with the specifics of any particular derivations.

The second potential is by means of a verbal suffix, which unlike the non-potential, which takes a conventional object, usually takes *ga*. There are other patterns also available however corresponding to the single pattern of the non-potential. Variants with *wa* are ignored.

Fionna ga eigo o hanasu.

Fionna talks English

Fionna ga eigo ga hanaseru.

Fionna ni eigo ga hanaseru.

Fionna ga eigo o hanaseru.

Fionna ni eigo o hanaseru.

Fionna can talk English

The situation described above with regard to the desiderative and transitivity applies in a similar way with potentials. Makino and Tsutsui¹⁹⁵ state that sentences with *o* indicate a greater degree of volition where more control is involved. While Sugioka¹⁹⁶ has claimed that a permanent state which is not controllable may exclude *o*-marking altogether.

*Taroo ga koe ga/*o dasenai.*

Taro can't speak. (from birth)

*Taroo ga koe *ga/o dasenai.*

Taro can't speak. (from a temporary shock)

It is interesting to note that *ni* can be substituted for the first *ga* only in the second example¹⁹⁷ in which case the second NP must have *ga*. This does not imply however that the two structures are equivalent.

Within government and binding theory Tada (1992) claimed that *dake* "only" has a different scope in the two constructions, despite the English gloss:

John ga migime dake o tsumureru.

John can close only his right eye.

John ga migime dake ga tsumureru.

John can close only his right eye.

¹⁹⁵ Makino and Tsutsui (1995) p.371 see also Maynard (1990) p.242.

¹⁹⁶ Sugioka (1984).

¹⁹⁷ Kubo (1994) p.163.

In the first sentence he claims *dake* has scope only over the potential morpheme, while in the second scope is extended over the whole predicate. He then goes on to argue that in the derivation of the second sentence *migime* is raised to a position above the VP (is made a subject?) and that the stative verb is adjoined to AgrO making it able to licence a nominative case. Koizumi (1994) in turn claimed an even higher position than AgrO, having scope over NEG as well:

It is only his right eye that John can't close.

Thus Koizumi's claim is that *migime* is raised as far as the Tense head, which he assumes can check a Nominative case. Ura (1996), working in a slightly different model provides additional evidence for this analysis. Notwithstanding the terminology used and the assumptions about the derivational history of such sentences, the thrust of this argumentation is that, at whatever level, the *ga*-marked object does in fact operate as a subject, albeit below the level of the first *ga*-marked NP. In a sense, whether this first NP is generated as an extra-sentential topic or within the clause, is to some extent a matter of linguistic model and despite the tenability or not of the derivations proffered, the lines of argument advanced by Tada, Koizumi and Ura do provide evidence for the differing natures of the nominative and accusative marked variants of the potential.

There are several major problems with the interpretation proffered above. The first is the nature of the datively marked NP.

It has been assumed above that the difference between *ga* marking and *o* marking is that in the former the second *ga*-marked NP has prominence and is the main target of the predication i.e. is in some sense the grammatical subject of the sentence. The *ni* marked NP (as in *Fionna ni eigo ga hanaseru.*) is downgraded in status - whether in prominence or grammatical rank¹⁹⁸ vis-à-vis (as in *Fionna ga eigo ga hanaseru.*) *eigo*.

¹⁹⁸ It is assumed without discussion the hierarchy described initially by Keenan, Edward L. and Comrie, Bernard (1977, 1979) has general validity for matrix clauses as well. cf. the earlier remarks about the nature of subject.

TRANSITIVITY

The distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs has traditionally been based on whether a direct object¹⁹⁹ is present or not. Many languages distinguish these in other ways as well²⁰⁰. Such a definition is not without problems, however. A verb such as *eat* provides an obvious example. "He ate his dinner fast." is obviously transitive but "He ate fast." although lacking an object seems less intransitive than "He eats all day". There are also differences between verbs, thus "run" is inherently more intransitive than "eat" although it too may have an object "He ran a race" but can "Twelve miles" be seen to be as much of an object in "He ran twelve miles" or even in "He ran for twelve miles". Because of such considerations, Hopper and Thompson (1980) consider transitivity as a scale on which a clause can be ranked according to an array of ten parameters. These take into account participants i.e. number and type of argument, kinesic; volitionality, mode (realis v. irrealis), agency and affectedness. Each of these may be graded and so a clause can be ranked along a continuum from transitive to non-transitive. The constructions discussed above rank very low on transitivity being typically nonvolitional, stative, non-action and irrealis. This last point can be seen quite clearly with the desiderative and potential where an active verb is moved from the realm of the real to the irrealis state of desire or potential. This in turn reduces the agency of the sentence.

Jacobsen (1992:2), in a very detailed work on Japanese, first discusses a definition of transitivity from predicate logic where it is seen not in terms of the presence of a direct object but in terms of how many NP's must occur with the verb for the meaning of the sentence to be understood. If only one is needed then the verb must be intransitive. This reasoning is behind Kuroda's assertion that the desiderative is intransitive, as it can occur with only one argument. Jacobsen then mentions that in Japanese there is a marked tendency for the human experiencer to be optional and that in a sentence such as:

Boku wa okane ga hoshii.

I want money.

¹⁹⁹ Crystal (1994) p.394.

²⁰⁰ German neatly distinguishes verbs of motion as transitive by changing the auxiliary from *sein* to *haben* for example.

the first NP may be omitted. In such a case according to Jacobsen the meaning of *hoshii* is understood as being closer to "is desirable". However he claims that there does not seem to be any real difference in meaning between sentences with such a meaning and the "want" reading. Such a position would see such sentences as potentially both transitive and intransitive. This is a not altogether satisfactory situation from the point of view of syntactic analysis, even if it causes no problems in real life. To resolve this issue he posits a definition of transitivity based on the traditional one as comprising four main elements²⁰¹.

- i. There are two entities involved in the event
- ii. One of the entities (called the "agent") acts intentionally
- iii. The other entity (called the "object") undergoes a change
- iv. The change occurs in real time

The second point distinguishes for example *Sake o konomu* from *Sake ga suki da Yama o miru* from *Yama ga mieru* or *Hito o nikumu* from *Hito ga kirai da*. It will also be noted that stative verbs by their very nature, usually do not imply a change and so are intrinsically intransitive.

The transitive verbs that fit this definition are defined as prototypical transitives. Clearly the constructions dealt with above mostly fall outside this definition of prototypical transitives²⁰². We are left with the choice of describing them as either non- prototypical transitives with nominative marking – a solution that seems to not be inclusive enough to avoid a series of additional ad hoc patches or to describe them as intransitive. This latter approach allows us to capture some valuable generalisations about how Japanese encodes a given situation by exploiting markers of transitivity and intransitivity, particularly in those cases, where either *o* or *ga* may occur.

The first area of Jacobsen's definition above that can be looked at is the notion of an agent causing an intentional change, as control seems to be of major importance in Japanese

²⁰¹ Jacobsen (1992) p.8.

²⁰² There are of course many types that fall outside this definition such as those that have a deleted agent. Jacobsen (1992) p.30 contrasts *Kokuban o mita* with *Kokuban ga mieta*.

grammar. This seems to be quite closely linked to morphological and syntactic considerations. There is, for example, the well-known morphological distinction between many paired verbs.

Sachiko wa doa o akeru.

Sachiko will open the door.

Doa ga aku.

The door will open.

The latter sentence also illustrates the fact that intransitive verbs may have an inanimate subject, something not possible with transitive verbs, reflecting the link between intentionality and transitivity, which is stronger in Japanese than English.

Mizutani (1979) noted also that the choice between transitive and intransitive verbs in Japanese is pragmatically loaded. An example is given where an American student is reported as offending a Japanese landlady by using the intransitive

Kariteita sutoobu ga kowarete shimaimashita.

The heater that I borrowed broke.

rather than

Karitaita sutoobu o kowashite shimaimashita.

I broke the heater that I borrowed.

as the intransitive verb did not convey any sense of responsibility. The English intransitive does not imply that the student is not responsible, but the transitive might suggest a more deliberate act. Such an analysis may suggest that agency is higher in an English transitive than in Japanese. Typically then transitives are associated with intentionality although of course, some intransitives with a human or an animate subject may be intransitive. Intransitives, on the other hand, are associated with spontaneity²⁰³. This last fact may explain

²⁰³ Jacobsen (1992) cf. pp.11-14.

why in Japanese verbs of involuntary perception such as *mieru* and *kikoeru* as well as verbs with low control such as *wakaru*, receive *ga* marking. That is the language marks them as intransitive precisely because there is no or very low control exerted by the human experiencer - if one happens to be implied.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

All the stative constructions discussed above may appear with two *ga*-marked arguments, at least in adult speech²⁰⁴. This pattern is highly marked however and rare.

There is a marked bias towards uncontrollability. Where a greater degree of control by a marked agent is suggested, there is a strong tendency for *o* to replace *ga* and the sentence becomes a non-stative transitive one.

Apart from the above point, if there is the possibility for a double *ga*, the first NP rather than the second, tends to replace this marker with some other. This may be the topic marker *wa* or the dative marker *ni*.

It is not possible to scramble the two NP's, which could be expected if Kuno's analysis of the second being a direct object were true. It might also be observed that scrambling is mostly confined to within a clause, and the fact that it is not possible here provides evidence for the extra-clause status of the first NP.

The status of these sentences in regards their degree of transitivity is debatable. Some have argued that they are mostly transitive. Here it is argued that they are predominantly intransitive, and where they have a more transitive reading, *o* tends to replace *ga* in the NP immediately preceding the verbal.

The present study has sought to present an alternative interpretation to the view that *ga* is an object marker in stative sentences. That view, although tacitly accepted by many studies, has posed many additional problems, and the inconsistencies of this position have sometimes been recognised by its adherents²⁰⁵.

²⁰⁴ Matsuoka (1998) "When two arguments appear with a stative predicate, the Nominative particle *ga* can be used for both the subject and the object in adult speech. The children used only one Nominative Case-particle *ga* .

²⁰⁵ Kuno (1973) 48-49 for example mentions that some statives "can represent both the subjective feelings of the subject and the objective attributes of the object."

It has given rise to further troublesome interpretations of the status of *ni* as a subject marker, a subject not broached above. It has also not solved the problem of some multiple *ga* sentences in which the first *ga*-marked NP does not appear to be a conventional grammatical subject. This is particularly so in cases where some sort of locative structure is involved. Such situations seem to necessitate the recognition of an additional role for *ga*, to just marking a grammatical subject. We have used the term topic *ga* for this on the grounds that it seems to parallel the role of topicalisation in other languages. There are disadvantages to this term in that there is very often a clear distinction between *wa* and *ga*, and *wa* is conventionally also called a topic marker. However, the structural features that distance these from the core sentence and the pragmatic role of these particles cancel out such disadvantages.

The major objection to a Kuno type analysis however, is that it does not explain what the difference is between stative sentences, which have alternatives with either *ga* or *o*. It is not enough to say merely that stative sentences mark an object with *ga* while non-statives use *o* and leave it at that, when stative sentences may show both patterns. This is part of an underlying problem with the approach Kuno and his successors have followed – it is overly mechanical in the assignation of case and consequently neglects meaning²⁰⁶. The analysis proffered here has the advantage of reflecting a real distinction in the language, that between non-volitional states, which we describe as intransitive, and agentive sentences, where the volitional intercession of the agent is marked. It is no coincidence that the native intuitions of native speakers in regard volition and control are reflected in the case marking that the language applies.

Many linguists have pointed out that there is a difference in meaning between such pairs and that there seems to be a difference in transitivity between them, albeit not an absolute one. A major task of any grammar is to explain how form relates to meaning. Clearly here there is an apparent difference in form and less clearly there is a difference in meaning. The analysis presented above has the advantage of recognising that that difference of form has a real function in the language in encoding a difference in how a situation is conceived. It also allows us to posit only two uses of *ga* rather than three, both being quite similar. In addition

²⁰⁶ cf. Kuno's Object Marking transformation: "Attach *o* to the first nonsubject unmarked NP to the left of the

case marking can be seen as simpler with less of a gap between surface form and putative deeper structures.

mani verb if it is [-stative], and ga if it is [+ stative] (1973) p.330.

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