

Japanese Noun Clauses: Functions and Historical Changes

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abstract

An embedded sentence that expresses the content of an utterance or perception in nominal form may be referred to as a content clause. Content clauses in modern Japanese are grouped morphologically into those that deploy *koto* as the head noun (*koto* clauses) and those that deploy *no* as the head noun (*no* clauses). Many similarities and differences between these two types of noun clauses have been identified, mainly from the perspective of their combinations with verbs, but here I give particular attention to the fact that *koto* clauses can be subjects of predicates indicating existence (*aru*) and non-existence (*nai*) while *no* clauses cannot. In this paper, I argue that this distinction arises from differences in part of speech and semantic type between *no* and *koto* clauses. Specifically, I claim that *koto* clauses are Determiner Phrases that can be bound with quantifiers whereas *no* clauses are Complementizer Phrases that cannot be bound with quantifiers. Viewing historical linguistic materials from this perspective, one can identify the following characteristics.

1. Examples of *koto* clauses appearing as subjects of existential predicates can be found consistently throughout the historical corpus. This means that the syntactic and semantic characteristics of the *koto* clause have remained unchanged throughout the history of the Japanese language.
2. On the other hand, *no* clauses appear as content clauses in the corpus from the 16th century onward, but before then one finds the Headless Relative Clause (HRC) and, before the 8th century, the *ku* clause. Based on the absence of examples of the HRC and the *ku* clause appearing as subjects of existential predicates, it can be hypothesized that these clauses possessed the same characteristics as the modern Japanese *no* clause and were similarly distinguished from the *koto* clause.

This analysis not only provides a unified morphological, syntactic, and semantic account of Japanese content clauses, but also promises new analyses of the many historical changes originating in these clauses.

Organization of this presentation

1. Three types of *no* clause and *koto* clause
2. Existential expression and *no* clause/*koto* clause
3. An analysis from a structure
4. Historical development of *no* clause
5. *Juntaiku* (Headless Relative Clause) and *ku* clause
6. Conclusion

1. Three types of *no*-clause and *koto*-clause

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>(1) [akai <u>no</u>] o kudasai.
red one ACC please-give
<i>Please give me a red one.</i>
<simple pronoun type of <i>no</i> clause></p> <p>(2) [ringo no akai <u>no</u>] o kudasai.
apple red one ACC please-give
<i>Please give me a red apple.</i>
<complex pronoun type of <i>no</i> clause>
(Left Headed Relative Clause)</p> <p>(3) [ringo ga sara-no ue-ni aru <u>no</u>] o
apple NOM plate on exist ACC
totte tabeta.
pick-up ate
<i>I picked up and ate an apple on the plate.</i>
<Head Internal Relative Clause></p> <p>(4) [ringo ga akai <u>no</u>] wa shitteiru.
apple NOM red that TOP know
<i>I know that an apple is red.</i>
<content clause type of <i>no</i>-clause></p> | <p>(5) [ringo ga akai <u>koto</u>] wa shitteiru.
apple NOM red thing TOP know
<i>I know that an apple is red.</i>
<koto-clause></p> <p>(6) ano [<u>koto</u>/<u>*no</u>] wa shitteiru
that thing TOP know
<i>I know that thing.</i>
(<i>koto</i> is a full noun but <i>no</i> is not.)</p> |
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2. Existential expression and *no*-clause/*koto*-clause

Content clause	Verbs, Adjective
<i>no</i> clause/ * <i>koto</i> clause	Transitive: miru (see), kanjiru (feel) Intransitive: mieru (can be seen), kikoeru (can be heard)
<i>no</i> clause/ <i>koto</i> clause	Transitive: siru (know), yameru (quit), akirameru (abandon) Intransitive: wakaru (can be understood), Adjective: akirakada (obvious), kakujitsuda (certain),
* <i>no</i> clause/ <i>koto</i> clause	Transitive: hanasu (tell), tsugeru, (tell), omou (think), kangaeru (think) Intransitive: hanmeisuru (come out), aru (be)

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From Oshima (1996)

- (7) a. tadashikarubeki seigi mo tokitoshite meshiiru
{*koto*/**no*} ga aru.
The justice which must be right may loses its sight in some cases.
- b. Kare wa ikisaki-mo tsugezu ni dokoka e itteshimau
{*koto*/**no*} ga aru.
He sometimes go out without saying the destination.
- (8) a. kakushintekina shisô wa rikaisare-nai {*koto*/**no*} ga
ôi.
Innovative thoughts often cannot win public acceptance.
- b. kono shujutsu no hôhō wa shippaisuru {*koto*/**no*} ga
sukunai.
This way of operation is less likely to fail.

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(9) a. watashi wa maeni ichido dake kanojo to
hanashita {koto/*no} ga aru.

*I have talked with her just one time in
previous day.*

b. boku wa imamadeni konnnani iyana omoi o shita
{koto/*no} wa nai.

I have never get such an awful time before now.

Oshima (1996:53)。

Pronoun type of no-clause and HIRC can be a subject of existential
verb/adjective.

(10) a. [ringo no akai no] ga aru yo.

There is a red apple.

b. [ringo o kattekita no] ga tēburu no ue ni aru yo.

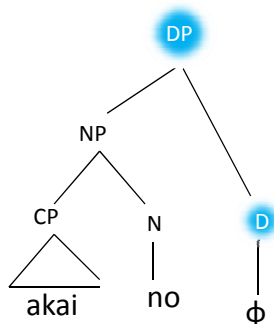
An apple which I bought is on the table

3. An analysis from a structure

pronoun type

(11) a. $[_{DP}[_{NP}[_{CP} \text{ akai}][_N \text{ no}]][_D \phi]]$

b. $[_{DP}[_{DP} \text{ ringo no}][_{DP}[_{NP}[\text{akai}][_N \text{ no}]][_D \phi]]]$

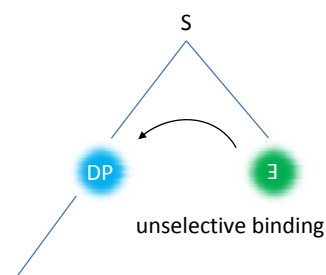


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Why DP ? (cf. Saito & Murasugi 1990)

- (12) There is *(an) apple on the table.
 (13) There is *(a) case that an apple is red.
 (14) *There is that an apple is red.

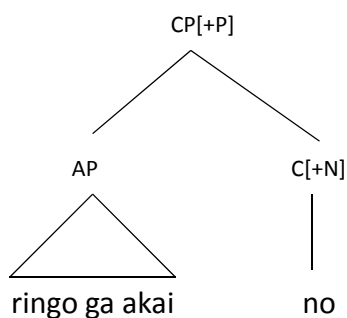
Though there is no phonetic article in Japanese, we need an abstract one at the request of semantics because only DP can be “visible” for the quantification.



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content clause type

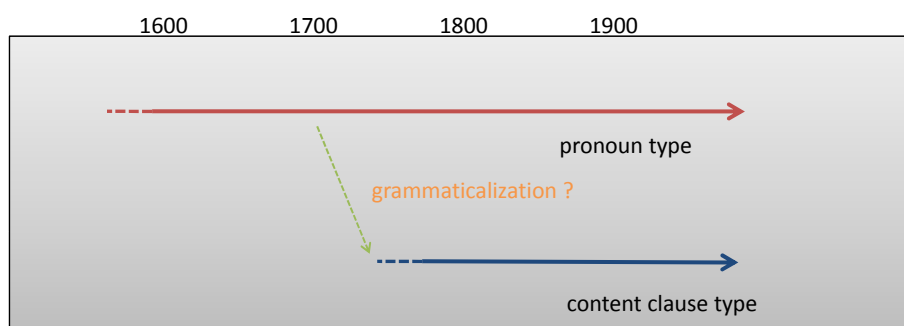
- (15) $[_{CP[+N]} [_{AP} \text{ringo ga akai}] [_{C[+N]} \text{no}]] \text{ o shitteru.}$



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- A content type of *no* clause is essentially a CP (Complimentizer Phrase) as well as “that clause” in English. It is not an “entity” but a depiction of a content of affairs. It can be an argument of certain verbs and adjectives which select content clause, but cannot be an argument of existential verbs (nor the subject of transitive verbs).
- *koto* clause is a NP and also a DP which can be the argument of the existential verbs/adjectives.
- [+N] means that an item which has the feature can be assigned cases and be the argument of predicates.

Historical development of *no* clause



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- Content clause type of *no* clause (CP) may also be a source of the subject noun phrases of the pseudo cleft sentence and the predicate noun phrases of “*noda*” sentence.

(16) [_{CP} asoko ni irassharu no] wa Nakamura sensei da.

It is Mr. Nakamura that is there.

(17) Nakamura sensei wa [_{CP} kitto asoko ni irassharu no] da.

Mr. Nakamura must be there.

5. *Juntaiku* (Headless Relative Clause) and *ku* clause

- (18) mukasi, [ofoyake no obosite tukau tamafu wonna no iro yurusaretaru] ari keru (*Ise*, 65)
<pronoun type of HRC>
- (19) [sokora tudofi tamaferu] ga ware mo otorazi to, motenasi tamaferu naka nimo
(*Genji*, Hatsune, 769.5)
<pronoun type of HRC>
- (20) kogite yuku fune nite mireba [asifikino yama safe yuku] wo matu fa sirazu ya. (*Tosa*)
<content clause type of HRC>
- (21) [tori maosu beki koto] arite namu (*Genji*, Kiritsubo)
<*koto* clause>

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- We can analyze a pronoun type of HRC as a DP which consists of an NP whose head is a *pro*.

(22) [_{DP} [_{DP} tomo no] [_{NP} [_{CP} enpou yori kitareru]
 [_N *pro*]] [_D φ]] ari

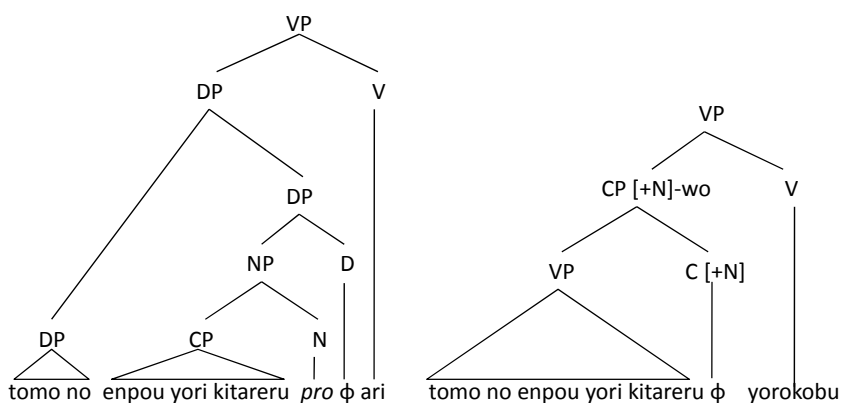
There is a friend who came here from a distance.

- While, content clause type of HRC can be analyzed as a nominal CP.

(23) [_{CP} [_{VP} tomo no enpou yori kitareru] [_C φ]] wo
 yorokobu

I am happy that my friend came here from a distance.

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(28) nagekaku wo (奈氣可久乎) todome mo
kanete miwataseba (*Man-yo* 17/4008)

(29) kono kapa no tayuru koto naku (絶事奈久)
(*Man-yo* 01/0036)

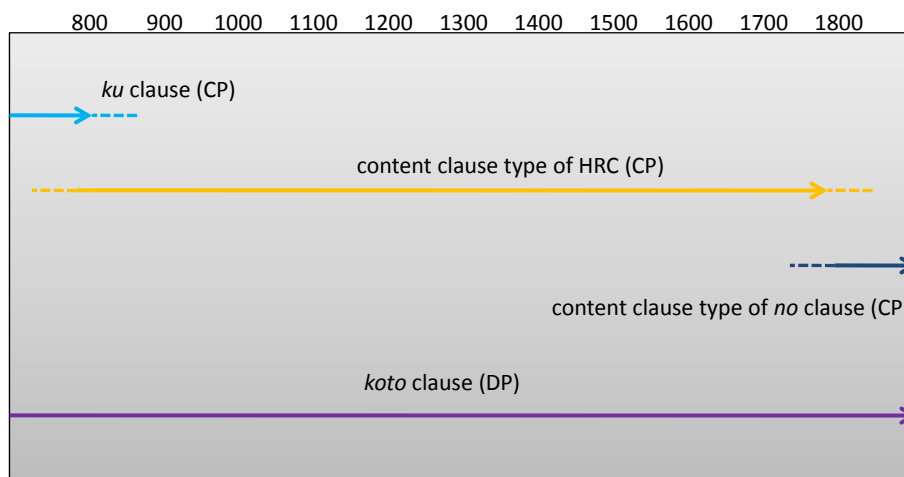
Cf.

(30) miraku (見良久) sukunaku kofuraku no (戀
良久乃) opoki (*Man-yo* 07/1394)

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- Wrona (2006) exhibits that *ku* clause could not be a subject of *nasi* (not existing) but *koto* could be. Though he deals with this phenomena as a problem of the scope of negation, I think that this must be reanalyzed as a problem of a contrast between a DP (= *koto* clause) and a CP (= *ku* clause).

Conclusion



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