On the Structural/Thematic Dichotomy between the \textit{Ni} Passive and the \textit{Ni Yotte} Passive in Japanese

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1. Introduction

It is widely known that there is a distinction between the \textit{ni} passive and the \textit{ni yotte} passive in Japanese.\(^1\) The agentive markers \textit{ni} and \textit{ni yotte} are in some cases employed in the same environment such as (1b), but not in other cases such as (2b) and (3b).

(1) a. Tookyoku wa kore o kinziteiru.
   authorities this prohibit
   "The authorities prohibit this."

   b. Kore wa tokyoku ni / ni yotte kinzi-rare-teiru.
   "This is prohibited by the authorities."

(2) a. John ga keetai-denwa o hatumeisita.
   cellular phone invent
   "John invented the cellular phone."

   b. Keetai-denwa ga John *ni / ni yotte hatumeis-are-ta.
   "The cellular phone was invented by John."

(3) a. Inu ga Taroo ni kamituita.
   dog bite
   "A dog bit Taro."

   b. Taroo ga inu ni / *ni yotte kamituk-are-ta.
   "Taro was bitten by a dog."

As is shown in the (a) sentences of (1)-(3), there are active versions directly corresponding to the passive sentences: these are instances of the "direct passive". The "indirect passive", on the other hand, does not have a directly corresponding active version.\(^2\) It is exemplified by (4) and is normally considered to contain an adversative meaning.

(4) a. "Ame ga boku ni futta.
   rain me fall
   "Rain fell on me."

   b. Boku wa ame ni fur-are-ta.
   "I was rained on."

Although there was a controversy over the deep/D structure of the direct and indirect passives marked with the agentive marker \textit{ni} (McCawley (1972), Kuroda (1965), Kuno (1973, 1983), Howard and Niyekawa-Howard (1976) among many others), it now seems that researchers have generally reached the agreement that they are both biclausal, i.e. they have a structure where (r)are is a main sentence predicate which requires a theta subject as well as a complement clause. Meanwhile we have a different kind of controversy triggered by Kuroda’s (1979) proposal based on Inoue (1976) that while the \textit{ni} passive is biclausal, the \textit{ni yotte} passive is monoclausal, i.e. derived from the corresponding active sentence by NP movement. Kuno (1983, 1986) entertains doubts about Kuroda’s (1979, 1985) arguments and maintains that both of them are biclausal. Recently Hoshi (1999) based on Hoshi (1991), interpreting Kuroda’s analysis in modern terms, presents arguments for
Kuroda's analysis and supports it. In Kuroda's analysis the biclusal nature of the *ni passive reflects the existence of the so-called "affectivity" while the monoclusal nature of the *ni yotte passive reflects the non-existence of this reading. In Kuno's analysis the existence or non-existence of "affectivity" is accounted for by interpretive constraints. Under these situations I simply assume that the question of "affectivity" does not lead us to a settlement of the controversy, because both of the analyses can potentially account for it. The independent evidence other than "affectivity" for or against the monoclusal analysis of the *ni yotte passive could offer a new perspective on the issue.

In this regard, it is important to closely examine Hoshi's (1999) four pieces of evidence for Kuroda's dichotomy between the *ni direct passive and the *ni yotte direct passive. His first argument is based on the examples like (5).

(5) a. *Fermat no teiri ga John ni syooomeis-are-ta.
   theorem
   "Fermat's theorem was affected by John's proving it."
   prove

b. Fermat no teiri ga John ni yotte syooomeis-are-ta.
   "Fermat's theorem was proven by John." (Kuroda 1979:330-1)

Although Hoshi (1999) claims that the data like (5) show that Kuroda's dichotomy in question is valid, Kuno (1983, 1986) convincingly, I believe, argues against it and gives grammatical counterexamples to it in which *ni, but not *ni yotte, is used as in (5a). This simply shows that the examples like (5) do not furnish a piece of evidence for Kuroda's dichotomy.

Hoshi's second and third arguments concern passivizability of verb phrase idioms and licensing of subject-oriented adverbs, which will be dealt with in sections 2 and 3, respectively. His final argument for the dichotomy concerns the parallelism between Japanese and English passive constructions. He argues that (6a) corresponds to the *ni direct passive and (6b) to the *ni yotte direct passive.

(6) a. John got arrested by the police.
   b. John was arrested by the police.

Since I will argue that his second and third arguments also cast doubt on the validity of his claim, I refrain from discussing the final argument involving (6), which depends on the assumption that the other arguments internal to Japanese are valid.

Incidentally it is important to note before going to the next section that not all the *ni yotte passives are "genuine" *ni yotte passives. Observe the following:

(7) a. Kisoku ga kore o kinziteiru.
   regulation this prohibit
   "Regulations prohibit this."

b. Kore wa kisoku ni yotte kinzi-rare-teiru.
   "This is prohibited by regulations."

The active version (7a) appears to suggest that the marker *ni yotte in (7b) is agentive, but it is not a genuine agentive marker: it can be replaced by the marker *de unlike (1b). This is shown in (8), and (1b) is repeated as (9) with *de added.

(8) Kore wa kisoku ni yotte / *de kinzi-rare-teiru.
(9) Kore wa tookyoku ni / ni yotte / *de kinzi-rare-teiru.

More importantly, it is possible to use twice the phrase marked with *ni yotte.

(10) Kore wa kisoku ni yotte / *de tookyoku ni / ni yotte / *de kinzi-rare-teiru.
   "Based on the regulations this is prohibited by the authorities."

Sentence (10) indicates that the marker *ni yotte attached to tookyoku is genuinely agentive and that attached
to *kisoku means “grounds” for prohibition, not “agent”. In this paper only the genuine agentive marker ni yotte will be taken up to avoid confusion with other uses of this marker.

2. Passivizability of Verb Phrase Idioms

Hoshi (1999) argues that verb phrase idioms such as *tyuui o haraw “pay heed” or *keto o tuke “find a fault” can be passivized with ni yotte, but that they resist ni direct passivization as in (11) and (12).

(11) a. John ga tyuui o haratta.
   "John paid heed."
   b. *Tyuui ga John ni haraw-are-ta.
   c. Tyuui ga John ni yotte haraw-are-ta.

(12) a. John ga keto o tuketa.
   "John found the fault."
   c. Keto ga John ni yotte tuke-rare-ta.

In Kuroda’s analysis the structures for the ni direct passive (11b) and the ni yotte direct passive (11c) are shown in (13a) and (13b), respectively.

(13) a. $S_1$
   tyuui$_1$ ga VP
      $S_2$
        V
          John ni VP are-ta
             tyuui$_1$ haraw
                $\phi$

(13) b. $S$
   tyuui$_1$ ga VP
      John ni yotte $t_1$ V
        haraw-are-ta

The main clause subject of the ni direct passive is a theta position: are imposes a selectional restriction called “affectee” on the subject. Since a part of the verb phrase idiom tyuui does not satisfy this requirement, (11b) is ruled out. On the other hand, the subject of the ni yotte direct passive is not a theta position: the passive morpheme are in (13b) is an affix which triggers NP movement of tyuui to the subject position on which no selectional restriction is imposed. Thus (11c) is ruled in. The grammatical contrast in (12b) and (12c) is
similarly accounted for.

The above line of argument Hoshi presents based on Kuroda's analysis predicts that the following ni yotte passive sentences containing a verb phrase idiom are all grammatical, but this is not borne out. Observe the following:

(14) a. John ga kono torihiki ni iro o tuketa.
   this deal color attach
   "John added a little sweetener to this deal."

b. *Iro ga John ni yotte kono torihiki ni tuke-rare-ta.

(15) a. John ga kono ken de dame o osita.
   this matter double assurance push
   "John made doubly sure of this matter."

b. *Dame ga kono ken de John ni yotte os-are-ta.

(16) a. John ga kono hanasi ni awa o kutta.
   this rumor bubble eat
   "John was confounded at this rumor."

b. *Awa ga John ni yotte kono hanasi ni kuw-are-ta.

(17) a. John ga dozi o funda.
   blunder step
   "John made a blunder."

b. *Dozi ga John ni yotte fum-are-ta.

(18) a. John ga neko o kabutte iru.
   cat wear
   "John is hiding his claws."

b. *Neko ga John ni yotte kabur-are-teiru.

(19) a. John ga abura o utteiru.
   oil sell
   "John is wasting time in idle conversation."

b. *Abura ga John ni yotte ur-are-teiru.6

The ungrammaticality of the (b) sentences above are all counterexamples to the analysis based on (13b).7

Furthermore, (20) and (21) below show a pattern which is nearly opposite to that of (11) and (12), being totally unaccounted for by the distinction between (13a) and (13b).

(20) a. aitu ga ore no sindai o tubusita.
   that person my fortune crush
   "That person lost my fortune."

b. ore no sindai ga aitu ni tubus-are-ta.

c. (?)ore no sindai ga aitu ni yotte tubus-are-ta.

(21) a. Aitu ga ore no kao o tubusita.
   that person my face crush
   "That person made me lose face."

b. Ore no kao ga aitu ni tubus-are-ta.

c. ?Ore no kao ga aitu ni yotte tubus-are-ta.

Although it is true that many verb phrase idioms resist the ni and/or ni yotte passivization as we have observed so far, the ungrammaticality of (11b) and (12b) might be ascribed to a cause totally different from the consideration of the subject as a (non)theta position. Tyuui o haraw and keti o tuke normally take the
noun phrase marked with ni as an indirect object.

(22) a. John ga Mary ni tyuui o haratta.
   "John paid heed to Mary."

   b. John ga Mary no syutyoo ni keti o tukefa.
      claim
      "John found fault with Mary's claim."

As discussed by Sunahara (1984) and further elaborated by Hosokawa (1996), the existence of the ni phrase in active sentences blocks the attachment of ni to the agentive phrase of the corresponding passive in some cases: only ni yotte is allowed.

(23) a. John ga ooku no hito ni eigo o osieta.
    many people English teach
    "John taught English to many people."

   b. Eigo ga John *ni / ni yotte ooku no hito ni osie-rare-ta.

It is natural to assume that the same restriction applies to (22). This is borne out.

(24) a. Tyuu ga John *ni / ni yotte Mary ni haraw-are-ta.

   b. Ketu ga John *ni / ni yotte Mary no syutyoo ni tuke-rare-ta.

The same contrast in grammaticality found in (24a) and (24b), on the one hand, and (23b) on the other, suggests that the sentences involving a verb phrase idiom in (11) and (12) have nothing to do with a possible argument for the structural/thematic dichotomy between the ni direct passive and the ni yotte direct passive.

In sum it is safe to assume that the recalcitrant behavior of verb phrase idioms does not provide any evidence for the dichotomy based on a subject as a theta or a non-theta position.

3. Subject-oriented Adverbs

Hoshi (1999:198-9) states that the contrast in (25a-b) observed by Kuroda (1979:325-6) substantiates his dichotomy of Japanese passives.

(25) a. Daitooryoo ga orokanimo CIA ni koros-are-te simatta.
    president stupidly kill
    "The president stupidly let the CIA kill him, which he should not
    have let happen (Or, more colloquially: The president stupidly
    went and got killed by the CIA)."

   b. ??Daitooryoo ga orokanimo CIA ni yotte koros-are-te simatta.9

Subject-oriented adverbs such as orokanimo "stupidly" requires a theta subject. In Kuroda's analysis the ni passive has a theta subject while the ni yotte passive does not. Thus orokanimo is properly licensed in (25a) but not in (25b).

It is often the case that when typical examples of the ni yotte passive are presented they contain a combination of a Sino-Japanese word and the semantically empty verb suru; for example, hatumeisuru "invent" in (2b), syooomeisuru "prove" in (5b), and "sengensuru" in (26) below. These words have a stylistically formal flavor which is compatible with the marker ni yotte. It is also often the case that when the ni yotte passive is employed the subject is an abstract noun, as is shown in (26), which is cited from Inoue (1976:83). This pattern is also considered to be stylistically formal.

(26) Kaikai ga gityoo ni yotte sengens-are-ta.
    opening chairperson announce
    "The opening of the meeting was announced by the chairperson."
With this in mind, note that the native Japanese verb koros is used in (25). If this word is replaced with a combination of the Sino-Japanese word satugai and suru meaning "kill", with the adverbial phrase itomo kantan ni "very easily" added, the resulting sentence is grammatical according to my judgment.

(27) Daitoooryoo ga orokanimo CIA ni yotte itomo kantan ni satugais-are-te simatta
The following sentence does not contain a Sino-Japanese verb but it is still grammatical.

(28) Simpei wa orokanimo warugasikoi kosoan syookoo ni yotte
raw recruit stupidly cunning senior officer
umaku marume-kom-are-te, zensen ni okuri-kom-are-ta.
well cajoled front send

"Raw recruits were stupidly cajoled by a cunning senior officer into being sent to the front."

Although (25b) might be somewhat unnatural, (27) and (28) indicate that subject-oriented adverbs are licensed in the ni yotte direct passive given a proper context and style. Under the assumption of the thematic dichotomy, no sentence would be better or worse depending on different contexts or styles, because the crucial difference is only whether a subject-oriented adverb is licensed by a theta subject or not, which further shows that the argument involving subject-oriented adverbs for the dichotomy in question is not valid.

4. Conclusion

We have observed in sections 2 and 3 that the Japanese examples intended to show the structural or thematic dichotomy between the ni passive and the ni yotte passive fail to furnish evidence for it. Generally speaking, it would be rather difficult to propose an analysis based on verb phrase idioms and subject-oriented adverbs, because the former have too much variation in the cohesion of the component parts to show a general pattern and the latter do not seem to provide a clear-cut example in terms of grammaticality or acceptability.

Notes

*Japanese data, when they are cited from other works, are slightly changed in some cases. This is just for ease of exposition and consistency. They do not have any theoretical import.
1. These terms are adopted following Kuroda (1979).
2. These terms are adopted following Howard and Niyekawa-Howard (1976).
3. One of the grammatical examples given by Kuno (1986:80) is (i).
(1) Ano teiri wa dare ni mo syoomeis-are-te inai.

"That theorem has not been proven by anybody."
4. Kuno (1986:86-87) suggests that the deep structure of (i) is not (ii) but (iii).
(i) sono hako wa siroo nuno ni yotte oow-are-te ita.

that box white cloth cover

"That box was covered with a white cloth."
(ii) [sono hako ∆ ni yotte [siroo nuno sono hako oow] rareteita]

(iii) [sono hako ∆ ni yotte [dareka ga] siroo nuno ni yotte sono hako oow] rareteita

His suggestion indicates that it is necessary to make a distinction between the agentive role and the other semantic roles ("instrument" in the case of (i)) in the use of ni yotte. Note that ni yotte can be replaced by de as in (8). See also Inoue (1976:85) and Kuroda (1979: 345-6) on this point.
5. The reason why I state that the marker ni yotte in (1b) is "genuinely" agentive is that this marker when

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meaning "grounds" as in (7b) and being not accompanied by the obvious agentive marker as in (10) could induce a certain degree of agentive interpretation.

6. (19b) has an irrelevant literal reading: "Oil is sold by John."

7. Hoshi (1991:80) notes that an inalienably possessed NP cannot be passivized based on the ungrammaticality of the following (b) sentence.

(i) a. John ga kosi o orosita.
   hip lower
   "(lit.) John lowered his hip (=John sat down)."

b. Kosi ga John ni yotte oros-are-ta.
   "(lit.) His hip was lowered by John."

Note that all the examples in (14)-(19) do not contain an inalienably possessed NP: the passive versions are still ungrammatical.

8. Kuroda (1979) states that (25b) is unacceptable, while Hoshi (1999: n. 13) states that a violation of the requirements imposed by subject-oriented adverbs seems to induce marginal ungrammaticality. However, I do not feel that it is so bad. It sounds only slightly stylistically unnatural.

References


