

Revisiting beautiful dancers and complete fools in Japanese

The goals of this paper are to show (i) that as opposed to Baker (2003), prenominal adjectives in Japanese can directly modify nouns just like those in English, allowing non-intersective interpretation, and (ii) that such adjectives in Japanese occupy a position within NP, while intersective adjectives are in the D domain in the spirit of Larson (2000).

Baker (2003) has pointed out that the Japanese adjective *utukusi-i* ‘beautiful’ in (1a) contrasts with the English counterpart *beautiful* in (1b), in that while *utukusi-i* permits intersective interpretation (i.e., ‘x is [AN]’ → ‘x is N’ and ‘x is A’), it does not allow non-intersective interpretation (i.e., adverbial reading).

- (1) a. Mary-wa utukusi-i odoriko-da
Mary-Top beautiful dancer-Cop.Pres
 ‘Mary is a dancer and Mary is beautiful’. [intersective]
 ‘*Mary dances beautifully’. [non-intersective]
- b. Olga is a beautiful dancer.
 ‘Olga is a dancer and Olga is beautiful’ [intersective]
 ‘Olga dances beautifully’. [non-intersective]

Baker (2003) further shows that non-intersective interpretation in (1a) is absent because Japanese adjectives cannot enter into direct attributive relationships with nouns. More specifically, he argues that Japanese adjectives form relative clauses. In (2), the English adjective *beautiful* in the relative clause cannot undergo non-intersective interpretation:

- (2) Olga is a dancer who is beautiful.
 ‘Olga is a dancer and Olga is beautiful’./‘*Olga dances beautifully’.

Furthermore, following Sproat and Shih (1991), Baker (2003) shows that the two possible orders of adjectives in (3a) are due to the relative-clause structure, in that the fixed order of the two English adjectives *small* and *square* in (3b) becomes flexible when they are embedded in a relative clause as in (3c).

- (3) a. tiisa-na sikaku-i ie ⇔ sikaku-i tiisa-na ie
small square house square small house
- b. the small square house ⇔ *the square small house
- c. the house that’s small that’s square ⇔ the house that’s square that’s small

Baker (2003) argues that the difference between adjectives in Japanese and those in English lies in the absence versus the presence of agreement between prenominal adjectives and nouns, respectively. That is, agreeing adjectives can merge directly with nouns, whereas non-agreeing adjectives must resort to indirect modification strategies, e.g., the relative-clause structure. However, given that English adjectives do not exhibit morphological agreement, it is not at all obvious if Baker’s account is on the right track. Moreover, as Yamakido (2000, 2005, 2007) points out, Japanese adjectives exhibit non-intersective interpretation, as in (4):

- (4) a. Peter-wa huru-i tomodati-da.
Peter-Top old friend-Cop.Pres ‘Peter has been a friend for a long time’.
- b. Omoigakena-i kyaku-ga ki-ta.
unexpected visitor-Nom come-Past ‘A guest came unexpectedly’.

In fact, adjectives are of three types with respect to intersective and non-intersective interpretation: (i) adjectives (e.g., shape, color and nationality) that allow intersective interpretation only, (ii) adjectives (e.g., nominal/relational, manner, temporal, emotive and modal) that allow non-intersective interpretation only, and (iii) adjectives that are ambiguous between intersective and non-intersective interpretation (cf Alexiadou 2001). Furthermore, there is an interesting correlation between the structural position of a given adjective within DP and its interpretation. Consider how *beautiful* is interpreted in the A₁ position in (5a), and in the A₂ position in (5b) (Larson (2000) based on Vendler (1967)).

(5)		A ₂	A ₁		A ₂	A ₁
a.	Olga	is a	blond	beautiful dancer.	Inter	Inter/Non-inter
b.	Olga	is a	beautiful	blond dancer.	Inter	Inter

Following Larson (2000), I propose in this paper (i) that Japanese adjectives can directly modify nouns as those in English, which undergo non-intersective interpretation, and (ii) that such adjectives occupy a position within NP, whereas intersective adjectives are in the D domain.

First of all, a similar contrast to that in (5) can also be observed in Japanese. The facts in (6) illustrate that *huru-i* ‘old=for a long time’ can be interpreted as non-intersective in A₁, the adjacent position to *yuuzin* ‘friend’, but it cannot in A₂.

(6)	A ₂	A ₁	
a.	monosizuka-na	huru-i	yuuzin
	<i>quiet</i>	<i>old</i>	<i>friend</i>
			‘quiet old friend’ (old=for a long time)
b.	*huru-i	monosizuka-na	yuuzin
	<i>old</i>	<i>quiet</i>	<i>friend</i>
			‘old quiet friend’ (old=for a long time)

(6b) is degraded because intersective *huru-i* can only modify [-animate] entities, e.g., *huru-i kuruma* ‘old car’.

Second, there is empirical support for the proposal that non-intersective adjectives such as *huru-i* in (6a) are within NP. On the basis of floated numeral-quantifier and N'-deletion facts, Saito, Lin & Murasugi (2008) have shown that the numeral and the classifier form a constituent that adjoins to NP, hence the base order, Numeral-Classifier-NP ([_{NP} [_{CLP} numeral CL] NP]). Provided that adjectives that undergo non-intersective interpretation are within NP, it follows that the order, Adjective-Numeral-Classifier-NP, should induce intersective interpretation for the adjective since the word order at issue suggests that the adjective is outside NP. This prediction is borne out as in (7):

(7)	a.	san-nin-no	kanzen-na	baka-ga	kita.	
		<i>three-CL-Gen</i>	<i>complete</i>	<i>fool-Nom</i>	<i>came</i>	‘Three complete fools came’.
	b.	??/*kanzen-na	san-nin-no	baka-ga	kita.	
		<i>complete</i>	<i>three-CL-Gen</i>	<i>fool-Nom</i>	<i>came</i>	‘Three complete fools came’.

Given that *kanze-na* ‘complete’ is outside NP in (7b), it should undergo intersective interpretation only. However, since intersective *kanze-na* typically modifies [-animate] entities, sentence (7b) becomes degraded.

Finally, it should follow from the correlation between the position of an adjective within DP and its interpretation, that other contrasts in adjective/modifier interpretation in relation to two different positions within DP should be available. Consider (8) (Larson 2000):

(8)	a.	Monday	Thursday	lecture
		deictic	generic	
	b.	invisible	visible	stars
		temporal	enduring	

(8a) means that a series of lectures regularly scheduled on Thursday happens to be given on Monday in a certain week. In (8b), stars that are usually visible are not visible today due to a bad weather. We predict that the same contrasts should be available in Japanese, given the correlation between the adjective position and its intersective/non-intersective interpretation.

(9)	a.	getuyoo-no	mokuyoo-no	koogi	‘Thursday lecture given on Monday’
		<i>Monday-Gen</i>	<i>Thursday-Gen</i>	<i>lecture</i>	(cf. *mokuyoo-no getuyoo-no koogi)
		deictic	generic		
	b.	hutoomee-na	toomee-na	garasu	‘nontransparent glass which is supposedly transparent’
		<i>nontransparent</i>	<i>transparent</i>	<i>glass</i>	
		temporal	enduring		

(9) shows that the prediction is correct, and it further supports the proposal that there are two distinct positions within DP for intersective and non-intersective interpretation.