Phi-Agreement in Japanese: On the Person Restriction of Case-valuation

Since Chomsky's (2001), it has been discussed that Case is assigned/valued as a reflex of phi-agreement. One of the problems this system faces is how Case is valued in languages such that phi-agreement is apparently missing (i.e. phi-agreement morphemes do not emerge overtly). Japanese is one of those languages. This presentation specifically focuses on the verb *give* in Japanese and demonstrates that it shows person restriction on nominative/dative Case-valuation. The work implies that Case-valuation is in tandem with phi-agreement in Japanese (at least in certain contexts), which supports the Uniformity Principle (Chomsky, 2001).

In English, the verb *give* does not impose phi-restriction (person restriction) on DPs (→1). In Japanese, however, phi-restriction is imposed both on the subject and indirect object (IO) when the Japanese equivalent of *give*, of two instances, *ageru* and *kureru*, appears in a sentence. The first person DP cannot be IO in *ageru* (→2), while the same restriction is imposed on the subject instead on IO in *kureru* (→3).

(1) Hanako gave {√me/√you/√Taro} a book./{√I/√you/√Hanako} gave Taro a book.

(2) Hanako-ga {***watasi**/√anata/√Taro}-ni hon-o **age-ta**
Hanako-Nom me you Taro-Dat book-Acc give-Past

(3) {***Watasi**/√Anata/√Hanako}-ga Taro-ni hon-o **kure-ta**
I you Hanako-Nom give-Past

Interestingly, the verb *give* in Japanese can be used not only in giving things (=DP) but also in giving 'action' (=TP) as follows:

(4) a. Hanako-ga {√watasi/√anata/√Taro}-ni asu-no yote-o hanasi-ta.
Hanako-Nom me you Taro-Dat tomorrow-Gen plan-Acc tell-Past
'Hanako told me/you/Taro about tomorrow's plan.'

b. {√Watasi/√Anata/√Hanako}-ga Taro-ni asu-no yote-o hanasi-ta.
I you Hanako-Nom

(5) Hanako-ga {***watasi**/√anata/√Taro}-ni asu-no yote-o **hanasi-te age-ta.**
Hanako-Nom me you Taro-Dat tomorrow-Gen plan-Acc tell-*te* give-Past
'Hanako told me/you/Taro about tomorrow's plan **<u>for me/you/Taro</u>**.'

(6) {***Watasi**/√Anata/√Hanako}-ga Taro-ni asu-no yote-o **hanasi-te kure-ta.**
I you Hanako-Nom tell-*te* give-Past
'I/you/Hanako told Taro about tomorrow's plan **<u>for Taro</u>**.'

In (5) and (6), *ageru* and *kureru* are added to the sentence (4). According to Nakatani (2010), in the V_1-*te*-V_2 construction, V_1 (*hanasu* in (5)-(6)) is combined with V_2 (*ageru*/*kureru* in (5)-(6)) by head movement. Before applying head movement, the subject and dative phrases are arguments of V_1 (*hanasu*). Notice that no person restriction is applied at this point because the verb *hanasu* does not impose such restriction, as confirmed in (4). V_1 is then moved to V_2, forming V_1-te-V_2 (*hanasi-te kure/age-ta*). The subject and dative phrases are now arguments of V_1-te-V_2, with the two verbs combined. In (5), the combined verb agrees with the dative phrase and person restriction is applied, assigning dative Case. The combined verb subsequently moves to T, imposing person restriction on the subject in (6), assigning nominative Case.

The proposed analysis implies that phi-agreement is in tandem with Case-valuation in Japanese at least in certain contexts, which supports Chomsky's (2001) Case-valuation system. Furthermore, the derivation for (5)/(6) shows that by combining V_1 with V_2 by head movement, person restriction is imposed on the subject and dative phrases. This supports the view that head movement is applied in syntax (Koizumi 2000), not in the phonological component (Fukui and Sakai, 2003). (word count: 500)