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On the Rank of Group

— with Regard to NP Structure in Japanese*

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SUMMARY

In comparing the structure of noun phrases of English with that of Japanese, what is found to be typical of English is its strict ordering rule with regard to premodifiers. In Japanese as an agglutinative language, there is very little constraint in that respect.

If Halliday's theory of rank-scale is applied to this different aspect in these languages, the distinction of Group and Phrase is more clearly seen in the syntax of Japanese than English. The term Group will be more useful for Japanese than for English.

Keywords: *noun phrase, premodifier, theory of rank-scale*

O. Introduction

This paper is intended to scrutinize the validity and applicability of the Hallidayan concept of GROUP/PHRASE to the noun phrase structure of Japanese. In 1961¹⁾, Halliday presented the scale of ranks as one of the basic metatheoretical concepts to account for the grammar of a language. In his most recent grammar²⁾, it is seen, he has retained the theory of Rank, adding to elasticity of conceptualization of these terms. It is interesting to find some parallelism between the X-bar theory³⁾ of Chomskyan linguistics and Halliday's rank-scale theory, although these theories have a completely different perspective from

which to look at language. But Halliday's systemic theory is less prevailing than generative (transformational) theory, as far as it is found in Japan. It is, therefore, worthwhile to take up even one small portion of the Japanese grammar and examine whether Halliday's concept is applicable to explanation of the grammatical structure of Japanese.

In the present paper, the focus is directed to the conglomeration of modifiers preceding a Noun Head in the Japanese language. The method to be used is contrastive — comparison of an English Noun Phrase with its Japanese translation. The English version was presented to the author by a native speaker of the British English:

〈All the twenty excellent⁴⁾ red leather bags with yellow buttons〉

1.1. Some Problems in Translation: a preliminary observation

It would be appropriate to first of all give some possible morph-for-morph glosses of the translation. This, however, is not an easy problem. First of all, the ambiguities should be removed in order to get it understood correctly. The lexical item 〈bag〉 finds its semantic correlates in different lexical items in Japanese such as *kaban*, *fukuro* and *baggu*, except for some other items to be used in their metaphorical senses of 〈bag〉, e. g. "We had a good *bag* that day." If 〈bags〉 in the original refers to 'travelling bags', its equivalent will be *kaban*; if, however, it refers to 'shopping bags', then it should be glossed as *fukuro*. *Baggu* is a loan word to refer to a container such as a 'handbag'.

There is still another problem of uncertainty with regard to translating the English quantifiers and determiner 〈all the twenty〉. Depending upon the function of the Nominal Group as the whole, these elements will be arranged in different ways. Whether the original

Nominal Group is the subject of a clause, or the object/complement of a verb or preposition will affect the way it is translated.

Thus, a tentative translation can be, with interlinear glosses, like:

- (1) *kiroi botan no tuita, nijuk-ko no subeteno rippana*
 <yellow> <butons> <with> <twenty> <all> <excellent>
 akai kawa no kaban
 <red> <leather> <bags>

1.2. Red-Leather Bags or Red Leather-Bags?

The original English version is not free from its structural ambiguity. If the bags are made of red leather, however, they cannot but be red bags. If they are leather-bags enamelled red later, the bags are supposed to be red-coloured. The matter-of-factness of this kind is extralinguistically obvious, but what matters is how the relevant elements are arranged in structure.

In this respect, there is no difference between English and Japanese, as shown in two diagrams. The first diagram shows that the Head preceded by a sequence of modifiers is interpreted as PRODUCT qualified by the juxtaposed elements of QUALITY and MATERIAL (cf. fig. 1); while in the second interpretation, the modifiers are structured as in [[QUALITY+MATERIAL]+PRODUCT]. The second diagram (cf. fig. 2) shows this interpretation. These different interpretations are not mapped on to their surface realizations in both languages.

As is easy to be seen, a Group consisting of MATERIAL+PRODUCT ideationally tends to be confused with a noun compound. A *kawa-gutsu* is to be analyzed as a compound, although it consists of MATERIAL+PRODUCT. There is a clear case of morphological process in which the second element is combined with the first by

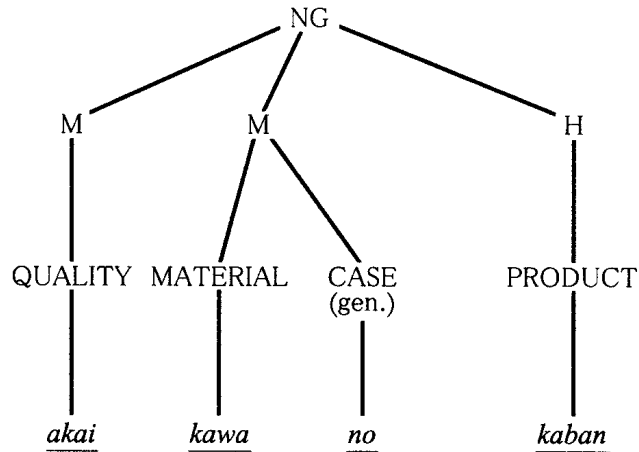


Fig. 1.

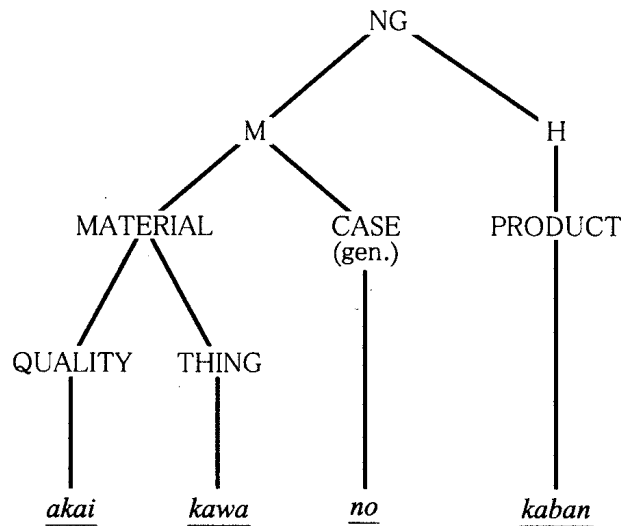


Fig. 2.

voicing the initial consonant. Here, {-*gutsu*} is a bound allomorph of {*KUTSU*} (=shoe). By the same token, <leather bag> can be glossed as *kawa-bukuro* with the voiced consonant at the initial position of the allomorph of {*FUKURO*} (=bag). This compound is well-known in the proverb “*Atarashii sake wa, atarashii kawa-bukuro ni*” (literally = “New wine into a new leather bag” [cf. “new wine into new bottles” —St. MATTHEW 9. 17]).

On the other hand, *kaban* is mostly made of leather, and so it is doubtful whether it is necessary to form a compound with *kaban* as

PRODUCT preceded by its MATERIAL; rather, it will be more cogent to combine *kaban* with its USE, as in *ryokoo-kaban* (=travelling-bag, i. e. trunk). With regard to shoes, they are not necessarily made of leather. Therefore, the MATERIAL which *akai kawa-gutsu* is made of is not the kind of leather which is inherently red or dyed red with sappan-wood to be used for specific purposes only, but a kind of leather enamelled red for women to wear in their ordinary life. It occasionally is the case that a pair of men's shoes which are brown are referred to as *akai kawa-gutsu*, however.

Thus, we have obviously *akai kawa-kaban* by the side of *akai kawa no kaban*, and possibly *aka-gawa no kaban* in which is found an initially voiced allomorph of {*KAWA*} (=leather). So much for the comment on the lexical and/or morphological aspects of the tentative translation; the order in which the elements of QUALITY, MATERIAL, PRODUCT, etc. are arranged in the structure may be taken up later on.

2. Application of Hallidayan Rank-Scale Theory

In Halliday's theory of rank-scale as it was first presented in 1961, five ranks of Sentence, Clause, Group/Phrase, Word and Morpheme were distinguished. They are still retained in his theory after almost forty years, although the emphasis placed upon them seems to have changed as his theory has developed in other respects. At the present stage of development, the difference of Group and Phrase is more clearly explained than in 1961⁵⁾.

In 1994, Halliday gives a wider range of use to the term Group than Phrase, restricting the latter to the combination of Preposition+Complement. In other cases, he applies the term Group to the sequences of words with a Noun or Verb as Head. He explains this manner of use

of Group and Phrase very cleverly as, “A PHRASE is different from group in that, whereas a group is an expansion of a word, a phrase is a contraction of a clause. Starting from the opposite ends, the two achieve roughly the same status on the rank scale, as units that lie somewhere intermediate between the rank of a clause and that of a word”⁶⁾. As far as the grammar of English is concerned, the use of Phrase restricted to a sequence more closely related to Clause may have some good reason, but it is doubtful whether the same is true with the grammar of Japanese. Anyway, it is assumed here that there remains to be examined the applicability of the two ranks of Group and Phrase in other languages than English: the translation into Japanese of the English group given in the first section is assumed to be capable of being utilized for illustrating this theoretical point.

The first to be examined is an utterance in Japanese evidently at the rank of Sentence, such as:

(2) *Akai kaban ga hoshiku nai ka?* (=Don't you want a red bag?)

Now if {*KA*}, the sentence final particle of Interrogative/Indefiniteness is removed, the resulting form is supposed to be at the rank of Clause, one rank lower than Sentence:

(3) *akai kaban ga hoshiku nai* (=don't want a red bag)

The English version attached to (3) to explain its literal meaning is at the rank of Group since it lacks the preceding Nominal element which is indispensable to place it at the rank of (finite) Clause. In Japanese, however, that is not the case; for example, the above clause can be either a prenominal modifier like:

- (4) *[[akai kaban ga hoshiku nai] shoonen]* (=a boy who doesn't want a red bag)

or a preverbal modifier of MESSAGE CONTENT like:

- (5) *[[Shoonen wa] [[akai kaban ga hoshiku nai] to] iu]*. (=The boy says that he doesn't want the red bag.)

According to Halliday, if (3) above functions, as in (4) and (5), within a structure at the rank of Clause, the elements it consists of should be at the rank of Group/Phrase. For example, *akai kaban ga* should be at the rank of Phrase in (2) to (5).

Consider this in (6) and (6'):

- (6) *akai kaban ga hoshii* (=want a red bag)
(6') *akai kaban ga hoshii* (=I want a red bag)

These two forms are completely homophonous, without any difference in their surface structure. (6') can be at the rank of either Sentence or Clause. Both (6) and (6'), therefore, can function at the rank of Clause (cf. *[[akai kaban ga hoshii] shoonen]*).

Now although it is observed that (6) can replace the sequence (3) within the structure (4) and (5), the sequence to be replaced in these structures ends in *hoshikunai* instead of *hoshii*. While *hoshii* is a single word, *hoshikunai* is a combination of an allomorph of *hoshii*, {*hoshiK-*} and an adjective *nai*. Therefore, in the Clause (3) there would have been embedded another Clause ending in a bound form:

- (7) *akai kaban ga hoshiK-*.

{*hoshiK-*} is to be arrived at through a morphological change from {*HOSHI-i*}. Here, the morphological process should be assumed to take place at the rank of Word or lower, not at the rank of Group/Phrase or Clause. Just as *hoshi-i* in (6), however, the bound form {*hoshiK-*}, is modified by the sequence of elements:

(8) *akai kaban ga*

to form a Clause as in (4) and (5). After all, (8) which is dependent in (7) upon an allomorph should be considered as a rank-shifted Phrase functioning at the rank of Word. It is obvious that in (6) as a Clause, there is no such rank-shift to take into account.

Now, the sequence (8) ends in an non-inflective particle functioning as the marker of a subject phrase. (8) is a Phrase with a structure:

(8') [[*akai*] *kaban*] *ga*]

And parallel to this structure are the phrases ending in *no*(gen.), *wo*(acc.), *ni*(loc.), *de*(instr.), *kara*(abl.), etc. which can replace *ga* in (8') above, changing at the same time its logico-semantic as well as syntactic function.

Now if Hallidayan scale of ranks is to be applied to the translation in question, there is no question about assigning Ranks to its related elements or constructions:

Sentence to (2), (6');

Clause to (3), (6);

Phrase to (8);

Word to *kaban*, *akai*, *hoshii*, *nai*, etc.

Morpheme to *hoshiK-* in (7).

Then, it will be convenient as well as reasonable to retain the rank of Group for such combinations as *akai kaban* whose syntactic function is yet undetermined. In the same way, *hoshiku nai* must be a Group as it is, namely in combination with *akai kaban ga*. This latter combination, however, is to be seen as functioning as a Clause in (9)B, below:

(9) [A: *Kono o-kashi ga hoshiku nai ka?*]

(=‘Don’t you like this cake?’)

B: *Hoshiku nai yo.* (=‘I don’t.’)

This can also function at the rank of Phrase like (3) as the constituent of (4) and (5) above, since its counterpart *akai kaban ga* in (3) is a Phrase in function. As for its function at the rank of Group, an example will suffice for the purpose of this paper: *totemo hoshii* (=want very much), where there is no indication of its functioning within a Phrase structure.

All these examples have been given to illustrate how rank-shift works in explaining a variety of structures.

Now, coming back to the translation given earlier, its main part

(10) *kiroi botan no tuita, rippana akai kawa no kaban*

should be at the rank of Group as a whole, and can obviously be nowhere else, in spite of its length of sequence. Here, the Clause:

(11) *kiroi botan no tuita*

with its structure:

(11') [[[[*kiroi*] *botan*] *no*] *tuita*]

modifying the Nominal Head *kaban*, should be considered as rank-shifted Phrase/Clause, embedded in a structure at the rank of Word. The same is the case with the Phrase *kawa no*, functioning as a prenominal modifier at the rank of Word together with *rippana* and *akai*.

All the above argument will justify dealing with the Japanese translation of <All the twenty excellent red leather bags with yellow buttons> as being at the rank of Group, since its function within a sequence of a higher Rank is undetermined.

3. Determiners and Quantifiers

The original English version includes <all the twenty ..., ... bags>, but as far as the given English expression is concerned, there seems to be no difference between the above and <all twenty ... bags>. In English, however, this is not always the case. <All> without <the> should be appropriate in the following generic statements:

(12) *All* plants breathe as well as men do.

——Kruisinga-Erades (1947: 413. 1)

(13) *All* boys are not alike. ——Curme (1931), p. 58.

But in (14) below, <all> and <all the> are synonymous. This is shown by transferring <all> to the position after the operator:

(14a) *All* students should register before October 1st.

——Zandvoort (1972), p. 487.

(14b) *All the* students should register before October 1st.

(14c) *The* students should *all* register before October 1st.

(14d) *Students should *all* register before October 1st.

(14a) is, therefore, different from (12) and (13) in that it is not a generic statement, but a statement relating to a whole group of specific students. (14a) is referentially constrained by the context of situation in which it is uttered, whereas (12) and (13) are not.

Turning to the comparison by translation into Japanese, the English version should be interpreted as having specific reference rather than generic reference. This will be illustrated by comparing the following with (14a-d):

(15a) *All* twenty bags were soiled.

(15b) *All the* twenty bags were soiled.

(15c) *All of the* twenty bags were soiled.

(15d) *The* twenty bags were *all* soiled.

If the Nominal Phrases of (15a-d) are to be translated, ordinary speakers of Japanese will give:

(16) *nijuk-ko* *no* *kaban* *wa* *mina* (*yogorete* *ita*).
 <twenty-items><gen.> <bags> <topic> <all> <soiled> <were>

But the following are also possible as grammatical:

(17a) *nijuk-ko no subete no kaban* [cf. **nijuk-ko no mina no kaban*]⁷⁾

(17b) *subete no nijuk-ko no kaban* [cf. **mina no nijuk-ko no kaban*]

All this illustrates the fact that the arrangement of quantifiers and determiners is different in English and Japanese.

4.0. Word Order

In English, the determiners such as <the, my, a, John's, etc.> have important referential functions; some determiner or other is obligatory to mark a Noun Phrase with, except for most Proper Nouns. However, the Japanese language has no specific grammatical category of Definiteness; there is, therefore, no position in the Japanese translation in which the determiners <all the> of the English version find their counterpart. If, however, the difference in referential function is to be looked for in Japanese, it can be found to exist in the choice of nominative/topic particles such as GA vs. WA. Compare, for instance:

(18a) *Kaban GA hoshii*. [=I want *a* bag.]

(18b) *Kaban WA yogorete ita*. [= *The* bag was soiled.]

These particles are no determiners at all, however.

Now what is to be considered is the order in which modifiers are arranged, except for the Japanese word for <the> and <all>. The English adjectives as premodifiers are classified according to the position they take in a noun phrase. The class of adjectives which can be used attributively as well as predicatively are considered as CENTRAL, in contrast to those which cannot. Those whose function is restricted to predicative use, such as <afraid>, are out of question for the purpose of the present paper. Those adjectives which can be used in their attributive function only are PERIPHERAL⁸⁾, but they may have to be taken into account in this paper.

Central and some Peripheral adjectives are subdivided according to the position they take in a prenominal modifier Group⁹⁾:

(a) PRECENTRAL: eg. <certain, sheer, complete, slight, etc.>

(b) CENTRAL: eg. <hungry, ugly, stupid, silent, rich, etc.>

(c) POSTCENTRAL: eg. <retired, sleeping, red, pink, etc.>

(d) PREHEAD: eg. <experimental, political, American, etc.>

These are to be arranged in the order of (a)+(b)+(c)+(d)¹⁰.

As for the determiners and quantifiers, whose position is determined to precede modifiers, are classified according to the positions they take in the determiner Group¹¹:

(A) PREDETERMINER: <all, both, half; twice, double, etc.>

(B) CENTRAL DETERMINER: <the, a/an, 0[zero]; this, that; my, her; what, which; no, each, some, any, enough, etc.>

(C) POSTDETERMINER: <first, fourth, other, last; many, few, two, little, a lot of, plenty of, etc.>

If all these rules for a nominal phrase structure are applied to the original English version in question:

<All the twenty excellent red leather bags with yellow buttons>

the determiners and prenominal modifiers are all found to be arranged completely in accordance with the rules, i. e.:

(19) (A)+(B)+(C)+(b)+(c)+(d)+HEAD (+POSTMODIFIER)

When it comes to the examination of word order in the translation, it is obviously feasible to disregard (B) for the reason already given above. The order to be examined, therefore, is that of the Japanese equivalents to (A) <all>, (C) <twenty>, (b) <excellent>, (c) <red> and (d) <leather>. Arithmetically, all the possible combinations of these five elements amount to one hundred and twenty. In order to examine them, it would be advisable for the sake of clarity to separate the determiner Group (A)+(C) from the modifier Group (b)+(c)+(d).

4.1. (A) + (C) + Head

In extracting from (1) above the portion relevant for the examination of the determiner Group equivalents:

(20) *njuk-ko no subete no kaban* (cf. fig. 3)

the following will be compared with it:

(20') *subete no njuk-ko no kaban.* (cf. fig. 4)

If the prenominal modification in (20)/(20') is to be interpreted as the realization of the potential structure [WHOLE+PART], (20) will be appropriate, while (20') is not. The reason will be clearly seen if we observe the following pair:

(21) *njuk-ko no iti-bu no kaban*

<twenty-items> <gen.> <one-part> <gen.> <bags>

(21') *iti-bu no njuk-ko no kaban*

<one-part> <i. e.> <twenty-items> <gen.> <bags>

(21) is equivalent to the English <part of the twenty bags> as well as <part of the bags, namely the twenty bags>, while (21') is only equivalent to <part of the bags, namely the twenty bags>. This comparison will illustrate the difference of (20) and (20') in their underlying semantic structure, although either structure amounts to the identical entity in reference: <all of the twenty bags> = <all the bags, namely the twenty bags>.

Now the original English version may not imply PART-WHOLE

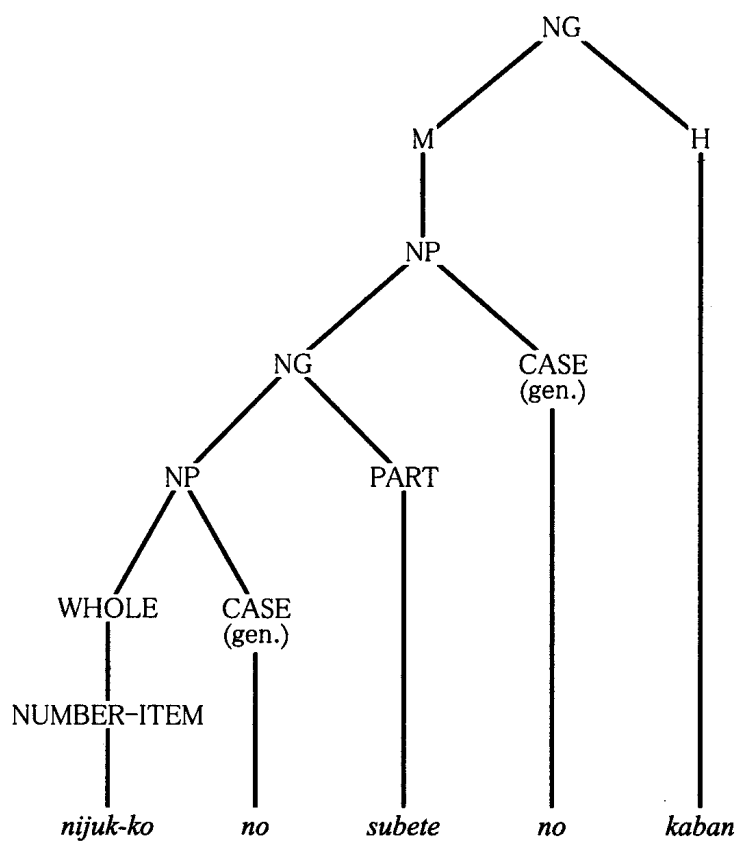


Fig. 3.

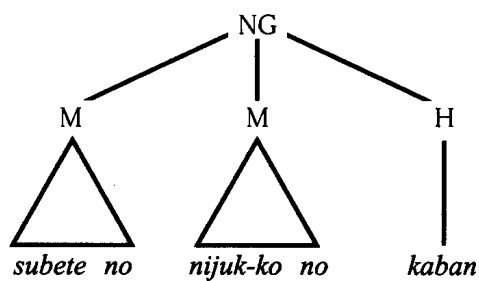


Fig. 4.

relationship as is seen in (20), in which the existence of more than twenty bags is implied, including those which are not red, or not excellent, or not made of leather. If that is the case, the first translation (1) should be turned to:

- (1') *kiroi botan no tuita, subete no nijuk-ko no rippa*
 <yellow> <butons> <with> <all> <twenty> <excellent>

akai kawa no kaban

<red> <leather> <bags>

All this means that in Japanese the order of determiner and quantifier can be either (A)+(C) or (C)+(A) depending upon the potential semantic structure, rather than syntactic constraint.

4.2. (b) + (c) + (d) + HEAD

Of the three modifiers, *rippana*, *akai* and *kawa no*, the first two are adjectives, and the last is a Phrase consisting of a noun plus a genitive case particle. The noun in this Phrase is MATERIAL ideationally, as was referred to in the section 2 in touching upon the ambiguity involved. It will be clear that *rippana kawa no kaban* can be ambiguous for the same reason that *akai kawa no kaban* is. Thus:

(22a) *rippana akai kawa no kaban* [in the order: (b)+(c)+(d)+HEAD]

(22b) *akai rippana kawa no kaban* [in the order: (c)+(b)+(d)+HEAD]

are both possible but ambiguous in that the Group *rippana akai* or *akai rippana* can be a modifier to *kawa*, referring to <a bag made of excellent red leather>, since *rippana kawa* and *akai kawa* are good Japanese both of them. And the following four examples will exhaust the six possible sequences of the three premodifiers (b), (c) and (d) of Japanese:

(23a) *kawa no rippana akai kaban* [in the order: (d)+(b)+(c)+HEAD]

(23b) *kawa no akai rippana kaban* [in the order: (d)+(c)+(b)+HEAD]

(23c) *akai kawa no rippana kaban* [in the order: (c)+(d)+(b)+HEAD]

(23d) *rippana kawa no akai kaban* [in the order: (b)+(d)+(c)+HEAD]

There will be no need to refer to the same ambiguity in (23c) and (23d)

that is found in (22a) and (22b).

4.3. Constraint on Ordering

Obviously there is lack of constraint on the order in which prenominal modifiers are arranged in a Noun Phrase of the Japanese language. The relevant Japanese modifiers are not only of the corresponding English types (a), (b), (c), and (d), but, as there is no category of determiners in Japanese, the determiner-quantifier types such as (A), (B,) and (C) can also be taken into account. Some type of quantifier may come in between modifiers, resulting in a sequence such as (b)+(C)+(d)+HEAD, referring to <all the excellent leather bags>.

- (24) *rippana* *subete* *no* *kawa* *no* *kaban*
 <excellent> <all> <gen.> <leather> <gen.> <bags>

Similarly:

- (25a) *akai nijuk-ko no rippana kaban* [(d)+(C)+(b)+HEAD]
 (25b) *subete no kawa no akai kaban* [(A)+(d)+(c)+HEAD]
 (25c) *kawa no nijuk-ko no subete no rippana kaban*
 [(d)+(C)+(A)+(b)+HEAD]

All these examples will be sufficient to lead us to the understanding that it is futile to list all of the one hundred and twenty possible combinations of the equivalents to the English determiners and modifiers. But this does not imply that there is no means in Japanese by which to differentiate and disambiguate some questionable combinations. For example, <a distant and invisible small boat> can be trans-

lated as in (26):

- | | | | | |
|------|----------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|
| (26) | <i>tookute</i> | <i>mienai</i> | <i>chiisai</i> | <i>fune</i> |
| | <distant> | <invisible> | <small> | <boat> |

Here, *tookute* should be morphologically analyzed as {*tooK-u + te*}, in which *te* is a conjunctive particle. The English version has <and> to signal the causal relationship between the distance and invisibility. *Te* can have a similar function. *Chiisai* can similarly be transformed into {*chiisaK-u + te*} to signify <too small to be seen> as in:

- (27) *chiisakute mienai fune*

But if this causal relationship is to be put together into (26), then the order should be changed as in (28a):

- (28a) *tookute, chiisakute mienai fune*
 (28b) **tookute mienai chiisakute fune*

(28b) is ungrammatical, however. In (26-28a), the order in which the modifiers are arranged is not arbitrary; there is constraint which prevents an illogical combination from occurring. In these examples, the modifier *mienai* is not a simple word, although it is at the rank of Word in these contexts. In fact, it is a combination of two morphs: {*mi-E + NAI*}. *Nai*, equivalent to the English <not> or <no>, is itself an adjective inflective in the same way as *akai* (=red). It is, therefore, not unreasonable to consider *tookute mienai*, *chiisakute mienai* and *tookute, chiisakute mienai* are rank-shifted Clauses, just like the corresponding English postmodifying adjectival Clauses.

In the surface structure, however, it is difficult to differentiate them from the ordinary (b)+(c)+(d)+HEAD type of sequence.

A similar analysis applies to the modifier sequence of (d)+(b)+(c) type such as (23a) *kawa no rippana akai kaban*. This can be compared with the following ambiguous combination: (23d) *rippana kawa no akai kaban*. (23a) and (23d) were treated as if they were synonymous above, and they can be, even if they may be differentiated in structure. In one analysis, the Group *kawa no rippana/rippana kawa no* can be structurally differentiated as

(29a)	<i>kawa</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>rippana</i>
	<leather>	<nom.>	<excellent>
(29b)	<i>rippana</i>	<i>kawa</i>	<i>no</i>
	<excellent>	<leather>	<gen.>

but they are semantically the same. What is different in (29a) and (29b) is the function of the particle *no*: in (29a), it functions as a nominative case marker equivalent, implying that what is excellent is the leather, whereas in (29b) the quality of excellence is attributed to the leather, i. e. the leather which is excellent. (Cf. the example in fig. 5.) Therefore, in spite of the structural difference, they can be synonymous. But this synonymity is simply potential, not being realized in the surface structure.

It should be noted that the same pattern is found with regard to (29a) and the part of the tentative translation (1) above, *kiroi botan no tuita*, where *no* has the same function as in (29a).

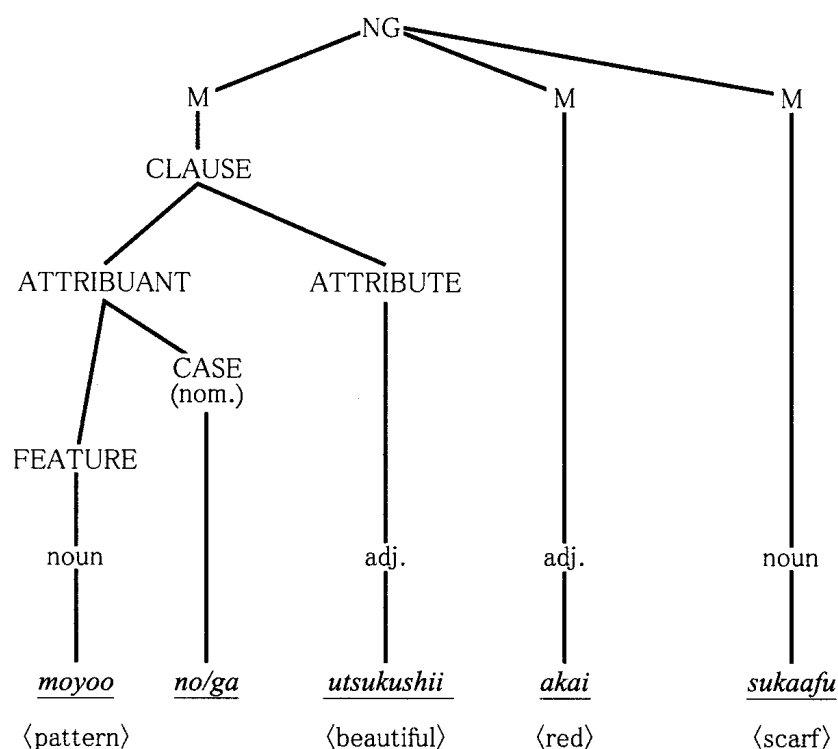


Fig. 5.

5. Conclusion

In comparing the ordering of (determiners and) prenominal modifiers in the structure of Noun Phrases in English and Japanese, the grammar of English as an analytic language puts strict constraints upon the ordering of elements; those elements are classified and subclassified according to the function they fulfill. The Noun Phrase in English must be structured as DET(+MOD(+MOD))+HEAD(+MOD), in whatever position they may occur. Therefore, from Hallidayan point of view, either it is of no use to distinguish a Noun Phrase from a Noun Group, or a Noun Group can function at the ranks of Sentence down to Word.

On the other hand, Japanese as an agglutinative language needs to attach one non-inflective particle or another to the end of a Noun

functioning as Head in a Phrase which might be an element of a Clause. The non-inflective particles are such as *ga*, *no*, *wo*, *kara*, etc. as in *kaban ga*(nom.), *kaban no*(gen.), *kaban wo*(acc.), *kaban kara*(abl.), etc. Prenominal modifiers, however, can take their positions preceding the Head in the Noun Phrase in a way in which there is almost no syntactic rule to determine their order. But it has been observed that the Head of a Noun Phrase followed by a non-inflective particle can be preceded by any number or any kind of modifiers as far as the sequence is logically or semantically not incongruous.

It will be reasonable, therefore, to regard those modifiers as a premodifying Group within a Noun Phrase, and to allow them to function at the rank of Word by rank-shift. Thus, in terms of Hallidayan metatheory, a sequence of prenominal modifiers will be regarded at the rank of Group within a structure at the rank of Phrase, distinguishing Group and Phrase clearly insofar as the grammar of the Japanese language is concerned¹²⁾.

NOTES

* This paper was first written in a personal correspondence with a former colleague about 20 years ago, in order to answer the question he had posed. This is a completely revised version of it.

- 1) Categories of the theory of grammar. *Word*, Vol. 17, No. 3.
- 2) *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. Edward Arnold. 1994².
- 3) Crystal (1997), p. 422.
- 4) Originally offered as 'beautiful', but changed to 'excellent' by the author, who takes into account the fact that in Japan a leather product is rarely spoken of as 'beautiful'.
- 5) Halliday (1961), p. 253.
- 6) Halliday (1994), p. 180.

- 7) It will be possible to examine the possibility of replacing *subete* and *mina* by *zenbu*. In the same way as *mina*, *zenbu no nijuk-ko no kaban* is no good, while *nijuk-ko no zenbu no kaban* is OK.
- 8) Cf. Quirk, et al. (1985), p. 403.
- 9) Ibid., p. 437; pp. 1338ff.
- 10) Hosoe (1956), p. 230, where Hosoe refers to the order in which prenominal adjectives are arranged as (1)demonstrative, interrogative, multiplier; (2)quantifier; (3)size; (4)form, shape; (5)quality, action, state; (6)colour; (7)age; (8)material, origin, affiliation. But immediately afterwards, he quotes an exceptional example to show the above-mentioned ordering is no absolute rule: "There are[sic] a beautiful big beast."
——S. E. White.
- 11) Quirk, et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 253ff.
- 12) It may as well be added here that the term GROUP has been used in the traditional English grammar, as in GROUP GENITIVE with regard to the use of Noun Group in <the Duke of Gloucester's daughter> and GROUP COMPOUND like <good-for-nothing>.

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