

Measure Phrase Modification in the Extended Projections of Adjectives

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This paper deals with the Japanese counterparts of (1).

(1) This building is 20 meters tall.

The past literature (Hayashishita 2009 and Snyder, Wexler, and Das 1995) points to cases like (2), which only allow the comparative reading, and concludes that Japanese lacks the structure that associates a measure phrase (MP) with the neutral reading of dimensional adjectives.

(2) Kono biru-wa 20-meetoru takai.
this building-top 20-ten-meter tall
'This building is twenty meters taller.'
'*This building is twenty meters tall.'

The conclusion is premature, however, in view of examples like (3).

(3) a. Kono biru-wa takasa 20-meetoru dearu.
this building-top height 20-meter is
'This building is twenty meters tall.'
b. Kono biru-wa takasa 20-meetoru aru.
this building-top height 20-meter is
'This building is twenty meters tall.'

After all, Japanese has a way of expressing the same meaning as the English example in (1). This paper explores issues surrounding the treatment of the two types of constructions in (3), which have not received proper attention in the past.

Internal Syntax: The fact that MP follows the adjective in (3) finds an analogue in Romance languages, as illustrated in (4).

(4) Gianni è alto due metri. Italian
Gianni is tall two meters

This word order is derived by raising AP past MP, as suggested in Watanabe (2009, to appear). The fact that *takasa* is case-less in (3) indicates that it is not a noun.

The close morphological relation between adjectives and nouns is not surprising and can be observed even in English, where a couple of “nominalized” adjectives feed the formation of otherwise de-adjectival verbs by means of affixation of *-en*, as in (5b).

(5) a. broaden, deepen, loosen, soften, thicken, tighten
b. heighten, lengthen, strengthen

Interface Questions: There is a semantic difference between (3a) and (3b), which becomes visible when there is a continuation as in (6).

(6) a. Kono biru-wa takasa 10-meetoru dearu. Totemo hikui.
this building-top height 10-meter is very short
b. Kono biru-wa takasa 10-meetoru aru. #Totemo hikui.
this building-top height 10-meter is very short

The oddness of (6b) suggests that the interpretation of the adjective in (3b)/(6b) is not neutral, which I take to be due to the presence of *pos* as the Deg head. Following Watanabe (2009, to appear) in the lower placement of MP in Spec of #P, with Spec of DimP as the landing site for AP, I propose (7) as the structure underlying (3b)/(6b).

(7) [DegP [DimP AP [#P MP ~~AP~~ #] Dim] [Deg pos]]

Since (3a)/(6a) allows the neutral interpretation, on the other hand, I propose that (3a)/(6a) lacks DegP.

Since the plain adjective accompanied by *pos* is followed by *aru* as in (8), I claim that DegP is selected by the null Pred head below *aru*, modifying Nishiyama's (1999) analysis slightly.

(8) Sono kasetu-wa moshiroku-wa aru.
That hypothesis-top interesting-top be.pres
'That hypothesis is interesting.'

The overt Pred head *de*, in contrast, takes various kinds of categories as its complement, as shown in (9).

(9) a. Hanako-wa gakusei-dearu.
Hanako-top student-is
'Hanako is a student.'
b. Hanako-wa (totemo) kenkou-dearu.
hanako-top very healthy-is
'Hanako is (very) healthy.'
c. Sono tegami-wa Hanako-kara-dearu.
that letter-top Hanako-from-is
'That letter is from Hanako.'

DimP is another category that can be combined with *de*.

Ref.

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