

Grammar D: Cases

■ Case in Japanese

● What Is Case?

Cases express the syntagmatic relationship mostly between nouns, or phrases equivalent to nouns, and the pivotal elements within the sentence that govern the nouns or noun equivalents. In Japanese grammar study, there are several standpoints as to the range of grammatical features that may be described as case. A broader definition takes the position that as long as a constituent has a syntagmatic relationship with other constituents in a sentence, it is a matter of case, even if the constituent is not a noun phrase. Of those who take the position that the matter of case should be limited to noun phrases, some include only instances in which the adverbial relationship with the predicate is involved. Others include the adnominal relationship with other noun phrases as well. Some limit the scope even more narrowly and place the core of case in the syntagmatic relationships with the noun phrases that are arguments specified by the predicate, such as the underlined arguments of *kariru* 'borrow' in *Doyōbi ni daigaku de A-kun wa B-kun ni hon o karita* 'On Saturday A borrowed a book from B'.

● Two Facets of Case

Two facets of cases are observed in noun phrases that bear a syntagmatic relationship with the predicate. One is how the syntagmatic relationship is expressed (form of expression), and the other is how the syntagmatic relationship realized through a certain expression, represents a semantic relationship. The former facet of case is called the surface case, and the latter is called the semantic (deep) case. The surface case is expressed, for example, by means of declension in Latin, added particles in Japanese, and varying the word order in Chinese.

● Surface Cases in Japanese

Surface case markers to go with the predicate include the particles *ga*, *o*, *ni*, *e*, *kara*, *to*, *de*, *yor**i*, and *made*. *No* works with nouns, and may combine with other case particles to indicate a variety of relations between nouns, as in *e no*, *kara no*, *to no*, *de no*, *yor**i no*, and *made no*.

● Semantic Cases in Japanese

Nothing definite can be said about the criteria for abstracting the semantic cases that are expressed by certain forms, or about the types and numbers of semantic cases that have been classified. Japanese semantic cases described below are thus tentative. Here are some examples: *Otoko ga hashitta* 'A man ran' (agent of an action); *To ga hiraita* 'The door opened' (subject of a change); *A-kun ga B-kun o tataita* 'A hit B', *Kabin o watta* 'I broke a vase', *Mukashi no koto o omoidashita* 'I remembered things from the past' (patient); *Hanataba o kanojo ni okuuta* 'I sent her a bouquet (counterpart as destination); *Kaiin kara kaihi o atsumeta* 'I collected dues from the members' (counterpart as source); *A-ko {to/ni} au* 'I will see A-ko' (counterpart as fellow participant); *mono-oto ni odorote* 'started by a noise' (cause); "*Niwa ni deta* 'I went out into the yard', *Nihongo ni yakusu* 'translate into Japanese' (destination); *Heya {o/kara} tobidashita* 'I rushed out

of the room' *Tamago kara chigyo o kaeshita* 'I hatched young fish from eggs' (source); *Tsukue no ue ni hon ga aru* 'There is a book on the table' (place of existence); *atari o samayou* 'wander in the neighborhood' (locus of motion).

→格 Case (7-D), 動詞と格助詞 Verbs and Case Particles (2-D), 格助詞の用法 Usage of Case Particles (2-D)

● References

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