

■ *O* and *Ga* of Object

Case particle *ga* expresses the object to which emotion and senses are directed when such emotion and senses are expressed with adjectives. Examples: *Inu ga hoshii* ‘I want a dog,’ *Hannin ga nikui* ‘I hate the culprit,’ *Supōtsu ga suki da* ‘I like sports,’ *Tabako no kemuri ga kirai da* ‘I dislike smoke from cigarettes.’ Case particle *o* is sometimes used instead, though not as common, as in *kanojo o suki da* ‘I like her.’ When the predicate is a verb, the object is marked by Case particle *o*.

Examples: *Inu o hoshigarau* ‘One wants a dog,’ *Hannin o nikumu* ‘One hates the culprit,’ *Supōtsu o konomu* ‘One likes sports,’ *Tabako no kemuri o kirau* ‘One dislikes smoke from cigarettes.’

Even when the predicate is a verb, *ga* marks the object in the following examples. (1) *mizu o (ga) nomitai* ‘one wants to drink water’, *eiga o (ga) mitai* ‘one wants to see a movie’ (*-tai* is attached to the verb to express desire); (2) *Chūgokugo o (ga) hanaseru* ‘one can speak Chinese’, *gohan o (ga) taberareru* ‘one is able to have a meal’ (potential); (3) *nimotsu o (ga) tsunde aru* ‘the luggage has been loaded,’ *kuruma o (ga) tomete aru* ‘the car has been parked’ (auxiliary verb *-te aru* is attached to the verb to express the resulting state). These verbs express action when used as single verbs, but they carry stativity when combined with such suffixes as *-tai*, potential expressions, and *-te aru*.

However, in the instances described above, *o* tends to be used when the distance between the object of the action and the predicate is far apart. In a sentence such as *Shukudai o asu made ni zembu yatteshimaitai* ‘I want to get all the homework done by tomorrow,’ using *o* makes the meaning of the sentence much easier to comprehend. If the object is a person, *o* is used to avoid the potential ambiguity whether the person is the object or the subject. In *Tarō ga suisen dekiru*, it may be construed that *Tarō* is the subject. To make it clear that *Tarō* is the object, the sentence has to be *Tarō o suisen dekiru* ‘We can recommend Taro.’

In the *-te aru* construction in (3), *ga* is used to describe the situation which the speaker is observing right then and there, as in *Hora, asoko ni posutaa ga hatte aru* ‘Look, there is a poster pasted over there.’ The principle at work here is the same as in sentences describing phenomena where *ga* is used, as in *Ame ga futte kita* ‘The rain started to fall.’ When there is no immediate situation, *o* is often used, as in *Yobō chūsha o shite aru* ‘I have had an immunization shot’ and *Ano hito ni nakōdo o tanonde aru* ‘We have asked that person to be the marriage go-between,’ to indicate that the effect is being sustained.

→格助詞の用法 Usage of Case Particles (2-D)

● References

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