

Genitive modifiers —*Ga/no* conversion revisited—

Masayoshi Shibatani, Sung Yeo Chung and Bayaerduleng

(Rice University and NINJAL / Osaka University / Osaka University)

Many languages of the world allow a genitive phrase to modify different types of nominals including nominalizations in a parallel fashion, as in English constructions *John's books*, *John's singing of an aria in the shower room*, and *John's singing an aria in the shower room*. In Japanese and Korean, genitive modifiers of this kind, other than the standard possessive construction, are seen most conspicuously in relative clauses, where what corresponds to the nominative subject of an RC appears marked *no* (Japanese) or *uy* (Korean). The past works dealing with this phenomenon, known as *ga/no* conversion in the literature, take it for granted that these genitive marked nominals are grammatical subjects without any substantial argument or empirical support. Works dealing with other languages also make a similar assumption about the genitive modifiers in RCs/nominalizations, as in the case of the genitive phrase *John's* in the English nominalization construction *John's singing an aria in the shower room*. That is, the past works assume that *ga/no* conversion or the genitive marking in nominalizations are simply a case alternation without affecting the structure or the relevant grammatical relations. This paper argues against such a treatment and that the genitive modifiers in RCs/nominalizations are not grammatical subjects; instead they are simply modifiers similar to the genitive modifier of the standard possessive construction. With a brief argument against treating the genitive modifier of the standard possessive construction as a grammatical subject, the paper offers arguments for the genitive-modifier analysis supported by a detailed semantic and syntactic analysis of the relevant constructions as well as those beyond *ga/no* conversion such as *nasu=no nita=no* (lit) 'what is cooked of eggplants' and *kami-no-ke=no naqai=no* (lit) 'what is long of the hair'. Additional supporting data are drawn from Mongolian and Turkish as well as languages outside the Altaic group.