

## A Three-way Ambiguity Analysis of Japanese Passives

HOSHI, Hiroto

Akita University

### 1. Introduction

Kuroda (1965, 1979, 1983, 1985, 1992), Kuno (1973, 1983, 1986), Saito (1982), Kitagawa and Kuroda (1992), among others, help us understand important properties of Japanese passives. Significantly, however, we have not been able to come up with a satisfactory analysis of Japanese passives which explains all those properties in an adequate way. It is thus worthwhile aiming both to identify some of the most important discoveries of the nature of Japanese passives, and to point out some remaining problems for passives in Japanese.

To attain the above mentioned aim, in Section 2, I show Kuroda's (1965, 1979, 1983, 1985, 1992) two-way ambiguity analysis of Japanese passives which seems to be formally minimal and empirically well substantiated. In Section 3, however, I demonstrate that Saito's (1982) observation of Japanese passives implies that Japanese passives may involve 'Case absorption' like English passives (cf. Kuno 1973, Chomsky 1981). There, I argue that it is not clear if Kuroda's two-way ambiguity analysis could be compatible with Saito's finding (cf. Hoshi 1991, 1994a-b, 1999). Furthermore, in Section 4, I show Kuno's (1983, 1986) data which seem to pose further potential problems for Kuroda's two-way ambiguity analysis of Japanese passives. In Section 5, in order to overcome problems for Kuroda's two-way ambiguity analysis, I attempt to suggest a new three-way ambiguity analysis of Japanese passives (cf. Hoshi 1991, 1994a-b, 1999), while pointing out some remaining problems for future research (see Hoshi to appear). In so doing, I conclude the discussion of this paper.

### 2. Complement Object Deletion and NP Movement (Kuroda 1965, 1979, 1983, 1985, 1992)

Consider the examples in (1).

- (1) a. Mary-ga John-o nagur-ta.  
Mary-Nom John-Acc punch-Pst  
'Mary punched John.'
- b. John-ga Mary-ni nagur-are -ta.  
John-Nom Mary-Dat punch-Pass-Pst  
'John was punched by Mary.'

(1a) is an active sentence, whereas (1b) is its passive

counterpart in Japanese. In (1a), the external argument of the two-place predicate *nagur* 'punch', i.e. *Mary*, is at the sentence initial position marked with the Nominative Case marker *-ga*; the internal argument of *nagur*, i.e. *John*, is marked with the Accusative Case marker, *-o*, and is immediately before the transitive verb.

In passive example (1b), on the other hand, the Japanese passive morpheme (*r*)*are* is attached to the transitive verb *nagur* 'punch.' In (1b), the logical object of *nagur*, i.e. the patient internal argument *John*, appears with the Nominative Case marker *-ga* at the sentence initial position, and the logical subject *Mary* appears with the Dative Case marker *-ni* (cf. *by* in English).

Hence, it appears that the pair of Japanese examples in (1) might correspond to the English active-passive pair in (2).

- (2) a. Mary punched John/him. (cf. 1a)  
b. John<sub>i</sub>/He<sub>i</sub> was punched *t<sub>i</sub>* by Mary. (cf. 1b)

Consider now the examples in (3).

- (3) a. John-ga Mary-ni nikki-o yom-are -ta.  
John-Nom Mary-Dat diary-Acc read-Pass-Pst  
'John was affected by Mary's reading a diary.'
- b. John-ga akanboo-ni nak-are -ta.  
John-Nom baby -Dat cry -Pass-Pst  
'John was affected by a baby's crying.'

(3a-b) are two more instances of passive in Japanese. In (3a), the Japanese passive morpheme (*r*)*are* is attached to the transitive verb *yom* 'read.' In this passive, the logical subject of the two-place predicate *yom*, i.e. the agent argument *Mary*, shows up with Dative Case *-ni* like the semantic subject of *nagur* in (1b).

Notice, however, that unlike the logical object of *nagur* in (1b), the logical object of *yom* in (3a), i.e. *nikki* 'diary,' appears with the Accusative Case marker *-o* immediately before the transitive verb *yom*. Notice also that in Japanese passive (3b), (*r*)*are* is combined with the intransitive verb *nak* 'cry.' In (3b), the argument of the one-place predicate *nak*, i.e. *akanboo* 'baby,' appears with the Dative Case marker *-ni*, like the external argument of the transitive verb *nagur* 'punch' in (1b) and the logical subject of *yom* 'read' in (3a).

Interestingly, in Japanese passive (3a), the Nominative Case marked argument, *John*, does not appear to have any semantic relationship with the transitive verb *yom* ‘read,’ and similarly, in (3b), the Nominative Case marked NP *John* at the sentence initial position seems to have no semantic relation with the intransitive verb *nak* ‘cry.’

Because English examples in (4a-b) are unacceptable,

(4) a. \*John was read a diary by Mary. (cf. 3a)

b. \*John was cried by a baby. (cf. 3b)

it seems that English lacks passives which correspond to the Japanese ones in (3a-b).

Importantly, to account for these apparently complex properties of Japanese passives in (1b) and (3a-b), Kuroda (1965, 1979, 1983, 1985, 1992) proposes the following simple, uniform analysis:

- (5) a. [S<sub>1</sub> John<sub>i</sub>-ga [S<sub>2</sub> Mary<sub>i</sub>-ni John<sub>i</sub>-o nagur] [v are]-  
↓  
deletion  
 ta] (for 1b)
- b. [S<sub>1</sub> John<sub>i</sub>-ga [S<sub>2</sub> Mary<sub>i</sub>-ni nikki-o yom] [v are]-ta]  
 (for 3a)
- c. [S<sub>1</sub> John<sub>i</sub>-ga [S<sub>2</sub> akanboo<sub>i</sub>-ni nak] [v are]-ta]  
 (for 3b)

Representations proposed by Kuroda for passive examples (1b), (3a) and (3b) are given in (5a), (5b), and (5c), respectively. As illustrated in (5a-c), under Kuroda’s uniform analysis, the Japanese passive morpheme (*r)are* is considered to be a two-place predicate which functions as the verb of the matrix clause S<sub>1</sub> (cf. Kuroda’s 1965 analysis of Japanese causative morpheme (*s)ase*). The passive verb (*r)are* has the broad meaning of the verb *affect*, i.e. that the event described by the embedded clause S<sub>2</sub> *has an influence on* the subject of the matrix clause S<sub>1</sub>, or S<sub>2</sub> *brings about a change in* the subject of S<sub>1</sub> (Kuroda 1992, p. 5; see Kuno 1983, 1986 for an alternative proposal for the meaning of the Japanese passive morpheme (*r)are*). In structures (5a-c), the Nominative Case marked NP *John* in (5a-c) is the external argument selected by the passive verb (*r)are*, and the embedded clause S<sub>2</sub> is the internal argument of (*r)are*. The Dative Case-marked NPs, *Mary* in (5a-b) and *akanboo* ‘baby’ in (5c), are the subject of the embedded clause S<sub>2</sub>.

Under Kuroda’s analysis, the above mentioned differences between one type of Japanese passive (1b) and the other types in (3a-b) are in a sense formally insignificant. In other words, Kuroda claims that given the two-place predicate analysis of the Japanese passive

morpheme (*r)are*, structures (5a-c) are an automatic consequence, i.e. a null hypothesis. In (1b), the matrix subject happens to be coreferential with the embedded object, and under the identity, the embedded object is deleted as illustrated in (5a) (cf. The deleted embedded object in (5a) is PRO under Kuroda’s 1983 and Hoshi’s 1991, 1994a-b, 1999 analyses, whereas the deleted complement object in (5a) is pro under Kitagawa and Kuroda’s 1992 analysis). On the other hand, there is simply no such identity between the matrix subject and the complement object in (3a); (3b) does not contain any complement object. Hence, under Kuroda’s analysis, neither (3a) nor (3b) may involve complement object deletion like (1b), as illustrated in (5b-c).

Significantly, Kuroda’s uniform analysis of Japanese passives in (5a-c) is not only desirable because of its formal simplicity, but also seems to be empirically plausible. This is because it could provide us with a pleasing way to account for the contrast such as the one between (6a) and (6b) (cf. Inoue 1976).

- (6) a. \*Fermat<sub>i</sub>-no teiri<sub>i</sub>-ga John<sub>i</sub>-ni syoomeis  
 Fermat<sub>i</sub>-Gen theorem<sub>i</sub>-Nom John<sub>i</sub>-Dat prove  
 -are -ta.  
 -Pass-Pst  
 ‘Fermat’s theorem was proven by John’
- b. Fermat<sub>i</sub>-no teiri<sub>i</sub> -ga John<sub>i</sub>-ni yotte  
 Fermat<sub>i</sub>-Gen theorem<sub>i</sub>-Nom John<sub>i</sub>-to owing  
 syoomeis<sub>i</sub>-are -ta.  
 prove -Pass-Pst  
 ‘Fermat’s theorem was proven by John.’  
 (Kuroda 1979, pp. 330-331)

Observe that there is a sharp contrast between (6a) and (6b). (6b) is acceptable, but (6a) is not. In (6a), the internal argument of the transitive verb *syoomeis* ‘prove’ appears to be at the sentence initial position marked by the Nominative Case marker *-ga*; the external argument of the two-place predicate appears with the Dative marker *-ni*. Hence, formally, ungrammatical passive example (6a) parallels Japanese passive sentence (1b).

Under Kuroda’s analysis, (6a) is thus assigned the following complement object deletion structure, and seems to be ruled out in a straightforward manner:

- (7) \* [S<sub>1</sub> Fermat<sub>i</sub>-no teiri<sub>i</sub>-ga [S<sub>2</sub> John<sub>i</sub>-ni Fermat<sub>i</sub>-no  
↓  
deletion  
 teiri<sub>i</sub>-o syoomeis] [v are]-ta]  
 (for 6a)

On Kuroda’s proposal, as in representation (7), the immutable entity, i.e. *Fermat-no teiri* ‘Fermat’s theorem,’ is generated in the matrix subject position, selected by the passive verb (*r)are*. However, apparently, the event described by the embedded clause

S<sub>2</sub>, [*John's proving Fermat's theorem*], cannot have an influence on the matrix subject, *Fermato-no teiri*, or cannot bring about a change in the immutable entity, *Fermato-no teiri*. Hence, under Kuroda's analysis, structure (7) is correctly ruled out, and (6a) is correctly predicted to be ungrammatical.

Observe now that in Japanese passives (6a) and (6b), the logical object of the predicate, *syoomois* 'prove,' appears to be at the sentence initial position marked with the Nominative Case marker *-ga* exactly in the same way. However, in ungrammatical example (6a), the logical subject of *syoomois* is marked by the Dative Case marker *-ni*, while in grammatical sentence (6b), the external argument of the predicate is accompanied by *-ni yotte* 'owing to.' Based on this observation, Kuroda proposes that the contrast between (6a) and (6b) implies that there are indeed two syntactically different types of Japanese passive: *ni* passives in (1a) and (3a-b), on the one hand, and *ni yotte* passive in (6b), on the other.

To be more precise, Kuroda proposes that whereas *ni* passives in (1a) and (3a-b) are uniformly generated by optional complement deletion as illustrated in (5a-c), *ni yotte* passive like (6b) is generated in a completely different way, i.e. by means of re-ordering transformation, as illustrated below:

- (8) [Fermat-no teiri]<sub>i</sub>-ga John-ni yotte *t<sub>i</sub>* syoomois-  
 ↑ \_\_\_\_\_ |  
 NP movement (for 6b)  
 are-ta.

Notice now that in contrast with complement object deletion structure (7), NP movement structure (8) is well-formed, because in (8), the internal argument of the predicate *syoomois*, i.e. [*Fermato-no teiri*] 'Fermat's theorem,' undergoes movement into the non-theta subject position where there is no semantic restriction imposed (cf. 6a & 7). Hence, under Kuroda's theory of Japanese passives, there is nothing wrong with structure (8). Consequently, *ni yotte* passive example (6b) is correctly ruled in, as desired.

On Kuroda's theory, thus, not *ni* passives such as (1b) or (6a), but *ni yotte* passives such as (6b) do indeed correspond to English *be* passive such as the one in (9),

- (9) Fermat's theorem was proven by John.

which is generally derived by means of NP movement as shown below:

- (10) [Fermat's theorem]<sub>i</sub> was proven *t<sub>i</sub>* by John.  
 ↑ \_\_\_\_\_ |  
 NP movement  
 (cf. Chomsky 1981, Saito 1982, etc.)

To summarize, Kuroda (1965, 1979, 1983, 1985,

1992) argues that Japanese has two formally distinct types of passive: *ni* passives and *ni yotte* passives. Namely, the Japanese passive morpheme (*r*)are is two-way ambiguous. The passive morpheme (*r*)are of *ni* passives is a two place predicate, i.e. a verb, while the passive morpheme (*r*)are of *ni yotte* passive is a suffix, triggering NP movement (cf. the passive morpheme *-ed/en* in English). Kuroda proposes an optional complement object deletion analysis for *ni* passives (see 1b, 3a-b, & 5a-c; \*6a & \*7), and an NP movement analysis for *ni yotte* passives (see 6b & 8; cf. 9 & 10). Japanese *ni yotte* passives such as (6b), not *ni* passives such as (1b), do correspond to English *be* passive like (9) in that both *ni yotte* passive and *be* passive involve NP movement as illustrated in (8) and (10).

Given the discussion above, it seems that Kuroda's two-way ambiguity analysis of Japanese passives is formally minimal and is empirically well substantiated, and that it would be desirable if we could maintain his theory of Japanese passives as it is. Importantly, however, there are indeed very interesting problems for his apparently minimal theory of passives. In the following section, I will attempt to show that Saito's (1982) discovery which implies that Japanese passives such as (1b) do involve 'intransitivation' or 'Case absorption' could pose a potential problem for Kuroda's complement object deletion analysis of *ni* passives. This is so, because Saito's finding does imply that the passive morpheme (*r*)are of *ni* passive (1b) is indeed not a verb, but a suffix, triggering Case absorption and consequently, NP movement.

### 3. Intransitivation/Case Absorption in Japanese Passive (Saito 1982)

Saito (1982) observes that *ni* passives such as (1b) appear to involve Case absorption, which is not expected by Kuroda's complement object deletion analysis. In this section, I will try to demonstrate how Saito (1982) reaches such a significant conclusion concerning the nature of Japanese passive like (1b).

Consider first the following data from Kuroda (1965, 1978), Harada (1973) Shibatani (1973), etc.:

- (11)a. John-ga Mary-ni hasir-ase -ta.  
 John-Nom Mary-Dat run -Cause-Pst  
 'John made Mary run.'  
 b. John-ga Mary-o hasir-ase -ta.  
 John-Nom Mary -Acc run -Cause-Pst  
 'John made Mary run.'

(11a-b) are both acceptable instances of Japanese causative. Observe that in (11a) and (11b), the intransitive verb *hasir* 'run' is attached by the causative morpheme (*s*)ase. Observe further that in (11a), the causee *Mary* appears with the Dative Case marker *-ni*, and that in (11b), the cause is accompanied by the

Accusative Case marker *-o*.

Consider next the causative examples in (12) also cited from Kuroda (1965, 1978), Harada (1973) Shibatani (1973), etc.

- (12)a. John-ga Mary-ni Bill-o nagur-ase -ta.  
John-Nom Mary-Dat Bill-Acc punch-Cause-Pst  
'John made Mary punch Bill.'
- b. \*John-ga Mary-o Bill-o nagur-ase  
John-Nom Mary-Acc Bill-Acc punch-Cause  
-ta.  
-Pst  
'John made Mary punch Bill.'

In (12a) and (12b), not an intransitive verb, but the transitive verb *nagur* 'punch' is combined with the causative verb (*s*)*ase*. As in (11a), the causee argument *Mary* is marked by the Dative marker *-ni* in (12a), and Japanese causative example (12a) is acceptable. As in (11b), the causee *Mary* in (12b) is marked by the Accusative Case maker *-o*, but (12b) results in ungrammaticality in sharp contrast with (11b). Thus, we can come up with the following generalization: in Japanese causative, a causee argument cannot be attached by the Accusative marker *-o*, if a transitive verb is combined with the causative morpheme (*s*)*ase* (See Kuroda 1965, 1978, Harada 1973, Shibatani 1973, Saito 1982, etc. for precise analyses of the data in (11a-b) and (12a-b)).

Given this generalization, consider again an instance of Japanese passive in (13).

- (13) Mary-ga damatte Tom-ni nagur-are -ta.  
Mary-Nom silently Tom-Dat punch-Pass-Pst  
'Mary was punched by Tom without saying anything.'

Here, the transitive verb *nagur* 'punch' is attached by the Japanese passive morpheme (*r*)*are*, and the internal argument of *nagur*, *Mary*, is at the sentence initial position marked with the Nominative Case marker *-ga*. The external argument of *nagur* 'punch,' *John*, appears with the Dative marker *-ni*. Hence, (13) is exactly the same type of Japanese *ni* passive as the one in (1b), which is generated by complement object deletion under Kuroda's analysis (see 5a).

Examine now Saito's (1982) crucial data where he embeds passive example (13) within a causative sentence as below:

- (14)a. John-ga Mary-in damatte Tom-ni nagur  
John-Nom Mary-Dat silently Tom-by punch  
-are -sase -ta.  
-Pass-Cause-Pst  
'John made/let Mary be punched by Tom without saying anything.'

- b. John-ga Mary-o damatte Tom-ni nagur  
John-Nom Mary-Acc silently Tom-by punch  
-are -sase -ta.  
-Pass-Cause-Pst  
'John made/let Mary be punched by Tom without saying anything.' (Saito 1982, p. 92)

In (14a), the causee argument *Mary* is attached by the Dative Case marker *-ni*, and in (14b), the causee *Mary* is marked by the Accusative Case maker *-o*. These two types of Japanese causative in (14) are both fully acceptable. Saito (1982) argues that the grammaticality of causative (14b) is significant, because given the above mentioned generalization about Japanese causative, the causee should not be able to show up with the Accusative Case marker *-o*, if a transitive verb is attached by the causative verb (*s*)*ase*. Notice that in (14b), the transitive verb *nagur* 'punch' is first combined with the Japanese passive morpheme (*r*)*are*, and the complex passive predicate [*nagur-are*] is then attached by the causative morpheme (*s*)*ase*. The grammaticality of Japanese passive-causative example with the Accusative Case marked causee *Mary-o* in (14b) thus implies that the complex passive verb [*nagur-are*] as a whole parallels (or functions as) intransitive verbs such as *hasir* 'run' (see 11b), but does not parallel (or function as) transitive verbs such as *nagur* 'punch' (see \*12b). This then suggests that the Japanese passive morpheme (*r*)*are* in (14b) may turn the transitive verb *nagur* 'punch' into a kind of intransitive verb, and Saito (1982, p. 92) claims that passive-causative example (14b) may be acceptable, because the Japanese passive morpheme (*r*)*are* in (13/14b) is indeed a suffix and does absorb Case in the same way as the English passive morpheme *-ed/-en* (Chomsky 1981, etc.; cf. 9, 10).

Recall that Kuroda (1965, 1979, 1983, 1992) generates Japanese passives such as (13) by means of complement object deletion as below:

- (15) [s<sub>1</sub> Mary<sub>i</sub>-ga damatte [s<sub>2</sub> Tom-ni Mary<sub>i</sub>-o nagur]  
↓  
deletion  
[v are]-ta] (for 13; cf. 5a)

Under Kuroda's theory of Japanese passives, however, it is not entirely clear how the matrix passive verb (*r*)*are* turns the transitive verb *nagur* 'punch' into a sort of intransitive verb, or how the passive morpheme (*r*)*are* absorbs Case from the transitive verb *nagur* (see Hoshi 1991, 1994a-b, 1999, etc. for attempts to solve this problem under Kuroda's deletion analysis). On Kuroda's analysis, the passive morpheme (*r*)*are* of *ni* passives is simply a verb, but is not a suffix to trigger a morphological operation like absorption of Case. Consequently, Saito's (1982) valuable data like the one in (14b) appears to constitute a potential problem for Kuroda's complement object deletion analysis of

Japanese passives such as (1b), (6a) or (13).

#### 4. Further Problems for Kuroda's Deletion and NP Movement Analyses (Kuno 1983, 1986)

Significantly, given Kuno's (1983, 1986) findings concerning the nature of Japanese passives, Kuroda's complement object deletion analysis of Japanese *ni* passive and his NP movement analysis of *ni yotte* passive both seem to suffer another setback. Remember that Kuroda makes use of the contrasts such as the one between (6a) and (6b), in order to reinforce his formal dichotomy between *ni* and *ni yotte* passives. Examples (6a) and (6b) are repeated below as (16a) and (16b), respectively:

(16)a. \*Fermat-no teiri-ga John-ni syoomeis  
Fermat-Gen theorem-Nom John-Dat prove  
-are -ta. (= 6a)  
-Pass-Pst  
'Fermat's theorem<sub>i</sub> was affected by John's proving it<sub>i</sub>.'

b. Fermat-no teiri -ga John-ni yotte  
Fermat-Gen theorem-Nom John-to owing  
syoomeis-are -ta. (= 6b)  
prove -Pass-Pst  
'Fermat's theorem was proven by John.'  
(Kuroda 1979, pp. 330-331)

Recall also that to account for the ill-formedness of Japanese *ni* passive (16a), Kuroda assigns the following structure to the example, and

(17) \*<sub>[S<sub>1</sub> Fermat-no teiri<sub>i</sub>-ga</sub> <sub>[S<sub>2</sub> John-ni Fermat-no teiri<sub>i</sub>-o syoomeis]</sub> <sub>[v are]-ta]</sub>  
↓  
deletion (for 16a; =7)

claims that *ni* passive example (16a) involves complement object deletion as illustrated in (17). In structure (17), the passive morpheme (*r*)are is the transitive verb of the matrix clause S<sub>1</sub>, and the immutable entity *Fermat-no teiri* 'Fermat's theorem' is the external argument selected by the passive verb (*r*)are. The embedded clause S<sub>2</sub> is the internal argument taken by (*r*)are. According to Kuroda (1979, 1992, p. 5), the meaning of this type of passive morpheme (*r*)are is basically the broad meaning of the verb *affect*, i.e. that the event described by the embedded clause S<sub>2</sub> has an influence on the subject of the matrix clause S<sub>1</sub>, or S<sub>2</sub> brings about a change in the subject of S<sub>1</sub>. However, because the immutable entity like Fermat's theorem would not be influenced by the event described by the embedded clause S<sub>2</sub>, [*John's proving Fermat's theorem*], Kuroda's structure (17) for Japanese passive example (16a) should result in semantic anomaly.

Kuroda (1979, 1992), on the other hand, accounts

for the acceptability of *ni yotte* passive (16b) in terms of his NP movement analysis like the one below:

(18) [Fermat-no teiri]<sub>i</sub>-ga John-ni yotte t<sub>i</sub>  
↑  
NP movement (for 16b; =8)  
syoomeis-are-ta.

On Kuroda's analysis, the passive morpheme (*r*)are of *ni yotte* passive is a suffix, triggering passive re-ordering transformation, i.e. NP movement. Japanese *ni yotte* passive parallels English *be* passive in that both types of passive involve NP movement. In Kuroda's structure (18), the internal argument of the predicate *syoomeis* 'prove,' i.e. *Fermat-no teiri*, thus undergoes movement into the non-theta subject position, where there is no semantic restriction. Hence, there is nothing wrong about structure (18), and under Kuroda's proposal, Japanese *ni yotte* passive (16b) is correctly ruled in, whereas Japanese *ni* passive (16a) is ruled out as explained above.

Though apparently plausible and convincing, Kuroda's formal dichotomy between *ni* and *ni yotte* passives turns out to be problematic, given Kuno's (1983, 1986) discoveries like the ones below (Kuno's 1983 examples are slightly modified only for the ease of exposition here):

(19)a. Fermat-no teiri -ga dareka -ni  
Fermat-Gen theorem-Nom somebody-Dat  
syoomeis-are -ta (koto)  
prove -Pass-Pst (fact)  
'(the fact that) Fermat's theorem was proven by somebody.'

b. Fermat-no teiri -ga dare -ni -mo  
Fermat-Gen theorem-Nom anybody-Dat-  
syoomeis-are -te i -nai (koto)  
prove -Pass- -Not (fact)  
'(the fact that) Fermat's theorem has not been proven by anybody.'

c. Fermat-no teiri -ga osokarehayakare  
Fermat-Gen theorem-Nom sooner or later  
dareka -ni syoomeis-are -ru (koto)  
somebody-Dat prove -Pass-Pres(fact)  
'(the fact that) sooner or later, Fermat's theorem will be proven by somebody'

(Kuno 1983, p. 198)

Kuno (1983, 1986) observes that (19a-c) are all acceptable in contrast with (16a). Notice here that in all the examples in (19), the internal argument of the predicate *syoomeis* 'prove,' i.e. *Fermat-no teiri* 'Fermat's theorem,' is at the sentence initial position marked with the Nominative Case marker *-ga*. The external argument of the predicate, on the other hand, is

marked by the Dative marker *-ni*, i.e. *dareka-ni* ‘by somebody’ in (19a) and (19c) and *dare-ni-mo* ‘by anybody’ in (19b). Hence, (19a-c) are the exactly the same type of *ni* passive as the *ni* passive in (16a). However, (19a-c) are fully acceptable, while (16a) is certainly not.

Kuroda’s optional complement object deletion analysis of *ni* passives necessarily assigns deletion structures (20a-c) to sentences (19a-c), respectively (cf. 17).

- (20)a. \*[<sub>S1</sub> Fermat-no teiri<sub>i</sub>-ga [<sub>S2</sub> dareka-ni Fermat-no teiri<sub>i</sub>-o syoomois] [v are]-ta]  
 ↓  
 deletion (for 19a)
- b. \*[<sub>S1</sub> Fermat-no teiri<sub>i</sub>-ga [<sub>S2</sub> dare-ni-mo Fermat-no teiri<sub>i</sub>-o syoomois] [v are]-te i-nai]  
 ↓  
 deletion (for 19b)
- c. \*[<sub>S1</sub> Fermat-no teiri<sub>i</sub>-ga [<sub>S2</sub> osokarehayakere dareka-ni-mo Fermat-no teiri<sub>i</sub>-o syoomois]  
 ↓  
 deletion (for 19c)  
 [v are]-te i-nai]

In all the representations in (20), the immutable entity *Fermat-no teiri* is placed in the matrix subject position as in (17), and thus, on Kuroda’s analysis, (19a-c) are all predicted to be semantically anomalous exactly like (16a). This is not the case, however. It is thus not entirely clear how Kuroda’s deletion analysis of *ni* passives distinguish acceptable examples (19a-c) from unacceptable one (16a). As a consequence, the contrast between (16a) and (19a-c) implies that Kuroda’s two-way ambiguity analysis to account for the contrast between *ni* passive (16a) and *ni yotte* passive (16b) might not be on the right track.

Furthermore, Kuno (1983, 1986) argues against Kuroda’s (1979, 1992) NP movement analysis of *ni yotte* passive in Japanese on the basis of examples such as the one below (the example below is also slightly modified just for the ease of discussion here):

- (21) Kono ziken -ga Yamada-kisya -ni yotte  
 This incident-Nom Yamada-reporter-to owing  
 sono sinsoo-o tutae -rare -ta (koto)  
 its truth -Acc report-Pass-Pst (fact)  
 ‘(the fact that) (lit.) \*This incident was reported  
 its truth by Reporter Yamada.’  
 (Kuno 1983, p. 199)

On Kuroda’s analysis of Japanese passives, Japanese *ni yotte* passive should parallel English *be* passive. However, as Kuno (1983, 1986) claims, those types of passive in Japanese and English do not behave in the

same way. Observe first that Kuno’s (1983, 1986) *ni yotte* passive sentence in (21) is acceptable in Japanese, whereas its English *be* passive counterpart, i.e. *This incident was reported its truth by Reporter Yamada*, is not. In addition, it seems to be the case that as shown below, we cannot find an active counterpart based on which we can generate *ni yotte* passive (21) by means of NP movement.

- (22)a. \*Yamada-kisya -ga kono ziken -o  
 Yamada-reporter-Nom this incident-Acc  
 sono sinsoo-o tutae -ta.  
 ts truth -Acc report-Pst  
 ‘(lit.) \*Reporter Yamada reported this incident  
 its truth.’ (Kuno 1983, p. 199)
- b. [Kono ziken]<sub>i</sub>-ga Yamada-kisya-ni yotte *t<sub>i</sub>* sono  
 ↑ \_\_\_\_\_ |  
 NP movement (cf. Kuroda 1979, 1992)  
 sinsoo-o tutae -rare -ta

In other words, in order to generate *ni yotte* passive (21) by means of NP movement as shown in (22b), we need its active counterpart like the one in (22a). As Kuno (1983, 1986) argues, however, (22a) is undoubtedly unacceptable in Japanese; Kuroda’s analysis of *ni yotte* passive in Japanese thus seems to suffer another setback from the grammaticality of *ni yotte* passive example (21).

## 5. Conclusion: A Three-way Ambiguity Analysis of Japanese Passives and Remaining Problems

Kuroda’s structures (5a-c) for *ni* passives (1b), (3a) and (3b) are repeated below as (23a-c):

- (23)a. [<sub>S1</sub> John<sub>i</sub>-ga [<sub>S2</sub> Mary-ni John<sub>i</sub>-o nagur] [v are]  
 ↓  
 deletion  
 -ta] (=5a; for 1b)
- b. [<sub>S1</sub> John-ga [<sub>S2</sub> Mary-ni nikki-o yom] [v are]-ta]  
 (=5b; for 3a)
- c. [<sub>S1</sub> John-ga [<sub>S2</sub> akanboo-ni nak] [v are]-ta]  
 (=5c; for 3b)

In this paper, first, I have attempted to show that Kuroda’s formally minimal, uniform analysis of *ni* passives is theoretically strong. That is, given the semantic properties of *ni* passives such as (3a-b), Kuroda’s two-place predicate analysis of the Japanese passive morpheme (*r*)*are* in (23b-c) is a convincing one, and that Kuroda’s complement object deletion analysis of *ni* passive (1b) in (23a) should follow from it naturally, i.e. it seems to be a null hypothesis.

I have, however, also shown that Saito (1982) provides us with invaluable evidence that the Japanese

passive morpheme (*r*)are of *ni* passive like (1b) does not seem to be a predicate contrary to Kuroda's claim (cf. complement object deletion structure 23a), but the passive morpheme (*r*)are of this sort is a suffix which absorbs Case from a transitive verb. Saito's crucial example (14b) is repeated here as (24).

- (24) John-ga Mary-o damatte Tom-ni  
 John-Nom Mary-Acc silently Tom-by  
 nagur-are -sase -ta.  
 punch-Pass-Cause-Pst  
 'John made/let Mary be punched by Tom  
 without saying anything.' (=14b)  
 (Saito 1982, p. 92)

(24) is a well-formed passive-causative sentence in Japanese where the causee argument *Mary* is attached by the Accusative Case marker *-o*. Significantly, the acceptability of (24) implies that the passive complex predicate [*nagur-are*] as a whole functions as (or parallels) an intransitive verb like *hasir* 'run' (cf. causative sentence 11b); [*nagur-are*] does not function as (or does not parallel) a transitive verb like *nagur* 'punch' (cf. causative example \*12b). This then hints at the possibility that the passive morpheme (*r*)are in (24) is a suffix which intransitivises the transitive verb *nagur* 'punch' or that in (24), (*r*)are of this sort absorbs Case from the attached transitive verb as a suffix exactly in the same way as the English passive morphology *-ed/en* (cf. Chomsky 1981, Saito 1982, etc.).

Given the above mentioned consideration, here, I would like to suggest the following: Kuroda's (1965, 1979, 1983, 1985, 1992) two-way ambiguity analysis of the Japanese passive morpheme (*r*)are is formally, minimal and is thus desirable. However, Saito's (1982) valuable discovery concerning the nature of *ni* passive like (24) implies that Japanese passive is not as simple as Kuroda's dichotomy between *ni* passives and *ni yotte* passives suggests. It might indeed be the case that the Japanese passive morpheme (*r*)are is three-way ambiguous (cf. Hoshi 1991, 1994a-b, 1999). To be more precise, beside the passive morpheme (*r*)are of *ni yotte* passive, Japanese may have two different types of *ni* passive morpheme (*r*)are: one of them is a verb which triggers complement object deletion optionally as Kuroda proposes and the other is a suffix which intransitivises a transitive verb or absorbs Case from a transitive verb as Saito argues. Hence, *ni* passives such as (1b) may indeed have either Kuroda type complement object deletion structure like (23a) or the following NP movement structure proposed by Saito (1982):

- (25)[s John<sub>i</sub>-ga Mary<sub>i</sub>-ni t<sub>i</sub> nagur-are-ta]  
 ↑ NP movement | Case absorption

In (25), the Japanese passive morpheme (*r*)are is

combined with the transitive verb *nagur* 'punch', and as a suffix, (*r*)are absorbs Case from the transitive verb, triggering NP movement. Thanks to this Case absorption (or intransitivisation) possibility proposed by Saito (1982), the acceptability of the Japanese passive-causative sentence (24) is now not a surprise at all, but is correctly predicted.

Given Saito type NP movement analysis (25) of *ni* passives like (1b) as an option, we can also straightforwardly account for the grammaticality of Kuno's (1983, 1986) examples such as (19a-c), which are problematic for Kuroda's (1965, 1979, 1983, 1992) two-way ambiguity analysis. (19a) is repeated here as (26) below:

- (26) Fermat-no teiri -ga dareka -ni  
 Fermat-Gen theorem-Nom somebody-Dat  
 yoomeis-are -ta (koto)  
 prove -Pass-Pst (fact)  
 '(the fact that) Fermat's theorem was proven by  
 somebody.' (=19a) (Kuno 1983, p. 198)

This is so, because under the new three-way ambiguity analysis of the Japanese passive morpheme (*r*)are suggested here, *ni* passive like (19a) could have either Kuroda type complement object deletion structure like (23a) or the following Saito type NP movement structure:

- (27) [s [Fermat-no teiri]<sub>i</sub>-ga dareka-ni t<sub>i</sub> syoomeis-  
 ↑ NP movement  
 are-ta] (koto)  
 Case absorption

In NP movement structure (27) given optionally under the new approach, the Japanese passive morpheme (*r*)are, as a suffix, absorbs Case from the transitive predicate *syoomeis* 'prove,' triggering NP movement by the internal argument *Fermat-no teiri* 'Fermat's theorem.' Though the internal argument in the subject position is an immutable entity, there is no semantic restriction imposed upon the subject position in (27). Hence, there is no problem for derivation (27). Thus, given optionally Saito's (1982) NP movement analysis of (26) like the one in (27) for *ni* passive like (1b), Kuno's example (26) is also correctly predicted to be acceptable under the three-way ambiguity analysis, as desired.

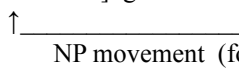
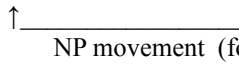
Under the new three-way ambiguity analysis of the Japanese passive morpheme (*r*)are suggested in this section, however, a question now arises as to Kuroda's (1979) contrast between *ni* passive (6a/16a) and *ni yotte* passive (6b/16b). Examples (6a/16a) and (6b/16b) are repeated below as (28a-b), respectively:

- (28)a. \*Fermat-no teiri-ga John-ni syoomeis

Fermat-Gen theorem-Nom John-Dat prove  
-are -ta. (=6a/16a)  
-Pass-Pst  
'Fermat's theorem<sub>i</sub> was affected by John's  
proving it<sub>i</sub>.'

- b. Fermat-no teiri -ga John-ni yotte  
Fermat-Gen theorem-Nom John-to owing  
syoomeis-are -ta. (=6b/16b)  
prove -Pass-Pst  
'Fermat's theorem was proven by John.'  
(Kuroda 1979, pp. 330-331)

*Ni* passive (28a) is unacceptable, whereas the *ni yotte* passive counterpart in (28b) is acceptable. The above mentioned question arises, because if *ni yotte* passive in Japanese (28b) necessarily involve NP movement as Kuroda (1979) proposes, and if Japanese *ni* passive (28a) could involve NP movement optionally as suggested above, (28a) and (28b) could both be assigned basically the same NP movement structures as illustrated in (29a) and (29b).

- (29)a. [Fermat-no teiri]<sub>i</sub>-ga John-ni *t*<sub>i</sub> syoomeis-are-ta.  
  
 b. [Fermat-no teiri]<sub>i</sub>-ga John-ni yotte *t*<sub>i</sub>  
  
 syoomeis-are-ta.

If so, we have to find a way based on which we can correctly rule out structure (29a) but rule in representation (29b) under the three-way ambiguity analysis of Japanese passives suggested in this section (cf. Kuno's 1983, 1986 functional account for Kuroda's contrast between 28a and 28b).

Concerning the grammaticality of Kuno's (1983, 1986) examples such as (21), which is repeated here as (30), the three-way ambiguity analysis of the Japanese passive morpheme (*r*)*are* suggested here does indeed inherit a problem of Kuroda's two-way ambiguity analysis of the Japanese passive morpheme (*r*)*are*.

- (30) Kono ziken -ga Yamada-kisya -ni yotte  
This incident-Nom Yamada-reporter-to owing  
sono sinsoo-o tutae -rare -ta (koto) (=21)  
its truth -Acc report-Pass-Pst (fact)  
'(the fact that) (lit.) \*This incident was reported  
its truth by Reporter Yamada.'  
(Kuno 1983, p. 199)

We thus have to consider the following questions seriously as well: (i) whether Kuroda's obligatory NP movement analysis of *ni yotte* passive is indeed correct; (ii) if correct, why (30) is grammatical and what is the

active counterpart (cf. \*22a); (iii) if not correct, what is the correct analysis of *ni yotte* passive in Japanese (See Kuno 1983, 1986 for his alternative functional-syntactic analysis of Japanese *ni yotte* passive); etc.

I leave these important questions for my future research (see Hoshi (to appear) for attempts to answer these questions under the three-way ambiguity analysis of Japanese passives suggested in this paper).

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