

Case-marking idiosyncrasy in subordination: the Japanese dative *ni* and beyond *

Takeshi Koguma

UNIVERSITY OF SHIGA PREFECTURE

kogumat@gmail.com

Katsunobu Izutsu

HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION

idutsu@gmail.com

Abstract

This article examines Japanese idiosyncratic dative case markings, which cannot be accounted for by the semantics of verbs *per se*. We argue that the underlying mechanism is best described in terms of “blending of prefabricated forms in language production” (Barlow 2000), demonstrating that the relevant prefabricated structures provide a scaffold for the development of the use of dative *ni* in question. This study further explores some comparable non-canonical case markings observed in Korean subordinate clauses, suggesting that they can also be similarly characterized.

1 Introduction

This study discusses idiosyncratic case markings in subordination, demonstrating that both Japanese and Korean exhibit case markings which are only available in a certain subordinate environment. In Japanese, idiosyncratic or irregular case markings have attracted much

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attention. Among these is case-particle alternation phenomenon commonly referred to as *ga/no* conversion (or nominative/genitive conversion), wherein the nominative particle *ga* marking the subject in a certain subordinate environment optionally alternates with the genitive particle *no* in modern Japanese (Harada 1971, Koguma 2010, Shibatani *et al.* 2015 among others).

However, the use of dative *ni* confined in subordinate clauses, as exemplified in (1) below, has received little attention, and none of the previous studies have provided a sufficient explanation for this idiosyncratic case marking. Here, the linguistically unexpressed subject, namely the speaker, is identified as HIDER, her husband and her smoking behavior correspond to HIDE¹ and SECRET, respectively.²

- (1) *otto-ni kakure-te tabako-o sut-teiru.*
 husband-DAT hide.away.from-and cigarette-ACC inhale-PROG
 ‘(I’m) smoking cigarettes hiding the fact from my husband.’
 (Koguma and Izutsu 2016)

Our previous preliminary analysis (Koguma and Izutsu 2016) explored this type of idiosyncratic dative *ni* in Goldberg’s (1995) constructional terms, and also adopting Barlow’s (2000) notion of “blending of prefabricated forms.” In this current study, we elaborate our previous findings and elucidate the underlying mechanism of this intricate case marking. We also shed light on a comparable linguistic manifestation observed in Korean. Our analysis shares the basic theoretical perspective with Barlow (2000: 316-317), who states “... what looks like creativity in language is in many instances the result of blending of prefabricated units rather than the output of a set of generative rules.”

We point out that an account based on the semantics of verbs *per se* cannot accommodate this type of dative *ni*, which is only observable in a certain syntactic environment. We demonstrate that it is the entire construction consisting of main and subordinate clauses that enables us to characterize the semantics of this dative *ni*. This study claims that behind the idiosyncratic case marking in subordinate clauses lies a particular conventional construal pattern of the relevant event conception: a configuration of HIDER, HIDE¹, SECRET and SHELTER (cf. Koguma and Izutsu 2016). This study reveals that it is the morphosyntactic behavior of the dominant expressions representing analogous event conceptions that enables us to characterize the idiosyncratic case markings in subordinate clauses.

¹ We adopt the term HIDE¹ rather than SEEKER due to the fact that he is not necessarily involved in a monitoring task and he could unexpectedly learn or encounter the fact.

² Abbreviations: ABL=ablative, ACC=accusative, ADVLZ=adverbializer, DAT=dative, DEC=declarative, HON=honorific, LOC=locative, NOM=nominative, PRS=present tense, PST=past tense, PROG=progressive, TOP=topic

2 Japanese Dative *ni*

The Japanese dative particle *ni* has been reported to be versatile both in its semantics and function in previous studies (Sugai 2000 *inter alia*). Before examining the dative *ni* in question, let us look at some of the relevant uses in independent clauses.

The referent of dative-marked NP in (2) below is interpreted as LOCATION. It can also bear SHELTER/SHIELD-reading in an appropriate context, accompanied by additional semantic imports such as intentionality and/or a sort of “force dynamics” (Talmy 1988). Example (3) indicates that dative *ni* can also mark RECIPIENT instead of LOCATION and SHELTER/SHIELD. As sketched in Figure 1, the referent of dative-marked NP in (3) corresponds to the recipient of the relevant event. Furthermore, the same conceived situation can be expressed in alternate ways, as illustrated in (4a-b).³ The dative-marked NP in (4a) as well as the ablative-marked NP in (4b), is characterized as SOURCE, as depicted in Figure 2. In either figure, the arrow represents the transfer of a book from the teacher to Taro and the initial position of the book is depicted by the small broken-line circle.

LOCATION; SHELTER/SHIELD

- (2) *Taroo-wa heya-ni tozikomot-ta.*
 Taroo-TOP room-DAT stay-PST
 ‘Taro [a writer] stayed in his study.’

RECIPIENT

- (3) *sensei-ga Taroo-ni hon-o kasi-ta.*
 teacher-NOM Taro-DAT book-ACC lend-PST
 ‘The teacher lent a book to Taro.’

SOURCE

- (4) a. *Taroo-ga sensei-ni hon-o kari-ta.* (Sugai 2000: 20)
 Taroo-NOM teacher-DAT book-ACC borrow-PST
 ‘Taro borrowed a book from the teacher.’
 b. *Taroo-ga sensei-kara hon-o kari-ta.* (*ibid.*)
 Taroo-NOM teacher-ABL book-ACC borrow-PST
 ‘Taro borrowed a book from the teacher.’

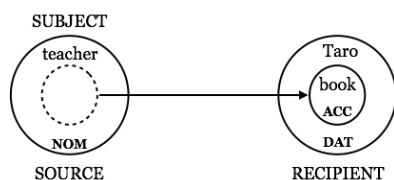


Figure 1: Example (3)

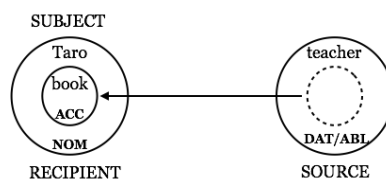


Figure 2: Examples (4a) & (4b)

³ Sugai (2000) demonstrates that the choice between dative and ablative markings as in (4) reflects conceptualizer’s construal, arguing that profiling the facet of the recipient’s approach to the lender (e.g., requesting, persuasion) will amount to dative-marking. Leaving aside the detailed discussion of the intricate behavior of dative case particle *ni*, let us emphasize here that LOCATION, SHELTER(SHIELD) and RECIPIENT are relevant to our following discussion.

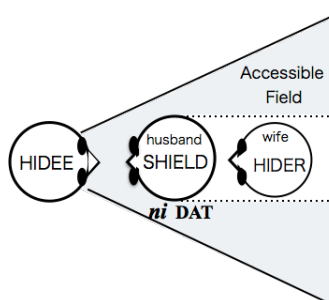
3 Hiding event conception in Japanese

This section will examine the case markings in hiding events, of which major semantic components are HIDER, HIDEE, LOCATION and SECRET with special reference to the verb *kakureru*, which means ‘hide oneself.’

3.1 *Kakureru* ‘hide away’ in independent clauses: SHELTER /EVASION-scenario

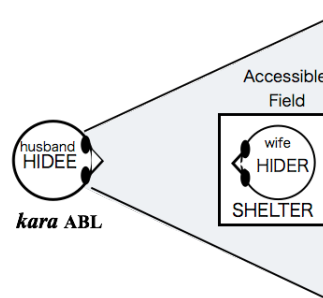
The verb *kakureru* is intransitive, and it can take either dative *ni* or ablative *kara*, as shown in (5). These two particles exhibit complementary distribution and are not interchangeable under the intended meaning, as illustrated in (5). The dative-marked participant *otto* ‘husband’ in (5a) is understood as SHIELD, which blocks HIDEE’s line of sight and thereby provides HIDER with SHELTER. This event conception, which can be referred to as SHELTER-scenario, is schematically diagrammed in Figure 3. The delta-like shaded area depicts HIDEE’s accessible field, and the unshaded area within the dotted lines represents HIDEE’s inaccessible zone, which ends up as SHELTER. You can imagine the situation where the wife hides herself behind her husband when they come across a guy who had been stalking her or a gossip neighbor whom she wants to avoid. Note that it is impossible to interpret the dative-marked participant *otto* ‘husband’ in (5a) as pursuer or HIDEE whom she evades.

- (5) a. *otto-ni/*-kara kakure-ta.* (SHELTER-dative)
 husband-DAT/-ABL hide- PST
 ‘I hid myself behind my husband.’
 b. *otto-kara /*-ni kakure-ta.* (HIDEE-ablative)
 husband-ABL/-DAT hide- PST
 ‘I hid myself away from my husband.’



Example sentence (5a)

Figure 3: SHELTER-scenario:
 (-*ni kakureru*)

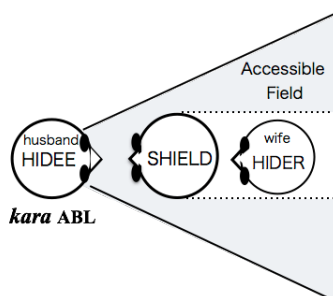


Example sentence (5b)

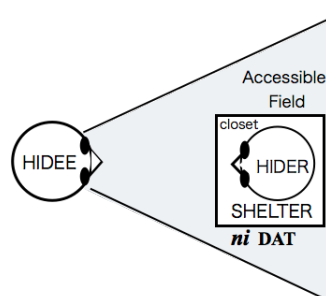
Figure 4: EVASION -scenario:
 (-*kara kakureru*)

HIDEE must be marked by ablative *kara* ‘from,’ rather than dative *ni*, as illustrated in (5b). The referent of the ablative-marked noun *otto* ‘husband’ in (5b) is best described as a pursuer or HIDEE whom she evades. Figure 4 above sketches one of the possible configurations of the situation, to which we refer as EVASION-scenario. The solid-line box located within the HIDEE’s

accessible field schematically depicts SHELTER, wherein HIDER hides herself. Note that SHELTER is not necessarily a three-dimensionally enclosed room such as a closet. It fundamentally represents HIDEE's inaccessible field: for instance, 'behind someone or furniture,' 'under a bed,' or 'in a remote town,' and so forth. We could thus have a configuration given in Figure 5 below, which is identical to that in Figure 3, except for the choice of overtly expressed participant.⁴



Example sentence (5b)
Figure 5: EVASION-scenario
(-kara kakureru)



Example sentence (6)
Figure 6: SHELTER-scenario
(-ni kakureru)

Since the dative-marked NP in (6) is inanimate, it excludes HIDEE-dative reading. This situation is sketched as in Figure 6, where the solid-line box represents *osiire* 'closet,' which provides an asylum for HIDER.

- (6) *osiire-ni*/*-kara *kakure-ta*. (SHELTER-dative)
 closet-DAT/-ABL hide-PST
 'I hid myself in the closet.'

3.2 *Kakureru* 'hide away' in *te*-subordinate clauses: SECRET-scenario

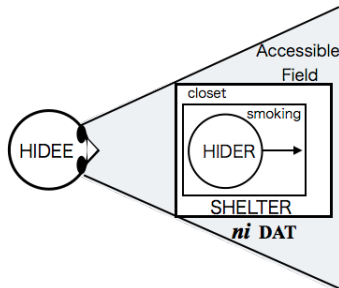
As is predicted from the linguistic behavior of dative *ni* in independent clauses, SHELTER-dative *ni* is available in subordinate clauses as illustrated in (7a-b), regardless of animacy. Figure 7 diagrams the event conception of example (7a). The arrow located in the inner rectangle depicts the activity of smoking. Note that the referent of the dative-marked NP *osiire-ni* 'closet-DAT' invariably receives SHELTER-reading regardless of its syntactic environment, either an independent or subordinate clause, as illustrated in examples (6) above and (7a) below.

- (7) a. *osiire-ni* *kakure-te* *tabako-o* *sut-teiru*.
 closet-DAT hide.in-and cigarette-ACC inhale-PROG
 '(I'm) smoking cigarettes hiding myself in the closet.'

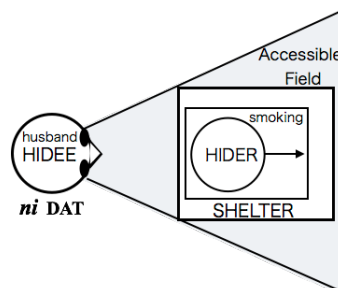
⁴ Japanese does not allow both dative *ni* and ablative *kara*-marked participants to be used together in a single clause.

- b. *otto-ni kakure-te mizugi-ni kigae-ta.*⁵
 husband-DAT hide.in-and swimsuit-DAT change.clothing-PST
 ‘(I) changed into my swimsuit hiding myself behind my husband.’

In contrast, the referent of the dative-marked NP *otto-ni* ‘husband-DAT’ alternates its semantic role between SHELTER and HIDEE depending on the syntactic environment wherein it occurs. The semantics of the verb *kakureru* observed in (5) strongly suggests that HIDEE should be exclusively marked by ablative *kara* ‘from’ in the same vein. However, the HIDEE participant in *te*-subordinate clauses takes dative *ni* rather than ablative *kara* as shown in (1), repeated for convenience here as (8) below. Surprisingly, although the ablative case marking is expected from the argument structure, it can hardly be recruited, as evidenced from the frequency of occurrences confirmed in the major Japanese language corpus database.⁶ The event conception of (1) is diagrammed as in Figure 8.



Example sentence (7)
 Figure 7: SHELTER-scenario
 (-*ni kakureru*)



Example sentence (1)=(8)
 Figure 8: SECRET-scenario
 (-*ni kakureru*)

- (8) *otto-ni kakure-te tabako-o sut-teiru.*
 husband-DAT hide.away.from-and cigarette-ACC inhale-PROG
 ‘(I’m) smoking cigarettes hiding the fact from my husband.’

This event conception differs from that of EVASION-scenario (shown in Figure 4) in that the wife intends to hide her inappropriate behavior, rather than herself. Let us refer to this type of configuration as SECRET-scenario.

3.3 Idiosyncratic case marking with *kakureru*

With respect to the intransitive verb *kakureru*, the observation so far indicates that HIDEE-dative *ni* is confined in *te*-subordinate clauses

⁵ Note that the reading of the dative marked participant in (7b) differs from that of (1) in that it significantly prefers SHELTER-reading to HIDEE-reading. We are exploring this phenomenon for an upcoming paper.

⁶ With *te*-subordinate clauses, while 38 HIDEE-datives are attested, not a single HIDEE-ablative is attested in the BCCWJ (Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese) corpus (<https://chunagon.ninjal.ac.jp>) provided by National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics.

whereas SHELTER(SHIELD) is consistently marked by dative *ni* regardless of its syntactic environment: whether independent or subordinate. Table 1 summarizes the distribution of dative and ablative cases with the predicate *kakureru* ‘hide oneself,’ with references to the example sentences.

Table1: Distribution of dative and ablative cases

	SHELTER(SHIELD)	HIDEE
Independent clause	dative <i>ni</i> : (2), (5a), (6)	ablative <i>kara</i> : (5b)
<i>te</i> -subordinate clause	dative <i>ni</i> : (7a), (7b)	dative <i>ni</i> : (1) ?ablative <i>kara</i> ⁷

The event conceptions observed above are all common in consisting of HIDER, HIDEE, SHELTER(SHIELD). Discrepancy is observed in case marking HIDEES between independent and *te*-subordinate clauses. In other words, HIDEE in EVASION-scenario (i.e., independent clause) takes ablative *kara* while HIDEE in SECRET-scenario (i.e., *te*-subordinate clause) receives dative *ni*. This raises a question of where HIDEE-dative comes from. The semantics or the argument structure of the verb *kakureru* cannot *per se* predict the fact that dative *ni* is recruited to mark HIDEE in *te*-subordinate clauses. The discussion so far demonstrates that an entirely lexical-based approach fails to accommodate the full range of case markings of Japanese dative *ni*.

4 Blending approach: Conceptual scaffolding

This section will examine the underlying mechanism of the idiosyncratic case marking, adopting Barlow’s (2000) notion of “blending of prefabricated forms” founded upon Fauconnier and Turner’s (1996) blending theory. Barlow (2000: 328) points out that the verb *claim* never occurred with a *that*-complement early in the eighteenth century, however, it began to take a *that*-complement in the nineteenth century. He argues that the verb *assert* with a similar semantic import has played a pivotal role in this change. The argument and semantic structure of *assert* is assumed to have served as scaffolding for the expansion of the argument structure of the verb *claim*.

It could be reasonable to assume that the HIDEE-dative *ni* with the verb *kakureru* has developed in the same fashion as the case of the change of English verb *claim*. Just as the verb *claim* has extended its argument structure so that it can take a *that* clause complement, modeling after the argument structure of semantically analogous *assert*, so the intransitive *kakureru* in subordinate clauses has acquired the HIDEE-dative *ni*-case marking, modeled upon other dominant expressions of analogous secret behavior in subordinate clauses.

⁷ Ablative marked HIDEE needs a more detailed examination; however, it seems that its ‘hiding’ sub-event is viewed as ‘arrangement event’ rather than as co-extensive event with the core-event encoded by the independent clause.

4.1 Dominant analogous expressions

The intransitive verb *damaru* ‘being silent with’ reflects the seemingly same event conception as *kakureru* but does render HIDEE dative case *ni* in both subordinate and independent clauses, as illustrated in (9a) and (9c), respectively. This indicates that those datives are both lexically licensed, and can thus be characterized in terms of grammatical relation of the predicate. It is reasonable to assume that the idiosyncratic dative case marking with *kakureru* in (1) stems from analogy with the predicate *damaru*, which consistently assigns dative *ni* to HIDEE in a SECRET-scenario.

- (9) a. *otto-ni* *damat-te* *syakkin-o* *si-ta.*
 husband-DAT hold.one’s.tongue-and debt-ACC do-PST
 ‘I borrowed money, hiding the fact from my husband.’
- b.**otto-kara* *damat-te* *syakkin-o* *si-ta.*
 husband-ABL hold.one’s.tongue-and debt-ACC do-PST
 ‘I borrowed money, hiding the fact from my husband.’
- c. *otto-ni* *damat-teita.*
 husband-DAT hold.one’s.tongue-PROG.PST
 ‘(I/she) was holding my/her tongue to her/my husband.’
- d.**otto-kara* *damat-teita.*
 husband-ABL hold.one’s.tongue-PROG.PST
 ‘(I/she) was holding my/her tongue to her/my husband.’

Let us look at another relevant expression. The intransitive verb *bareru* (‘reveal itself’ or ‘be uncovered’) in (10) also has dative-marked NPs, the referent of which is defined as HIDEE. The dative particle is felicitous in the independent clause of (10c), as well as in the subordinate clause of (10a). This means that it is lexically licensed and can again be characterized in terms of the argument structure of the predicate. The semantic import of example (10a) differs from that of (9a) above in that it does not specify the manner of a leakage of secrets, for instance, by being told, seen, heard, and so forth. The defocusing of the transmission facet amounts to a resultant-facet focus, giving rise to an affinity with ‘luckily’ interpretation. In addition, (10a) differs from (9a) in that it is a negative sentence. Nevertheless, there is no doubt about the semantic similarity between (9a) and (10a).

- (10)a. *otto-ni* *bare-zuni* *syakkin-o* *si-ta.*
 husband-DAT be.exposed-without debt-ACC do-PST
 ‘I borrowed money without inadvertently revealing it
 to my husband.’
- b.**otto-kara* *bare-zuni* *syakkin-o* *si-ta.*
 husband-ABL hold.one’s.tongue-and debt-ACC do-PST
 ‘I borrowed money without inadvertently revealing it
 to my husband.’

- c. *otto-ni* *syakkin-ga* *bare-ta.*
 husband-DAT debt-NOM be.exposed-do-PST
 ‘My husband found out my debt.’
- d. **otto-kara* *syakkin-ga* *bare-ta.*
 husband-ABL debt-NOM be.exposed-do-PST
 ‘My husband found out my debt.’

Let us now turn to an intransitive verb *mitukaru* ‘be found.’ This verb exhibits linguistic behavior parallel to *bareru* (‘reveal itself’ or ‘be uncovered’) discussed above. It is potentially compatible with ‘luckily’ reading, as well. Note that the HIDEE-dative *ni* in the subordinate clause of (11a) can be accounted for exactly in the same vein as *bareru* in (10).

- (11) a. *otto-ni* *mitukara-zuni* *syakkin-o* *si-ta.*
 husband-DAT be.found-without debt-ACC do-PST
 ‘I borrowed money without having my husband find out.’
- b. ?*otto-kara* *mitukara-zuni* *syakkin-o* *si-ta.*
 husband-ABL be.found-without debt-ACC do-PST
 ‘I borrowed money without having my husband find out.’
- c. *otto-ni* *syakkin-ga* *mitukat-ta.*⁸
 husband-DAT debt-NOM be.found-do- PST
 ‘My husband found out my debt.’
- d. **otto-kara* *syakkin-ga* *mitukat-ta.*
 husband-ABL debt-NOM be.found-do- PST
 ‘My husband found out my debt.’

Let us now examine another set of sentences with *naisyo* ‘secret.’ The conceived event profiled in the examples of (9a), (10a) and (11a), ‘borrowing money behind her husband,’ could also be expressed as in (12a). Although the predicate *naisyo-de* ‘secretly’ is not a verb, HIDEE can be overtly expressed in a dative-marked NP, if necessary, as illustrated in (12a) and (12c).

- (12)a. *otto-ni* *naisyo-de* *syakkin-o* *si-ta.*
 husband-DAT secret-in debt-ACC do-PST
 ‘I borrowed money, hiding the fact from my husband.’
- b. **otto-kara* *naisyo-de* *syakkin-o* *si-ta.*
 husband-ABL secret-in debt-ACC do-PST
 ‘I borrowed money, hiding the fact from my husband.’
- c. *otto-ni* *naisyo-ni-sita.*
 husband-DAT secret-in do- PST
 ‘I hid (the fact) from my husband.’

⁸ The dative-marked NP (*otto-ni*, ‘husband’) in (11c) has LOCATION-reading as well as HIDEE-reading: ‘It has turned out that my husband has debt.’

d.**otto-kara naisyo-ni-sita.*
 husband-ABL secret-in do- PST
 ‘I hid (the fact) from my husband.’

Table 2 below shows the case marking patterns we discussed. It shows that the predicate *kakureru* consistently marks SHELTER with dative *ni*, irrespective of syntactic environment. The discrepancy observed between HIDEES with *kakureru* is highlighted.

Table 2: Case marking patterns of analogous expressions

	Independent clause		<i>te</i> -subordinate clause	
	SHELTER	HIDEE	SHELTER	HIDEE
<i>kakureru</i> (1)	DAT <i>ni</i>	ABL <i>kara</i>	DAT <i>ni</i>	DAT <i>ni</i> (?ABL <i>kara</i>)
<i>damaru</i> (9)	–	DAT <i>ni</i>	–	DAT <i>ni</i>
<i>bareru</i> (10)	–	DAT <i>ni</i>	–	DAT <i>ni</i>
<i>mitukaru</i> (11)	LOC <i>de</i> /DAT <i>ni</i>	DAT <i>ni</i>	–	DAT <i>ni</i>
<i>naisyo-de</i> (12)	–	DAT <i>ni</i>	–	DAT <i>ni</i>

Examples (9)-(12) strongly suggest that the HIDEE of SECRET-scenario must employ dative *ni* rather than ablative *kara*, regardless of syntactic environment. It is reasonable to assume that it is the (potential) recipient nature of HIDEE that motivates this case marking. Notice that all the HIDEES above can be characterized as a potential RECIPIENT of SECRET (cf. RECIPIENT-dative *ni* in (3)). We assume that this common dative marking among the four dominant analogous expressions examined above is, to a considerable extent, responsible for the idiosyncratic HIDEE-dative in question.

4.2 Transitive counterpart of *kakureru*: *kakusu*

It should be worth noting that in the Japanese classic *Genji monogatari* ‘*Tale of Genji*,’ two HIDEE-datives *ni* under the SECRET-scenario are attested but none of them are used with the intransitive *kakuru* corresponding to *kakureru* in modern Japanese, but with the transitive counterpart *kakusu*.⁹ This finding is consistent with the view proposed above. As illustrated in (13), the transitive verb *kakusu* in modern Japanese, which means ‘hide’ or ‘conceal,’ allows HIDEE-dative *ni* regardless of its syntactic environment. It seems reasonable to assume that the argument structure of the transitive counterpart *kakusu* is also to some extent responsible for the development of the idiosyncratic HIDEE-dative *ni* as in (1).

(13) a. *tuma-ni(-wa) syakkin-o kakusi-teiru.*
 wife-DAT(-TOP) debt-ACC hide-PROG
 ‘(I’m) hiding the debt from my wife.’

⁹ We are indebted to Kaname Takashima for this information.

- b. *tuma-ni(-wa)* *syakkin-o* *kakusi-te* *kekconsi-ta.*
 wife-DAT(-TOP) debt-ACC hide-and marry-PST
 ‘(I) married my wife hiding my debt from her.’

4.3 Common event conception: SECRET-scenario

We have observed that the two distinct particles, dative *ni* and ablative *kara*, in independent clauses exhibit complementary distribution and they are by no means interchangeable under the same interpretation. The clause *otto-ni kakure-* in (1)(*te*-subordinate) and (5a)(independent) receives distinct interpretations: SECRET-scenario and SHELTER-scenario, respectively. The referent of the dative-marked NP is identified as HIDEE in (1) and as SHELTER in (5a). This twisted pattern that Japanese dative *ni* exhibit defies a straightforward explanation in terms of the semantics of the verb *per se*.

The argument structure with the other four predicates discussed above reflects the SECRET-scenario event conception in independent-clause uses. It is reasonable to assume that the *ni*-marking with *kakureru* in subordinate clauses is modeled on the argument structure. We claim that the dative *ni* case-marking in the dominant expressions, which reflect the same SECRET-scenario event conception, gives rise to the idiosyncratic HIDEE-dative in question

The common event conception of SECRET-scenario can be schematically depicted as in Figure 9. The inaccessible field with HIDER rather than HIDEE, represented by a rounded rectangle, is highlighted with a bold line. The shaded ellipse indicates a latent accessible field, which is partially overlaid by the inaccessible field. There can be two variants in Japanese: one variant focuses on HIDER’s creation of the inaccessible field, while the other emphasizes the HIDER’s sneak into the inaccessible field. Note that this concept of inaccessible field is close to the notion of SHELTER mentioned above.

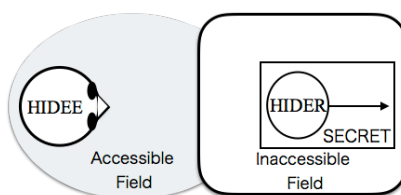


Figure 9: Japanese SECRET-scenario conception

4.4 Non-canonical case marking in Korean subordinate clauses

An analogous account is applicable to some non-canonical or idiosyncratic case markings in Korean subordinate clauses. An event conception comparable to that described in the Japanese examples above can be

encoded in the postposition-like phrase *mollae* in (14a) or the adverbial clause *moreu-ge* in (14b).

- (14) a. *geunyeo-neun bumonim(*-i) mollae*
 she-TOP parents-HON (NOM) without.knowing
geu namja-hago sagwi-goissda.
 that man-with go.out.with-PROG
 ‘She is going out with that man without her parents’ notice.’
- b. *geunyeo-neun bumonim(?-i) moreu-ge*
 she-TOP parents- HON (NOM) be.ignorant-ADVLZ
geu namja-hago sagwi-goissda.
 that man-with go.out.with-PROG
 ‘She is going out with that man without her parents’ notice.’
- c. *geu sasil-eul geunyeo-eui bumonim-i moreu-nda.*
 that fact-ACC she-GEN parents-HON-NOM be.ignorant-DECL
 ‘Her parents don’t know the fact.’

Whereas the verb *moreuda* ‘be ignorant’ itself can felicitously take the nominative-marked subject in independent clauses as in (14c), it disfavors the presence of the nominative case in subordination like (14b). This can also be accounted for in terms of blending; conceptually equivalent *mollae* and *moreu-ge* can merge formally in subordinate environments. *Mollae* is primarily used as adverb with no nominal preceding it, and the relevant postposition-like use presumably derives from its variant prefixed with a semantically light noun: *nammollae* (*nam* ‘other.people’). Since the adverbial clause *moreu-ge* in (14b) as well as the postposition-like *mollae* in (14a) are modeled on the prefixed variant of the adverbial, they both favor the absence of case marking, as does *nammollae*. Here as well, the case marking in subordination is not solely motivated by lexical argument structures but also by morphosyntactic blending with the independent-clause predicate for the relevant event conception.

Mollae and *moreu-ge* in subordinate environments have an event conception in common, which can be diagrammed as in Figure 10. In both the postposition-like phrase and the adverbial clause, the accessible field with HIDEE rather than HIDER, represented by the shaded ellipse, is highlighted, as indicated with a bold line. They also exhibit certain some differences. *Mollae* focuses on HIDEE’s state of its accessible field falling short of HIDER, while *moreu-ge* emphasizes the HIDEE’s change in its accessible field. Note that the concept of accessible field is identical to the notion referred to in the relevant event conception of the similar Japanese expressions seen above.

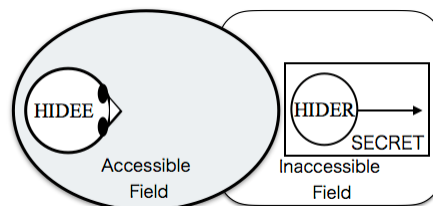


Figure 10: Korean SECRET-scenario conception

Let us sum up the present cross-linguistic discussion by pointing out how Japanese and Korean differ in structuring and linguistically coding the event conceptions of concealed behavior. Both languages have in common an event conception that consists of the HIDER with its inaccessible field (or SHELTER), HIDEE with its accessible field, and SECRET. Japanese is more likely to focus on the inaccessible field with HIDER rather than HIDEE, while Korean is liable to highlight the accessible field with HIDEE rather than HIDER.

5 Conclusion

This study has pointed out that the presence of the idiosyncratic case marking confined in *te*-subordinate environment evidences that the semantics of verbs *per se* cannot accommodate the full range of case markings of Japanese dative *ni* and argued that HIDEE-dative in question, therefore, should be characterized in terms of construction rather than the argument structure of the verb.

This study elucidated the case-marking mechanism with respect to “blending of prefabricated forms in language production” (Barlow 2000: 317). It demonstrated that the use of dative *ni* in “X-*ni kakure-te V*” construction cannot be accounted for by the semantics of verbs *per se* and, therefore, is best characterized in special reference to the dominant argument structure of the relevant prefabricated structures reflecting the event conception of SECRET-scenario in independent-clause uses. This study argued that the relevant prefabricated structures, including the transitive counterpart of the intransitive verb *kakureru*, namely *kakusu* ‘hide,’ provide a scaffold for the development of the use of idiosyncratic HIDEE dative *ni* in *te*-subordinate clauses.

We also explored the comparable Korean expressions and suggested that our proposed blending approach can accommodate the idiosyncratic linguistic behavior in which the grammatical subject of *moreu-ge* adverbial clause in Korean disfavors nominative case marking.

Our analysis also revealed that Japanese and Korean exhibit different conventional construal patterns with respect to SECRET-reading scenario. On the one hand, Japanese tends to view the background sub-event co-extensive with the core-event encoded by the verb of the independent clause in terms of HIDER’s SHELTER (HIDEE’s inaccessible field), on the other hand, Korean opts to construe the co-extensive background event in terms of HIDEE’s accessible field.

Examining non-canonical or idiosyncratic case markings in both Japanese and Korean that seem to reflect a blending of prefabricated structures, this study has shown that subordination can tolerate and even accommodate irregular or non-canonical linguistic behaviors, thus rendering them no-longer idiosyncratic. We hope that our approach to case markings beyond the scope of verbal semantics can contribute to a new perspective and understanding of other closely related but long-ignored morphosyntactic phenomena.

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