

Viktor Köhlich

On the Syntactic Status of the Element *-no* and the Categorization of *no*-Modifiers in Japanese

Abstract:

In Japanese, there seem to exist clear morphological boundaries between adjectives and nouns. When modifying a noun, adjectives exhibit either the element *-i* or *-na*, depending on whether they belong to the group of *i*- or *na*-adjectives, while nouns exhibit the element *-no* that can license a variety of different relationships. However, several lexemes exist that appear with the element *-no*, but exhibit characteristics that point in favor of adjectival and nominal status simultaneously. I will refer to these lexemes as ‘*no*-modifiers’ and argue that they form a hybrid group with different lexemes leaning more towards adjectival or nominal status respectively.

In this talk, I put forward three different syntactic accounts for *-no* – a functional head (Rubin 1994; Belk 2017), a combination of copula and tense marker (Nishiyama 1999) or a genitive case marker (Murasugi 1991) – and show that these analyses ultimately correlate with the word class status of relevant lexemes. In the next step, I will present morphosyntactic criteria for adjectivehood and nounhood in Japanese (cf. Oshima et al. 2019) as well as the empirical methodology to test these. Based on these criteria, a taxonomy of the different subgroups of *no*-modifiers will be delivered.

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