It is often assumed in the literature that LF is freer than narrow syntax. In particular, languages with null pronouns seem to possess a wider range of interpretive strategies, freely applying post-syntactic operations that establish dependencies between two expressions. Through an analysis of semantic effects of a certain instance of Case alternation in Japanese, I claim that it is not always the case: Such semantic operations are constrained by the argument structure of the predicates involved.

In many languages, overt Case-marking on object phrases has semantic import (e.g., specificity encoded by the overt accusative marker in Turkish (Enç 1991)). Japanese seems to fall outside the groups of such languages (putting aside the cases involving the topic marker -wa, most notably discussed by S.-Y. Kuroda). As shown in (1)-(3), the existence of the accusative marker -o does not determine the specificity of the object NP, regardless of the morphological make-up of the verb.

(1) Transitive sentence: The object NP is specific regardless of the existence of -o.
Taro-wa tuini atarasi-i kuruma(-o) kat-ta yo. 
'Taro finally bought a new car.'

(2) Transitive sentence: The object NP is non-specific regardless of the existence of -o.
Watasii, [pro,hon(-o)]-ga suki nanda. 
'I book-Nom-Acc like SFP (NM = nominalizer) 'Talking about myself, I like reading books.'

(3) Desiderative sentences (adapted from McGloin 1989):
   water-Nom/-Acc drink-want-Pres. car-Nom/-Acc buy-want-Pres.
   '(I) want to drink some water.'  '(I) want to buy a car.'
With morphologically complex verbs, the object can be marked with either the nominative marker -ga or the accusative marker -o. In this case, too, the choice of the case marker does not seem to have any effects on the meaning of the sentence. Thus in (3), in which the denoted events are yet to happen, the object NP is most naturally interpreted as non-specific, regardless of the choice of the Case-marker.

However, some derived stative predicates provide the data that contradicts the observation made so far. With the accusative marker, the most salient interpretation of the object NP is specific: (4). With the nominative marker, the object NP must be interpreted as not only specific but also focused.

(4) Desiderative sentences and NP-o interpreted as specific (adapted from McGloin 1989):
   company-Acc quit-want-Pres. room-Acc clear-want-Pres
   'It is the company that I want to quit.'; 'It is the room that I want to clear.,'

The contrast between (4)-(5) is rather surprising, given that the Case marker does not seem to contribute to sentence meanings, as illustrated in (1)-(3).

Notice that the verbal stems in (4)-(5) are of a particular semantic type. In English, the verb clear distinguishes itself from other verbs, most notably by the possibility of altering the order between the two internal arguments (Hook 1983): (6).

(6) a. clear dates from the table b. clear the table of dishes
The Japanese counterpart of this class of verbs exhibits similar behaviors (Fukui, Miyagawa, and Tenny 1985): The non-theme NP may be marked with the genitive marker -no while the theme NP is marked with -o, as in (7)c. This alternation is not observed with other ditransitive verbs: (8).

(7) The alternation with katazuke- 'clear' (Fukui, Miyagawa, and Tenny 1985):
   a. teeburu-kara sara-o katazuke-ru (cf. (6)a)
      table-from dish-Acc clear-Pres 'clear dishes from the table'
   b. A parallel example to (6)b: c. The licit variant of (7)a:
      *teeburu-o sara-de katazuke-ru teeburu-no sara-o katazuke-ru
      table-Acc dish-with clear-Pres table-Gen dish-Acc clear-Pres

(8) Non-katazuke-class ditransitive verbs fail to exhibit the Case alternation:
   a. Hanako-ni hon-o okur-u 
      Hanako-to book-Acc send-Pres 'send books to Hanako'
   b. *Hanako-no hon-o okur-u (cf. (7)c)
      Hanako-Gen book-Acc send-Pres - Ungrammatical as 'send books to Hanako'
There is another difference between the katazuke-class verbs and non-katazuke-ditransitives. The non-theme NP of katazuke can be left non-overt without making the phrase non-elliptical ((9)a), which is not the case with other ditransitive verbs: (10)a.

(9)  

a. ∅ sara-o katazuke-ru non-elliptical  
b. teeburu-kara ∅ katazuke-ru elliptical

clear-dish clear-Pres
dish clear-Pres

Lit. 'clear the dishes'
Lit. 'clear from the table'

(10)  

a. Hanako-ni ∅ okur-u elliptical  
b. ∅ hon-o okur-u elliptical

Hanako-to send-Pres book-Acc send-Pres

Lit. 'send to Hanako'
Lit. 'send to Hanako'

Based on these observations, I claim that the non-theme NP of the katazuke-class verbs is reanalyzed with the theme NP when there is no adposition associated: (12)a. Reanalysis takes place as a last-resort means to save the non-theme NP which would otherwise left unlicensed for Case.

(11) *The structure of the projection headed by the katazuke-class verbs*

\[
\text{[VP [PP teeburu kara] [V' [NP sara] katazuke-]]}
\]

table from dish clear

(12) *From (11): When P for the non-theme NP is not selected*

a. \[
\text{[VP [NP teeburu] [V [NP sara] katazuke-]]}
\]
At Spell-Out

b. \[
\text{[VP teeburu-kara sara katazuke-]}
\]
Reanalysis contingent upon Linearization

c. \[
\text{[VP teeburu-no sara katazuke-]}
\]
Case-marking, including no-(Gen)-insertion

Returning to the issue of interactions of the Case alternation and the focus interpretation ((4) and (5)), I assume the following structure for desiderative sentences with the katazuke-class verbs as in (13), which is based on the hidden complementation analysis of Japanese desiderative sentences (Endo, Kitagawa, and Yoon 2000). A motivation behind the postulation of phonologically null T is that the event denoted by the lower clause is independent of the time of one's wanting in those sentences: (14).

(13) *The structure of desiderative sentences (4)b and (5)b (only the relevant portions are shown):*

\[
... \text{[CP1 pro\textsubscript{1} [NP pro\textsubscript{2} heya katazuke- T\textsubscript{2} [T\textsubscript{1} ...)]}
\]
room clear want

(14) a. Raisyuu kuruma-o kai-ta-katta  

next.week car-Acc buy-want-Past next.week car-Acc buy-Past

'I wanted to buy a car next week.'  Lit. 'Yumi bought a car next week.'

Unlike (9)a, which is merely a fragment of a sentence, the interpretation of a full sentence (4)-(5) is not 'elliptical', even without an overt non-theme NP. As the translation indicates, the most natural interpretation of these two sentences is the one in which the owner of the room is the same as the subject of ta-'want'. I thus assume that the non-theme NP is present in (14) as a null pronominal. Unlike (12), which illustrates a monoclusal structure, (15) has a biclausal structure. Accordingly, there are two options for morphological Case-licensing: Before or after Linearization. If Case is licensed before Linearization, the theme NP in (13) is marked with -o, being adjacent to a verbal head (cf. Kuroda 1965, 1978. 1983). If Case is licensed after Linearization, it induces merger of verbal morphemes, which are bound morphemes and need to be assembled for PF requirements: (15).

(15) (13) after reanalysis (only the relevant portions are shown):

\[
\text{[CP1 pro\textsubscript{1} [NP pro\textsubscript{2} heya katazuke-T\textsubscript{2} [T\textsubscript{1} ...]]}
\]
room clear-want

Given the Right-hand Head Rule (Williams 1981), the head of the verbal complex is ta, which is adjectival. The Case-licenser being non-verbal, the complex NP in (15) has its Case features licensed as nominative -ga rather than -o. Note that the complex NP in (15) contains pro, over which binding can take place. Following Heycock and Doron's analysis (2003), I assume that abstraction as binding of null pronominal elements leads to categorical (or focus) judgments. Hence only when the theme is marked with ga (i.e., Linearization and reanalysis precede Case-licensing), is the focus interpretation obtained.

This account explains why the same process does not obtain with verbs other than katazuke-class ones. With embedded ditransitive verbs like okur-, non-theme NPs cannot be left unexpressed without causing semantic awkwardness (cf. (9)a and (10)a). If semantic operations such as abstraction could have been applied freely, pro could have been generated in (3), which would fail to capture the difference between (3) and (4)-(5) with respect to the availability of focus reading. Note also that this account clarifies the order of the processes at interfaces: If there are options in the point of Case-licensing, only when Case is licensed after Linearization does the choice of the Case-marker affect interpretations.

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\[\text{[VP [PP teeburu kara] [V' [NP sara] katazuke-]]}\]

table from dish clear