

Lexical Decomposition and Comparative Structures for Japanese Determiners

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1. Introduction

This paper is about the interpretation of Japanese *ooku-no* and *takusan-no*, which seem to share the same meaning. Both of these items are roughly translated as *many* in English.

- (1) a. John-wa **ooku-no** hon-wo yon-da
 John-Nom many-Gen book-Acc read-Past
 b. John-wa **takusan-no** hon-wo yon-da
 John-Nom many-Gen book-Acc read-Past
 ‘John read many books’

In English, *many* is used in non-comparative constructions, and *more* is used in comparative constructions as shown in (2). In Japanese, however, *ooku-no* and *takusan-no* can be used in both comparatives and non-comparatives, as shown in (3).

- (2) a. John read **many** books
 b. John read **more** books than Mary did.
 c. *John read **many** books than Mary did.
- (3) a. John-wa Mary yorimo **ooku-no** hon-wo yon-da
 John-Nom Mary than many-Gen books-Acc read-Past
 ‘John read more books than Mary did.’
 b. John-wa Mary yorimo **takusan-no** hon-wo yon-da
 John-Nom Mary than many-Gen books-Acc read-Past
 ‘John read more books than Mary did.’¹

In the rest of the paper, I will show that the Japanese lexical items *ooku-no* and *takusan-no* actually have different meanings and they appear in different

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¹-no of *ooku-no* and *takusan-no* can be omitted. Traditionally, *ooku* and *takusan* have been assumed as manner adverbs. We will put aside these variant forms in this paper.

