

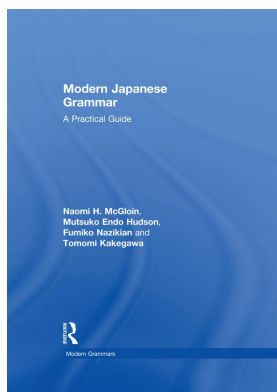
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Complement clauses

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Complement clauses

A complement clause is a clause that is required, i.e., not optional, as a constituent of a larger sentence. It functions like a noun phrase required by the predicate of the main clause.

26.1 *no* and *koto* ‘...ing, that...’

Both **no** ‘...one(s), thing(s)’ and **koto** ‘fact(s), intangible thing(s)’ nominalize a clause, i.e. turn a clause into a noun phrase. In English, this is done by using the gerund ‘-ing,’ as in ‘Eating breakfast is important’; by using ‘to,’ as in ‘To eat breakfast is important’; or by using ‘that,’ as in ‘That I ate breakfast is true.’ When a clause is nominalized, it can be used in the position in a sentence that a noun phrase commonly occupies, such as the subject and object positions. The topic particle **wa** cannot be used within the nominalized clause, and therefore the subject must be marked by **ga**.

朝ご飯を食べるの/ことは健康にいい。

Asagohan o taberu no/koto wa kenkoo ni ii.

Eating breakfast is good for one’s health.

誰も私が/は朝ご飯を食べたの/ことを知らない。

Dare mo watashi ga/wa asagohan o tabeta no/koto o shiranai.

Nobody knows that I ate breakfast.

詩を書くの/ことが好きだ。

Shi o kaku no/koto ga suki da.

I like writing poems.

The predicate preceding **no** or **koto** needs to be in its pre-nominal form. However, when the predicate preceding **no** or **koto** is a nominal predicate, the pre-nominal copula **no** cannot be used. Instead, the copula **de aru** is used.

► 5.2.1

母が弁護士であるの/ことを誇りに思う。

Haha ga bengoshi de aru no/koto o hokori ni omou.

I am proud that my mother is a lawyer.

テストが簡単なの/ことを喜んだ。

Tesuto ga kantan na no/koto o yorokonda.

We were glad that the test was easy.

no and **koto** can be used interchangeably in many cases, but they induce slightly different interpretations. When **no** is used, the sentence indicates that the speaker empathizes with what is expressed by the **no** clause. On the other hand, the use of **koto** indicates the speaker’s lack of empathy or his/her distant feeling towards what is denoted by the **koto** clause. In short, the sentence with the nominalizer **no** sounds more subjective or personal and the sentence with the nominalizer **koto** sounds more objective or general. Another difference is that **no** is used when

the nominalized sentence expresses something concrete or perceptible, while **koto** is commonly used when the nominalized clause expresses something more abstract.

▶ See 18.1 for idiomatic expressions that only appear with **koto**.

Only **no** is used when the clause is a complement of verbs of sense perception (e.g. **miru** ‘to see,’ **kiku** ‘to listen/hear,’ **kikoeru** ‘to be audible’), discovery (e.g. **mitsukeru** ‘find’ and **mitsukaru** ‘to be found’), and direct interaction (e.g. **tasukeru** ‘to rescue,’ **tetsudau** ‘to help’ and **tomeru** ‘to stop’).

The complement of these verbs expresses a concrete or perceptible event.

隣人が家を出るの/コトを見た。

Rinjin ga ie o deru no/koto o mita.

I saw my neighbor leaving the house.

子供がテレビを見るの/コトをとめた。

Kodomo ga terebi o miru no/koto o tometa.

I stopped the child from watching TV.

Koto tends to be used to nominalize the complement of verbs denoting an abstract thinking process or deduction, such as **narau** ‘to learn,’ **kangaeru** ‘to think,’ **meejiru** ‘to command’ and **suitee suru** ‘to deduce.’

娘に早く就職させることを考えた。

Musume ni hayaku shuushoku saseru koto o kangaeta.

I thought about making my daughter get a job soon.

日本語では一つの漢字に複数の読み方があることを習った。

Nihongo de wa hitotsu no kanji ni fukusuu no yomikata ga aru koto o naratta.

I learned that one Chinese character has multiple readings in Japanese.

In nominal (copulative) sentences (i.e. X **wa** Y **da/desu** ‘X is Y,’) only **koto** can be used to nominalize a clause that occupies the Y position.

▶ 5.2; 18.1

問題は金だ。

Mondai wa kane da.

The problem is money.

問題は金がないこと/のだ。

Mondai wa kane ga nai koto/no da.

The problem is that there is no money.

26.2 to/tte

to is a particle that introduces a quotation or a sound related to someone/something doing something. It is often used with verbs like **yuu** (originally **iu**) ‘to say,’ **omou** ‘to think,’ **kiku** ‘to hear,’ **kaku** ‘to write,’ **sakebu** ‘to shout,’ **naku** ‘to cry,’ and **naruru** ‘to ring.’ The clause preceding **to** appears in the plain form. The tense in the complement clause does not have to agree with the tense of the main verb. Nonpast form in the complement clause indicates non-completion of the action/event denoted in the complement clause at the time of the action/event denoted by the main verb.

同僚は明日は会議があると言った。

Dooryoo wa ashita wa kaigi ga aru to itta.

My colleague said that there would be a meeting tomorrow.

今日は雨が降ると思います。

Kyoo wa ame ga furu to omoimasu.

I think that it'll rain today.

明日は晴れると聞きました。

Ashita wa hareru to kikimashita.

I heard that tomorrow would be sunny.

誰かが「火事だ」と叫んだ。

Dare ka ga 'kaji da' to sakenda.

Someone yelled 'Fire!'

When speaking casually, **to** is often pronounced as **tte** or **te** (when preceded by the syllabic **n**).

友達が遊びに来るって言った。

Tomodachi ga asobi ni kuru tte itta.

My friend said she would come to visit.

君はお母さんから何て聞いた？

Kimi wa okaasan kara nan te kiita?

What did you hear from your mom?

目覚まし時計がピーピーって鳴った。

Mezamashi dokee ga biibii tte natta.

The alarm clock went off 'beep beep.'

The perception verb **kiku** 'hear' can take a clausal complement nominalized by **no**, but what is expressed differs from what the **-to** clause (quotation) denotes.

(a) 父がうちを出て行くのを聞いた。

Chichi ga uchi o dete iku no o kiita.

I heard my father leaving home.

(b) 父がうちを出て行くと聞いた。

Chichi ga uchi o dete iku to kiita.

I heard that my father was leaving home.

In (a), the speaker believes that his/her father left home and he/she heard the sound of it. In (b), it merely expresses that the speaker heard that his/her father was leaving. What is denoted by the **-to** clause is not assumed to be a fact by the speaker; it simply reports or quotes (directly or indirectly) what is said, heard, or thought.

26.3 Embedded questions

A question sentence can be a complement of predicates such as verbs of knowing (**shitte iru** 'to know'), understanding (**wakaru** 'to understand,' **rikai suru** 'to understand'), asking (**kiku** 'to ask,' **tazuneru** 'to inquire,' **shitsumon suru** 'to ask a question'), examining (**kangaeru** 'to think,' **kakunin suru** 'to confirm,' **kooryo suru** 'to consider'), remembering (**omoidasu** 'to recall'), forgetting (**wasureru** 'to forget'), explaining (**setsumee suru** 'to explain') and deciding (**kimeru** 'to decide,' **kettee suru** 'to decide'). When a yes or no question is the complement, the question clause appears in the plain form followed by **ka doo ka** ('whether or not'). It is then placed before the main verb. **Doo ka** is optional in an informal style speech.

休みがとれますか。(yes or no question)

Yasumi ga toremasu ka.

Can I take a day off?

休みがとれるかどうかききたい。(embedded question)

Yasumi ga toreru ka doo ka kikitai.

I want to ask whether or not I can take a day off.

The plain affirmative form of the copula **da** is deleted before **ka** in an embedded question.

道子さんは学生ですか。(yes or no question)

Michiko-san wa gakusee desu ka.

Is Michiko a student?

道子さんが学生かどうか知らない。

Michiko-san ga gakusee ka doo ka shiranai.

I don't know if Michiko is a student.

勉強しなくてもいいのですか。(yes or no question)

Benkyoo shinakute mo ii no desu ka.

Is it the case that I don't have to study?

勉強しなくてもいいのかどうか聞きました。(embedded question)

Benkyoo shinakute mo ii no ka doo ka kikimashita.

I asked if it's the case that I don't have to study.

If the embedded question is a WH-question (see 32.2), the complement clause appears in the plain form followed by **ka**. **Doo ka** cannot be used in an embedded WH-question. The plain affirmative form of the copula **da** is deleted before **ka**.

空港までどうやって行きますか。(WH-question)

Kuukoo made doo yatte ikimasu ka.

How do I get to the airport?

空港までどうやって行くか分からない。(embedded question)

Kuukoo made doo yatte iku ka wakaranai.

I don't know how to get to the airport.

どうして分からないのですか。(WH-question)

Dooshite wakaranai no desu ka.

Why don't you understand?

どうしてわからないのか尋ねた。(embedded question)

Dooshite wakaranai no ka tazuneta.

I asked why he/she doesn't understand.

When the main verb is a verb of asking, the quotation particle **to** may be used following the embedded question.

友達に明日のパーティーに行くかと聞いた。

Tomodachi ni ashita no paatii ni iku ka to kiita.

I asked if my friend was going to the party tomorrow.

明日のテストは難しいかと尋ねた。

Ashita no tesuto wa muzukashii ka to tazuneta.

I asked if tomorrow's test is difficult.