Focus Licensing at the Left Periphery in Japanese Right Dislocation

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1. Introduction

# Topic and Focus in Japanese:

(1) a. Mary-wa, John-ga e1 kinoo atta.
   Mary-TOP John-NOM yesterday saw
   ‘As for Mary, John saw her yesterday.’

b. John-ga Mary-wa kinoo atta.
   John-NOM Mary-FOC yesterday saw
   ‘John saw MARY yesterday.’

⇒ Although Japanese uses the left peripheral field to mark a topic phrase, it is not
   clear whether such a field plays a crucial role in marking a focused phrase in
   this language, since a focused phrase does not have to be shifted to any
   designated position but rather its function appears to be exclusively marked
   with a focus particle such as contrastive -wa.

- Rizzi (1997):
(2) … Force … (Topic) … (Focus) … Fin IP

<Claim> There is actually a designated focus position in the CP layer in Japanese and
   this position is activated only in limited contexts such as those involving ellipsis.

# Japanese Right Dislocation (JRD):

(3) John-ga kinoo atta yo, Mary-ni.
   John-NOM yesterday saw Mary-DAT
   ‘Lit. John saw e yesterday, that is Mary.’

2. The Bi-Clausal Analysis of Japanese Right Dislocation

- Kuno (1978): a JRD case like (3) involves “a process that adds afterthoughts to the
   end of a sentence.”

⇒ Arguably, this process of adding afterthoughts is most naturally captured under
   the bi-clausal analysis of JRD, proposed by Tanaka (2001):
(4) [John-NOM yesterday e saw], [Mary-DAT₁ [John-NOM yesterday t₁ saw]]

⇒ The null object e in the first clause simply denotes something unspecified and the semantic content of this object is further specified in the second clause:

(5) ∃x [John saw x yesterday] & it was Mary that John saw yesterday.

⇒ In (4), the focused phrase is not marked with any focus particle. Hence it is most natural to claim that it is licensed in a designated position for a focus phrase in the CP field.

(6) [TP John-NOM yesterday e saw], [FocP Mary-DAT₁ [TP John-NOM yesterday t₁ saw]]

<Supporting evidence>

i) Island sensitivity:

(7) Mary-ga [John-ga e yonda to] omotteiru yo, Barriers-o.

Mary-NOM John-NOM read Comp think Barriers-ACC

‘Lit. Mary thinks John read e₁, Barriers₁.’

(8) a.?*Mary-ga [John-ga e yonda] tosi-o oboeteita yo, Barriers-o.

Mary-NOM John-NOM read year-ACC remembered Barriers-ACC

‘Lit. Mary remembered the year when John read e₁, Barriers₁.’

b.?*Mary-ga [John-ga e yonda node] odoroiteita yo, Barriers-o.

Mary-NOM John-NOM read because was-surprised Barriers-ACC

‘Lit. Mary was surprised because John read e₁, Barriers₁.’


(9) John-ga sore-o yonda yo, Barriers-o.

John-NOM it-ACC read Barriers-ACC

‘Lit. John read it₁, Barriers₁.’

⇒ Under the mono-clausal analysis, no island effect would be expected.

(10) a.?*Mary-ga [John-ga sore-o yonda] tosi-o oboeteita yo, Barriers-o.

Mary-NOM John-NOM it-ACC read year-ACC remembered Barriers-ACC

‘Lit. Mary remembered the year when John read it₁, Barriers₁.’

b.?*Mary-ga [John-ga sore-o yonda node] odoroiteita yo, Barriers-o.

Mary-NOM John-NOM it-ACC read because was-surprised Barriers-ACC

‘Lit. Mary was surprised because John read it₁, Barriers₁.’

(11) [TP ... it₁-ACC ...], [FocP Barriers-ACC₁ [TP ... t₁ ... ]]
# Postverbal NP as a topic: cf. Yamashita (2011)

(12) John-ga kinoo atta yo, Mary-wa.
    John-NOM yesterday saw Mary-TOP
    ‘Lit. John saw [e] yesterday, as for Mary.’

(13) \[TP John-NOM yesterday e saw], \[TopP Mary-TOP1 [TP John-NOM yesterday t, saw]]

(14) \(\exists x [John saw x yesterday] \& as for Mary, John saw her yesterday.\)

(15) A: What have Mary and Susan been doing these days?
    B: (12)
    B’: #John-ga kinoo atta yo, Mary to Susan-wa.
    John-NOM yesterday saw Mary and Susan-TOP
    ‘Lit. John saw [e] yesterday, as for Mary and Susan.’

- Island insensitivity of topic phrases: (cf. Kuno 1973)

    Barriers-TOP Mary-NOM John-NOM read year-ACC remembered
    ‘As for Barriers\(_1\), Mary remembered the year when John read \(e_1\).’
    Barriers-TOP Mary-NOM John-NOM read because was-surprised
    ‘As for Barriers\(_1\), Mary was surprised because John read \(e_1\).’

    Mary-NOM John-NOM read year-ACC remembered Barriers-TOP
    ‘Lit. Mary remembered the year when John read \(e_1\), Barriers\(_1\).’
    Mary-NOM John-NOM read because was-surprised Barriers-TOP
    ‘Lit. Mary was surprised because John read \(e_1\), Barriers\(_1\).’

# Multiple right dislocation:

    yesterday ring-ACC gave John-NOM Mary-DAT
    ‘Lit. \(e_1\) gave \(e_2\) a ring, John\(_1\), Mary\(_2\).’
    b. Kinoo yubiwa-o ageta yo, Mary-ni John-ga
    yesterday ring-ACC gave Mary-DAT John-NOM
yesterday ring-ACC gave John-TOP Mary-DAT
‘Lit. $e_1$ gave $e_2$ a ring, as for John$_1$, Mary$_2$.’ (Topic-Focus)
b. (#) Kinoo yubiwa-o ageta yo, Mary-ni John-wa
yesterday ring-ACC gave Mary-DAT John-FOC (*Focus-Topic)
(20) a. Kinoo yubiwa-o ageta yo, Mary-wa John-ga
yesterday ring-ACC gave Mary-TOP John-NOM
‘Lit. $e_1$ gave $e_2$ a ring, as for Mary$_2$, John$_1$’ (Topic-Focus)
b. (#) Kinoo yubiwa-o ageta yo, John-ga Mary-wa
yesterday ring-ACC gave John-NOM Mary-FOC (*Focus-Topic)
⇒ In Japanese, the topic projection is higher than the focus projection in the CP layer.

N.B. (19b) seems to become acceptable with topic interpretation when Mary-ni is taken as part of a topic, so that (19b) may be felicitous as an answer to a question such as ‘What did John do to Mary?’.

3. **CP Extraposition in Japanese Right Dislocation**

# CP extraposition is impossible in normal sentences:

    John-NOM yesterday white hat-ACC is-wearing girl-DAT saw
    ‘John saw a girl who was wearing a white hat yesterday.’

    John-NOM white hat-ACC is-wearing yesterday girl-DAT saw

- CP extraposition in JRD:

(22) John-ga kinoo syoozyo-ni atta yo, siroi booshi-o kabutteiru.
    John-NOM yesterday girl-DAT saw white hat-ACC is-wearing
    ‘Lit. John saw a girl yesterday, (one) who was wearing a white hat.’

⇒ CP extraposition is licensed here since ellipsis activates FocP.

(23) *[TP John-NOM yesterday a girl saw], [FocP [REL white hat-ACC is-wearing]$_1$
    [TP John-NOM yesterday [a $1$ girl saw]]
- Island sensitivity:

is-wearing
‘Lit. Mary heard that John had seen a girl yesterday, (one) who was wearing a white hat.’

siroi booshi-o kabutteiru.
white hat-ACC is-wearing
‘Lit. Mary had the ring that John had given to a girl yesterday, (one) who was wearing a white hat.’

b. *Mary-ga [John-ga kinoo syoozyo-ni atta node] okotteiru yo, Mary-NOM John-NOM yesterday girl-DAT met because is-angry
siroi booshi-o kabutteiru.
white hat-ACC is-wearing
‘Lit. Mary is angry because John met a girl yesterday, (one) who was wearing a white hat.’

# Fox and Nissenbaum’s (1999) covert movement + late merge:

(26) We saw a painting yesterday by John.

(27) a.  we saw a painting yesterday <a painting> (covert movement)

b.  we saw a painting yesterday [<a painting> by John]. (late merge)

- Derivation of (22):

(28) a.  [TP John-NOM yesterday girl-DAT saw], [FocP <girl-DAT> [TP John-NOM yesterday girl-DAT saw]] (covert movement of girl-DAT to the Spec of FocP)

b.  [TP …], [FocP [REL white hat-ACC is-wearing] <girl-DAT> [TP John-NOM yesterday girl-DAT saw]] (late merge of the relative clause with the head N)

c.  [TP …], [FocP [REL white hat-ACC is-wearing] <girl-DAT> [TP John-NOM yesterday girl-DAT saw]] (deletion of the second TP)
Since covert movement is involved in this derivation (cf. (28a)), this correctly captures the fact that the extraposed relative clause can be successfully connected to a nominal head in an embedded clause, as in (24), whereas it cannot be connected to a nominal head within an island, as in (25).

The covert movement in question cannot be QR, as suggested by Fox and Nissenbaum (1999) for the derivation of CP extraposition in English, since it is not clause-bound.

<Suggestion> The covert movement in question is an instance of scrambling with the bottom copy of the resulting chain pronounced.

(29) A chain produced by scrambling must have an effect on PF.

In the derivation given in (28), the “covert” scrambling applied to the noun girl-DAT does have a PF effect, thanks to the late merge of the relative clause with this noun.

4. Licensing at the Root?

# JRD is a root phenomenon.
(30) TopP and FocP are licensed only in root clauses.
- Japanese sluicing:

(31) A: Daremo-ga kinoo zibun-no tomodati-ni atta yo.
   everyone-NOM yesterday self-GEN friend-DAT saw
   ‘Everyone saw a friend of his/hers yesterday.’

B: Eh! Dono mati-ni sundeiru?
   which town-in live
   ‘Lit. Oh, yeah? Everyone saw a friend of his/hers yesterday who lived in which town?’

(32) *Daremo-ga kinoo zibun-no tomodati-ni atta ga, watasi-wa
   everyone-NOM yesterday self-GEN friend-DAT saw but I-TOP
   [dono mati-ni sundeiru ka]-wa wakara-nai.
   which town-in live Q-TOP know-not
   ‘Lit. Everyone saw a friend of his/hers yesterday, but I don’t know Q [everyone saw a friend of his/hers yesterday] who lived in which town.’
Given that the possibility of CP extraposition is a hallmark of licensing FocP, the contrast between (31) and (32) indicates that FocP is licensed at the root.

- Saito (2012): Embedded topics are possible.

(33) John₁-ga [Mary-wa zibun₁-no uti-ni kuru to] itteita/omotteiru.
John-NOM Mary-TOP self-GEN house-to come Comp said/think
‘John said/thinks that as for Mary, she would/will come to his house.’

(34) John₁-ga [Mary-wa zibun₁-no hon-o yonda ka] tazuneta.
John-NOM Mary-TOP self-GEN book-ACC read Q Comp asked
‘John asked whether as for Mary, she read his book.’

#Complementizer to heads the highest projection in the CP layer, higher than the projection headed by Force, which expresses “paraphrases” or “reports” of direct discourse.

(35) John₁-ga [Mary-wa zibun₁-no hon-o yonda ka to] tazuneta.
John-NOM Mary-TOP self-GEN book-ACC read Q Comp asked
‘John asked whether as for Mary, she read his book.’

(36) John₁-ga Mary-ni [zibun₁-no uti-ni kite-kure to] itta.
John-NOM Mary-DAT self-GEN house-to come Comp said
‘Lit. John told Mary that come to his house.’

(37) [CP [ForceP [TopP XP [FinP [TP … ] Fin (no)] Topic] Force (ka)] Report (to)]

N.B. Observing that a wa-phrase cannot be interpreted as a topic in an embedded clause headed by no, Saito (2012) concludes that the Topic projection is located higher than the Fin projection.

- Focus licensing in embedded sluicing:

(38) John₁-wa [daremo-ga kinoo zibun₁-no tomodati-ni atta to]
John-TOP everyone-NOM yesterday self-GEN friend-DAT saw Comp
said but I-TOP which town-in live Comp said Q know-not
‘Lit. John said that everyone saw a friend of his yesterday, but I don’t know Q [pro] said that [everyone saw a friend of his yesterday who lived in which town]].’

#There is a conflict between the licensing of TopP and that of FocP in interrogative clauses headed by ka: only FocP is not permitted in such clauses, as shown in (32).
It turns out that the unacceptability of this sentence has nothing to do with licensing of FocP: the sluicing part could be regarded as a non-elided sentence (i.e., ‘which town pro lives in’) due to the inflectional form of the verb sundeiru, which is ambiguously taken as a form of nominal modifier (rentai-kei) or as an ending form (syusui-kei).

(39) Dono sensei1-mo [pro1 kinoo zibun1-no seeto-ni atta to] itteita ga, every teacher  yesterday self-GEN student-DAT Comp saw but watasi-wa [dono kamoku-ga tokuina ka]-wa wakara-nai. I-TOP which subject-NOM good Q-TOP know-not

‘Lit. Every teacher said that he/she1 met a student of his/hers1 yesterday, but I don’t know Q [every teacher said that he/she met a student of his/hers yesterday who were good at which subject].’


<Remaining Question> Why is FocP licensed if ellipsis is involved?

I speculate that in Japanese, the focus-presupposition relationship is phonetically manifested as accenting-deletion. It does not seem that the accenting-deaccenting device is available to this language.

References