

Focus Mismatch under Ellipsis in Japanese, Polarity and Head Movement

This paper studies examples of focus mismatch under argument ellipsis in Japanese headed by focus particles such as *dake/bakari/nomi* ‘only’ and explores their implications for the derivations of elliptical arguments, the size of their ellipsis sites, and the interaction of head movement with scope economy.

Akiyama (2014) and Moriyama (2017) observe that argument ellipsis (AE) cannot apply to any argument suffixed with focus particles such as *dake* ‘only’, as in (1) (where *e* stands for an elided argument). Here, the elided null object can refer back to *sushi*, but not to *susi-dake* ‘sushi-only’.

- (1) Taroo-wa susi-dake-o tabeta. Hanako-mo *e* tabeta. [??focus-inclusive reading;
 Taro-TOP sushi-only-ACC ate Hanako-also ate ✓ focus-exclusive reading]
 ‘lit. Taro ate only sushi. Hanako also ate *e*.’

I suggest that the impossibility of the focus-inclusive reading in (1) follows from Saito’s (2017) proposal that AE, implemented in terms of LF-Copy (Oku 1998, 2016, Saito 2007), cannot apply to an item which forms an operator-variable relation. Among other arguments, Saito shows that this analysis correctly predicts that a *wh*-phrase is ineligible for AE, as illustrated in (2a, b). Since *dare* ‘who’ constitutes an operator-variable chain (i.e., {[for which *x*, *x* a person], *x*}), copying the operator or the variable parts onto the empty subject slot in (2b) yields the LF-representations in (2c) and (2d), respectively. However, neither representation is legitimate: (2c) involves vacuous quantification whereas (2d) involves an unbound trace.

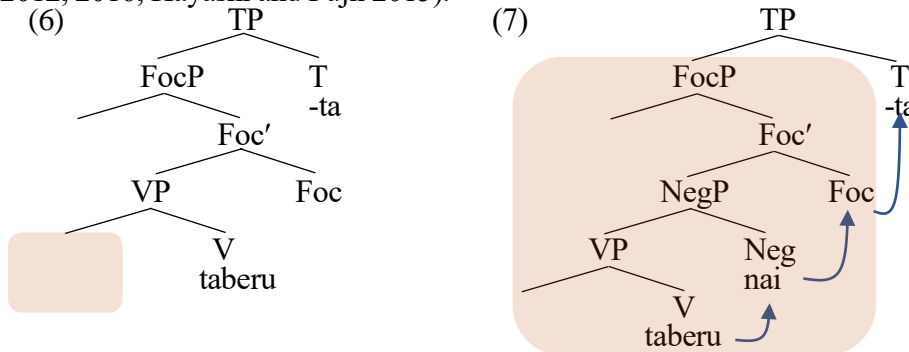
- (2) a. Dare-ga Haiderabaad-e itta-ka sitteimasu-ka.
 who-NOM Hyderabad-to went-Q know-Q
 ‘Do you know who went to Hyderabad?’
 b. I.e. * Demo *e* Siena-e itta-ka-nara sitteimasu.
 no but Siena-to went-Q-if know
 Intended: ‘No. But I know the answer if the question is who went to Siena.’
 c. * [for which *x*: *x* a person] went to Siena.
 d. * *x* went to Siena. (Saito 2017:727–728)

The impossibility of the focus-inclusive reading in (1) also follows from Saito’s theory, given that a *dake*-marked phrase forms an operator-variable relationship either through focus movement (Shoji 1986; Hoshi and Miyoshi 2007; Funakoshi 2012) or Quantifier Raising (Takahashi 2011). The focus-exclusive reading in (1), by contrast, is derived when LF-copy targets *susi* ‘sushi’ alone to copy on the empty object position.

A closer examination reveals, however, that the focus-inclusive reading actually becomes acceptable in an elliptical clause if the polarity of the two clauses is manipulated, contrary to the observation that focused expressions in general cannot undergo ellipsis (Tancredi 1992; Funakoshi 2012; Oku 2016). The examples in (1, 3, 4, 5) show that *the relevant reading is acceptable iff the second elliptical clause is negative*. This novel observation goes against my proposed analysis of (1) above, which predicts that the focus-inclusive reading should be uniformly blocked when the antecedent is marked with *dake*.

- (3) Taroo-wa susi-dake-o tabeta. Hanako-wa *e* tabenakatta. [✓ only-XP reading]
 Taro-TOP sushi-only-ACC ate Hanako-TOP didn’t.eat
 (4) Taro-wa susi-dake-o tabenakatta. Hanako-wa *e* tabeta. [??only-XP reading]
 Taro-TOP sushi-only-ACC didn’t.eat Hanako-TOP ate
 (5) Taroo-wa susi-dake-o tabenakatta. Hanako-mo *e* tabenakatta. [✓ only-XP reading]
 Taro-TOP sushi-only-ACC didn’t.eat Hanako-also didn’t.eat

I propose that the derivation of an elliptical argument construction is different depending on its polarity: *a positive elliptic structure does not involve V-to-T movement and hence can only be derived through AE, as shown in (6), whereas its negative counterpart is derived through V-stranding ellipsis (VSE), fed by overt V-to-T raising in syntax, as shown in (7)* (Otani and Whitman 1991; Funakoshi 2012, 2016; Hayashi and Fujii 2015).



Under this analysis, the elliptical clauses in (1, 4) are associated with the derivation in (6). Accordingly, the operator-variable configuration of *susi-dake-o* cannot be copied onto the empty object slot, excluding the focus-inclusive interpretation. The elliptical clauses in (3, 5), by contrast, involve V-to-T movement in syntax, creating a large enough structure (i.e., the FocP) to reconstruct the whole operator-variable structure from the antecedent clause in the complement position of the T head at LF. The focus-

exclusive reading is obtained when AE copies the object XP minus *dake* onto the empty object position. Two independent arguments support this Janus-faced approach to the focus-mismatch phenomenon. First, given the well-known observation that adjuncts themselves cannot be elliptical in Japanese (Oku 1998; Funakoshi 2012), the presence vs. absence of the adjunct-inclusive interpretation in the null argument construction has been taken as a useful probe into its derivation in terms of AE or VSE. The interpretive patterns reported in (8–11) show that the positive elliptical clause blocks the null adjunct reading whereas its negative variant allows such a reading.

- (8) Taroo-wa susi-o yukkuri tabeta. Hanako-mo e tabeta.
 Taro-TOP sushi-ACC slowly ate Hanako-also ate
 ‘lit. Taro ate sushi slowly. Hanako also ate e.’ [*null-adjunct reading]
- (9) Taroo-wa susi-o yukkuri tabeta. Hanako-wa e tabenakatta.
 Taro-TOP sushi-ACC slowly ate Hanako-TOP didn’t.eat [✓ null-adjunct reading]
- (10) Taroo-wa susi-o yukkuri tabenakatta. Hanako-wa e tabeta.
 Taro-TOP sushi-ACC slowly didn’t.eat Hanako-TOP ate [*null-adjunct reading]
- (11) Taroo-wa susi-o yukkuri tabenakatta. Hanako-mo e tabekanakatta.
 Taro-TOP sushi-ACC slowly didn’t.eat Hanako-also didn’t.eat [✓ null-adjunct reading]

The patterns here are exactly what my analysis predicts. The elliptical clauses in (8,10) can only be associated with the AE derivation, due to the lack of overt V-raising, blocking the adverb-inclusive interpretation. By contrast, the elliptical clauses in (9,11) are derived through VSE. Second, it is widely acknowledged (Goldberg 2005) that the verbs in the antecedent and elliptical clauses must be identical for VSE to apply. This verb-identity requirement means that the availability vs. non-availability of two distinct verbs in the two clauses implicate the AE vs. VSE derivations of the elliptical clauses. My analysis therefore predicts that positive elliptical clauses as in (1, 4), involving AE, should not need to obey the verb-identity requirement whereas negative elliptical clauses as in (3, 5) should. The acceptability judgements reported in (12–15) show that this prediction is borne out. The examples in (12,14) may allow two distinct verbs – *taberu* ‘to eat’ and *motikaeru* ‘to take away’ – to be used in the antecedent and elliptical clauses whereas the examples in (13,15) may not.

- (12) Taroo-wa susi-o sonobade tabeta. Hanako-wa e motikaetta.
 Taro-TOP sushi-ACC on.the.spot ate Hanako-TOP took.away
- (13)??Taroo-wa susi-o sonobade tabeta. Hanako-mo e motikaeranakatta.
 Taro-TOP sushi-ACC on.the.spot ate Hanako-also took.away
- (14) Taroo-wa susi-o sonobade tabenakatta. Hanako-mo e motikaetta.
 Taro-TOP sushi-ACC on.the.spot didn’t.eat Hanako-also took.away
- (15)* Taroo-wa susi-o sonobade tabenakatta. Hanako-mo e motikaeranakatta.
 Taro-TOP sushi-ACC on.the.spot didn’t.eat Hanako-also didn’t.take.away

The major findings of this paper are summarized in Table 1. The paper has argued that the derivation of a focus-marked elliptical clause involving *XP-dake-o* ‘XP-only-ACC’ takes two different routes depending on the polarity of the clause in question: AE vs. VSE. The results reported here indicate that a pluralistic approach is called for using a combination of methods suited to different interpretive and syntactic contexts (e.g., adverb-inclusive interpretations and the clause type of an elliptical clause) to reach a comprehensive understanding of ‘argument ellipsis’ in Japanese: neither a monolithically AE nor VSE-based analysis will not help elucidate the rich complexity of the focus-mismatch phenomenon. Another theoretical implication of my analysis concerns head movement in Japanese. My analysis raises a new question why the clause type interacts with head movement, in the manner shown in (6, 7). I conjecture that the observed correlation between polarity and head movement may well follow from scope economy (Fox 2000). A negative clause with a quantificational elliptic object could potentially yield a new scope interpretation (i.e., Neg > only) in addition to the base scope (only > Neg), *provided that overt V-to-T raising involving negation takes place in syntax*. Such is not the case with its positive counterpart, which only involves one quantificational argument. This conjecture, in turn, opens a new avenue of research suggesting that head movement in Japanese is syntactic (Kishimoto 2007, 2008; Sato and Maeda in press) rather than a mere post-syntactic/PF-phenomenon (Chomsky 2000, 2001).

Ex.	1 st clause	2 nd clause	Readings	Derivation	Adverb inclusive interpretation?	Verb-identity requirement?
(1)	Positive	Positive	?? only XP; ✓ XP	AE	* (8)	No (12)
(3)	Positive	Negative	✓ only-XP; ✓ XP	VSE	✓ (9)	Yes (13)
(4)	Negative	Positive	?? only XP; ✓ XP	AE	* (10)	No (14)
(5)	Negative	Negative	✓ only-XP; ✓ XP	VSE	✓ (11)	Yes (15)

Table 1: Focus-Mismatch Phenomena under Argument Ellipsis in Japanese and Their Derivations

Selected References [1] Akiyama, M. 2014. The syntax of focus-doubling in Japanese. *MITWPL73*. MIT Press. [2] Funakoshi, K. 2012. On headless XP-movement/ellipsis. *LI43*. [3] Oku, S. 1998. *A theory of selection and reconstruction in the minimalist perspective*. Uconn, PhD Diss. [4] Saito, M. 2017. Ellipsis. In *Handbook of Japanese syntax*. De Gruyter Mouton.