The Syntax of Focus-Doubling in Japanese

Introduction: This paper examines the syntax of sentences/utterances like (1), in which an XP appears in the initial position and an XP identical to the one in the initial position appears in situ at the same time. In this construction, the XP in the initial position is followed by a conspicuous pause that is represented by ‘.’. The lack of this pause makes (1) unacceptable. Furthermore, both the two occurrences of the repeated XP contain a prominent stress, which is represented by capitalization. A sentence/utterance in which the object is repeated is felicitous as a reply to a question that focuses the object (2), but not to a question that focuses the subject (3). (3B), with the subject repeated, is felicitous as a reply to (3A). These facts show that, in the construction like (1), the repeated XP presents the information-focus of the entire construction. Hereafter the construction like (1) is referred to as Focus-Doubling (FD), the focused XP in the initial position, as the FXP₁ and the in situ focused XP, as the FXP₂.

An analysis: I propose that the FXP₁ is a constituent of a clause (Clause₁) that is independent of the one that dominates the FXP₂ (Clause₂), as in (4a) and Clause₄, undergoes ellipsis leaving behind the FXP₂, like in the analysis of gapless Right Dislocation in Japanese suggested by Tanaka (2001). I propose that the FXP₁ is moved to the left peripheral focus position (i.e. [Spec, Foc]) of Clause₁ and the complement of Foc in Clause₁ is deleted under the identity/non-distinctness relation between the two clauses ((4b)). This is similar to what happens in Merchant's (2001, 2004) analysis of Sluicing and sentence-fragments. The two clauses might be combined by a covert conjunction. The evidence that FD involves two clauses (i.e. Clause₁ and Clause₂) is provided by (5). (5) contains two occurrences of a topicalized temporal adverb, one before the FXP₁ and one immediately before the subject of Clause₂. The two occurrences of the topicalized adverb are interpreted as thematic topics but not as contrastive topics: today is not contrasted with some other day(s). A single clause in Japanese can contain at most one thematic topic in its left-peripheral position (Kuno 1973; Yamashita 2011). Under the ‘bi-clausal’ analysis (4), it is easily predicted that Clause₁ and Clause₂ can contain one thematic topic each.

Island-insensitivity of the relation between the FXPs: Under the analysis in (4), the FXP₁ is not moved from the position of the FXP₂ (with its copy being pronounced as the FXP₂). This claim is supported by the fact that the relation between the two FXPs is not subject to island constraints (6), the complex NP constraint.

“Reconstruction” of the FXP₁: The FXP₁ is moved to [Spec, Foc] of Clause₁ from within the TP in it, and the complement of Foc in Clause₁ is identical to or non-distinct from the relevant part of Clause₂. As usual, the FXP₁ should behave as if it were reconstructed into its original position in Clause₁, which is structurally parallel to that of the FXP₂. With Clause₁ and Clause₂ being identical/non-distinct, the FXP₁ should behave as if it were “reconstructed” to the position of the FXP₂. First, the FXP₁ can contain a subject-oriented anaphor that appears to be bound by the subject of Clause₁ (7). The FXP₁ is moved from within the TP of Clause₁, which is later deleted ((8)). The anaphor in the in situ copy of the FXP₁ is bound by the subject of Clause₁, which is identical to that of Clause₂, and behaves as if it were bound by the subject of Clause₂. Second, a pronoun in the FXP₁ can behave as if it were a variable bound by a quantified noun phrase in Clause₁ that e-commands the FXP₂ in (9), for example, the pronoun in the object FXP₁ can behave as if it were bound by the dative noun phrase in Clause₂. “Reconstruction” effects of this kind can be observed even when the FXP₂ is contained in an island ((10)). In (10), Clause₁ must contain the quantified antecedent that binds the pronoun, and thus must be a full-fledged clause that corresponds to Clause₁ as a whole and contains the island. This point entails that, in the derivation of (10) and (6), the FXP₁ is extracted from an island, which in turn suggests that movement of the FXP₂ in Clause₁ is island-insensitive. Because Sluicing, for example, nullifies island-violations (Merchant 2001), this point might be attributed to the ellipsis in Clause₁.

The FXP₁ does not e-command Clause: The FXP₁ is contained in Clause₁, and does not e-command Clause₂, or anything contained in it. This point helps explain the fact that FD does not induce violation of the Condition C of the Binding Theory, for example. The FDX-example (11a) does not show the same awkwardness that is observed in (11b), which is attributed to the Condition C.

The FXP₁ cannot be null: Let us compare (5) with (12), in which the FXP₂ is null. Recall that the two occurrences of the same thematic topic in (5) and (12) lead us to conclude that they unambiguously exemplify FD. (12) is less acceptable than (5), which shows that the FXP₂ in FD cannot be null. I assume that null arguments in Japanese can be analyzed as (a) base-generated pro (Abe 2009) or (b) full-fledged noun phrases that are deleted in PF (Takahashi 2008). (12) then shows that the FXP₂ in FD cannot be pro or a deleted noun phrase. This point can be explained by referring to the fact that the two FXPs are focused. Suppose that the FXP₂ is pro. With the FXP₂ being pronominal and the FXP₁ being focused, in order for the FXP₂ as pro to be “coreferential” with the FXP₁, the former must be a variable bound and thus e-commanded by the latter. However, the FXP₂ is contained in Clause₂ and does not e-command Clause₁ or anything it contains. The possibility that the FXP₂ is pro that is bound by the FXP₁ is excluded. Suppose now that the FXP₂ is identical to the FXP₁ and is deleted in PF. Since the FXPs are focused, this putative deletion of the FXP₂ must be a process that deletes a focused element. It is natural to think that UG (or the grammar of Japanese) contains a condition to the effect that focused elements should not undergo deletion. The possibility that the FXP₂ is deleted is excluded by this condition. Independent evidence for this assumption comes from (13). In the first conjunct of (13), the object is accompanied by the focus-particle ‘dake ‘only’. In the second conjunct, the object is null. The null object can be coreferential with the object of the first conjunct, but the meaning of the focus-particle is excluded; (13) entails that Bill has read Bocchan but that Bill has read ONLY Bocchan. This fact shows that focused XPs cannot undergo deletion.
(1) **BOCCHAN-o, John-wa** BOCCHAN-o yonda-yo  
_Bocchan-ACC_ John-TOP _Bocchan-ACC_ read-PAST-PART(ICLÉ) ‘John read BOCCHAN.’

(2) A: John-wa nani-o yonda-no  
John-TOP what-ACC read-PAST-Q ‘What did John read?’

B: **BOCCHAN-o, John-wa** BOCCHAN-o yonda-yo (= (1))

(3) A: Bocchan-wa dare-ga yonda-no  
Bocchan-TOP who-NOM read-Q ‘As for Bocchan, who read it?’

B: **BOCCHAN-o, John-wa** BOCCHAN-o yonda-yo  
_Bocchan-ACC_ John-NOM _Bocchan-ACC_ read-PAST-PART ‘John read BOCCHAN.’

B’: **JOHN-ga, jitu-wa** JOHN-ga Bocchan-o yonda-yo  

(4a) [[Cla... FXP1...](Conj)] [[Cla2... FXP2...]]

(4b) [[Foc(Chasel) FXP1 [Foc Foc ...]] (Conj) [[Cla2... FXP2...]]

(5) Kyoo-wa BOCCHAN-o, kyoo-wa John-ga BOCCHAN-o yonda-yo  

(6) **BOCCHAN-o, John-wa** [[BOCCHAN-o yonda] gakusei]-o sagsi-te-ni-yo  
_Bocchan-ACC_ John-TOP _BOCCHAN-o_ read student-ACC search-ASP-PRES-PART ‘John is looking for students who have read BOCCHAN.’

(7) **ZIBUN[no kuruma]-o, [sube-te-no reesaa]-ga** [ZIBUN[no kuruma]-o self-GEN car-ACC every-GEN racer-NOM self-GEN car-ACC kowasi-ta-yo broke-PART ‘Every racer; broke HIS/HER CAR.’

(8) [[Foc(Chasel) [ZIBUN[no kuruma]]-o [Foc Foc ...]] (Conj) [[Cla2... FXP2...]]

(9) **soitu-no ATARASHII sensei]-o, John-wa [subete no gakusei]-ni**

his/her-GEN new teacher-ACC John-TOP all-GEN student-DAT  
soitu-no ATARASHII sensei]-o shoki-sita

his/her-GEN new teacher-ACC introduction-did ‘John introduced to every student, HIS/HER, NEW TEACHER.’

(10) **soitu-no Ronbun]-o, John-wa [subete no gakusei]-ni**

his/her-GEN paper-ACC John-TOP every-GEN student-DAT  
[[soitu-no Ronbun]-o nose-ta] jaanaru]-o mise-ta-yo

his/her-GEN paper-ACC publish-PAST journal-ACC show-PAST-PART ‘John showed every student, journals in which his/her paper had been published.’

(11a) JOHN-o, Bill-wa JOHN-o nagutta-yo  
John-ACC Bill-TOP John-ACC hit-PART ‘Bill hit JOHN.’

(11b) *John-[ga-wa] John-o nagutta-yo  

(12) Kyoo-wa BOCCHAN-o, kyoo-wa John-ga e yonda-yo (cf. (5))

(13) John-ga Bocchan-dake-o yom-ii, Bill-mo e yonda  
John-NOM Bocchan-only-ACC read-NONF INITE Bill-too read ‘John read only Bocchan Bill read {Bocchan too*only Bocchan too}.’

References


