

DECOMPOSING CONTRASTIVE TOPICS IN JAPANESE AND KOREAN

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Topics in Japanese and Korean show several syntactic differences, for which the existing literature offers no satisfactory account. This talk systematically compares the syntactic behavior of expressions marked by the markers *wa* in Japanese and *nun* in Korean, and offers a uniform account of their distribution. In particular, I argue that the observed patterns are predicted by an independently motivated syntactic typology of information structural (IS) notions. As such the talk also bears on theoretical issues at the syntax-IS interface.

There is overwhelming evidence that [topic], [focus] and [contrast] are discrete notions of IS that syntax may target (Rizzi 1997, Vallduví & Vilkuna 1998, Frey 2006, *a.o.*). There are also arguments that so-called contrastive topic and contrastive focus should be analysed as composites of [topic] and [contrast], and [focus] and [contrast], respectively (Molnár 2002, Giusti 2006, *a.o.*). Based on these considerations, Neeleman et al. (2009) propose the following typology.

(1)

	Topic	Focus
Non-contrastive	non-contrastive topic [topic]	information focus [focus]
Contrastive	contrastive topic [topic], [contrast]	contrastive focus [focus], [contrast]

(1) expresses that languages have cross-cutting syntactic generalizations regarding items with each of the three IS features: a generalization regarding [topic], for example, concerns the behavior of ‘non-contrastive topic’ and ‘contrastive topic’. Taking a generalization to indicate the existence of a syntactic operation sensitive to a feature, Neeleman et al. argue that Japanese, Russian and Dutch have an operation sensitive to [topic], [focus] and [contrast], respectively.

According to (1), however, if a language has an operation sensitive to [topic] and one sensitive to [contrast], it is not immediately clear which operation should be relevant for contrastive topic. I propose that there is parametric variation in such a case as to which operation the language adopts. This predicts that a contrastive topic would systematically behave either like a non-contrastive topic or a contrastive focus in the same language. I argue that Japanese and Korean exemplify precisely this situation. Specifically, I show that (i) the two languages have the same operation sensitive to [topic] and; (ii) the same operation sensitive to [contrast], but; (iii) for contrastive topic, Japanese adopts the operation sensitive to [topic], while Korean adopts the one sensitive to [contrast]. I provide evidence for each point of argument. The proposal also correctly predicts a previously unnoticed difference between the two languages, which is discussed in (iv).

(i) The standard description of non-contrastive topics in Japanese and Korean is that they ‘typically’ appear in clause-initial position (Kuno 1973, Choi 1999). I show with data involving island (in-)sensitivity, however, that [topic] ‘must’ be licensed in clause-initial position. Moreover, I argue that topics are adjoined to the highest projection in a clause (Saito 1985), rather than in SpecTopP (Endo 2007, Kishimoto 2009). (I adopt Reinhart’s (1981) notion of ‘topic’ here.)

(ii) Contrastive focus optionally undergoes scrambling to an intermediate or sentence-initial position (Tada 1993, Choe 1995), (2). Japanese shows the same pattern. I argue that [contrast] licences this kind of scrambling and that [focus] is irrelevant here.

A: *Did John give both the CD and the book to Sue?* B: *No, ...*

(2)

a.	John-i	Sue-hantey	CHAYK-MAN	cwu-ess-e.	(K)
	John-Nom	Sue-to	book-only	give-Past-Decl	(SMALL CAPS =
b.	John-i	CHAYK _j -MAN	Sue-hantey	t _j cwu-ess-e.	emphatic stress)
c.	CHAYK _j -MAN	John-i	Sue-hantey	t _j cwu-ess-e.	

(iii) According to the standard view in the literature, Japanese contrastive topics are *wa*-marked and move optionally to clause-initial position (Saito 1985, Tomioka 2010), while the Korean counterparts are *nun*-marked and restricted to clause-initial position (Han 1998, Gill & Tsoulas 2004). However, a careful examination of the distribution of *wa*- and *nun*-marked phrases reveals that the standard view is not entirely accurate for either of the languages. As (3) and (4) demonstrate explicitly, with an appropriate discourse context for a contrastive topic (Büring 1997,

2003, Lee 2003), a Japanese contrastive topic must be clause-initial, like non-contrastive topics in this language, while the Korean counterpart behaves like a contrastive focus (cf.(2)).

A: *To whom did John give this CD?* B: *Well, I don't know about this CD, but...*

- (3) a. #John-wa SUE-NI ANO HON-WA kinoo age-ta. (J)
 John-wa Sue-to that book-wa yesterday give-Past
 b. ??John-wa ANO HON_i-WA SUE-NI kinoo t_i age-ta.
 c. ANO HON_i-WA John-wa SUE-NI kinoo t_i age-ta.
 ‘as for this book, John gave it to Sue yesterday.’
- (4) a. John-i SUE-HANTEY I CHAYK-UN ecey cwu-ess-e. (K)
 John-Nom Sue-to this book-nun yesterday give-Past-Decl
 b. John-i I CHAYK_i-UN SUE-HANTEY ecey t_i cwu-ess-e.
 c. I CHAYK_i-UN John-i SUE-HANTEY ecey t_i cwu-ess-e.

(iv) It is possible for an emphatically stressed *wa*-phrase to remain in-situ, but a different context from (3) is required, as illustrated in (5a). The Korean counterpart is in (6a). Following Kuroda (2005) and Hetland (2007), among others, I argue that the *wa*- and *nun*-phrases in (5a)/(6a) are not contrastive ‘topics’. They implicate a contrast, but the fact that they answer the *wh*-part of a preceding question indicates that they are in fact foci. The literature reports further grammatical similarities between stressed *wa/nun*, and focus particles like ‘also’ (Kuroda 1965, Oshima 2008, Choi 1999). Thus, I claim that the implicature of stressed *wa* and *nun* is a kind that is compatible with contrastive topics, (3)/(4), as well as contrastive foci, (5a)/(6a). (See Krifka (1999) for a similar analysis of German *auch* ‘also’.)

Who did Mary see?

- (5) a. Mary-wa JOHN-WA kinoo mi-ta. (J)
 Mary-wa John-wa yesterday see-Past
 b. # JOHN-WA_i Mary-wa kinoo t_i mi-ta.
 ‘Mary saw John.’ (Implicature: But I’m not sure if she saw anyone else)
- (6) a. Mary-ka JOHN-NUN ecey po-ass-ta. (K)
 Mary-Nom John-nun yesterday see-Past-Decl
 b. JOHN-NUN_i Mary-ka ecey t_i po-ass-ta.

The present claim that the operation sensitive to [topic] is the relevant one for Japanese contrastive topics predicts that from a functional perspective, this language would interpret any stressed *wa*-phrase displaced to clause-initial position as a contrastive topic. Thus, although the object *wa*-phrase in (5a) implicates contrast, and [contrast] allows scrambling, it cannot scramble to clause-initial position, because it is not a contrastive topic in this context. On the other hand, in Korean, where the operation sensitive to [contrast] is the relevant one for contrastive topic, the prediction is that the *nun*-phrase can scramble to clause-initial position. The predictions are borne out: (5b), (6b). I show that the same contrast as in (5b) and (6b) emerges in one further context.

SELECTED REFERENCES: Choi, H.-W. 1999. *Optimizing Structure in Context*. CSLI; Gill, K.-H. & G. Tsoulas 2004. Peripheral effects without peripheral syntax: the left periphery in Korean. In Adger et al. (eds.) *Peripheries*. Kluwer.; Giusti, G. 2006. Parallels in clausal and nominal periphery. In Frascarelli (ed.), *Phases of Interpretation*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter; Han, C.-H. 1998. Asymmetry in the interpretation of *-(n)un* in Korean. In *Japanese/Korean Linguistics 7*. CSLI; Hara Y. 2006. Grammar of Knowledge Representation. PhD diss. University of Delaware; Hetland, J. 2007. The Korean particle *nun*, the English fall-rise accent andthetic/categorical judgements. In Schwabe & Winkler (eds.) *On Information Structure, Meaning and Form*. John Benjamins; Kishimoto, H. 2009. Lee, C. 2003. Contrastive topic and/or contrastive focus. In *Japanese/Korean Linguistics 12*. CSLI; Lee, C. 2008. Contrastive (predicate) topic, intonation, and scalar meaning. In Lee, et al. (eds) *Topic and Focus: Cross-linguistic Perspectives on Meaning and Intonation*. Springer.; Molnár, V. 2002. Contrast - from a contrastive perspective. In Hallelgard, et al. (eds.) *Information Structure in a Cross-Linguistic Perspective*. Rodopi; Neeleman, A. et al. 2009. A syntactic typology of topic, focus and contrast. In van Craenenbroeck (ed.) *Alternatives to Cartography*. Mouton; Tomioka, S. 2010. Contrastive topics operate on speech acts. In Zimmermann & Féry (eds.) *Information Structure*. OUP.