

Bracketing paradoxes with Japanese focus particles

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This paper discusses focus ambiguities caused with Japanese focus particles, such as *-sae* ‘even’ and *-mo* ‘also’, and argues that the mismatch between the position of the focus particles and the interpretation is due to the morphological properties of the focus particles, assuming Morphological Merger (cf. Marantz (1988) and Embick and Noyer (E&N) (2001)).

Japanese focus particles show a significant ambiguity, as in (1). In (1), the focus particle, *-sae*, suffixes to the object, *uta* ‘song’. It is naturally predicted that (1) only has a straightforward reading in (1a), where the object is focused. Significantly, however, (1) allows another reading in (1b), where the VP is focused.

Shedding light on *-sae*, this paper assumes that the focus particle attaches to not only the object but also VP in syntax and LF, as in (2a) and (2b) respectively, which makes both (1a) and (1b) possible readings for (1). Considering that c-command is necessary for focus readings, in the case of (2b), *-sae* c-commands not only VP but also the object and V. This makes a wrong prediction that (1) should be three-way ambiguous, which we argue in terms of phonological requirements later. This paper also argues that the surface form/alignment in (1) is a morphological reflex that is result of three interacting factors - adjacency, the morphological property of *-sae*, and that the verbal heads are bound morphemes. Following E&N (2001), we assume that the phonological domain operates movement to resolve morphological dependencies, and we take the position stated in (3). We further adopt E&N’s (2001) analysis that there are at least two varieties of Morphological Merger; one occurs in Morphology before Vocabulary Insertion, and the other in Morphology after or concomitant with Vocabulary Insertion, as stated in (4). In addition, we consider (5) as a morphological property of *-sae*, given the morphological behavior of *-sae*. The mechanism given above derives the three possible surface morpho-phonological orders, as in (6). At spell-out, when Morphological Merger does not apply, we have (6a), which requires *suru* ‘do’-insertion later, as in (7). When Raising applies, we have (6b), which is the exact order of (1). The case that Lowering applies is not allowed because of (5). Now we consider the question why (1) is two-way ambiguous, but not three-way. It is due to a phonological reason that the F-marked verb is in a different intermediate phrase (*iP*) from the focus particle, *-sae*. Following Nagahara (1994), we assume the two constraints for Japanese phrasal phonology, as in (8), and assume that the phonological domain has a constraint in (9) about an intermediate phrase of *-sae*. When the object is an F-marked element and associates with *-sae*, it receives a pitch accent. The intermediate phrase starts at the left edge of the object as in (9a). Given (8b), the intermediate phrase includes *-sae* following the object too, which satisfies the constraint in (9), as shown in (10a). As shown in (10b), when VP is F-marked in syntax, then the object starts an intermediate phrase as per (8a). The intermediate phrase also includes *-sae*, which satisfies the condition in (9). The object receives a pitch accent since it is the most embedded phrase inside of VP. When the verb is F-marked in the syntactic derivation, the verb has a pitch accent. It also starts an intermediate phrase at the position of T, but it is out of VP attached with *-sae*, as in (10c). This violates the condition in (9), and the derivation crashes. We claim that this is the reason why the V-focused reading is impossible in the Japanese case in (1) even though it is semantically possible.

The proposed analysis also gives an account of another type of focus ambiguity in Japanese. This paper implies that the morpho-phonological domain has its own movement, which affects the surface form of derivations, but not the LF interpretation.

- (1) Ano kin-medarisuto-wa uta-sae dasi-ta.
 that gold-medalist-Top song-even release-Pst
 a. ‘In addition to releasing something else (e.g. a photo-album and an autobiography), that gold-medalist even released a song.’ [Object-focus]
 b. ‘In addition to doing something else (e.g. being on TV and dating an actress), that gold-medalist even released a song.’ [VP-focus]
- (2) a. [TP Subj [_{VP} t_{Subj} [_{VP} [Obj]_{F-sae} V] v] T]
 b. [TP Subj [_{VP} t_{Subj} [_{VP} Obj V]_{F-sae} v] T]
- (3) PF movement:
 Syntax generates and moves terminals, according to its own principles and is oblivious to morphophonological concerns. PF takes the output of syntax and resolves morphophonological dependencies according to its own principles. (Embick and Noyer 2001)
- (4) a. Lowering and raising of the head occurs in Morphology before Vocabulary Insertion and forms a complex head.
 b. -Sae affixation occurs in Morphology after or concomitant with Vocabulary Insertion subject to linear adjacency.
- (5) -Sae cannot suffix to T.
- (6) Spell-out: Subj [_{VP} Obj V]_{F-sae} v T
 a. No change: Subj [_{VP} Obj V]_{F-sae} v-T => (7)
 b. Raising: Subj [_{VP} Obj t_V]_{F-sae} V-v-T => (1)
 c. Lowering1: Subj [_{VP} [Obj V]_{F-v-T}]-sae t_v t_T => violation of (5): *dasi-ta-sae
- (7) Ano kin-medarisuto-wa [uta-o dasi]_{F-sae} si-ta.
 that gold-medalist-Top song-Acc release-even do-Pst
- (8) a. Focus-Left-Edge:
 Left edge of focus = left intermediate phrase edge
 b. Focus-to-End:
 No intervening intermediate phrase boundary between focused phrase and the end of sentence. (Nagahara 1994)
- (9) -sae must be in the same intermediate phrase as an F-marked element. Otherwise, the derivation crashes.
- (10) a. Subj {_{IP}(Intermediate Phrase) [Obj]_{F-sae} V-T => Object-focus
 b. Subj {_{IP} [_{VP} Obj t_V]_F}-sae V-T => VP-focus
 c. Subj Obj-sae {_{IP} [V]_F}-T => *V-focus

References

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