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# 1

## Introduction

### Preliminaries

This book examines the syntactic properties of cleft constructions in Japanese within the Principles and Parameters framework (Chomsky 1981, 1982, 1986a, 1986b and many others), with some consideration of the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995 and others). In a cleft construction, a focal element is displaced from the remainder of the clause, and then connected to this remainder with a copula. Although this construction has been broadly investigated in the literature on English, the analogous Japanese construction has still remained for further research, to my knowledge. This book deals with a number of facts concerning Japanese cleft constructions, and touches on larger issues in Japanese syntax, as well as in the grammar of human language in general.

A major theoretical hypothesis of this book is that the cleft construction does not exist as a distinct theoretical entity. Following the insight of Chomsky (1977, 1981), syntactic constructions themselves are viewed as epiphenomenal, and are derived not by construction-specific rules but instead from the interaction of general principles. Cleft constructions in particular are argued to arise from a combination of the theories of A'-movement, predication relations and copulas. While this analytical view is not novel, we can note that this outcome lends support to the Principles and Parameters approach, and argues against approaches, such as Construction Grammar (Goldberg 1995 and references cited therein), which propose that each individual construction has its specific meaning, being accounted for by principles which apply only to that construction. Moreover, this book will present detailed discussion of the properties of A'-movement in clefts and other similar constructions in Japanese, which are crucially and systematically different from the

properties of A'-movement in English. This claim has strong empirical supports, some of which have not been observed in the literature on Japanese.

The present chapter will review the fundamental facts of English and Japanese cleft constructions, and will outline empirical issues concerning Japanese cleft constructions which will be discussed in the following chapters. The larger organization of this book will be described at the end of the current chapter.

## Background: English cleft constructions

Cleft constructions in English have been explored extensively within the generative tradition (Akmajian 1970, Chomsky 1970, 1977, Higgins 1979, among many others). The sentences in (1) demonstrate two types of cleft constructions in English: (1)a shows an *it*-cleft, and (1)b a pseudocleft:

- (1) a It was [<sub>NP</sub> the movie] [<sub>CP</sub> that Mary saw] ***it*-cleft**  
 b [<sub>CP</sub>What Mary saw] was [<sub>NP</sub>the movie] **pseudocleft**

Roughly speaking, the syntactic structures of *it*-cleft and pseudocleft constructions fulfill similar semantic functions.<sup>1</sup> In terms of information structure, the CPs express a presupposition, and the NPs express the focus in (1). I will henceforth call the former a presuppositional clause and the latter a focus phrase.

The analysis proposed in the literature assumes that in both *it*-clefts and pseudoclefts, Wh (operator)-movement of some kind takes place in the presuppositional clause. The structures in (2) are from Chomsky (1977) and Heggie (1988), which I take as standard analyses for English cleft constructions within Government and Binding theory:

- (2) a [<sub>IP</sub> it [<sub>VP</sub> be [<sub>CP</sub> XP<sub>i</sub> [<sub>CP</sub> Op<sub>i</sub> that<sub>i</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> ... e<sub>i</sub> ... ]]]]] (Chomsky 1977)  
 b [<sub>CP</sub>[<sub>CP</sub>Op<sub>i</sub> ... e<sub>i</sub> ... ]<sub>j</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> be [<sub>SC</sub> XP<sub>i</sub> t<sub>j</sub>]]] (Heggie 1988)

The sentences in (1) are represented as the schematized structures in (2), respectively. The null operator, which is coindexed with the focus phrase, moves to the spec of CP in the presuppositional clause, and the focus XP is licensed by a predication relation with the presuppositional clause which contains the coindexed null operator (Williams 1980, 1983).<sup>2</sup> Thus, the structures in (2) account for the fact that English cleft constructions exhibit the standard constraints on A'-movement.<sup>3</sup>

One of the most interesting issues concerning English cleft constructions is the syntactic phenomenon of ‘connectivity’ or reconstruction.<sup>4</sup> Even though there is no c-command relation between the focus phrase and its antecedent in the presuppositional clause, the effects of binding dependencies are apparent:

- (3) a It was a picture of herself<sub>i</sub> that Mary<sub>i</sub> bought  
 b What Mary<sub>i</sub> bought was a picture of herself<sub>i</sub>
- (4) a It was his<sub>i</sub> own analysis that every student<sub>i</sub> believed  
 b What every student<sub>i</sub> believed was his<sub>i</sub> own analysis
- (5) a\* It was *any* good books that he didn’t buy  
 b What he didn’t buy was *any* good books

The sentences in (3) show that the anaphor, *herself*, can be bound by the non-c-commanding *Mary*. The same is true for variable binding, as shown in (4): despite the absence of a c-command relation, the pronoun, *his*, can be coindexed with the quantified phrase, *every student*, yielding a bound variable reading. Although *it*-cleft constructions do not allow the clefting of a Negative Polarity Item (NPI), as shown in (5)a, the NPI is licensed in the pseudocleft sentence, as seen in (5)b.<sup>5</sup> These facts are not expected under the standard Binding theory assumptions (Chomsky 1981, 1986a, 1986b), because binding basically requires c-commanding and coindexation. While numerous attempts have been made to account for the connectivity phenomena in the analyses of clefts, the implementation is still a matter of controversy.

### The phenomenon of interest: Japanese cleft constructions

With this background, let us now turn to Japanese cleft constructions. Unlike English, it appears that Japanese has only one kind of cleft construction, as shown in (6) below. The Japanese cleft construction resembles the English pseudocleft, with the presuppositional clause consisting of a ‘free relative’ clause followed by a focus element and a copular verb:<sup>6</sup>

- (6) [Hanako-ga [e] atta no] -wa [sono hito-ni] da<sup>7</sup>  
 Hanako-NOM met NM TOP that person-DAT COP  
 ‘It was that person that Hanako met’

Japanese has SOV word order. The presuppositional clause is marked by the nominalizer *no* and the entire clause is topicalized. This sequence is

followed by the focus phrase, *sono hito-ni* 'that person-DAT', and the copular verb, *da*.<sup>8</sup>

Given the facts we reviewed for English cleft constructions above, our examination of Japanese cleft constructions such as (6) will consider the following issues:

- (7) a Do Japanese cleft constructions involve operator movement like their English counterparts?
- b What is the syntactic structure of Japanese cleft constructions?
- c Are Japanese cleft constructions like English clefts in having connectivity effects? If so, how should we account for them?

The questions formulated in (7) will be explored throughout the following chapters via the examination of the syntactic behavior of Japanese clefts.

Why are the questions in (7) important? Concerning (7)a we can note that Japanese Wh-constituents appear *in situ* and are not considered to move to the designated spec position, at least overtly.<sup>9</sup> Given this, it is not immediately obvious that the operator movement analysis shown in (2) is applicable to Japanese cleft constructions. Furthermore, although relative clauses are typical operator-movement constructions in English, the same constructions in Japanese do not obey the syntactic constraints on movement (Kuno 1973: 249):

- (8) a [[ e<sub>i</sub> sinda noni] daremo kanasimanakatta] hito<sub>i</sub>  
           died although anyone saddened-not-was person  
           'the person who no one was saddened although (he/she) died'
- b [[[ e<sub>i</sub> e<sub>j</sub> kiteiru] yoofuku<sub>j</sub>]-ga yogoreteiru] sinsi<sub>i</sub>  
           wearing suit-NOM dirty-be gentleman  
           'the gentleman such that the suit that (he) is wearing is dirty'

These are well-known examples of relative clauses in Japanese. If these constructions are analyzed on a par with English counterparts and assumed to contain a null operator, then this operator would move outside an island: an adjunct clause in (8)a and a relative clause in (8)b. This would, of course, be a subjacency violation, and hence, the sentences in (8) should be ungrammatical. Both sentences in (8) sound perfect, however. Since the standard analysis for English (Chomsky



The sentence in (11) shows that more than one Wh-constituent can occur in focus position. If we assume that this position is occupied by a single constituent, this fact arises unexpectedly.

To begin our answer to (7)c, let us first consider the following examples:

- (12) a [Hanako<sub>i</sub>-ga hon-o e ageta no]-wa  
 Hanako-NOM book-ACC gave NM-TOP  
 zibun<sub>i</sub>-no hahaoya-ni dat-ta  
 self-GEN mother-DAT COP-PAST  
 '(lit.) Who Hanako<sub>i</sub> gave a book was herself's<sub>i</sub> mother'  
 '(lit.) It was herself's<sub>i</sub> mother that Hanako<sub>i</sub> gave a book'
- b [Daremo<sub>i</sub>-ga e saisho-ni au no] -wa  
 everyone-NOM first time meet NM-TOP  
 zibun<sub>i</sub>-no hahaoya-ni da  
 self-GEN mother-DAT COP  
 'Who everyone<sub>i</sub> meets first is his<sub>i</sub> own mother'  
 'It is his<sub>i</sub> own mother that everyone<sub>i</sub> meets for the first time'
- c\* [Taroo-ga e aw-ana-katta no]-wa  
 Taro-NOM meet-NEG-PAST NM-TOP  
 dono sensei-ni-mo da-ta  
 any teacher-DAT-also COP-PAST  
 'Who Taro didn't meet was any teacher'

(12)a contains the anaphoric pronoun, *zibun* 'self', in focus position. As in English connectivity facts, *zibun* is coindexed with its antecedent, *Hanako*, which is in the presuppositional clause. *Zibun* can also be interpreted as a bound variable, as shown in (12)b. Here again, the focused *zibun* is interpreted as bound by the quantifier, *daremo-ga* 'everyone-NOM', despite the fact that there is no c-command relation between the binder and the bindee. In contrast, the NPI, *dono* NP-*mo* 'any NP-also', in focus position in (12)c is not licensed. Thus, from what these sentences show, the behavior of Japanese cleft constructions parallels exactly that of English *it*-cleft constructions.

Interestingly, however, a striking difference between Japanese and English cleft constructions emerges when more complex connectivity effects are examined. Consider the following long-distance cleft constructions:

- (13) a Taro<sub>i</sub>-ga [Hanako<sub>j</sub>-ga zibun<sub>i/j</sub>-no tomodachi-ni atta to]  
 Taro-NOM Hanako-NOM selfGEN friend-DAT met COMP  
 sinziteita  
 believed  
 '(lit.) Taro<sub>i</sub> believed that Hanako<sub>j</sub> met self's<sub>i/j</sub> friend'
- b [Taro<sub>i</sub>-ga [Hanako<sub>j</sub>-ga e atta-to] sinziteita-no]-wa  
 Taro-NOM Hanako-NOM met COMP believed-NM-TOP  
 [zibun<sub>i/j</sub>-no tomodachi-ni] dat-ta  
 self-GEN friend-DAT COP-PAST  
 '(lit.) It was self's friend<sub>i/j</sub> that Taro<sub>i</sub> believed that Hanako<sub>j</sub> met'
- (14) a Taro<sub>i</sub>-ga [Hanako<sub>j</sub>-ga zibun-nituite<sub>i/j</sub> hanasitato] omotta  
 Taro-NOM Hanako-NOM self-about talked COMP thought  
 '(lit.) Taro<sub>i</sub> thought that Hanako<sub>j</sub> talked about self<sub>i/j</sub>'
- b [Taro<sub>i</sub>-ga [Hanako<sub>j</sub>-ga e hanasita to] omotta no]-wa  
 Taro-NOM Hanako-NOM talked COMP thought NM-TOP  
 zibun-nituite<sub>i/j</sub> dat-ta  
 self-about COP-PAST  
 '(lit.) It was about self<sub>i/j</sub> that Taro<sub>i</sub> thought that Hanako<sub>j</sub> talked'

In the non-clefted (13)a and (14)a examples, *zibun* appears within the embedded CP complement. It is well known that *zibun* is a long-distance, subject-oriented anaphor. The *zibun* in (13)a and (14)a can therefore refer either to the matrix subject, *Taroo*, or to the embedded subject, *Hanako*. The standard analysis of English cleft constructions would predict successive-cyclic movement of a null operator, and thus *zibun* in focus position can be coindexed with either *Taroo* or *Hanako*. The fact is, however, the *zibun* in the focus position in (13)b and (14)b can be coindexed only with the matrix subject, and not with the embedded subject. This casts doubt on the idea that Japanese cleft constructions are to be analyzed on a par with English cleft constructions. We will consider this issue further in Chapter 4.

## Outline of the book

The organization of this book is as follows. Chapter 2 shows that Japanese cleft constructions are analogous syntactically to topic constructions, continuing a line of analysis begun by Hoji (1990). We will depart from Hoji's analysis, however, and we will explore the parallelisms further. The ungrammaticality of NPI licensing in (12)c will be accounted

for by the analysis proposed for topicalization and clefting. Furthermore, I will argue that cleft constructions crucially involve movement within the presuppositional clause, a process which differs from scrambling but which is similar to topicalization. This will force us to assume that there is a null operator in presuppositional clauses. At the end of this chapter, the structure of focus phrases is investigated.

The main concern in Chapter 3 is the nominalizer *no* and its syntactic category in presuppositional clause of clefts. I will argue that the *no* in cleft constructions is a complementizer, and that the presuppositional clause does not project a nominal category. This claim is based on a comparison of the presuppositional clauses of clefts and so-called head-internal relative clauses (HIRCs). These two clause types share similar syntactic property in that both are CPs rather than NPs. In this respect, presuppositional clauses and HIRCs are distinct from other types of relative clauses.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the somewhat peculiar connectivity phenomena in long-distance cleft constructions. Empirical facts from reconstruction, weak crossover, and interactions with other A'-dependencies show that the null operator in the presuppositional clause of long-distance clefts is base-generated in some intermediate position rather than in its thematic position. Under the analysis I propose, the null operator in adjoined position is associated with a *pro* in thematic position, and this operator undergoes short movement to the spec of CP. This structure type is not specific to Japanese, but also occurs in A'-dependencies in other languages. Such 'resumptive' A'-dependencies appear in other Japanese constructions as well. Reconstruction effects in relative clauses and case conversion phenomena in Japanese provide support for our proposal that long-distance A'-dependencies may not be truly 'long-distance' movement after all, but rather appear only in the highest clause of the structure.

As an extension of the discussion in Chapters 2–4, Chapter 5 deals with sluicing in Japanese. It has been pointed out by Kizu (1997), Kuwabara (1995, 1996) and Nishiyama, Whitman and Yi (1996), that Japanese sluicing involves some sort of copular construction, and more specifically, a cleft construction. The discussion in this chapter supports the cleft analysis of Japanese sluicing, and, more importantly, provides empirical evidence in favor of a PF deletion approach for ellipsis, addressing the central debate in the literature on ellipsis.

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