

# The embedded distributions of topic, focus and exclaimatives in Japanese and the structure of the left periphery

Naoyuki Yamato, University of Tromsø / CASTL

**1. Introduction:** The aim of this paper is twofold: (i) to shed light on the striking parallelism between the embedded distribution of topic/focus in Japanese and that of V2 in Northern Norwegian; (ii) to propose a left periphery structure, based on Haegeman (2006) and Rizzi (1997) that accounts for the embedded distributions of the topic/focus/exclamative constructions.

**2. The embedded distributions of topic and focus in Japanese and that of V2 in Northern Norwegian:** In Japanese simplex matrix clauses, each of the case-marked arguments may be interpreted with an exhaustive listing focus reading or without it (see e.g., Kuno 1973 and Kuroda 2005 for discussions of the exhaustive listing reading):

- (1) Taroo-ga keeki-o tabe-ta.  
Taroo-NOM cake-ACC eat-PAST  
'Taroo (and only Taroo) ate cakes (and only cakes).'

Arguments are alternatively marked with *-wa*, in which case they are interpreted with an aboutness topic (see e.g., Heycock 2006, Kitagawa 1982, Kuno 1973, Kuroda 2005 for discussions on the topic *-wa* marking in Japanese):

- (2) Taroo-wa keeki-o tabe-ta.  
Taroo-TOP cake-ACC eat-PAST  
'Taroo ate cakes.'

The distributions of the topic marking and the focus reading vary when the clause is embedded: the topic/focus readings are available in the complement of asserted predicates, such as *say* and *think*, while such readings are not available in the complement of non-asserted predicates, such as *doubt* and *deny* (for the assertion-based distinctions of predicates, see Hooper and Thompson 1973).

- (3) Hanako-ga Taroo-ga/wa keeki-o tabe-ta to it-ta.  
Hanako-NOM Taroo-NOM/TOP cake-ACC eat-PAST that say-PAST  
'Hanako said that Taroo (and only Taroo) ate cakes (and only cakes).'
- (4) Hanako-ga Taroo-ga/\*wa keeki-o tabe-ta to-iu-koto-o utagat-ta.  
Hanako-NOM Taroo-NOM/TOP cake-ACC eat-PAST that-say-thing-ACC doubt-PAST  
'Hanako doubted that Taroo (\*and only Taroo) ate cakes (\*and only cakes).'

Strikingly, the embedded distribution of the V2 word order in Northern Norwegian patterns with that of topic/focus in Japanese (Bentzen, Hróarsdóttir, Hrafnbjargarson and Wiklund's 2007: 2, 4 examples 7, 19):

- (5) Han sa at han kunne ikke syng i bryllupet.  
he said that he could not sing in wedding-the
- (6) \*Han tvilte på at ho hadde ikke møtt den her mannen.  
he doubted on that she had not met this here man-the

**3. An account in terms of assertion and the structure of the left periphery:** In order to account for the contrast between (5) and (6), following Haegeman's (2006) and Rizzi's (1997) left periphery structure, Bentzen et al. (2007) propose that when a clause is asserted, ForceP is present, and its presence licenses the presence of TopicP where the verb moves, yielding the V2 order, while when a clause is not asserted, ForceP is not present, thus the TopicP is not present either, therefore the verb may not move to TopicP. This paper adopts the left periphery structure Haegeman (2006) proposes to account for the contrast between central and peripheral adverbial

