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Another Look At Scrambling, Stress, and Information Structure

The question of whether scrambling in Japanese has an effect on interpretation or the output/is semantically vacuous has been an issue for a number of years, with Saito (1989) often being taken as representative of the position that it does not. In contrast, Ishihara (2000, 2001) and Miyagawa (2005, 2006) argue that scrambling does have an effect on the output; their argument is based in part on the idea of focus structure in Neeleman and Reinhart (1998), which in turn is based on Cinque (1993).

(1) is a typical example that Ishihara and Miyagawa look at; their argument is that in the scrambled sentence (1b) the focus structure has changed.

- (1) a. Tarou-ga **hon-o** katta.
T. -nom book-acc bought
b. **Hon-o_i** Tarou-ga t_i katta.
book-acc T.-nom bought
'Taro bought a book.'

In this paper I present a small set of further but more complex data that give further support to the Ishihara/Miyagawa approach, but with what looks like somewhat surprising consequences. The new data I consider are scrambling of a sentential complement as in (2)

- (2) [[Tarou-ga hon-o katta to]_i [Hanako-ga t_i itta]]
T.-nom book-acc bought that H.-nom said
'Hanako said that Tarou bought a book.'

and scrambling of such a complement that already has a scrambled word order as in (3).

- (3) [[hon-o_j Tarou-ga t_j katta to]_i [Hanako-ga t_i itta]]
Book-acc T.-nom bought that H.-nom said
'Hanako said that Tarou bought a book.'

Although there does appear to be an effect on the output in (2) and (3), preliminary results of testing these sentences has led me to ask further questions about the interplay between scrambling, sentence stress, and information structure. I have nothing conclusive to say at the moment, but in light of such theories on sentence stress as in Kahnemuyipour (2004) and on the left periphery in Japanese as in Endo (2007), I speculate that scrambling of the type in (1) targets one structural position, whereas that of (2) and (3) targets another.

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