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Ellipsis and Head Movement at the Syntax-Semantics-Pragmatics Crossroad: Japanese and Beyond

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1   Synopsis of the Workshop

This workshop aims to deepen our understanding of the nature of ellipsis in terms of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics in Japanese and beyond. In particular, we focus on how syntactic head movement affects ellipsis phenomena. The workshop consists of three presentations focusing on the interactions of ellipsis and head movement from various perspectives from syntax to semantics and pragmatics in Japanese and beyond. In this introduction, we review some discussion from the previous literature underlying the issues of ellipsis and head movement with a special reference to Japanese.

In Japanese, arguments can be elided relatively freely. For instance, (1) can be followed by an elliptic sentence (2) below:

(1)   Bill-wa   kuruma-o arat-ta
      Bill-TOP car-ACC   wash-PST
      'Bill washed a car.'

(2)   John-mo [e] arat-ta
      John-also   wash-PST
      'Lit. John also washed [e].'

It has been intensively debated whether Japanese null objects are derived via Argument Ellipsis (**AE** or via *pro*-drop) in (3) (Oku 1998; Saito 2007; Takita 2018; Sakamoto 2019; Sato 2020, among others) or Head-stranding Ellipsis (**HSE**) in (4) (Otani and Whitman 1991; Hayashi and Fujii 2015; Funakoshi 2016, *inter alia*). In (3), *kuruma-o* 'car-ACC' is elided via AE, while the object is elided via HSE with syntactic head movement of V to T in (4). To date, this debate has not been settled as to which analysis is empirically and conceptually more desirable than the other.

(3)   John-mo [$_{VP}$ kuruma-o arat]-ta.   (AE)

(4)   John-mo [$_{VP}$ kuruma-o t$_V$] arat$_V$-ta.   (HSE)

As is widely known, HSE requires syntactic head movement before remnant ellipsis. Japanese is not only strictly head final but also agglutinative; hence, syntactic head movement (if it exists) must be string vacuous, which does not affect word order. Since it is difficult to detect due to the lack of overt evidence, whether syntactic verb raising exists in Japanese has been another controversial issue for more than three decades. Numerous studies have been conducted on the presence or absence of head movement in Japanese in relation to ellipsis phenomena. Summarized below is a non-exhaustive list of previous studies for and against verb-raising in Japanese.

(5)   Research for Head Movement in Japanese:

   a.   Null objects: Otani and Whitman (1991)

   b.   Non-constituent Coordination: Koizumi (2000)

   c.   Null adjuncts: Hayashi and Fujii (2015) and Funakoshi (2016)

   d.   Verb-echo answers: Sato and Hayashi (2018) and Sato and Maeda (2021)

(6)   Research against Head Movement in Japanese:

   a.   Null objects: Hoji (1998)

   b.   Non-constituent Coordination: Takano (2002), Fukui and Sakai (2003) and Kobayashi (2023)

   c.   Null adjuncts: Tanaka (2023) and Tanabe and Kobayashi (2024)

   d.   Verb-echo answers: Tanabe and Kobayashi (2023) and Tanaka (2024)

Against this backdrop, this workshop focuses on the relationship between ellipsis and head movement. Four researchers working on ellipsis from syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic perspectives are invited as speakers. We aim to deepen our understanding of the nature of Argument Ellipsis and Head-stranding Ellipsis and to clarify the future direction of ellipsis research in general by looking not only at syntax but also at semantics and pragmatics as well as languages other than Japanese.

2 Outline of the Workshop

After the introduction is over, three presentations with a brief question and answer session. Then, we will have a general QA and discussion session at the end. The organization of the workshop is summarized in the table below:

	Presenters	Titles of the Presentations
10:00-10:10	Ryoichiro Kobayashi	Introduction (10mins)
10:10-10:40	Yosuke Sato	Argument Ellipsis, Pragmatic Enrichment and Head Movement: Why is Japanese so Special? (30mins)
10:40-11:10	Kenta Mizutani and Ryoichiro Kobayashi	Head Movement does not Necessarily Affect Scopal Relations: Arguments from Syntax and Semantics (30mins)
11:10-11:40	Tomoya Tanabe	Where to Draw Lines between Syntax and Pragmatics in Ellipsis: Licensing of Null Arguments and Adjuncts in Japanese (30mins)
11:40-12:00	all presenters	QA and Discussion (20mins)

3 Brief Overview of each Presentation

i. Argument Ellipsis, Pragmatic Enrichment and Head Movement: Why is Japanese so Special?

Sato argues for Han et al.'s (2007) population split among speakers concerning computational accessibility of head movement. The presentation carefully examines variable judgment among Japanese speakers on the adjunct reading, in which the ellipsis site is recovered with an adjunct from antecedent expressions. Specifically, this study observes various Asian languages in terms of whether null adjuncts are interpreted in ellipsis sites and argues that the availability of syntactic head movement explains the differences between Japanese and the other languages.

ii. Head Movement does not Necessarily Affect Scopal Relations: Arguments from Syntax and Semantics

Mizutani and Kobayashi provide an empirical critique of earlier work on ellipsis that assumes syntactic head movement (i.e., HSE) from both syntactic and semantic perspectives. In particular, they focus on a semantic problem concerning reconstruction that has not been addressed so far. Sato and Hayashi (2018) and Sato and Maeda (2021) argue that syntactic verb-raising causes scope reversal effects in certain Japanese elliptic constructions. However, this study demonstrates that such an operation is subject to obligatory semantic reconstruction due to the presence of a higher type trace left behind by a verb; hence, the scope reversal effects that previous studies discuss cannot be derived via head movement.

iii. Where to Draw Lines between Syntax and Pragmatics in Ellipsis: Licensing of Null Arguments and Adjuncts in Japanese

Tanabe's work points out the limitations of the syntactic conditions on ellipsis licensing and argues for the importance of discourse coherency, a pragmatic condition on the recoverability of null adjuncts as well as null arguments. The study also critically examines the purely pragmatic approaches to ellipsis licensing of previous studies (Ahn and Cho 2021; Landau 2023) and offers an alternative analysis based on Tanabe and Hara (2021) and Tanabe and Kobayashi (2023). The study concludes by suggesting directions for future research.

Selected References:

Kobayashi, R, Tanabe, T., & Sato, Y. 2023. Focusing on the diagnostic validity of the adjunct test in Japanese: Where prosody meets information structure. In Tae Sik Kim (ed.), *Proceedings of Seoul International Conference on Generative Grammar 25*, 60-73. Korea Generative Grammar Circle. **Rullmann, Hotze.** 1995. Maximality in the semantics of wh-constructions. Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. **Sato, Y., & Maeda, M.** 2021. Syntactic head movement in Japanese: Evidence from verb-echo answers and negative scope reversal. *Linguistic Inquiry* 52(2), 359-376. **Tanabe, T., & Hara, Y.** 2021. Question under Discussion-based analysis of Japanese ellipses. *Pre-Proceedings of 162nd Meeting of the Linguistic Society of Japan*, 329–335. **Tanabe, T., & Kobayashi, R.** 2024. Arguments against head-stranding ellipsis in Japanese: A reply to Funakoshi (2016). *Syntax*, 1-23.