# Case/Focus Interaction in Young Children's Interpretation of *dake* (only) in Japanese

Kazumi Matsuoka

*Keio University*

**Abstract:** We present children's non-adult interpretation of sentences that contain the focus particle *dake*, using the Truth-Value Judgment Task (Crain and Thornton 1998). Our first observation is that children interpreted sentences with *dake* differently when *dake* was attached to the subject and to the object (the subject/object asymmetry in the interpretation of *dake*). We also observed that children interpreted sentences with *dake* differently when *dake* was followed by a case particle (the 'particle/no-particle asymmetry'). Any theory based on the assumption that the Japanese employs an abstract Case feature system fails to capture the systematic pattern shown in children's non-adult interpretations of *dake*. Our data provide empirical support for a syntactic theory proposed in Aoyagi (2006), which distinguishes the nature of Nominative and Accusative case particles (*ga* and *o*), as well as assumes different derivations for sentences containing *dake*, depending on whether it is followed by a case particle or not.*

**Key words:** focus, particles, *dake*, language acquisition, Japanese

## 1. Introduction

Children's non-adult interpretation of focus expressions have been reported in a variety of languages. For example, Crain et al. (1993) pointed out that there is a stage of language development in which English-speaking young children consistently give the subject-oriented or the object-oriented interpretation to sentences that contain *only*, regardless of its syntactic position. In that study, a subject-oriented group of children (mean age 4;8) associated *only* with the subject in a sentence such as (1):

(1)　The bird is only holding the balloon.　　(Crain et al. 1993)

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In other words, the children interpreted the sentence as if it were 'Only the bird is holding the balloon.' Hüttner et al. (2004) also reported that German-speaking children showed a strong tendency to associate *auch* (the German equivalent of *also* in English) with the subject, even though in adult German, the unstressed *auch* must be associated with the object.[1] Our research group reported that Japanese-speaking young children were classified into groups in a similar way to what Crain et al. reported, according to their response patterns to sentences that contained focus expressions *mo* (also) and *dake* (only) (Matsuoka 2004, Matsuoka et al. 2006).

In this paper we add an interesting set of experimental data that shows that children's non-adult interpretation of *dake* (only) is influenced by the occurrence of Nominative or Accusative case particles. Our results show that syntax plays an important role in children's interpretation of focus expressions, which sheds light on the interaction of case and focus particles in Japanese, as well as on the nature of the Japanese case system.

A short summary of previous studies in syntax and language acquisition is presented in the following section, in which we will briefly describe the characteristics of the Japanese focus particles *dake* (only) and *mo* (also).

## 2. Focus and case particles in Japanese

One characteristic of Japanese focus expressions is that their narrow interpretation is closely related to their syntactic position. This is not necessarily the case in other languages. For example, the interpretation of *too/also* in English is not always determined syntactically. In the following examples, the interpretation of the adverb *also* varies, even though it appears in the same syntactic position in both sentences:

(1)   a.  John also introduced [Bill]$_F$ to Sue
          (There is someone other than Bill, whom John introduced to Sue.)
      b.  John also introduced Bill to [Sue]$_F$
          (There is someone other than Sue, to whom John introduced Bill.)
                                                                  (Rooth 1996)

On the other hand, the range of the alternative set in the interpretation of *mo* is syntactically determined, as demonstrated in the following examples:

(2)   Subject+*mo*
      Yusuke-mo    jitensha-o    kat-ta
      Yusuke-also  bicycle-ACC   buy-PAST[2]
      'Yusuke also bought a bicycle (in addition to other people)'.

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[1] See Matsuoka (2007) for a cross-linguistic discussion of children's non-adult interpretation of focus expressions.
[2] NOM: Nominative, ACC: Accusative

(3)    Object+*mo*
       Yusuke-ga            jitensha-mo    kat-ta
       Yusuke-NOM      bicycle-also    buy-PAST
       'Yusuke bought a bicycle, too (in addition to other belongings)'.

The particle *dake* (only) behaves more similarly to *only* in English; as indicated in the English gloss in (4) and (5) below, *dake* is typically associated with the noun phrase immediately preceding it. Unlike *mo*, *dake* is optionally followed by a case particle.

(4)    Subject+*dake*(+*ga*):
       Yusuke-dake(-ga)         jitensha-o      kat-ta
       Yusuke-only(-NOM)   bicycle-ACC   buy-PAST
       'Only Yusuke bought a bicycle.'
(5)    Object+*dake*(+*o*):
       Yusuke-ga         jitensha-dake(-o)      kat-ta
       Yusuke-NOM   bicycle-only(-ACC)   buy-PAST
       'Yusuke bought only a bicycle.'

Following the traditional classification of Japanese linguistics, the focus particle *mo* is a K-particle, while *dake* is an F-particle (see Teramura 1991 for discussion with references cited therein). It is widely assumed in Japanese syntactic literature that the association between focus particles and the focused items is established by movement. Considering the scope interaction between negation and *mo*, as well as the crossing effect with an NPI and a wh-phrase, Hasegawa (2005) argued that *mo* undergoes movement to the Spec of TP. Aoyagi (1999) argued that the association of DP and K/F-particles is licensed by Spec-Head agreement in different projections (T′ for K-particle, vP for F-particles). On the other hand, Hoshi (2006) claimed that association with focus is licensed via Agree, accompanied by overt movement of the focus associate of K- and F-particles to the Spec of FocP. In Hoshi's analysis, the K-particle is the Focus head, while the F-particle overtly moves to the Spec of FocP as a unit with the focus associate.

Wherever the landing site of the focus particles and their associated focused items are, there should be no difference between the focused subject and the focused object. Nevertheless, it has been observed in recent language acquisition research that a group of young, Japanese-speaking children exhibits the subject-object asymmetry in their interpretation of sentences that includes focus particles (Endo 2004, Matsuoka 2004, Matsuoka et al. 2006).

Moreover, investigations of young Japanese-speaking children's interpretation of *dake* have yielded seemingly incompatible observations. Endo (2004) reported that the majority of children gave the object-oriented interpretation, while Matsuoka et al. (2006) observed the dominance of the subject-oriented interpretation. Even though both studies adopted the identical experimental method (the Truth-Value Judgment task), the target sentences in the two studies were different. The discrepancy in the two studies indicates that even though case particles do not significantly affect the adult interpretation of focus expressions, this might not be

the case in a developmental stage of children's language acquisition. Endo used target sentences in which *dake* occurred with a case particle, while *dake* appeared 'bare' (i.e. without any case particle attached) in Matsuoka et al's test sentences. To reconcile the different results in the two studies, the present experiment was conducted.

## 3. Experiment
### 3.1. Subjects and method

Twenty Japanese-speaking children in Yokohama (3;10-6;7) participated in the study. The Truth-Value Judgment task (Crain and Thornton 1998) was conducted at the day-care center that they normally attend. The same children participated in two separate sessions (Sessions A and B) from December 2006 to January 2007. The two sessions were conducted 3–20 days apart. In the test sentences for Session A, *dake* was not followed by any case particle (e.g. *omawarisan-dake kyoryu-o nade-mashi-ta* 'Only the policeman patted the dinosaur.') In the test sentences for Session B, *dake* appeared with either the Case particles *ga* (Nominative) or *o* (Accusative).

To control the strong preference among Japanese speakers to place the topic marker (*wa*) at the beginning of a simple sentence, each target sentence began with the phrase, '*kono ohanashi dewa* (in this story)' (e.g. *Kono ohanashi dewa, otoko-noko-dake-ga boshi-o nage-mashi-ta*. 'In this story, only the boy threw a hat.') There were four tokens for each of the 'subject+*dake*' and the 'object+*dake*' sentence patterns. The number of test sentences, warm-up sentences, and fillers were the same for both sessions A and B. The order of the sessions (A-B or B-A) were switched for about half of the children. Refer to the Appendix for the complete list of the target sentences.

Sample stories (translated into English) with target sentences are as follows:

Sample story (Subject+*dake*/Subject+*dake*+*ga*)

>An old lady and a dwarf were in a competition. They were trying to find out who is stronger. The dwarf thought he would easily win, but the old lady was very strong. She pulled a car. Then she pulled a steam engine. The dwarf pulled a different car. He had to pull something bigger than the steam engine to win the match. He walked toward a large boat. However, he had run out of energy while pulling the car. He had to lie down. The dwarf did not pull the boat.
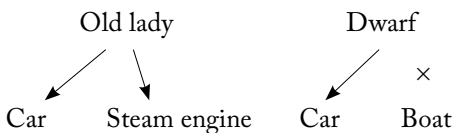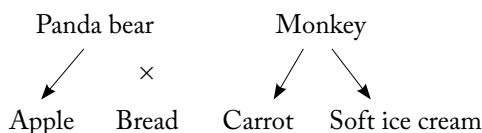
Target sentence

kobito-san-dake    kuruma-o   hippari-mashi-ta.
dwarf-SAN[3]-only   car-ACC   pull-POL[4]-PAST
'Only the dwarf pulled a[5] car.'

According to the adultlike interpretation, the target sentence is false, since the dwarf is not the only character who pulled a car. If, on the other hand, children associate *dake* with the object (as in one of the non-adult patterns reported in Crain et al. 1993), the target sentence will be judged to be true, since the dwarf pulled only a car.

Sample story (Object+*dake*/Object+*dake*+*o*)

A panda bear and a monkey were having snack. The panda bear ate an apple. He had a loaf of bread, but it was not sliced. The panda bear decided not to eat the bread. The monkey ate a carrot. After that, he ate some soft ice cream.

    Panda bear          Monkey

    ↙   ×     ↙  ↘

  Apple   Bread    Carrot   Soft ice cream

Target sentence

osaru-san-ga         sofutokuriimu-dake   tabe-mashi-ta.
monkey-SAN-NOM soft ice cream-only   eat-POL-PAST
'The monkey ate only soft ice cream.'

Adult speakers would judge the target sentence to be false, because the monkey also ate the carrot. If children associate *dake* with the subject (the subject-oriented response), the target sentence turns out to be true, since it is only the monkey who ate the soft ice cream.

For comparison, the judgment of the same test sentences by 23 adult Japanese speakers (mean 20;7) was collected. The participants of the adult sessions are all undergraduate students at Keio University. They read the test stories, which were printed in two separate questionnaires and indicated if the target sentence was true or false, according to the situation described in the story. The two sessions (A and B) were conducted at least seven days apart.

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[3] The suffix −*san* is often attached to animate nouns in child speech, particularly when a non-human character acts in a 'person-like' fashion.
[4] The honorific/politeness suffix (-*mas*-) is typically attached the verb stem in children's stories told in Japanese.
[5] There is no equivalent of the English articles *the/a* in Japanese. Nouns appear without an article and its reference is determined by the context. In the English translations provided here, we supplied *the* when there is no other similar characters/items, and *a* when there were more than one character/item of the same type (which indicated our intended meaning of the target sentences).

## 3.2. Results

Three children did not complete the task. The results from the remaining 17 children (4;1-6;7, mean 5;4) strongly suggest that Japanese young children distinguish between these two types of derivations. As shown in Table 1, below, they overwhelmingly associated *dake* with the subject, regardless of its syntactic position when the Case particle was missing after *dake*. In contrast, they associated *dake* with the object when the Case-particle followed *dake*.

Table 1: Number of the Adultlike Response

|  | Children | | |  | Adult | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | *dake* | *dake*+particle |  |  | *dake* | *dake*+particle |
| Subject | 97% (66/68) | 43% (29/68) | Subject | | 87% (80/92) | 98% (90/92) |
| Object | 47% (32/68) | 94% (64/68) | Object | | 92% (85/92) | 89% (82/92) |

The adult did not distinguish the two sentence types, whether *dake* was followed by a case particle or not.

    The order of two sessions (A and B) did not influence the children's results. The children's response patterns observed with *dake*+particle (*ga/o*) replicated the results in our pilot study with a different set of subjects in Osaka (conducted in February 2006).

## 4.  Discussion
## 4.1.  Children's response patterns: experimental observations

The results of the experiment show that young Japanese-speaking children treat the subject+*dake* and the object+*dake* sentences differently. Moreover, their ability to associate *dake* with the target noun in adultlike fashion varied, depending on whether *dake* was followed by a case particle. When *dake* was followed by the case particle, children failed to successfully associate *dake* with the subject; the success rate was below the chance level. On the other hand, the poor performance with *dake* and the subject disappeared when *dake* was not followed by *ga*. In other words, the findings can be summarized as follows:

Table 2: Children's Response Patterns

|  | *dake* | *dake*+particle |
|---|---|---|
| Subject | ADULTLIKE | NON-ADULT |
| Object | NON-ADULT | ADULTLIKE |

What is shown in Table 2 can be summarized as experimental observations below:

Experimental Observations
Observation 1: Children interpret sentences with *dake* differently when it is attached to the subject and the object (the subject/object asymmetry in the

interpretation of *dake*)
Observation 2: children interpret sentences with *dake* differently when it is followed by a case particle (the particle/no-particle asymmetry in the interpretation of *dake*).

Any syntactic theory that aims to describe and explain the innate knowledge of language must capture the two types of asymmetries described in the observations above. However, a syntactic approach to the Japanese case system that uniformly treats the Nominative and the Accusative as abstract Cases fails to explain young children's different interpretations of the focus particles in the four types of sentence constructions, as summarized in Table 2. In the following sections, we will discuss how our empirical findings support the claim that the Japanese case feature is morphological (Aoyagi 2006).

### 4.2.  Different natures of Japanese case particles *ga* and *o*
In the analysis of Aoyagi (2006), the case feature of Japanese is morphological. The case feature is carried by D, and must be phoneticized at PF. He also argued that Japanese case particles are associated with different types of case, summarized below:

(6)    a.   Dative *ni* (inherent case)
       b.   Accusative *o* (dependent case)
       c.   Nominative *ga* (default case)

It is important to note that *ga* and *o* are markers of different types of case, which are attached at different steps in the derivation. The Accusative marker *o* is assigned to an unmarked DP when it is c-commanded by another DP in a tensed clause. Since the assignment of *o* is based on this c-commanding relationship, it must be done at a level that the original phrase structure is maintained. In other words, the assignment of *o* occurs before linearization (Fukui and Takano 1998).

On the other hand, the Nominative particle *ga* is attached as the last resort, when it is not possible to attach *ni* or *o* to phoneticize the morphological case feature of D. Since linearization can make it possible for some other grammatical item (such as focus particles and postpositions) than case particle to be attached, it is necessary to refer to the result of linearization before attaching the default case particle *ga*. For that reason, *ga* is considered to be attached after linearization.

In the rest of the paper, we will consider possible sources of children's non-adult interpretation of *dake*. We will begin our discussion with the objects appearing with *dake*.
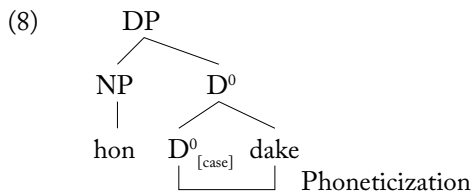
### 4.3.  Objects with *dake*
Our data show that young Japanese-speaking children clearly distinguish between 'Noun-*dake*' and 'Noun-*dake-o*'. Namely, they successfully associated *dake* with the target noun only in the latter case. Children's responses indicate the possibility that those two phrases are derived in different fashions.

As mentioned earlier, Aoyagi (2006) assumes that *o* is the dependent case marker, which is assigned to an unmarked DP when it is c-commanded by another DP.[6] It is important to note that Aoyagi assumed that the object DP appears in a different phrase structure, depending on whether the accusative case marker appears or not. When the case marker *o* is present, the phrase structure (before linearization) will be as follows:

(7)

```
            DP
          /    \
       NP       D[case] -o
      /   \     └──────┘ Phoneticization
   NP     dake
    |
   hon
```
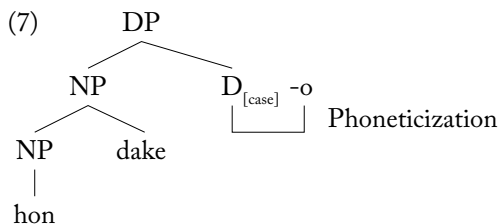
As can be seen in (7), the target NP (*hon*) and *dake* form a constituent. Namely, they are structurally close to each other. The entire DP is unmarked and hence will be case-marked with *o*. The morphological case feature of D is phoneticized by the overt case marker. As a result, a phrase such as *hon-dake-o* ('only the book+ACC') is derived.

Japanese allows the object-*dake* phrase as well, which suggests that the case feature of D can be checked in another way, which does not call for the morphological case marker. Aoyagi (2006: 86) proposed the following structural representation for the phrase such as *hon-dake* ('only the book'):

(8)

```
            DP
          /    \
       NP       D⁰
        |      /    \
       hon   D⁰[case]  dake
             └──────┘ Phoneticization
```

In (8) above, *dake* is directly merged to D, which provides the phonetic form for the morphological case feature of D. Hence, there is no need to attach the case marker *o* to check the case feature. An important difference between (7) and (8) is the structural positions of the target noun phrase *hon* and *dake*. Unlike in (7), there is not direct local relationship between the NP and *dake*, since *dake* is merged with D.

In our experiment, while 4 and 5-year-olds had more difficulty in associating *dake* with the target NP, none of the three 6-year-old participants distinguished the NP-*dake-o* from the NP-*dake* phrases. What was observed in the current experimental study possibly indicates a developmental stage in which the interpretation of *dake* requires a local relationship between *dake* and its target NP.

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[6] See Aoyagi (2006) for a discussion of visibility conditions of the dependent case assignment.

## 4.4. Subject with *dake*

According to Aoyagi (2006), the Nominative particle *ga* is attached to a DP as the last resort. The relevant structure reflects the result of linearization. When the focus item *dake* is attached to DP at overt syntax, the following phrase structure is obtained:

(9)

```
            DP
          /    \
       DP        F
      /  \       |
    NP   D_[case]  dake
    |
   hon
```
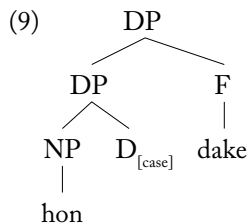
In (10), below, the representation after linearization is applied. *Dake* phoneticizes the case feature of D; hence, there is no need to attach *ga*.

(10)

```
            N
          /    \
       N         D
       |       /    \
      hon   D_[case]   F
              |_____dake___|  Phoneticization
```
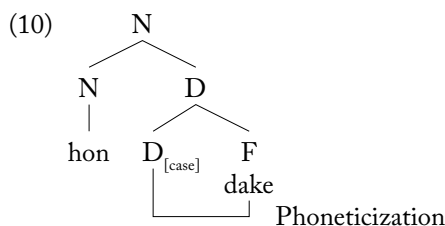
Young children can successfully associate *dake* and the target N (underlined) in (10). In (10), *dake* and D are associated structurally and through phoneticization. For that reason, it is conceivable that the focus feature of *dake* is inherited by the D node at the upper level. Since the upper D (which carried the focus property of *dake*) and the target noun form a constituent, the locality that children's grammar seems to require for the focus association can be maintained.
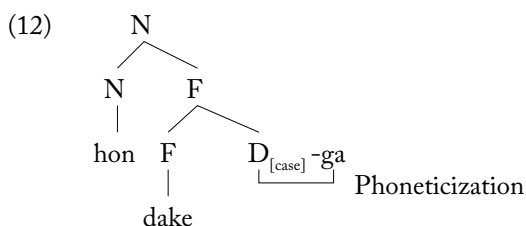
The children's non-adult performance with the object-*dake-o* construction leads us to conclude that the focus feature inheritance does not apply to (7). Our conjecture is that such inheritance is not possible, because the feature inheritance seems to be mediated by structural adjacency and phoneticization. Since the phoneticization occurs at the PF level, the inheritance occurs only at this level.[7] The assignment of the Accusative particle *o* occurs at overt syntax and hence children's grammar does not allow feature inheritance to the representation, such as (7).

Since a focus particle can be attached to any maximal projection, (11) is also possible.

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[7] This analysis is based on the assumption that a PF representation is visible as children interpret the sentence. In other words, different components in the grammar might be accessible to each other in an earlier stage of language development. Even though this would lead to important theoretical implications, we will not discuss the topic here.

(11)

```
              DP
            /    \
        NP          D_[case]
       /  \
     NP    F
     |     |
    hon   dake
```
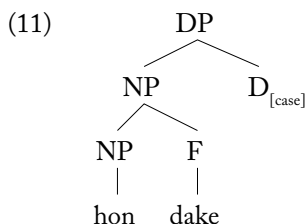
After linearization, the following structural representation is derived. To phoneticize the case feature of D, the Nominative particle *ga* is attached. The result is a noun phrase such as *hon-dake-ga* ('only the book+NOM').

(12)

```
              N
            /   \
         N         F
         |       /   \
        hon    F       D_[case] -ga
               |        |_____|
              dake         Phoneticization
```

Children have a problem associating *dake* and the subject in this construction. The observation leads us to either argue that (a) the focus feature of *dake* does not percolate to the next higher level, or that (b) the adjacency that the child grammar requires the mediation of D.

Another possibility is that *ga* in (12) is interpreted as something other than the default particle. The sentence-initial Nominative NP always induces the exhaustive reading in a simple clause. As discussed in the method section, we added a phrase '*kono ohanashi dewa* (in this story)' to cancel this effect. However, there might be a developmental stage in which children uniformly treat *ga* as the exhaustive marker, at least when it appears with *dake*. The exhaustive listing of *ga* is semantically close to *dake*, though it does not seem to lead to the strong exclusive reading which *dake* requires. Such children do not compute the meaning of *dake*, which led them to interpret the target sentence *otokonoko-dake-ga boshi-o nage-mashi-ta* ('Only the boy threw a hat.') in a similar way to when they hear the sentence *otokonoko-ga boshi-o nage-mashi-ta* ('The boy threw a hat.'). Since it is true in the test story in which the boy threw a hat (while the mother also threw a hat), those children accepted the target sentence, while they correctly processed the bare *dake* in an adultlike fashion (e.g. *otokonoko-dake kori-o hakobi-mashi-ta* 'Only the boy carried a piece of ice.').

## 5. Conclusion

We have presented children's non-adult interpretation of sentences that contain the focus particle *dake*. Our first observation is that children interpreted sentences with *dake* differently when *dake* was attached to the subject and to the object (the subject/object asymmetry in the interpretation of *dake*). We also observed that

children interpreted sentences with *dake* differently when *dake* was followed by a case particle (the particle/no-particle asymmetry). Children associate *dake* with the subject when *dake* appears without a case particle, while they tend to associate *dake* with the object when *dake* was followed by a case particle.[8] Any theory based on the assumption that the Japanese employs an abstract Case feature system fails to capture the systematic pattern shown in children's non-adult interpretations of *dake*. Our experimental data provide support for a syntactic theory that distinguishes the nature of the Nominative and Accusative case particles (*ga* and *o*), as well as assumes different derivations for sentences containing *dake*, depending on whether it is followed by a case particle or not. We adopted the approach proposed in Aoyagi (2006) to consider a possible developmental stage in children's language acquisition. The nature of the adjacency requirement in the interpretation of the focus items must be considered further with empirical data from different sentence constructions that contain focus items.[9]

## Appendix: List of sentences
The numbers indicate the order of presentation in each of two sessions. Each target sentence was presented with the opening phrase *kono ohanashi dewa* 'in this story' to make the usage of the Nominative case marker *ga* more felicitous (see the discussion in the method section.)

### Session A
Subject+*dake*

2.  otokonoko-dake kori-o    hakobi-mashi-ta.
    boy-only        ice-ACC carry-POL-PAST
    'Only the boy carried a piece of ice.'
4.  Minnie-chan-dake    buta-o     fuki-mashi-ta.
    Minnie-DIM[10]-only pig-ACC    dry (with cloth)-POL-PAST
    'Only Minnie dried a pig.'
7.  kobito-san-dake     kuruma-o  hippari-mashi-ta.
    dwarf-SAN-only    car-ACC    pull-POL-PAST
    'Only the dwarf pulled a car.'
10. hiyoko-san-dake     taoru-o     hoshi-mashi-ta.
    chick-SAN-only    towel-ACC hang-POL-PAST
    'Only the chick hung a towel.'

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[8] Another interpretation of children's responses is that they systematically ignore *dake*, depending on whether it is attached to the subject or the object.
[9] If the analysis in this paper is on the right track, it means that children need to learn to give different representations for all four possible combinations of subject/object and *dake* with or without a particle. This might be a reason why we found more variety in children's response patterns (though the majority of their non-adult response corresponded to what we reported in this paper) in our previous research of children's interpretation of sentences which contain *mo* and 'bare' *dake* (Matsuoka 2004, Matsuoka et al. 2006).
[10] *-chan* is the diminutive style of *-san*.

Object+*dake*

3.    osaru-san-ga               sofutokuriimu-dake   tabe-mashi-ta.
       monkey-SAN-NOM soft ice cream-only     eat-POL-PAST
       'The monkey ate only soft ice cream.'

6.    omawarisan-ga     kyoryu-dake  nade-mashi-ta.
       policeman-NOM   dinosaur-only pat-POL-PAST
       'The policeman patted only the dinosaur.'

8.    ojiisan-ga         osara-dake tsutsumi-mashi-ta.
       grandpa-NOM   plate-only  wrap-POL-PAST
       'The grandpa wrapped only the plate.'

11. Anpanman-ga         ninjin-dake nage-mashi-ta.
       Anpanman-NOM  carrot-only  throw-POL-PAST
       'Anpanman threw only the carrot.'

Warm-up and Fillers

1.    onnanoko-ga isu-dake    kai-mashi-ta.
       girl-NOM     chair-only  buy-POL-PAST
       'The girl bought only the chair.'

5.    zo-san-ga            torakku-o     oshi-mashi-ta.
       elephant-SAN-NOM   truck-ACC     push-POL-PAST
       'The elephant pushed a truck.'

9.    kuma-san-ga        appurupai-o   tsukuri-mashi-ta.
       Bear-SAN-NOM  apple pie-ACC   make-POL-PAST
       'The bear made the apple pie.'

**Session B**

Subject+*dake*+*ga*

3.    zo-san-dake-ga            futon-o          arai-mashi-ta.
       elephant-SAN-only-NOM   comforter-ACC wash-POL-PAST
       'Only the elephant washed a comforter.'

6.    otokonoko-dake-ga boshi-o      nage-mashi-ta.
       boy-only-NOM       hat-ACC    throw-POL-PAST
       'Only the boy threw a hat.'

8.    kaba-san-dake-ga         taiko-o       tataki-mashi-ta.
       hippo-SAN-only-NOM   drum-ACC    hit-POL-PAST
       'Only the hippo hit a drum.'

11. hiyoko-san-dake-ga       keeki-o      kai-mashi-ta.
       chick-SAN-only-NOM   cake-ACC  buy-POL-PAST
       'Only the chick bought a cake.'

Object+*dake*+*o*

2.    usagi-san-ga          keeki-dake-o   tabe-mashi-ta.
       bunny-SAN-NOM   cake-only-ACC eat-POL-PAST
       'The bunny ate only the cake.'

4.    oneesan-ga         hata-dake-o    tsukami-mashi-ta.
       young lady-NOM  flag-only-ACC  grab-POL-PAST

'The young lady grabbed only the flag.'

7.  ahiru-san-ga       iruka-dake-o          oshi-mashi-ta.
    duck-SAN-NOM  dolphin-only-ACC   push-POL-PAST
    'The duck pushed only the dolphin.'
10. ojisan-ga         pengin-dake-o         tsukamae-mashi-ta.
    man-NOM     penguin-only-ACC   catch-POL-PAST
    'The man caught only the penguin.'

Warm-up and Fillers
1.  panda-ga            bebiikaa-dake-o      oshi-mashi-ta.
    panda bear-NOM   stroller-only-ACC  push-POL-PAST
    'The panda pushed only the stroller.'
5.  kaeru-san-ga        juusu-o         nomi-mashi-ta.
    frog-SAN-NOM    juice-ACC   drink-POL-PAST
    'The frog drank the juice.'
9.  tora-san-ga           buta-san-o          hippari-mashi-ta.
    tiger-SAN-NOM    pig-SAN-ACC    pull-POL-PAST
    'The tiger pulled the pig.'

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[要　旨]

## 幼児の「だけ」の解釈における格と焦点の相互作用

松岡　和美

慶應義塾大学

　この研究では日本語を母語とする幼児の「だけ」の解釈の実験結果にもとづき，焦点助詞と格助詞の相互作用について考察した。真偽値判断課題において，幼児は「だけ」が主語と目的語に付加されている場合で異なった反応パターンを示した。また，同じ幼児が「だけ」が助詞と共起するか否かによっても異なる解釈を与えることも明らかになった。具体的には幼児は「だけ」が助詞と共起する際には「だけ」を主語と結びつけ，「だけ」が助詞なしで現れる場合には目的語と結びつけるというパターンが観察された。日本語の格を抽象格ととらえる統語理論では，上記のパターンに説明を与えることはできない。この実験結果は，主格と目的格の助詞の間に異なる性質を認め，「だけ」が主語または目的語に付加される場合と，助詞が共起するか否かの4つの可能な文型のそれぞれに対して異なる派生を仮定する青柳（2006）に経験的支持を与えることを論じる。