

The Prohibition against the *Wa*-marking in Relative Clauses: Where does it Come from?

Background: While the topic marking with the particle *wa* is a robust phenomenon in Japanese, it is rather restricted under embedding. Combining the previous observations by various authors (e.g., Kuroda 2005, Ueyama 2007, Heycock 2008, Hara 2006), Tomioka (2009) presents the descriptive generalization that embedded thematic *wa*-phrases are possible when the embedded clauses indicate, explicitly or implicitly, the presence of 'point-of-view' holders. He lists a variety of supporting facts; (i) complement clauses of attitude verbs can have *wa*, (ii) *because* clauses show sensitivities to the Davidson's 'single causal statement'/'causal explanation' distinction, where only the latter allows the topic marking, (iii) Ueyama's (2007) observation that *wa* can be found in some conditional *if*-clauses (e.g., *no-nara*) but not in others (e.g., *-reba*). The former type contains *-no-da* 'it is that', which indicates that the speaker is in the explanation mode (cf. Okuda 1990). However, there is one type of embedded clause that does not conform to the generalization; relative clauses show a much stricter restriction on *wa*-phrases than expected. The key contrast is between (1ab) and (2ab), both of which involves CPs embedded within NPs. (1a) shows that a CP complement of an N ordinarily disallows *wa*, but adding a 'point-of-view' expression like *-to-iu* 'says that' makes the topic marking possible, as shown in (1b). The same trick does not work for a relative clause, however. While *to-iu* can be added to a relative clause, the topic marking is still illicit, as shown in (2b). If the topic marking under embedding were just a matter of 'point of view', no contrast would be expected between the type types. What is the source of the tighter restriction on relative clauses? **Analysis:** The crucial ingredient of my proposal is Kuroda's (1992) theory of *wa*-marking. A sentence of the form *XP-wa YP* expresses a categorical judgment, and it represents the true predication relation: 'Predication exists only in a form of the object of a judgment, and not as a form of a proposition per se' (Kuroda 1992: 67). I use the term *K(uroda)-Predication* in order to distinguish Kuroda's notion from the more conventional notion of predication. Let us now turn to the function of a relative clause. The process embodies a strategy of creating a predicate by Predicate Abstract-ion (hereafter, PA) triggered either by the movement of a relative operator or of a head noun (depending on one's theoretical inclination). I propose a very simple constraint: No PA is allowed over K-Predication (the schematization in (3)). The intuition behind this constraint is the following. K-predication is a truly 'privileged' predication relation, and its privilege cannot be undermined by PA over it. Since a CP complement of an N does not involve PA, the *wa*-marking is allowed, as long as the 'point of view' requirement is satisfied. **Predictions:** The ban on the *wa*-marking within relative clauses is predicted to be sensitive to where PA takes place. In particular, the *wa*-marking should be allowed as long as PA does not 'cross over' the *wa*-phrase. This prediction is borne out. In both (4a) and (4b), the attitude verb *omou* 'think' creates an environment suitable for *wa*. In (4a), however, the abstraction is over the embedded object and therefore crosses over the embedded subject with *wa*. This creates the pattern depicted in (3), so the *wa*-option is disallowed. In (4b), on the other hand, what is abstracted is the subject of the attitude verb *omou*. Hence, the use of *wa* is licensed. Second, not all relative clauses correspond to predicates/properties. Non-restrictive relative clauses are propositional and do not involve PA. Then, it is predicted that, with the 'point-of-view' being clearly indicated within a non-restrictive relative clause, *wa* can appear in it. The contrast shown in (5) confirms this prediction: With the evidential marker *dearou*, the embedded subject can bear *wa*. **Implications:** If (3) also applies to such operations as QR in root contexts, it is (correctly) predicted that topics take the widest scope possible. The current analysis also suggests that the *wa/ga* distinction does not directly reflect the new information/old information partition but rather comes from different judgment forms, as Kuroda claimed, or different speech act structures, as proposed by Jacob (1983), Krifka (2001) and Endriss (2009).

- (1) a. [Kenji-✓ga /*wa kekkon-sita] uwasa b. [Kenji-✓ga /✓wa kekkon-sita]-to iu uwasa
 K-nom/top married rumor K-nom/top married- rumor
 ‘the rumor that Ken married.’ ‘the rumor that (says that) Ken married.’
- (2) a. [Kenji-✓ga /*wa e katta] kuruma b. [Kenji-✓ga /*wa e katta]-to iu kuruma
 K-nom/top married car K-nom/top bought- car
 ‘the car that Ken bought.’ ‘the car that (it is said that) Ken bought.’
- (3) No Predicate Abstraction over K-Predication
- $$\begin{array}{c} \text{K-predication} \\ \text{Op}_1 \dots [\text{XP} \dots \text{wa}] [\text{YP} \dots \text{t}_1 \dots] \\ \text{Predicate Abstraction} \end{array}$$
- (4) a. [[Kenji-✓ga /*wa e katta]-to Maki-ga omotte-iru] kuruma
 K-nom/top bought-Comp M-nom think-prog car
 ‘the car that Maki thinks that Kenji bought’
- b. [[Kenji-✓ga /✓wa sono-kuruma-o katta]-to e omotte-iru] hito
 K-nom/top that-car-acc bought-Comp think-prog person
 ‘the person who thinks that Kenji bought that car’
- (5) a. [Katute-naku seihu-✓ga /???wa taioo-ni kurou-site-iru] nikkoo-mondai
 in.the.past-neg government-nom/top cope-dat have trouble-prog JAL- problem
 ‘the problem of the Japan Airlines, which the government is having more trouble coping with than ever.’
- b. [Korekara-mo seihu-✓ga /✓wa taioo-ni kurou-suru-dearou] nikkoo-mondai
 from now-also government-nom/top cope-dat have trouble-evid JAL-problem
 ‘the problem of the Japan Airlines, which (it is predicted) the government will continue having trouble coping with.’

References

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