What Differentiates Two Japanese Exhaustive Focus Particles?

There is more than one exhaustive focus (sensitive) particle meaning only in Japanese. This paper studies two of them, -dake and -bakari, which are both bound morphemes, and explains how and why they behave differently. Although the distinction between the two focus particles has been studied for a long time, none of the previous analyses are convincing. This paper argues that -dake is only composed of an exhaustive operator, while -bakari is composed of an iterative operator along with an exhaustive operator. This means that, even when -bakari associates with a noun, it pluralizes the event. The aims of this paper are: (i) to generalize the behavior of -dake and -bakari, and (ii) to account for how -bakari suffixing to a noun can derive the plural event.

In (1), where Acc(usative) case marker, -o, suffixes to the object, Jun, the sentence could be uttered in either the single event situation, as in (1a), or the plural event situation, as in (1b). When -dake suffixes to the object instead of Acc marker, the sentence still could be uttered in both singular and plural situations, as in (2a). When -bakari suffixes to the object, however, the sentence can only be uttered in the plural event situation, as shown in (2b). This contrast between -dake and -bakari is observed across all the types of nouns, regardless of plurality and definiteness. That is, -bakari requires a plural event, while -dake has no such requirement.

This paper proposes that both -dake and -bakari are composed of the exhaustive operator (EXH), which is defined as in (3a) and (4a), modifying Rooth’s (1985, 1992) analysis of only and his alternative set analysis of focus. Adopting Krifka’s (1989) idea of iterativity, we furthermore propose that -bakari consists of the Iterative operator (ITER), which is defined as in (3b), in addition to EXH. The two operators are combined by means of Generalized Conjunction, which combines two elements of the same type into the same semantic type, as in (4b). The denotation of -bakari is (3e). We assume Kratzer’s (1996) Event Identification, as defined in (5), and Heim’s (1982) Existential Closure in (6). Then, the structure and truth condition of (2b) are illustrated in (7a) and (7b), respectively. (7b) is interpreted as in (8), which is exactly what (2b) means. Note that it is also possible that -bakari suffixes to the subject and even the VP, as in (9). The proposed analysis also gives an account for those cases, although -bakari (EXH and ITER) adjoins to Voice’ and it needs to be type-shifted into <est, est> in the case of the VP association, as in (10). The truth condition of (9) is as follows: [there is an event of hitting (e) for which PAT is Jun and AGT is Aoi, where, if there is a predicate (P’) such that P’ is a member of the alternative set, there is no event (e’) for which AGT is Aoi and P’≠P, and there are events (e”, e”’) and a set of individuals (x’) such that e” and e”’ are event subsets of e and they are not identical and x’ is a subset of Jun, and e” and e”’ are both an event of hitting for which PAT is x’ and AGT is Aoi]. In cases of the subject association, where -bakari suffixes to the subject, Aoi, instead of the object, Jun, in (2), the denotation of -bakari is defined as in (3e), which is the same as the object association cases. In such cases, the truth condition is as follows: [there is an event of hitting (e) for which PAT is Jun and AGT is Aoi, where, if there is an individual (y) such that y is a member of the alternative set, there is no hitting event (e’), for which PAT is Jun and AGT is y and y is not Aoi, and there are events (e”, e”’) and there’s a set of individuals (x’) such that e” and e”’ are event subsets of e and they are not identical and x’ is a subset of Aoi, and e” and e”’ are both an event of hitting for which PAT is Jun and AGT is x’].

If this analysis is on the right track, it should be the case that -bakari cannot co-occur with a one-time event predicate, like kill. This is borne out in (11). The killing event cannot apply to the same animate object more than once. The only possible interpretation for this sentence is that the person who was killed is, for example, a character in a game and can return to life, which makes it possible that s/he can be killed more than once. The analysis also accounts for the fact that -bakari cannot appear in predicates that refer to a specific time like at that time. Any specific time event cannot go along with the iterative property of -bakari. Furthermore, this analysis predicts that -bakari cannot co-occur with a stative verb, like understand or know, but it can with non-stative verbs, such as speak. This is borne out in (12). This analysis not only makes a clear distinction between the two Japanese exhaustive focus particles, -dake and -bakari, but also implies that some focus particles introduce event pluralities.
(1) Aoi-wa Jun-o tatai-ta.
Aoi-Top Jun-Acc hit-Pst
a. single event situation: ‘Aoi hit Jun once.’
   b. plural event situation: ‘Aoi hit Jun more than once.’
(2) Aoi-wa [Jun]-dake-/bakari tatai-ta.
Aoi-Top Jun-only/-BAKARI hit-Pst
a. -dake: ‘Aoi only hit JUN (once/more than once).’
   b. -bakari: ‘Aoi only hit JUN *once/more than once.’
(3) a. \[
[\text{EXH}]=\lambda x. \lambda P_{<e,est>}.\lambda y. P(e,x) & \exists y[y\in Alt -> \neg \exists e'[P'(e',y) & y\neq x]]
\]
b. \[
[\text{ITER}]=\lambda x. \lambda P_{<e,est>}.\lambda e. P(e,x) & \exists e'[e'' \subseteq e & e'' \neq e' & x \subseteq x & P(e'',x') & P(e'',x')]
\]
c. \[
[\text{[baki]}]=([\text{EXH}]) & ([\text{ITER}])
\]
=\lambda x. \lambda P_{<e,est>}.\lambda e. P(e,x) & \exists y[y\in Alt -> \neg \exists e'[P'(e',y) & y\neq x]] &
\exists e''[e'' \subseteq e & e'' \neq e' & x \subseteq x & P(e'',x') & P(e'',x')]
(4) a. \[
\text{[dake]}_{<e,est>}
\]
b. \[
\text{[bakari]}_{<e,est>}
\]
(5) Event Identification (Kratzer 1996): \[
f_{<e,st>} + g_{<s,t>} -> h_{<e,st>} = \lambda x. \lambda e. f(e,x) & g(e)
\]
(6) Existential Closure (Heim 1982): \[
[\text{[E]}]=\lambda x.S_{<e,st>}, \exists xS(e)
\]
(7) a. \[
\exists \text{Voice}P_{<s,t>}
\]
b. \[
[\text{[Aoi-wa JUN-bakari tatai-ta]}]=1 \iff 
\exists e[hit(e) & PAT(e,Jun) & AGT(e,Aoi)] &
\exists y[y\in Alt -> \neg \exists e'[hit(e') & PAT(e',y) & y\neq Jun]] &
\exists e''[e'' \subseteq e' & e'' \neq e' & x \subseteq Jun &
hit(e'') & PAT(e'',x') & hit(e'') & PAT(e'',x')]
\]
(8) a. There is an event of hitting (e) for which PAT is Jun and AGT is Aoi, where
b. if there is an individual (y) such as y is a member of the alternative set, there is no hitting event
(e'), for which PAT is y and y is not Jun, and
c. there are events (e'', e'''') and there's a set of individuals (x') such that e' and e''' are event subsets
of e and they are not identical and x' is a subset of Jun, and
d. e'' and e''' are both an event of hitting for which PAT is x' (and AGT is Aoi).
(9) Aoi-wa [Jun-bakari tatai-ta.-ta.
Aoi-Top Jun-BAKARI hit-Pst
‘Aoi only HIT JUN more than once/ Aoi kept HITting JUN only.’
(10)\[
[\text{[baki]}]=([\text{EXH}]) & ([\text{ITER}])
\]
=\lambda P_{<e,est>}.\lambda x.\lambda e. P(e,x) & \exists P'[P'\in Alt -> \neg \exists e'[P'(e',x) & P'\neq P]] &
\exists e''[e'' \subseteq e & e'' \neq e' & P(e'',x') & P(e'',x')]
(11)Kare-wa [sono hito]-bakari korosi-ta.
3Sg-m-Top the person-BAKARI kill-Pst
‘He only killed THE PERSON *once/#more than once.’ (only in-a-game reading)
(12)[Eigo]-bakari *wakaru/hanasu hito
English-BAKARI understand/speak person
‘person who only *understands/speaks ENGLISH (more than once)’