

VP-Focus Pseudocleft Sentences in Japanese: An Argument for Question-Answer Pair Analysis*

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Abstract: This paper examines properties of Japanese VP-focus pseudocleft sentences, and offers support for the question-pair analysis of pseudocleft sentences proposed by Ross (1972, 1979) and Den Dikken et al. (2000) among others. In Japanese pseudocleft sentences, a part denoting presupposition is linked to a part denoting focus by a sentence-final copula. The presuppositional part takes the form of a nominalized clause followed by the morphological topic marker, *-wa*. We point out this has exactly the same form as a fragment question, which can be regarded as direct evidence for the question-answer pair analysis. We also show that the occurrence of the same morpheme, such as a passive morpheme and a causative morpheme in both the presuppositional clause and the focus phrase at the same time can be explained naturally, if we consider that the presuppositional part and the focus phrase of pseudocleft sentences correspond to a question and its answer respectively.

1. Introduction

VP-focus pseudocleft sentences in English takes the following form.

- (1) [PRESUPPOSITION] COPULA [FOCUS]
e.g. [What Taro did] was [read a book].

The corresponding VP-focus pseudocleft sentences in Japanese takes the similar form, as shown in (2). The copula appears sentence-finally, because Japanese is a head-final language. The presuppositional part is nominalized by Complementizer, *no*, which is followed by the topic marker, *wa*.

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- (2) [PRESUPPOSITION-no]-wa [FOCUS] COPULA
 e.g. [Taroo-ga si-ta-no]-wa [hon-o yom-u koto] da.¹
 Taro-NOM do-PST-C-TOP book-ACC read-U NMNL COP.NPST
 'What Taro did was read a book.'

2. Forms of VP that can Appear in the Focus Position

There are some restrictions imposed on the form of VP that appears in the focus position. Firstly, it must be nominalized by Nominalizer, *koto*, so that the copula can immediately follow it.

- (3) Taroo-ga si-ta-no-wa [hon-o yom-u *(koto)] da.
 Taro-NOM do-PST-C-TOP book-ACC read-U NMNL COP.NPST
 'What Taro did was read a book.'

Secondly, the type of VP that is allowed in the focus position is limited.

- (4) a. Taroo-ga si-ta-no-wa [{ Hanako-o waraw-ase-ru/ Hanako-ni
 Taro-NOM do-PST-C-TOP Hanako-ACC laugh-CAUSE-RU/ Hanako-DAT
 hana-o kat-te yar-u/ titioya-ni syukudai-o tetudat-te moraw-u}
 flower-ACC buy-TE give-U/ father-by homework-ACC help-TE receive-U
 koto] da.
 NMNL COP.NPST
 'What Taro did was {make Hanako laugh/ buy Hanako flowers/ have his father help him with his homework.}'
- b. Taroo-ga Saburoo-ni s-are-ta-no-wa [nagur-are-ru koto] da.
 Taro-NOM Saburo-by do-PASS-PST-C-TOP hit-PASS-RU NMNL COP.NPST
 Lit. 'What Taro was done by Saburo is he was hit.'
- c. Tanaka-sensee-ga s-are-ta-no-wa [kenkyuu-o hon-ni
 Tanaka-professor-NOM do-HON-PST-C-TOP research-ACC book-as
 o-matome-ninar-u koto] da.
 HON-write-HON-U NMNL COP.NPST
 'What Prof. Tanaka did was write a book on his research.'

V in the focus position can be accompanied by a causative (*s*)*ase*, or the benefactive use of *te yar(u)* or *te moraw(u)* as in (4a). The focus V can also occur with passive (*r*)*are*, as in (4b), or an honorific *o-**ninar(u)*, as in (4c). In contrast, it cannot be accompanied by morphemes such as

¹ The abbreviations used in this paper are as follows: NOM=Nominative case, ACC=Accusative case, DAT=Dative case, PST=Past tense, NPST=non-past tense, C=Complementizer, TOP=Topic, NMNL=Nominalizer, COP=Copula, TE=continuative verbal inflection, (R)U=infinitival verbal inflection, CAUSE=Causative, PASS=Passive, HON=Honorific, ASP=Aspectual, POL=Polite, NEG=Negation, and SFP=Sentence final particle.

- (8) a. What no student_i enjoys is [his_i finals]. (Sharvit (1999))
 b. Kinoo dono gakusee_i-mo si-ta-no-wa [zibun_i-no hahaoya-ni tegami-o
 yesterday every student-also do-PST-C-TOP self-GEN mother-to letter-ACC
 kak-u koto] da.
 write-U NMNL COP.NPST
 'What every student did was write a letter to his mother.'

In (8a, b), *his finals* and *zibun no hahaoya* 'self's mother' have a bound variable reading, respectively, even though *no student* and *dono gakusee* 'every student' in the presuppositional clauses do not c-command them.

Licensing of Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) shows connectivity as well.

- (9) a. What John bought was [some wine].
 b. ? What John didn't buy was [any wine]. (Den Dikken et al. (2000))

The status of (9b) is subject to idiolectal variation, but some people find that the NPI, *any wine*, is allowed in the focus position, even though it is not c-commanded by *not*. Indefinites can marginally appear in the focus position of cleft sentences in Japanese as well.

- (10) a. ? Kinoo Taroo-ga at-ta-no-wa [dare-ka-ni] da.
 yesterday Taro-NOM meet-PST-C-TOP someone-or-DAT COP.NPST
 'Who Taro met was someone.'
 b. ? Kinoo Taroo-ga awa-nakat-ta-no-wa [dono gakusee-ni-mo] da.
 yesterday Taro-NOM meet-NEG-PST-C-TOP any student-DAT-also COP.NPST
 'Who Taro didn't meet was anyone.'

As shown in (10b), the NPI, *dono gakusee-ni-mo* 'any student' can be licensed, even though NEG within the presuppositional clause does not c-command it.

Note in passing that unlike (10b), where NP is focused, VP focus pseudocleft sentences in Japanese do not allow NPIs in the focus position.

- (11) Taroo-ga si-nakat-ta-no-wa [dono wain-mo ka-u koto] da.
 Taro-NOM do-NEG-PST-C-TOP any wine-also buy-U NMNL COP.NPST
 ?*'What Taro didn't do was buy any wine.'
 OK 'What Taro didn't do was buy every wine.'

The only reading available for *dono wain* 'any wine' in (11) is a universal reading, and no NPI reading is available. This does not constitute a counterargument against the connectivity effect observed in (10b). The NPI object needs to be licensed locally by a selecting V with a negative morpheme affixed to it. However, as we have seen in the previous section, only vP-phase-level categories are allowed in the focus position from which NEG is excluded. Even though NEG

cannot occur in the focus position, the existence of V in the affirmative form, blocks licensing of the NPI by NEG in the presuppositional clause, which is not local enough. So the lack of NPI licensing in (11) is due to the factor independent of connectivity.

We conclude that connectivity effects obtain in pseudocleft sentences in Japanese as in English.

3.2. The Occurrence of the Topic Marker *Wa* in Pseudocleft Sentences

In order to account for the connectivity effects observed between the presuppositional clause and the focus phrase of pseudocleft sentences, Ross (1972, 1997), Shlenker (2003), Den Dikken et al. (2000) among others have proposed a question-answer pair analysis of these sentences. This is the analysis I argue for in this paper, though various other analyses have been proposed in the literature.

- (12) a. syntactic approaches
i. question-answer pair analysis
ii. presuppositional clause as a free relative (Akmajian (1979), Heggie (1988) etc.)
iii. monoclausal analysis (Meinunger (1998), Hiraiwa and Ishihara (2012) etc.)
b. semantic approaches (Heycock and Kroch (1997), Sharvit (1999) etc.)

This analysis is motivated by the parallelism between pseudocleft sentences and question-answer pairs. For instance, connectivity effects obtain in question-answer pairs as in (13) just as we have seen with pseudocleft sentences in (9).

- (13) a. What did John buy? Some wine.
b. ? What didn't John buy? Any wine. (Den Dikken et al. (2000))

When the question is negative as in (13b), the NPI is licensed, even though there is no c-command relation between NEG in the question and the NPI as its answer. It is natural to consider that the NPI in the fragment answer is licensed not by NEG in the question, but by NEG within the same clause, which can optionally undergo ellipsis along with a subject NP and V, as indicated by parentheses in (14).

- (14) a. What did John buy? (He bought) some wine.
b. ? What didn't John buy? (He didn't buy) any wine. (Den Dikken et al. (2000))

We can apply the same analysis to pseudocleft sentences.

- (15) a. What John bought was (he bought) some wine.
b. ? What John didn't buy was (he didn't buy) any wine. (Den Dikken et al. (2000))

comment for the topic phrase. While an answer to a question makes a good comment, the old information available in the context does not.

The same holds true with fragment questions involving a sentential subject.

- (19) Q: Taroo_i-ga si-ta-no-wa.
 Taro-NOM do-PST-C-TOP
 #‘Taro bought a book.’^{OK} ‘What did Taro do?’
- A: (Taroo_i-ga) zibun_i-no hahaoya-ni hana-o age-ru koto da
 Taro-NOM self-GEN mother-DAT flower-ACC give-RU NMNL COP.NPST
 (yo).
 SFP
 ‘He gave flowers to his mother.’

In (19a) the sentence ends with a topic marker, and it only has a question reading. I argue that the same holds true with pseudocleft sentences as in (20).

- (20) [Taroo-ga si-ta-no-wa] Question
 Taro-NOM do-PST-C-TOP
 [~~Taroo-ga~~ zibun_i-no hahaoya-ni hana-o age-ru koto] da. ANSWER
 Taro-NOM self-GEN mother-DAT flower-ACC give-RU NMNL COP.NPST
 ‘What Taro_i did was give flowers to his_i mother.’

What is remarkable here is that the question in (19a) and the presuppositional clause of a pseudocleft sentence in (20) have exactly the same form, unlike in English. The fact that a presuppositional clause must be marked by *wa* indicates that it constitutes a question, since a fragment topic must be interpreted as a question. This in turn suggests that the focus phrase represents its answer. Japanese, a language with a topic marker, thus offers novel support for the question-answer pair analysis of pseudocleft sentences.

4. Doubling Phenomena in Pseudocleft Sentences and the Parallelism Requirement on Ellipsis

This section explores a consequence of the question-answer pair analysis of pseudocleft sentences. I will show that the doubling phenomena observed with pseudocleft sentences occur in fragment answers as well, which are both subject to the parallelism constraint.

- (21) Tanaka-sensee-ga s-are-ta-no-wa [kenkyuu-o hon-ni
 Tanaka-professor-NOM do-HON-PST-C-TOP research-ACC book-as
 {o-matome-ninar-u/ ??matome-ru} koto] da.
 HON-write-HON-U/ write-RU NMNL COP.NPST
 ‘What Prof. Tanaka did was write a book on his research.’ (=4c)

When honorific *rare* is used in the presuppositional clause, honorific *o-* *-ninaru* must occur in the focus position, as indicated by (21).³ Similarly, in the answer to a question in which the honorific *rare* is used, the honorific *o-* *-ninaru* must be used as well, as in (22).

- (22) Q: Tanaka-sensee-ga s-are-ta-no-wa?
 Tanaka-professor-NOM do-HON-PST-C-TOP
 ‘What did Prof. Tanaka do?’
 A: Kenkyuu-o hon-ni {o-matome-ninar-u/ ??matome-ru} koto da
 research-ACC book-as HON-write-HON-U/ write-RU NMNL COP.NPST
 (yo).
 SFP
 ‘It is to write a book on his research.’

Likewise, the passive morpheme (*r*)*are* must be doubled both in pseudocleft sentences as in (23) and in question-answer pairs as in (24). This is known as ‘voice matching effect.’ (cf. Merchant (2013))

- (23) Taroo-ga Saburoo-ni s-are-ta-no-wa [{*nagur-u/^{OK}nagur-are-ru} koto]
 Taro-NOM Saburo-by do-PASS-PST-C-TOP {hit-NPST/ hit-PASS-RU} NMNL
 da.
 COP.NPST
 Lit. ‘What Taro was done by Saburo is he was hit.’
 (24) Q: Taroo-ga Saburoo-ni s-are-ta-no-wa?
 Taro-NOM Saburo-by do-PASS-PST-C-TOP
 Lit. ‘What was Taro done by Saburo?’

³ Though the honorific morpheme used in the presuppositional clause differs from the one used in the focus phrase, we regard it as an example of honorific doubling, since **o-si-ninar-u* ‘HON-do-HON-NPST’ is not morphologically acceptable. The doubling of honorific *rare* yields a good doubling sentence.

- (i) Tanaka-sensee-ga s-are-ta-no-wa [kenkyuu-o hon-ni matome-rare-ru
 Tanaka-professor-NOM do-HON-PST-C-TOP research-ACC book-as write-HON-RU
 koto] da.
 NMNL COP.NPST
 ‘What Prof. Tanaka did was write a book on his research.’

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A: {??Nagur-u/^{OK}Nagur-are-ru} koto da (yo).
 {hit-NPST/ hit-PASS-RU} NMNL COP.NPST SFP
'It is hitting/ to be hit.'

As shown in (24), the voice matching effect seems weaker with the question-answer pairs, maybe because the answer can be construed as starting with 'It is ...' rather than 'He was ...,' since Japanese allows null subjects.

Causative (*s*)*ase* can, but does not have to, double in the presuppositional clause and the focus phrase, as shown in (25), and the same is true with question-answer pairs as in (26).

(25) Taroo-ga kodomo-ni s-ase-ta-no-wa [heya-o katazuke-(sase)-ru
 Taro-NOM child-DAT do-CAUSE-PST-C-TOP room-ACC tidy.up-(CAUSE)-RU
 koto] da.
 NMNL COP.NPST
'What Taro forced his child to do is tidy up his room.'

(26) Q: Taroo-ga kodomo-ni s-ase-ta-no-wa?
 Taro-NOM child-DAT do-CAUSE-PST-C-TOP
'What did Taro force his child to do?'
 A: Heya-o katazuke-(sase)-ru koto da (yo).
 room-ACC tidy.up-(CAUSE)-RU NMNL COP.NPST SFP
'It is to (make him) tidy up his room.'

As for benefactive verbs *te yar(u)* or *te moraw(u)*, they can, but do not have to, double in the presuppositional clause and the focus position.

(27) a. Taroo-ga kodomo-ni si-te yat-ta-no-wa [hon-o ka(t-te yar)-u
 Taro-NOM child-DAT do-TE give-PST-C-TOP book-ACC buy(-TE give)-U
 koto] da.
 NMNL COP.NPST
'What Taro did for his child is buy him a book.'
 b. Taroo-ga titioya-ni si-te morat-ta-no-wa [syukudai-o tetsuda(t-te
 Taro-NOM father-by do-TE receive-PST-C-TOP homework-ACC help-TE
moraw)-u koto] da.
 receive-U NMNL COP.NPST
'What Taro did was have his father help him with his homework.'

These verbs can double optionally in question-answer pairs, too.

(28) Q: Taroo-ga kodomo-ni si-te yat-ta-no-wa?
 Taro-NOM child-DAT do-TE give-PST-C-TOP
'What did Taro do for his child?'

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- b. explicitly express the externalization of the internal argument. (e.g. passives (23))
- b. When an internal argument is not affected, doubling of a grammatical morpheme is not necessary. (e.g. causatives (25), benefactives (27))
- c. When honorification is involved in an antecedent clause, it must be explicitly expressed in the ellipsis clause as well. (21)

(31a, b) state that doubling depends on whether an internal argument of V is externalized or not. In this light let us consider (32). When causatives are passivized in the presuppositional clause, both the causative and the passive morpheme must be present in the focus phrase as in (32a), or both must be absent from it as in (32c). It is not possible to retain only a causative or a passive morpheme in the focus phrase, as in (32b).

- (32)
- | | | | | | |
|----|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------|--|
| | Taroo-ga | Saburoo-ni | s-ase-rare-ta-no-wa | | |
| | Taro-NOM | Saburo-by | do-CAUSE-PASS-PST-C-TOP | | |
| a. | [e-o | kak-ase-rare-ru | koto] | da. | |
| | picture-ACC | draw-CAUSE-PASS-RU | NMNL | COP.NPST | |
| b. | ?* [e-o | kak-ase-ru/ kak-are-ru | koto] | da | |
| | picture-ACC | draw-CAUSE-RU/ draw-PASS-RU | NMNL | COP.NPST | |
| c. | [e-o | kak-u | koto] | da. | |
| | picture-ACC | draw-U | NMNL | COP.NPST | |
- Lit. 'What Taro was forced to do by Saburo was (he was forced) to draw a picture.'*

Note that voice mismatch is allowed between the presuppositional clause and the focus phrase in (32c). It is not simple voice matching that is required of pseudocleft sentences. In (32a) it is the causativized V *kak-ase* 'cause to write' that is passivized, and *Taro* undergoes externalization. In this case the passive morpheme must double along with the causative morpheme, as stated in (31a).

- (33)
- | | | | | | |
|--|--|------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| | $[_{\text{TopP}} [_{\text{CP}} \text{Op}_i [_{\text{TP}}$ | Taroo _j -ga | Saburoo-ni t_j | t_i -ase-rare-ta] | [_C no]]-wa |
| | | Taro-NOM | Saburo-by | CAUSE-PASS-PST C-TOP | |
| | $[_{\text{TP}} [_{\text{PredP}} [_{\text{FocP}} [_{\text{VP}}$ | e-o | kak] _i -u | $[_{\text{TP}} [_{\text{CP}} \text{Taroo}_j$-ga | Saburoo-ni |
| | | picture-ACC | draw-U | Taro-NOM | Saburo-by |
| | $[_{\text{Foc}} [_{\text{VP}} [_{\text{VP}} [_{\text{VP}}$ | e-o | kak]_i-ase-rare] | $[_{\text{Foc}}$ koto]] | $[_{\text{Pred}}$ da]] T] TOP] |
| | | picture-ACC | draw-CAUSE-PASS | NMNL | COP.NPST |

On the other hand, in (32c), the structure of which is represented as (33), it is the minimal V and not the causativized V that is passivized, and *e* 'picture,' the direct object of V, is not externalized. Hence it is possible to focalize the minimal VP *e-o kak-u* 'draw a picture' without doubling the causative and the passive morpheme.

Ellipsis applies in the focus position of pseudocleft sentences with a presuppositional clause as its antecedent. It obeys a parallelism requirement with respect to grammatical proper-

ties of nominals (e.g. externalization of arguments/ target of honorification), and verbal morphology must be focused along with V that indicates that the elided nominals have marked properties (e.g. having undergone externalization/ target of honorification).

5. Conclusion

This paper discussed the properties of VP-focus pseudocleft sentences in Japanese. I have shown that VP-focus constitutes a vP phase in a broad sense. I have also argued that the presuppositional clause of pseudocleft sentences is a question based on the occurrence of a topic marker in the presuppositional clause. Finally, it is demonstrated that the presuppositional clause and the focus phrase are subject to the same parallelism constraint on ellipsis.

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