

Remarks on String Vacuous Overt Verb Raising

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1. Introduction

It is controversial whether or not string vacuous overt verb raising takes place in head final languages such as Japanese. Koizumi (2000) proposes that verbs must undergo overt verb raising in Japanese, concluding that his proposal is inconsistent with Fukui and Takano's (1998, 1999) claim that Specifier-Complement-Head is universally the "basic" word order and that Japanese does not have overt head movement. The purpose of this article is to argue that there seems to exist no rational and indisputable evidence for the existence of the string vacuous overt verb raising in head final languages.

The rest of the article is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews direct evidence for overt verb raising in the overt syntax in Japanese, presented by Koizumi (2000). Section 3 argues against the existence of string vacuous overt verb raising in head final languages for several reasons. Finally, section 4 summarizes the discussion.

2. String Vacuous Overt Verb Raising

Koizumi (2000) addresses the presence of string vacuous overt verb raising in Japanese, assuming that a regular ditransitive sentence in (1) has a structure like (2) (except for the possibility of verb raising).

- (1) Mary-ga John-ni ringo-o age-ta.
 Mary-NOM John-to apple-ACC give-PAST
 'Mary gave an apple to John.'

- (2) [_{CP} [_{IP} Mary-NOM_i [_{VP} t_i [_{VP} John-to [_v apple-ACC gave]] v]] I] C]

(Koizumi, 2000:228)

He then presents a number of empirical evidence for string vacuous overt verb raising in the overt syntax in Japanese, based on coordination, clefting, and scrambling, respectively (see Koizumi, *op.cit.*: 228-43 for much more detailed discussion). Let us consider the following example including numeral quantifiers, which shows the first evidence for overt verb raising.

- (3) Mary-ga [[John-ni ringo-o 2-tu] to [Bob-ni banana-o
Mary-NOM [[John-to apple-ACC 2-CL] and [Bob-to banana-ACC
3-bon]] ageta (koto).
3-CL]] gave (fact)

(Koizumi, 2000:228)

As shown in (3), two internal argument NPs (Indirect Object and Direct Object) form a syntactic constituent excluding the subject and the verb, supposing that each conjunct of a coordinate structure is a constituent. Given that (3) has a structure like (2), this constituent must be either VP or vP, which entails that the main verbs have overtly raised at least to v in the "across-the-board" manner.

The next evidence for overt verb raising has to do with clefting. In (4) two internal arguments (Indirect Object and Direct Object) may be clefted, with the main verbs stranded.

- (4) a. Mary-ga John-ni ringo-o 3-tu ageta (koto).
Mary-NOM John-to apple-ACC 3-CL gave
'Mary gave three apples to John.'
b. Mary-ga age-ta no-wa [John-ni ringo-o 3-tu] da.
Mary-NOM give-PAST NL-TOP [John-to apple-ACC 3-CL] be
Lit. It is [three apples to John] that Mary gave.'

(Koizumi, 2000:234)

The indirect and direct objects are in the focus position in (4b). Given that the internal arguments are generated with the maximal projection of the main verb which selects them, these two examples imply that the main verb overtly moves out of the VP that dominates the direct and indirect objects, as schematically represented in (5).

- (5) a. Schematic structure of (4a)
Subject [_{VP} IO DO t_v] V
b. Schematic structure of (4b)
[OP_i [Subject t_i V-v-I] no-wa [_{VP} IO DO [_v e]_i] da

(Koizumi, 2000:235)

The third evidence for overt verb raising comes from facts about scrambling. Application of multiple long-distance movement from within the same clause necessarily yields a Subjacency violation. Therefore, if multiple scrambling applied to a sentence, the resultant structure will be degraded. However, a sentence with multiple scrambling is acceptable if it is parsed in such a way that the scrambled elements form an intonation

phrase as follows:

- (6) [Hawai-de Masami-ni purezento-o] John-ga
 [Hawai-at Masami-DAT present-ACC] John-NOM
 [Kiyomi-ga katta to] omotteiru (koto).
 [Kiyomi-NOM bought that] believe
 Lit. [A present for Masami in Hawaii] John believes that Kiyomi bought.'
 (John believes [that Kiyomi bought a present for Masami in Hawaii].)
 (Koizumi, 2000:240)

To account for the acceptability of (6), Koizumi (2000) proposed that it contains a scrambling of the embedded VP (or some larger phrase), as schematically shown in (7).

- (7) Scrambling of a remnant VP
 [_{VP} Hawai-de Masami-ni purezento-o t_v]_i John-ga
 [_{VP} Hawai-at Masami-DAT present-ACC t_v]_i John-NOM
 [Kiyomi-ga t_i katta_v to] omotteiru.
 [Kiyomi-NOM t_i bought_v that] believe
 (Ibid.)

The above-mentioned requirement that the fronted constituents from an intonation phrase helps to signal that they form a single syntactic constituent (i.e., VP in this case). This analysis crucially relies on the assumption that the main verb has overtly moved out of VP. Thus, if correct, it constitutes another argument for overt verb raising in Japanese.

3. Argument against String Vacuous Overt Verb Raising

As we have seen in the preceding section, Koizumi (2000) apparently accounts for empirical facts about coordination, clefting, and scrambling in an elegant way. In this section, I would like to develop an argument against the existence of string vacuous overt verb raising.

Firstly, it is not at all obvious that verbs undergo overt raising in head final languages, since nothing can exist between "a verb and associated functional heads" in Japanese. More specifically, overt head movement in Japanese, if it exists at all, is a movement which does not invert the word order (i.e., "string vacuous" movement in this sense). As Koizumi (2000:227) himself points out, the Specifier-Complement-Head order in Japanese does not tell us anything about overt verb raising, unlike overt V-raising in English. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that there is no overt verb raising in Japanese.

Secondly, the overall discussion about string vacuous overt verb raising seems to only suggest that verbs raise optionally, not obligatorily. More specifically, if application of overt verb raising is obligatory in Japanese, it should require some driving force (see Fukui, 1993 and Lasnik, 1995, among others). There seems to be no crystal-clear explanation for independent motivation for overt verb raising in Koizumi (2000). What triggers overt verb raising in Japanese? One might argue that a verb is attracted by its associated functional head in Japanese as well as in English, as opposed to Fukui and Takano's (1998, 1999) hypothesis that "v has the property of attracting V in English but not in Japanese." However, this argument seems to fail to account for some typological differences between English and Japanese (see Fukui and Takano (1998) for much more detailed discussion).

4. Concluding Remarks

Summarizing, we have argued against the presence of string vacuous overt verb raising in head final languages for several reasons mentioned above, proposing that there is no sufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion that overt head movement exists in Japanese. Whether the overall argument of this paper is basically on the right track or not remains to be seen in future research.

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