

# What Derives Long-Distance Scope: The Case of *Only* in English and *Dake* in Japanese\*

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## 1. Introduction

It is often noted in the literature (Taglicht (1984), Sano (1985), Longobardi (1991), Bayer (1996), Kayne (2000:Ch.13), Herburger (2000), etc.) that a focus particle like *only* or its counterparts in other languages may take long-distance scope across the minimal clause in which it appears:

(1) I knew [he had learnt only Spanish]

(2) the man at the nursery told us [to water only the azaleas]

Example (1), from Taglicht (1984:150), may be interpreted either as saying that “I knew he hadn’t learnt any other language” or that “I didn’t know he had learnt any other language,” to use Taglicht’s paraphrases. The first interpretation is the short-distance scope reading (SD reading) of *only*, with its scope limited to the embedded clause in brackets; the second interpretation is its long-distance scope reading (LD reading), where it scopes over the matrix clause across the boundary of the embedded clause. Similarly in Herburger’s (2000:88) example (2), the SD reading of *only* says that the man at the nursery explicitly told us not to water anything but the azaleas, while its LD reading says that azaleas are the only kind of plant the man told us to water; he didn’t

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say anything about other plants. While noting these two readings, Herburger (2000) adds in a footnote what I believe is an important proviso: she says, “Personally I find this [LD] reading less preferred than the [SD] one. This was also reported by the native speakers I consulted. The interpretation seems easiest when [(2)] is read as an exclamative and/or there is a pause before [*only*]” (p.149, n.3).

It is the purpose of this paper to suggest the cross-linguistic validity of Herburger’s observation just given about the availability of the LD reading of a focus particle like *only*, by drawing evidence from the scopal behavior of its Japanese counterpart *dake*, and also to suggest the universal mechanism that derives the LD reading for such a particle.

## 2. Phonetic Prominence Associated with Long-Distance Scope Reading

Let us begin by considering the possible scope readings of *dake* in (3):<sup>1</sup>

- (3) *isya-wa Aiko-ni [kongo yasai-dake taberu] koto-o*  
 doctor-Top Aiko Dat from-now-on vegetable-only eat C-Acc  
*yurusita*  
 allowed

‘the doctor allowed Aiko to eat only vegetables from now on’

Obviously *dake* in the bracketed embedded clause in (3) allows the SD reading saying that the doctor allowed Aiko not to eat anything but vegetables from now on. In contrast, it is quite difficult to get the LD reading saying that the doctor did not allow her to eat from now on anything but vegetables (unless the adverbial *kongo* ‘from now on’ is left out; see note 1). If Herburger’s observation holds true of Japanese, however, we expect that the LD reading will be available with an exclamative interpretation or with a pause after *dake* (“after,” because of the head-finality of the language that requires the particle to attach to the right of the phrase it focuses). Since the sentence ends with the simple past form of a verb and does not contain any element that suggests the speaker’s exclamation, it is hard to construe it with an exclamative

interpretation. This leaves the pause option. Indeed, if we put a distinctive pause after *dake* in (3), this does seem to make accessible the LD reading that is otherwise hard to get.

The relevance of a pause to the availability of LD reading is confirmed by the observation that LD reading is virtually unobtainable in an environment where not only is an exclamative interpretation unlikely but a pause after a focus particle is also impossible. Thus consider the following where a postposition or a Case-marker occurs to the right of *dake*:

- (4) *isya-wa Aiko-ni [kongo yasai-dake-o taberu] koto-o*  
 doctor-Top Aiko-Dat from-now-on vegetable-only-Acc eat C-Acc  
*yurusita*  
 allowed

‘the doctor allowed Aiko to eat only vegetables from now on’

(4) differs from (3) only in the overt occurrence of the accusative *o* to the right of *dake*. This Case-marker prevents a pause from being put directly after *dake*, given that Case-markers, or postpositions in general, are dependent words that form a single intonational unit with what they attach to. With a pause after *dake* impossible, the LD reading is hardly available. That this is due to the occurrence of a dependent word to the right of *dake* is further confirmed by examples like (5)-(6):

- (5) *titioya-wa Aiko-ni [kongo {a. Taro-ni-dake /b. Taro-dake-ni}*  
 father-Top Aiko-Dat from-now-on Taro-Dat-only Taro-only-Dat  
*au] koto-o yurusita*  
 meet C-Acc allowed

‘the father allowed Aiko to meet only Taro from now on’

- (6) *titioya-wa Aiko-ni [kongo {a. Taro-to-dake /b. Taro-dake-to}*  
 father-Top Aiko-Dat from-now-on Taro-with-only Taro-only-with  
*asobu] koto-o yurusita*  
 play C-Acc allowed

‘the father allowed Aiko to play {only with Taro/with only Taro} from

now on'

In the (a)-examples above, *dake* appears in a phonological “edge” position, to the right of the Case-marker or postposition *ni* / *to*, so that it may be followed by a pause; and putting a distinctive pause after *dake* indeed allows the LD reading of *dake*. In the (b)-examples, *dake* appears in an internal position, to the left of such dependent words. No pause is possible after *dake* here, and its LD reading is quite difficult just as it would be in the (a)-examples without a pause in the relevant position.

The difficulty of the LD reading with no pause after *dake*, however, is not insuperable. It can be overcome with a strong accent on *dake* that indicates an extra focus above and beyond the focus assigned by the focus particle itself. The extra focus indicated by stress often invites addition to the end of the sentence, of a modal element that suggests the speaker’s emphatic assertion, such as *noda* (‘itisthat’) as in the following, where capitals indicate a strong accent: <sup>2</sup>

- (7) *Isya-wa Aiko-ni [kongo yasai-DAKE-o taberu] koto-o*  
 doctor-Top Aiko-Dat from-now-on vegetable-only-Acc eat C-Acc  
*yurusita-noda. (Sore igai-o taberu koto-wa yurusite i-nai.)*  
 allowed-M that besides-Acc eat C-Top allowing be-Neg  
 ‘The doctor allowed Aiko to eat only vegetables from now on. (He has not allowed her to eat anything else.)’
- (8) *Titioya-wa Aiko-ni [kongo Taro-DAKE-ni au] koto-o*  
 father-Top Aiko-Dat from-now-on Taro-only-Dat meet C-Acc  
*yurusita-noda. (Kare igai-ni au koto-wa yurusite i-nai.)*  
 allowed-M him besides-Dat meet C-Top allowing be-Neg  
 ‘The father allowed Aiko to meet only Taro from now on. (He has not allowed her to meet anyone other than him.)’
- (9) *Titioya-wa Aiko-ni [kongo Taro-DAKE-to asobu] koto-o*  
 father-Top Aiko-Dat from-now-on Taro-only-with play C-Acc  
*yurusita-noda. (Kare igai-to asobu koto-wa yurusite i-nai.)*

allowed-M him beside-with play C-Top allowing be-Neg  
 ‘The father allowed Aiko to play with only Taro from now on. (He has not allowed her to play with anyone other than him.)’

Notice that the sentences ending with the modal *noda* in (7)-(9) may be followed by the material in parentheses without any inconsistency, and this indicates that we are indeed dealing with the LD reading, the reading implying what is said in the parenthesized material.

Why is the LD reading available with *dake* assuming such phonetic prominence as indicated by a distinctive pause or a strong accent? In the next section we will give an answer to this question that also relates the LD reading to an exclamative interpretation.

### 3. Focus and Modality

It is reasonable to assume that a pause after *dake* (or one before *only*) and an extra stress on it are both phonological reflexes of one and the same thing: focus. As noted, this focus is independent of the focus interpretation associated with the focus particle itself. It also seems reasonable to assume that focus must be licensed by some element that potentially has some semantic connection with it. One such element is a modal, given Rooth’s (1996:272f.) observation that focus may be construed with a modal to give distinct interpretations depending on the focused item (see also Hajičová et al. (1998:24f.) and the references cited there). Thus consider the following from Rooth (1996:273), where the subscripted F indicates focus:

- (10) a. Officers<sub>F</sub> must escort ballerinas.
- b. Officers must escort ballerinas<sub>F</sub>.

To quote Rooth (1996:273), “a bank clerk escorting a ballerina would violate the first rule [= (10a)] of etiquette...but not the second [= (10b)], and an officer escorting a journalist would violate the second rule but not the first.” Though Rooth does not say this, (10a) and (10b) have the focus of the deontic modality falling on *officers* and *ballerinas*, respectively, and may be paraphrased with cleft

constructions as in the following:

(11) a. It must be officers that escort ballerinas. ( (10a))

b. It must be ballerinas that officers escort. ( (10b))

Similarly, examples like (7)-(9) may be taken as having the focus of the assertion modality of *noda* falling on the stressed *dake*-phrase, interpreted along the lines suggested by the relation between (10) and (11). (7), for example, may be paraphrased with a cleft construction as follows:

(12) Isya-ga Aiko-ni [kongo taberu] koto-o yurusita-no-wa  
 doctor-Nom Aiko-Dat from-now-on eat C-Acc allowed-C-Top  
 yasai-dake-da.  
 vegetable-only-Cop

'It is only vegetables that the doctor allowed Aiko to eat from now on.'

Consideration along these lines leads to the analysis whereby the focus feature [Foc], phonetically realized either as a pause or a strong accent, is assigned to the *dake*-phrase on the LD reading, and this feature is licensed by the matrix modal *noda* in sentences like (7)-(9) or by a covert analogue of such a modal in sentences lacking an overt modal. If this licensing relation is established by covert movement of [Foc], pied-piping the entire *dake*-phrase, to a position close enough to the modal (say its Spec position), then the LD reading obtains, with *dake* scoping over the matrix predicate *yurusita* 'allowed.'<sup>3</sup>

It takes but a short step to see that essentially the same mechanism is applicable to constructions amenable to an exclamative interpretation that Herburger suggests is associated with LD reading. First consider the following pair of sentences:

(13) a. [ isya-ga Aiko-ni [ kongo yasai-dake-o  
 doctor-Nom Aiko-Dat from-now-on vegetable-only-Acc  
 taberu] koto-o yurusita] zizitu-wa nai  
 eat C-Acc allowed fact-Top exist-Neg

'there is not a fact such that the doctor allowed Aiko to eat only vegetables from now on'

- b. [ isya-ga Aiko-ni [ kongo yasai-dake-o  
 doctor-Nom Aiko-Dat from-now-on vegetable-only-Acc  
 taberu] koto-o yurusita-nante] zizitu-wa nai  
 eat C-Acc allowed-M fact-Top exist-Neg  
 ‘there is not a fact such that the doctor should have allowed Aiko to  
 eat only vegetables from now on’

The paired sentences minimally differ from each other in whether there is an overt modal in , the complement clause of the noun *zizitu* ‘fact’ with its main predicate *yurusita* ‘allowed.’ In (13a), where there is no overt modal in , *dake* can hardly take long-distance scope over *yurusita* across the minimal clause containing it, . Putting a strong accent on *dake* is of little help, since is not a matrix clause that can support a modal interpretation with a covert modal element; embedded clauses generally do not support a modal interpretation with a covert modal element. Thus even if there is an extra focus feature [Foc] realized as phonetic prominence on *dake*, there is no modal in that licenses its occurrence, hence no LD reading is derivable that depends on its licensing. The long-distance scope over *yurusita* is possible, however, with an overt modal *nante* in as in (13b). This modal serves as a licenser of [Foc] associated with the stressed instance of *dake*, giving the LD reading of the particle under movement of [Foc] together with the *dake*-phrase to a local domain of the modal (such as its Spec position). Now observe that we obtain an exclamative sentence with *nante* the matrix modal as in (14), obtained from (13b) by omitting the matrix material *zizitu-wa nai*:

- (14) Isya-ga Aiko-ni kongo yasai-dake-o taberu koto-o  
 doctor-Nom Aiko-Dat from-now-on vegetable-only-Acc eat C-Acc  
 yurusita-nante!  
 allowed-M  
 ‘That the doctor should have allowed Aiko to eat only vegetables  
 from now on!’

Again, with a strong accent on *dake* the LD reading is available, under the

same mechanism sketched above.

#### 4. Focus with Long-Distance Scope Reading: A Case from English

We have been claiming that a focus independent of the one involved in the focus particle plays an important role in giving what appears to be its LD reading. Some data from English support this conclusion. In a verb-particle combination like *look up* or *point out*, if its object is to be focused, then the object must not be between the verb and the particle, but must come after the latter. This is the case, for example, in an indefinite answer to a *wh*-question as in (15) or in the single-sentence counterpart (16) (Kayne (2000:248)):

(15) Q: What is he looking up?

A: He's looking {up a linguistic term/?a linguistic term up}.

(16) What he looked up was he looked {up a linguistic term/?a linguistic term up}.

If the LD reading of *only* is associated with the type of focus that is also involved in (15)-(16), then for that reading, the *only*-phrase as the object of a verb-particle combination should prefer the position to the right of the whole combination rather than the position between the verb and the particle. This is indeed true:

(17) a. we've requested that he point out only one book

b. we've requested that he point only one book out

To quote Kayne (2000:236): "In a context favorable to wide scope for *only*, such as one in which 'he' is a book-seller to whom a single request has been made, [(17a)] seems appreciably more natural than [(17b)]." What is crucial for the present discussion is that (17b) is acceptable on the SD reading of *only*, but it is not fully so on its LD reading, which, unlike the SD reading, requires the type of focus on the *only*-phrase that is subject to the same constraint that produces the effect observed in (15)-(16). In terms of Herburger, the LD reading is less preferred in (17b) because no pause is possible before the *only*-phrase located between the verb and the particle.



## 5. Concluding Remarks

What emerges from the discussion thus far is that at least some instances of the LD reading of *only/dake* are really a by-product of the covert movement of the extra focus feature assigned, independent of the focus interpretation associated with the particle.<sup>4</sup> This feature has the phonetic effect of prominence (stress/pause) and/or the semantic effect of modal or exclamative interpretation (as far as what licenses the feature is a modal element supporting such an interpretation, rather than just the head of FocP; see the second paragraph of note 3). If there is any kind of movement involved in licensing (or checking) some features that *only/dake* lexically has, this must be local A-movement, either internal to the minimal clause CL in which the particle overtly appears (giving its SD reading), or perhaps to some position immediately above CL to give a different type of LD reading from the one discussed in the present paper, in the manner suggested in note 1.

### NOTES

- 1 Here and below, an adverbial expression like *kongo* ‘from now on’ construed with the embedded predicate is added before the relevant *dake*-phrase to confine it within the embedded clause in overt syntax; without such an adverbial the *dake*-phrase could undergo string-vacuous overt movement to some (A-)position (say Spec of the VP complement of the matrix *v*) from which it can take matrix scope for an overt-syntactic reason. See Sano (2001) for the covert analogue of such movement of *dake* and other focus particles.
- 2 See McGloin and Terakura (1978) for the use of *nodesu*, the polite form of *noda*, for the speaker’s subjective and emphatic assertion.
- 3 By allowing pied-piping the *dake*-phrase in covert focus movement, we are assuming covert phrasal movement in the sense of Pesetsky (2000), as distinct from the pure feature movement of Chomsky (1995:Ch.4).  
See Kiss (1995), Rizzi (1997), Puskas (1997) and references therein for focus movement (to the Spec position of a functional category like FocP).
- 4 Thus, the present paper in a sense merely elaborates Herburger’s (2000:88) following suggestion: “The scopal properties of *only* that are illustrated in [(2)] seem to be derivative. An *only* attached to a noun phrase seems to piggyback on the possible scopes of the noun phrase. If in [(2)] the noun phrase takes matrix scope,

we get the [LD] reading; if it takes embedded scope, we get the [SD reading]...”

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