

The Syntax of Topics in Japanese

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Abstract

It is a widely held belief that the Japanese particle *wa* is a marker for topic. This paper presents arguments that challenge this belief. I argue that identification of topics in terms of the particle alone is not sufficient for a satisfactory account of the syntactic properties of topics. Examining contexts that require topics on discourse grounds, it is demonstrated that the relevant *wa*-marked item must appear in clause initial position, whether it is contrastive or non-contrastive. The literature reports that it is possible for a *wa*-marked item to occupy other positions in a sentence (Saito 1985, Hoji 1985, Kuroda 1988, Watanabe 2003). This paper identifies the contexts where such sentences are permitted and show that these *wa*-marked items are associated with a distinct set of syntactic properties from those displaced to clause-initial positions. For instance, contrary to the standard assumption (Heycock 2007), *wa*-marked items that can appear in situ cannot optionally move to clause-initial position, and are not licensed in a dislocation structure. The alternative account proposed here advocates that additional discourse factors must be taken into consideration in identifying topics in Japanese, both contrastive and non-contrastive types. A further advantage of the proposed analysis is that it captures generalisations that hold of contrastive topics and non-contrastive topics, which have previously been treated separately.

1 INTRODUCTION

It is a widely held assumption that the particle *wa* is a topic marker in this language. However, I argue that this assumption cannot provide a straightforward account of different syntactic properties that *wa*-marked items display depending on the environment in which they appear. The standard characterisation of the particle *wa* in the literature on Japanese is that it has two

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uses: non-contrastive and contrastive (Kuno 1973).¹ A phrase marked by the former does not bear an emphatic stress, typically occupies clause-initial position and is interpreted as what the rest of the sentence is about. These properties are demonstrated in (1), with a *wa*-marked object to highlight its non-canonical positioning. I will call such a phrase ‘non-contrastive *wa*-phrase’. A phrase marked by contrastive *wa* is emphatically stressed, optionally moves to clause-initial position and implicates contrast with some other contextually salient alternative. These properties are illustrated in (2). I will refer to this type of *wa*-phrase as ‘contrastive *wa*-phrase’. (Throughout the paper SMALL CAPS is used for emphatic stress; neutral stress is not indicated; and # indicates infelicity):

(1) non-contrastive *wa*:

- a. ano hon_i-wa John-ga *e*_i katta.
that book-wa John-nom bought
- b. #John-ga ano hon-wa katta.
John-nom that book-wa bought
‘Speaking of that book, John bought it.’

(2) contrastive *wa*:

- a. ANO HON_i-WA John-ga *t*_i katta.
that book-wa John-nom bought
- b. John-ga ANO HON-WA katta.
John-nom that book-wa bought
‘John bought that book.’ (Implicature: ‘Maybe John didn’t buy another book.’)

The two types of *wa*-phrases are generally analysed as two distinct types of ‘topics’, non-contrastive topics and contrastive topics, respectively, and they are usually given separate accounts in the literature (see Heycock 2007 for an overview). Indeed, other than bearing the same particle, the above examples seem to suggest that they do not share any properties either in their interpretation or in their syntactic distribution. On the view that the particle *wa* is a topic marker then, it is unclear what notion of topicality is shared by the two types of topics.

¹ Kuno (1973) calls the two uses ‘thematic’ and ‘contrastive’ and the terms are widely used. Following Heycock (2007), however, I will call the former ‘non-contrastive’ in order to be less theory-specific.

In this paper, I argue that the particle *wa* alone is insufficient for identifying topics, non-contrastive or contrastive. Rather, other factors must also be taken into account for identifying them. In particular, there are independent tests based on considerations from discourse and the interface between syntax and information structure that can identify items with the discourse function of ‘topic’. I show that according to these tests, only a subset of contrastive and non-contrastive *wa*-phrases qualify as topics, and crucially, those *wa*-phrases have some syntactic properties in common. One such property is that they must occupy clause-initial position. I propose to take this observation as a condition on licensing topics in Japanese and formulate it as a constraint as in (3). The notion of ‘topic’ will be made explicit Section 2.

(3) Topic is licensed in clause-initial position.

An immediate consequence of the constraint is that *wa*-phrases that appear in positions other than clause-initial position, such as *ano hon-wa* ‘that book-wa’ in (2b), are not topics. I argue that this is a desirable consequence. Evidence comes from considering various discourse contexts in which a sentence may contain a contrastive *wa*-phrase. In contexts that require contrastive topics, the contrastive *wa*-phrase must appear in clause-initial position, as in (2a). Conversely, when the context requires the *wa*-phrase only to implicate contrast, and not have the discourse function of topic, it must remain in-situ, as in (2b). There are additional syntactic differences between contrastive *wa*-phrases in clause-initial position and those in-situ.

A further advantage of the proposed analysis concerns a rarely discussed property of non-contrastive *wa*-phrases. Despite the standard characterisation noted above, non-contrastive *wa*-phrases can appear in positions other than clause-initial position under certain circumstances (Kuroda 1988, Watanabe 2003). In replying to a *wh*-question, such as (4), the object in the answer can be fronted, with the effect that the subject *wa*-phrase is no longer in clause-initial position, as in (5b).

- (4) ano inu-wa dare-o kande-simatta no?
 that dog-nom who-acc bite-ended.up Q
 ‘Who did the dog bite?’

- (5) a. ano inu-wa kinoo kooen-de JOHN-O kande-simatta.
 that dog-wa yesterday park-at John-acc bite-ended.up
 b. JOHN_i-O ano inu-wa kinoo kooen-de t_i kande-simatta.
 John-acc that dog-wa yesterday park-at bite-ended.up
 ‘The dog bit John in the park yesterday.’

I argue that non-contrastive *wa*-phrases that are not in clause-initial position are also not topics. Evidence similar in nature to that mentioned above for contrastive *wa*-phrases is available. In contexts that require non-contrastive topics, the relevant *wa*-phrase must appear in clause-initial position. On the other hand, some contexts that do not require a non-contrastive topic still allow non-contrastive *wa*-phrases. Such *wa*-phrases can occupy positions other than clause-initial position and show further syntactic differences from non-contrastive topics. I will call the latter type of non-topical *wa*-phrases ‘discourse anaphoric’ *wa*-phrases. The notion of discourse anaphoricity and how it relates to topic will be elaborated in Section 2. The main claims are summarised below:

(6) *Types of wa-phrases*

	non-contrastive <i>wa</i> -phrase (unstressed)	contrastive <i>wa</i> -phrase (stressed)
clause-initial	non-contrastive topic	contrastive topic
non-clause-initial	discourse anaphoric	contrastive

In addition to the interpretation and syntax, another way of distinguishing between non-contrastive *wa*-phrase and contrastive *wa*-phrase is stress. The prosodic properties of contrastive *wa*-phrases are very much like those of focus, as noted by several authors: they bear an emphatic stress (raised f_0 -peak), are followed by suppression of pitch movement and can be the sole focal accent of the sentence (Nakanishi 2001, Hara 2006, Ishihara 2007, Oshima 2008, Tomioka 2009). *Wa*-phrases that are not emphatically stressed do not usually give rise to contrast. As noted by Kuroda (2005: Appendix II), however, it is possible that a contrast arises from the context even in the absence of contrastive *wa*-phrases. Thus, one may infer from a sequence of statements such as *John buys Japanese novels and Bill buys English novels* that John and Bill are somehow contrasted. In all cases considered below, such contexts are avoided: non-contrastive *wa*-phrases are set in contexts that do not induce

contrast, and contrastive *wa*-phrases are set in contexts where they must be emphatically stressed and implicate contrast.²

The rest of the paper is organised as follows. The following section first clarifies the terminologies, ‘topic’, ‘discourse anaphoric’ and ‘contrast’ that this paper adopts, also pointing out what interpretive elements of the notion ‘topic’ are common to contrastive and non-contrastive topics. Section 3 then examines the syntactic distribution of *wa*-phrases in specific contexts that require non-contrastive and contrastive topics. It will be demonstrated that the relevant *wa*-marked item must appear in clause-initial position in such contexts, motivating the constraint in (3). Sections 4 and 5 consider contrastive and non-contrastive *wa*-phrases that are not in clause-initial position. In each section, I provide arguments for their non-topical status in terms of their syntactic properties as well as their interpretation. Section 6 shows that a further prediction of the constraint in (3) is correct, namely that there can be no more than one topic per clause, because there is only one clause-initial position. In Section 7, the current proposal is compared with some recent approaches in the literature. Section 8 concludes the paper.

2 TOPIC, CONTRAST AND CONTRASTIVE TOPICS

2.1 Topic

It is important to note the distinction between ‘sentence topic’ and ‘discourse topic’. Sentence topic is generally considered the syntactic category that is what the sentence is about, while discourse topic is what the whole discourse is about and can be more abstract (Reinhart 1981).

² An anonymous reviewer points out that the choice of the predicate seems to affect the availability of the four types of *wa*-phrase in (6). For instance, a *wa*-marked subject of the predicate *mieru* ‘visible’ obligatorily has a contrastive interpretation. Thus, the example in (i) has the implicature that the particular mountain is visible but other things are not. This is not the case with other intransitive predicate, such as (ii).

- | | | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|---------|------|------------------------|-------------|
| (i) | yama-wa | mieru | (ii) | John-wa | kasikoi |
| | mountain-wa | visible | | John-wa | intelligent |
| | ‘The mountain is visible.’ | | | ‘John is intelligent.’ | |

At present, I have no insightful explanation for this interesting observation. It could be that predicates have different ‘default’ information structures associated with them, as hinted at by the reviewer. See Heycock (1993a) and Tomioka (2007) for analyses along this line for predicates of the type in (ii). I put aside this issue in this paper.

In this paper, I take a narrower notion of ‘sentence topic’ as a syntactic category that not merely is what the rest of the sentence is about, but an item that in addition ‘affects’ the topic of discourse by introducing a new one, re-introducing it, shifting it from one item to another, narrowing down its referent or implicating the existence of a salient alternative. These are characteristics associated, for instance, with Givón’s (1983) ‘chain-initial topic’, Vallduví’s (1992) ‘link’, and Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl’s (2007) ‘aboutness topic’. As discussed below, the linguistic relevance of this narrower notion of topic is observed cross-linguistically. This paper is concerned with the syntactic distribution of sentence topic in this narrower sense.

A sentence topic in this narrower sense can be identified as the item *X* in the answer to requests such as *tell me about X* or *what about X?* (Reinhart 1981). Such requests explicitly instruct the hearer to introduce *X* as the discourse topic. Thus, *John* in Speaker B’s utterance below is a sentence topic.

- (7) A: Tell me about John.
 B: John likes hiking.

That *John* in (7B) indeed introduces the referent as the topic of discourse, rather than *John* in (7A), are suggested by two facts. First, native speakers do not interpret the imperative in (7A), as being about ‘John’. Secondly, B’s utterance is still felicitous even if the request is less specific about what is to be the topic of discourse, such as *tell me about someone in your class*. A sentence topic is also associated with constructions such as *as for X...*, or *regarding X...*, where *X* is the sentence topic.³

Sentence topics in the narrower sense must also be distinguished from items that refer back to them and are thereby interpreted as what the rest of the sentence is about (Vallduví 1992, Lambrecht 1994, Vallduví & Engdahl 1996, Neeleman et al. to app.). The point can be illustrated by the following discourse.

³ There are other constructions that introduce an item and instruct that item to be a sentence topic in the subsequent utterance, although the force of the instruction is not as strong as the imperative *tell me about X*. An example is a presentational construction. In (i) below, the first sentence introduces *a wizard* and *he* in the second sentence, referring to the wizard, is a sentence topic (Lambrecht 1994: 177, taken from Givón 1976):

(i) Once there was a wizard. He was very wise, rich and was married to a beautiful witch.

See Portner & Yabushita (2001: 279) for similar examples using *aru* ‘certain’ in Japanese.

- (8) a. Maxine was introduced to the president on her birthday.
 b. She was wearing a special dress for the occasion.

Uttered discourse-initially, *Maxine* in the example in (8a) is a sentence topic, introducing Maxine as the topic of discourse. The use of the passive biases the subject to be interpreted as the sentence topic (Reinhart 1995) and speakers generally interpret the sentence in (8a) as being about Maxine. The pronoun *her* in this utterance has the same referent as the discourse topic, but is not itself a sentence topic. It simply is a discourse anaphoric item, in the sense that its referent is previously mentioned or given in the discourse. Here, it refers back to the sentence topic, and hence the discourse topic, indicating what other semantic role the referent of the discourse topic plays in the event described by the sentence. By the same logic, I argue following Vallduví & Engdahl (1996) that the pronoun *she* in the subsequent utterance in (8b) simply refers back to the discourse topic and is not a sentence topic. The utterance in (8b) can be described as an all-focus or all-comment structure where the discourse topic has been inherited from the previous utterance. The sentence in (8b) is interpreted as being about the referent of *she*, but this is so only because *she* is an anaphoric item, and the item it is anaphoric to happens to be the discourse topic, and not because *she* is a sentence topic.

The same considerations apply to the following type of exchange:

- (9) a. Who did Max see yesterday?
 b. He saw Rosa yesterday.

Here again, the pronoun *he* in (9b) is not a sentence topic in the narrower sense, but is only a discourse anaphoric item that refers back to the discourse topic Max, which is introduced as such in the preceding question in (9a) by the sentence topic *Max* (Vallduví & Engdahl 1996). The information structure of the utterance in (9b) is that *Rosa*, that answers the *wh*-part of the preceding question, is the focus and the remaining items constitute the background. The sentence in (9b) is interpreted as being about the referent of *he*, because *he* happens to refer back to the discourse topic, not because *he* is a sentence topic. Thus, a sentence topic is always what the sentence is about, but the item that the sentence is about is not necessarily a sentence topic.

In English, sentence topics are not necessarily overtly marked and are not easy to distinguish from those that refer back to them. In (9b), for instance, one could argue that *he* is interpreted as what the rest of the sentence is about because it is a sentence topic, re-

introducing the discourse topic, though somewhat unnecessarily here (Vallduví & Vilkuna 1996: 474). However, there appears to be no theoretical reason why a pronominal referring back to a discourse topic should also itself be a sentence topic. An anaphoric item does not usually inherit the discourse-related properties of the antecedent. A pronoun that refers to a focus is not also therefore a focus.

Moreover, it is widely observed for other languages that items that affect the topic of discourse display a different set of linguistic properties from those that refer back to them. Vallduví (1992) demonstrates that in Catalan, the distinction is formerly marked by the direction of dislocation: those that affect the discourse topic must be left-dislocated, while those that refer back to them must be right-dislocated together with other backgrounded material ('tail' in his terminology). Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl (2007) also show that in Italian and German, those that affect the discourse topic bear a different intonation from those that refer back to them, and the former cannot be right-dislocated, while the latter can. The latter also behaves in other ways like those that are simply mentioned previously in the discourse. In Korean, the so-called topic marker *nun*, in its non-contrastive use, typically marks only items that affect the topic of discourse and those that refer back to the topic of discourse are usually marked by a case-marker, just as other discourse given material is (Choi 1999). As we will see, the distinction is also crucial in explaining certain syntactic properties of *wa*-phrases in Japanese.

A further consideration for adopting the narrower notion of 'topic' is that it is extremely difficult to define 'aboutness' and hence identify 'topic' solely in terms of it, as some have proposed (Lambrecht 1994, Rizzi 1997). Speakers generally have an intuition about what the sentence is primarily about, but there is no consensus in the literature about the precise meaning of 'aboutness'. Reinhart (1981: 56) and Vallduví (1992) claim as part of their definitions for topic (or 'link' for Vallduví) that there can be no more than one per sentence, so a sentence can be at most about one item. Others argue that anything given or old in the discourse are what the sentence is about, resulting in multiple topics per sentence (Lambrecht 1994, Rizzi 1997, Frey 2004, Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl's 2007).⁴ Furthermore, in the literature on Japanese, 'aboutness' is often alluded to in accounting for other constructions,

⁴ Portner & Yabushita (1998, 2001) propose a formal account of 'aboutness'. Their accounts, however, do not distinguish those that affect the discourse topic and those that refer back to them. The syntactic generalisations discussed in the main text would therefore be difficult to capture.

including the so-called multiple nominative constructions (Saito 1982, Heycock 1993b, Vermeulen 2005a,b). By contrast, a carefully worked out discourse contexts can identify more easily an item that affects the topic of discourse. Considering that those items identified on the narrower notion of topic display a distinct set of properties cross-linguistically, as discussed above, it seems instructive to adopt the narrower notion.

Some authors propose several types of topics and analyse items that refer back to the discourse topic as a distinct type of topic, for example, as ‘continuing topic’ (Givón 1983, Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl 2007), ‘role-oriented topic’ (Lambrecht 1994), ‘given topic’ (Bianchi & Frascarelli 2009). It is important to point out that the main aim of the paper is not to argue against such an approach, but to demonstrate that a distinction of this sort is necessary. If one adopts a broad enough definition of ‘topic’, such as in terms only of ‘aboutness’, those items that refer back to discourse topics can also be considered ‘topics’. However, this comes at the cost of losing generalisations about the syntax of ‘topics’. I therefore refrain from using a term containing the word ‘topic’ for items referring back to the discourse topic and reserve the term ‘topic’ only for syntactic constituents that are what the rest of the sentence is about and in addition affect the discourse topic. This point is further discussed in relation to Japanese in Section 5.

2.2 *Contrast and contrastive topics*

I take contrastive topics to be sentence topics, in the sense discussed above, which implicate contrast of a particular type that presupposes at least one salient alternative in the discourse (Büring 1997, 2003). As such, among the functions of topic mentioned above, contrastive topic is typically associated with shifting the current discourse topic, narrowing down the referent of the discourse topic and implicating the existence of an alternative.⁵ *I* in (10B) is a contrastive topic, shifting the topic of discourse from *Fritz*.

(10) A: Do you think that Fritz would buy this suit?

B: Well, I certainly wouldn’t.

(Büring 1997: 56)

I in the above example bears the so-called B-accent (Jackendoff 1972) and contrastive topics in languages such as English are often identified as items bearing this accent. There

⁵ These are functions Büring (1997) attributes to his notion of S(entence)-topic.

have been several proposals on the exact meaning associated with the B-accent in English and the similar rising pitch accent in German (e.g., Büring 1997, 2003, Constant 2006, Hara and van Rooij 2007, Wagner 2008). I will not examine the details of different proposals here (but Section 4 discusses proposals for Japanese contrastive topics). One idea most proposals share is that a contrastive topic generates a set of alternatives and there is a particular implicature with respect to the alternatives that are not selected such as ‘uncertainty’ of their truth values.

However, there are instances in which items with a B-accent or a rising pitch accent are not sentence topics in a most obvious way. Being what the sentence is about, a sentence topic must usually be specific (Reinhart 1981). The following examples from English and German show, however, that these accents can be used to mark contrast on verbs or quantifiers. It is difficult to see in what sense these non-specific items are what the sentences are about, or how they affect the discourse topic. Conversely, if contrastive topics are identified simply as items bearing these accents, and not necessarily what the sentence is about (e.g. Repp 2009), it is unclear what is common to contrastive topics and non-contrastive topics in terms of their interpretation.

- (11) How’s your revision going?

Well, I [bought]_B the book, but I haven’t [read]_A it.

- (12) How many people expressed interest in your house?

Well, [lots]_B of people [called]_A, and [three]_B [looked at it]_A, but [nobody]_B [made an offer]_A

(McNally 1998: 152)

- (13) Man √MUSS das Buch \NICHT mögen (, aber man KANN)

One must the book.acc not like but one can

(German: modified from Jacobs 1997, cited in Molnár 2002: 157)

I propose that accents such as the B-accent or the rising pitch accent only indicate contrast of the type proposed in the literature and the topic status of contrastive topic is identified in terms of aboutness and its effect on the current topic of discourse, as discussed above. The contrastive interpretation and the topic interpretation of a contrastive topic are

therefore independent of each other.⁶ In the example in (10B), *I* is contrastive, because it bears a B-accent and has the associated implicature that the speaker is perhaps not sure about Fritz. It is also a sentence topic, because it is what the rest of the sentence is about and has shifted the topic of discourse from *Fritz* to *I*.

There is evidence that ‘contrast’ is an autonomous information structural notion (Vallduví & Vilkuna 1998, Molnár 2002, Giusti 2006). Vallduví & Vilkuna show in detail that contrast may manifest itself independently of other discourse-related notions such as focus and topic in several languages. For instance, a contrastive item in Finnish moves to a unique left-peripheral position, regardless of whether it is a contrastive focus or contrastive topic. Neither non-contrastive focus nor non-contrastive topic appears in this position in this language. The relevant notion triggering the syntactic displacement is therefore contrast (‘kontrast’ in their terminology). Section 4 provides further syntactic arguments from Japanese that contrastive topic is a composite of two independent attributes, topic and contrast.

In sum, I take topic to be a syntactic constituent that is what the rest of the sentence is about and affects the topic of discourse. This is an element of interpretation that is shared by contrastive and non-contrastive topics. Contrastive topic in addition has a particular implicature regarding the alternatives that are not selected. In the remainder of the paper, I will show that topics in Japanese, contrastive or non-contrastive, identified in the ways described in this section have a uniform syntactic distribution.

3 THE DISTRIBUTION OF TOPICS IN JAPANESE

This section provides empirical motivation for the clause-initialness constraint in (3) for both contrastive and non-contrastive topics in Japanese. Let us first consider non-contrastive topics. In Japanese, *X* in the reply to the request *tell me about X* must be marked by *wa* and appear in clause-initial position. This is illustrated by the exchange in (14)/(15). A reply in which the relevant *wa*-phrase occupies a non-clause-initial position, as in (15b), is infelicitous. The example in (15b) is not ungrammatical, as shown by the acceptability of the example in (5b). It is simply unacceptable in this context.⁷

⁶ See Section 7 for how other compositional proposals in the literature differ from mine.

⁷ One may wonder whether (15b) is infelicitous because object fronting is disallowed in this context, rather than because the topic is not in clause-initial position. In the acceptable (5b), the object is stressed, while in (15b), I

- (14) ano inu-nituite nanika osiete-kudasai.
 that dog-about something tell-please
 ‘Tell me about that dog.’
- (15) a. ano inu-wa kinoo kooen-de John-o kande-simatta.
 that dog-wa yesterday park-at John-acc bite-ended.up
 b. # John_i-o ano inu-wa kinoo kooen-de t_i kande-simatta.
 John-acc that dog-wa yesterday park-at bite-ended.up
 ‘The dog bit John in the park yesterday.’

The same pattern obtains when the object is a non-contrastive topic in the reply, as illustrated below. The nature of the empty category in (17a) is discussed in Section 4.

- (16) ano boosi-nituite nanika osiete-kudasai.
 that hat-about something tell-please
 ‘Tell me about that hat.’
- (17) a. ano boosi_i-wa John-ga kinoo e_i kaimasita.
 that hat-wa John-nom yesterday bought

have not indicated the object as stressed (by not using small caps). Objects scrambled to above subjects need not be stressed and (15b) is infelicitous regardless of whether the object is stressed or not. If stressed, a scrambled object is generally interpreted as focused and the context in (14)/(15) does not permit such focus fronting easily (Miyagawa 1997). On the other hand, little is known about the discourse status of an unstressed fronted object. Some authors have noted that it need not be interpreted as focus, but remain unclear about the exact discourse effects (Saito 1985, Tada 1993, Ishihara 2001, *pace* Endo 2007, Aoyagi & Kato 2008). It is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate such effects. Nevertheless, one observation suggests that (15b) is infelicitous because the topic is not in clause-initial position. The object in (15b) is arguably moved out of VP-focus, the latter providing new information regarding the topic. There are however other acceptable instances of object moving out of a focused VP across a subject *wa*-phrase, at least for some speakers, as illustrated in (i). (The *wa*-phrase is a ‘discourse anaphoric’ *wa*-phrase, discussed in Section 5). The acceptability of (i) indicates that (15b) is infelicitous because of the position of the topic, not because of the object fronting.

What did the dog do yesterday?

- (i) John_i-o ano inu-wa kinoo [_{VP} t_i kooen-de kande-simai-masi-ta]_{FOC}.
 John-acc that dog-wa yesterday park-in bite-end.up-POLITE-PAST

b. #John-ga ano boosi-wa kinoo kaimasita.⁸

John-nom that hat-wa yesterday bought

‘John bought that hat yesterday.’

Contrastive topics must also appear in clause-initial position. In the following discourse, information about John is requested in (18), but a speaker may provide information with respect to Bill, as in (19). In doing so, s/he has shifted the topic of discourse from John to Bill, making *Bill* a contrastive topic. *Bill* is emphatically stressed and marked with *wa* and as demonstrated by the contrast between (19a) and (19b), occupying clause-initial position is obligatory. We saw in the exchange (4)/(5) that a focus can be fronted in answering a *wh*-question. Thus, the example in (19b) must be infelicitous because the topic does not occupy clause-initial position, not because the object is fronted. The same pattern obtains when the object is a contrastive topic, as in (20)/(21).⁹

(18) John-wa kinoo-no paatii-de nani-o tabeta no?

John-wa yesterday-gen party-at what-acc ate Q

‘What did John eat at the party yesterday?’

(19) hmm, John-wa doo-ka sir-anai kedo,

well, John-wa how-whether know-not but,

‘Well, I don’t know about John, but...’

a. BILL-WA 8-zi-goro MAME-O tabeteita (yo).

Bill-wa 8 o’clock-around beans-acc eating.was particle

b. #MAME_i-O BILL-WA 8-zi-goro t_i tabeteita (yo).

beans-acc Bill-wa 8 o’clock-around eating.was particle

‘as for Bill, he was eating beans around 8 o’clock.’

⁸ For reasons not entirely clear to me, an object *wa*-phrase sometimes seems to prefer not to surface adjacent to a verb. In order to circumvent this effect, adverbials are inserted between object and verb throughout the paper. I assume following Neeleman & Reinhart (1998), that a structure in which an argument has scrambled across an adverbial can be base-generated, hence the absence of an empty position below the adverbial in (17a). This does not affect the discussion in the main text.

⁹ The set-up of the discourse context is due to Neeleman & van de Koot (2008). As pointed out by Neeleman & van de Koot (2009), it is important to note that contexts can only strongly favour an interpretation of particular items as topics and foci. They cannot rule out alternative interpretations entirely, as the hearer may be willing to accommodate. Nevertheless, judgements reported here were quite robust for my informants.

The idea of a transparent mapping is similar in spirit to the so-called cartographic approach initiated by Rizzi (1997), which projects in the left-periphery a potentially recursive functional projection TopP, among other discourse-related functional projections. The phrase occupying its specifier is interpreted as the topic and the complement of the head Top⁰ is the comment to the topic. In Section 7, I compare the above approach and the cartographic approach and point out advantages of the above approach in explaining some data discussed in this paper over the cartographic approach to Japanese topics (Watanabe 2003, Endo 2007, Kuwabara 2008).

A significant consequence of the clause-initialness constraint in (3) is that *wa*-marked phrases in other positions cannot be topics. I provide arguments for this position for both contrastive and non-contrastive *wa*-phrases in the following two sections.

4 CONTRASTIVE *WA*-PHRASES IN-SITU

4.1 *Contrastive interpretation*

In this section, I argue that contrastive *wa*-phrases in-situ are items whose contrastive interpretation is contributed by the stressed particle *wa*, but lack the topical interpretation in the sense discussed in Section 2. I first elaborate on the contrastive interpretation and then provide two syntactic arguments for their non-topical status.

There has recently been much work on the precise interpretation of contrastive *wa*-phrases (Kuroda 2005, Hara 2006, Hara & van Rooij 2007, Oshima 2008, Tomioka 2009). Adapting Büring's (1997, 2003) analysis of contrastive topics in German, Hara (2006) argues that a contrastive *wa*-phrase induces the presupposition that a scalar alternative stronger than the assertion of the sentence exists and also the implicature that the stronger alternative could be false. Let us consider the following example.

- (23) NANNINKA-WA kita.
 some people-wa came
 'Some people came.' (Implicature: 'Not everyone came')

The above example has the meaning given in (24a). It has the presupposition that there is a stronger scalar alternative such as (24b). The sentence also induces the presupposition that

this alternative could be false, giving rise to the implicature that ‘(it is possible that) not everyone came’.

- (24) a. $\exists(x) [[\text{person}(x)] [\text{came}(x)]]$
 b. stronger scalar alternative: $\forall(x) [[\text{person}(x)] [\text{came}(x)]]$

Hara’s analysis also explains the infelicity of the following example, where the subject is a universally quantified item. The reason is that there is no stronger alternative and therefore the presupposition is not satisfied.

- (25) *MINNA-WA kita.
 everyone-wa came

The analysis is extended to non-quantified DPs. A contrastive *wa*-phrase can answer the *wh*-part of a preceding question with the implicature that the speaker is unsure about the alternatives. In cases where there are only two individuals, say *Mary* and *John*, the implicature of a sentence such (26b) is that John probably did not pass the exam.

- (26) a. dare-ga siken-ni ukatta no?
 who-nom exam-to passed Q
 ‘Who passed the exam?’
 b. MARY-WA ukatta.
 Mary-wa passed
 ‘Mary passed’ (Implicature: ‘John probably didn’t pass’)

The stronger alternative that the utterance in (26b) induces is that both Mary and John passed. However, as the speaker just asserted that Mary passed, the hearer can infer that the intended implicature is that John did not pass.

The data considered in the literature involve predominantly cases where the subject bears contrastive *wa*. The same contrastive interpretation obtains with contrastive object *wa*-phrases in-situ in similar contexts, and Hara’s analysis can be extended straightforwardly to these cases. The sentence in (27) gives rise to the implicature ‘John did not help everyone’, because ‘John helped everyone’ is a stronger scalar alternative and this alternative could be

false. A universal quantifier *minna* ‘everyone’ cannot be an object marked with contrastive *wa*, as in (28), similarly to (25). Finally, marking the object *Mary* with contrastive *wa* gives rise to the implicature ‘John did not help Bill’ in a context where only Bill and Mary are the salient individuals in the discourse, in the same way as in (26b).

- (27) John-ga NANNINKA-WA tasuketa.
 John-nom some.people-wa helped
 ‘John helped some people.’ (Implicature: ‘John didn’t help everyone.’)

- (28) *John-ga MINNA-WA tasuketa.
 John-nom everyone-wa helped
 ‘John helped everyone.’

- (29) John-ga MARY-WA tasuketa.
 John-nom Mary-wa helped
 ‘John helped Mary.’ (Implicature: ‘John didn’t help Bill.’)

There are obviously differences amongst the proposals mentioned above. However, they typically argue that a contrastive *wa*-phrase generates a set of alternatives, and has a particular implicature regarding the alternatives, akin to incompleteness or uncertainty.¹¹ I believe that this line of analysis provides a correct characterisation of the interpretation of contrastive *wa*-phrases in general. However, nothing inherent in the kind of interpretation makes a contrastive *wa*-phrase a contrastive ‘topic’, i.e., what the rest of the sentence is about, affecting the discourse topic.

I propose that contrastive *wa*-phrases in general have the type of interpretation proposed in the recent literature, but only those that move to clause-initial position are interpreted additionally as topics. Topicality and the particular contrastive interpretation are thus two independent features of a contrastive topic (Kuroda 2005, Tomioka 2009). Recall that the

¹¹ Fiengo & McClure (2002) argue alternatively that the contrastive interpretation depends on the *wa*-phrase occupying a non-clause-initial position. However, as many examples in this article show, the contrastive reading is not limited to clause-medial positions and not all clause-medial *wa*-phrases must be interpreted contrastively.

same point was made in Section 2 regarding non-specific items with the B-accent in English and the rising pitch accent in German.

Some authors refrain from using the term ‘contrastive topic’ and refer to them as ‘contrastive *wa*-phrases’ or talk in terms of the ‘function’ of contrastive *wa* (Hara 2006, Oshima 2008, among others). However, these authors, like others, do not distinguish contrastive *wa*-phrases displaced to clause-initial position from those in-situ. Their accounts therefore cannot easily capture the observation that contrastive *wa*-phrases must occupy clause-initial position in certain discourse contexts, as we saw in Section 3. Section 7 compares the present approach with other compositional approaches to contrastive topics offered in the literature. I now turn to the two syntactic arguments that support the present approach.

4.2 *Non-topical contrastive wa-phrases can’t move*

The current proposal predicts that contrastive *wa*-phrases that can appear in-situ cannot optionally move to clause-initial position, contrary to the standard characterisation. By virtue of being able to appear in-situ, they are not contrastive topics and there is no motivation for movement. Recall that the displacement of topics is motivated to facilitate a transparent mapping between syntax and information structure (see discussion around (22)). The prediction is borne out in four different contexts. In order to see clearly that the *wa*-phrase in question is either in-situ or has been displaced to clause-initial position, I will avoid using data with subject *wa*-phrases, whose canonical position is clause-initial.¹²

A first context is where the object in the answer to a question like (30) can be a contrastive *wa*-phrase in-situ. As (31b) shows, the *wa*-phrase cannot be fronted.

- (30) Dare-ga ziken-genba-de tasuke-no tetudai-o sita no?
 who-nom accident-scene-at rescue-gen help-acc did Q
 ‘Who was helping with the rescue operation at the accident scene?’

¹² To be clear, a subject *wa*-phrase in clause-initial position can thus be either a non-contrastive topic or discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrase, if not stressed, and either a contrastive topic or a contrastive *wa*-phrase without the topical interpretation, if stressed.

- (31) a. JOHN-GA 3-NIN-WA tasuketa.
 John-nom 3-cl.-wa rescued
 b. #3-NIN_i-WA JOHN-GA t_i tasuketa.
 3-cl.-wa John-nom rescued
 ‘John rescued at least three people.’

From an interpretational point of view too, it does not make sense to say that the contrastive *wa*-phrase in (31a) is a contrastive topic. The sentence is not about the *wa*-phrase. It does not mean ‘at least three people are such that John rescued them.’ The example in (31b) is felicitous at least for some speakers if *3-nin* ‘three people’ refers to specific three people who may be salient in the discourse. Considering that topics must usually be specific (Reinhart 1981), the fact that only the specific reading is available for the moved *wa*-phrase lends further support to the claim that displacement is triggered by the topical status of the relevant *wa*-phrase.

The second context exemplifies a peculiar property of contrastive *wa*, namely that it can project the contrastive interpretation to a larger constituent. In (32a), contrastive *wa* marks the subject *ame* ‘rain’ in the first conjunct and the object *kasa* ‘umbrella’ in the second conjunct. The interpretation here is not that the first conjunct is about rain and the second conjunct is about an umbrella. It is also not that rain is contrasted with an umbrella. Rather, what are contrasted are the events described by the two conjuncts. As (32b) demonstrates, this context does not permit the *wa*-phrase in the second conjunct to move to clause-initial position. The example in (32a) is modified from one cited in Kuno (1973: 46) attributed to Minoru Nakau (p.c.).

- (32) a. [AME-WA hutteita-ga] [John-ga KASA-WA motte-ik-anakatta].
 rain-wa falling.was-but John-nom umbrella-wa bring-go-not.past
 b. #[AME-WA hutteita-ga] [KASA_i-WA John-ga t_i motte-ik-anakatta].
 rain-wa falling.was-but umbrella-wa John-nom bring-go-not.past
 ‘It was raining, but John did not bring an umbrella.’

Thirdly, it is possible to stress a verb and mark it with *wa* when it is explicitly contrasted with another verb. In (33), each conjunct contains a stressed *wa*-marked verb. The example in (33b) shows that the verbs cannot be moved to clause-initial position.¹³

- (33) a. [John-ga ano hon-o KAI-WA sita-ga], [sonoba-de sore-o YOMI-WA sinakatta].
 John-nom that book-acc buy-wa did-but there-at it-acc read-wa did-not
 ‘John bought that book, but he didn’t read it there.’
 b. #[KAI_i-WA John-ga ano hon-o t_i sita-ga], [YOMI_j-WA sonoba-de sore-o t_j sinakatta].
 buy-wa John-nom that book-acc did-but read-wa there-at it-acc did-not

Finally, a contrastive *wa*-phrase can answer the *wh*-part of a preceding question, with the implicature that the statement may not be true for an alternative. We saw this for a subject in (26). In the case of an object, such a *wa*-phrase appears in-situ, and as (35b) shows, this object *wa*-phrase cannot move to clause-initial position.¹⁴

- (34) John-wa nani-o katta no?
 John-wa what-acc bought Q
 ‘What did John buy?’
 (35) a. John-wa OSENBEE-WA tikaku-de katta (kedo, KUKKII-WA kaw-anakatta).
 John-wa rice.crackers-wa near-at bought but cookies-wa buy-not.past
 ‘John bought rice crackers nearby, but (he) didn’t buy cookies.’
 b. #OSENBEE_i-WA John-wa t_i tikaku-de katta (kedo, KUKKII-WA kaw-anakatta).
 rice.crackers-wa John-wa near-at bought but cookies-wa buy-not.past

4.3 Syntax-information structure mapping

The second syntactic argument concerns considerations at the interface between syntax and information structure. It is well-known that at the level of information structure, a focus-background structure can be embedded inside the comment of a topic, but a topic-comment

¹³ The infelicity of the example in (33b) cannot be reduced to the idea that verbs are moved into phrasal positions. See Vermeulen (2009) for discussion.

¹⁴ Kuroda (1965, 2005) and Oshima (2008) suggest with examples like (26) and (30)/(31) that contrastive *wa* is like focal particles such as *mo* ‘also’ and *sae* ‘even’.

structure cannot be part of the background of a focus, an observation that was initially noted by the Prague School (Hajičová, et al. 1998).

(36) *Information Structure*

- a. topic [comment FOCUS [background]]
 b. *FOCUS [background topic [comment]]

As mentioned in Section 3, Neeleman & van de Koot (2008) argue that the sister constituent of a fronted topic is interpreted as the comment. They argue similarly that the sister constituent of a fronted focus is interpreted as the background.

(37) *Syntax – Information structure*

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>a. XP_i [$_{YP}$ t_i]</p> <div style="margin-left: 40px;"> } </div> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Topic comment</p> | <p>b. XP_i [$_{YP}$ t_i]</p> <div style="margin-left: 40px;"> } </div> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Focus background</p> |
|--|---|

The two considerations in (36) and (37) together make predictions regarding the syntactic distribution of topic and focus, illustrated in (38): a focus can follow a fronted topic, because a focus is part of the comment, but a topic cannot follow a fronted focus, because a topic cannot be inside a background. Neeleman & van de Koot show that the predictions are correct for Dutch. The cross-linguistic observation that topics generally precede foci also partially confirm the predictions (Hajičová, et al 1998).

(38) *Syntax*

- a. topic_i [$_{YP}$ FOCUS t_i]
 b. *FOCUS_i [$_{YP}$ topic t_i]

The prediction in (38a) is superfluously borne out in Japanese due to the clause-initialness requirement for topics in (3). The prediction in (38b) may at first seem untestable in Japanese due to the same constraint. The above considerations regarding mapping between syntax-information structure in (37) may hence appear irrelevant here. However, close examination of examples involving embedded clauses demonstrates that the prediction in (38b) is correct and the mapping considerations in (37) are hence relevant for Japanese. In addition, and more

importantly, it is only those *wa*-phrases displaced to clause-initial position that show the predicted distribution of ‘topic’ in (38).

Firstly, it is possible for a contrastive topic to appear in an embedded clause, as shown in (40), uttered in a context such as (39). The context makes *kono CD* ‘this CD’ a contrastive topic, as it shifts the topic of discourse from *the book*. The presence of *kare* ‘his’, that is coreferential with the matrix subject *Bill*, ensures that the embedded clause is indeed embedded and not a direct quotation (Fukui 1995).

(39) Context: John finds a book on Sue’s desk and he asks Bill to tell him something about the book. Bill does not know anything about the book, but he knew how Sue obtained a CD that was also on the desk. So, he decides to tell John about the CD. In describing this situation, you utter (40).

(40) Bill_j-wa [_{CP} KONO CD_i-WA Mary-ga kare_j-no mise-de Sue-ni *t_i* ageta-to] itta.
 Bill-wa this CD-wa Mary-nom he-gen shop-at Sue-to gave-that said
 ‘Bill_j said that as for this CD, Mary gave it to Sue in his_j shop.’

Independently, a focus can move out of an embedded clause to initial position of the matrix clause, for instance, in cases of correction (Saito 1989, Miyagawa 2006). Thus, correcting the statement in (41), one could say (42), where the indirect object of the embedded verb provides correct information and is fronted to sentence-initial position:¹⁵

(41) Bill_j-wa [_{CP} Mary-ga Jane-ni kono CD-o kare_j-no mise-de ageta-to] itta.
 Bill-wa Mary-nom Jane-to this CD-acc he-gen shop-at gave-that said
 ‘Bill_j said that Mary gave this CD to Jane in his_j shop.’

(42) *tigau-yo*. SUE_i-NI Bill_j-wa [_{CP} Mary-ga *t_i* kono CD-o kare_j-no mise-de
 Incorrect-prt Sue-to Bill-wa Mary-nom this CD-acc he-gen shop-at
 ageta-to] itta-ndayo.
 gave-that said-prt
 Lit.: ‘No. It’s to Sue that Bill_j said that Mary gave this CD in his_j shop.’

¹⁵ Some of my informants allow long-distance movement of a focus also in answering a *wh*-question. Thus, they can utter the example in (42) without *tigau-yo* ‘incorrect-prt’ an answer to a question like *to whom_i did Bill say that Mary gave this CD *t_i* in his shop?*.

The precise prediction that follows from the interface considerations above is that it should be impossible to combine the above two operations, as this will result in the following unacceptable structure in (38b), where a fronted focus precedes a topic. The prediction is borne out. The example in (44), uttered in correcting the statement in (43), is infelicitous. *Sue-ni* is focussed, and is fronted to initial position of the embedding clause, while *kono-CD-wa* ‘this CD-wa’ functions here as the contrastive topic and is moved to initial position in the embedded clause.¹⁶

- (43) Bill_j-wa [_{CP} Mary-ga Jenny-ni kono hon-o kare_j-no mise-de ageta-to] itta.
 Bill-wa Mary-nom Jenny-to this book-acc he-gen shop-at gave-that said
 ‘Bill_j said that Mary gave this book to Jenny in his_j shop.’
- (44) tigau-yo. Bill-wa ano hon-nituite-wa sir-anakat-ta-kedo,
 Incorrect-prt Bill-wa that book-about-wa know-not-past-but
 ‘No, Bill didn’t know anything about the book, but...’
 #SUE_i-NI Bill_k-wa [_{CP} KONO CD_j-WA Mary-ga kare_k-no mise-de t_i t_j ageta-to] itta.
 Sue-to Bill-wa this CD-wa Mary-nom he-gen shop-at gave-that said
 Lit.: ‘it’s to Sue that Bill_k said that as for this CD, Mary gave it to her in his_k shop.’

Crucially, the sentence is acceptable if the focus remains in-situ, which is possible in the same context:

- (45) ... Bill_k-wa [_{CP} KONO CD_j-WA Mary-ga kare_k-no mise-de SUE-NI t_j ageta-to] itta.
 ... Bill-wa this CD-wa Mary-nom he-gen shop-at Sue-to gave-that said
 ‘... Bill_k said that as for this CD, Mary gave it to Sue in his_k shop.’

In contrast, contrastive *wa*-phrases in-situ are not subject to the syntactic distribution predicted for ‘topic’ in (38b). The utterance in (46) contains a contrastive *wa*-phrase in-situ in the embedded clause. In correcting this statement, it is possible to front the focus from within the embedded clause to sentence-initial position, as illustrated in (47). The contrast between (47) and (44) is unexpected if all contrastive *wa*-phrases were contrastive topics. Moreover,

¹⁶ Slight unnaturalness arises here due to repeated mention of *Bill-wa*, but this does not affect the argument here, as the same informants found (45) acceptable.

the acceptability of (47) shows that the unacceptability of (44) cannot be due to Relativized Minimality (Rizzi 1990) or an intervention effect (Beck & Kim 1997), caused by a focus crossing a contrastive *wa*-phrase. In the acceptable (47) too, the focus moves across a contrastive *wa*-phrase.

- (46) Bill_j-wa [_{CP} Mary-ga sukunakutomo 3-NIN-NI-WA Jane-o karej-no mise-de
 Bill-wa Mary-nom at.lesat 3-cl.-to-wa Jane-acc he-gen shop-at
 syookai-sita to] itta.
 introduced that said
 ‘Bill said that Mary introduced Jane to at least three people in his shop.’
- (47) ?tigau-yo, SUE_i-O Bill_j-wa [_{CP} Mary-ga sukunakutomo 3-NIN-NI-WA t_i
 Incorrect-prt, Sue-acc Bill-wa Mary-nom at.least 3-cl.-to-wa
 karej-no mise-de syookai-sita to] itta-ndayo.
 he-gen shop-at introduced that said-prt
 ‘No, it is Sue that Bill said that Mary introduced to at least three people in his shop.’

In sum, contrastive *wa*-phrases that are not in clause-initial position are not topics: they are not necessarily interpreted as what the rest of the sentence is about, they cannot optionally undergo movement and they do not show the syntactic distribution of ‘topic’ that is predicted by considerations at the interface.

5 NON-CONTRASTIVE *WA*-PHRASES IN NON-CLAUSE-INITIAL POSITIONS

We saw in Section 3 that a non-contrastive topic must occupy clause-initial position, but we also saw in the introduction that a non-contrastive *wa*-phrase can sometimes appear elsewhere in the clause. The relevant examples are repeated below.

- (48) ano inu-nituite nanika osiete-kudasai (= (14)/(15))
 that dog-about something tell-please
 ‘Tell me something about that dog.’
- (49) a. ano inu-wa kinoo kooen-de John-o kande-simatta.
 that dog-wa yesterday park-at John-acc bite-ended.up

- b. #John_i-o ano inu-wa kinoo kooen-de t_i kande-simatta.
 John-acc that dog-wa yesterday park-at bite-ended.up
 ‘The dog bit John in the park yesterday.’

- (50) ano inu-wa dare-o kande-simatta no? (=4)/(5)
 that dog-nom who-acc bite-ended.up Q
 ‘Who did the dog bite?’

- (51) a. ano inu-wa kinoo kooen-de JOHN-O kande-simatta.
 that dog-wa yesterday park-at John-acc bite-ended.up
 b. JOHN_i-O ano inu-wa kinoo kooen-de t_i kande-simatta.
 John-acc that dog-wa yesterday park-at bite-ended.up
 ‘The dog bit John in the park yesterday.’

The clause-initialness constraint in (3) predicts that the *wa*-phrase in (51b) is not a topic. Moreover, notice that what precedes it is a fronted focus. We saw in the previous section that interface considerations disallow a moved focus to precede a topic. Thus, on the latter considerations too, the *wa*-phrase in (51b) is predicted not to be a topic. In Section 2, I argued with English examples that in a context such as (50)/(51), the subject in the answer is not a sentence topic, but an anaphoric item referring back to the discourse topic, which is established as such by the preceding question.^{17,18} This explains why *ano inu-wa* in (51) need not occupy clause-initial position. Following the discussion in Section 2, I call such non-topical, non-contrastive *wa*-phrases ‘discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases’.¹⁹ That *ano inu-wa*

¹⁷ In the corresponding English example in (9), the subject in the answer is a pronominal, while in (50)/(51), a full DP is repeated. Pronominals in Japanese have certain social implications and are not frequently used (Shibatani 1990). One may wonder whether being a pro-drop language, a discourse anaphoric item would be better expressed as an empty pronominal. Discourse anaphoric items are often not overtly expressed. However, there is some evidence that an item must be mentioned twice before it can be pro-dropped (Clancy 1980), and no awkwardness arises from the use of the full DP in (51).

¹⁸ As pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, the subject in sentences answering requests or questions such as (48) and (50) can be marked with the nominative case marker, instead of *wa*. However, such sentences give rise to particular rhetorical effects, which I will leave aside here. See Hinds, et al. (1987) for discussion.

¹⁹ Kuroda (1988) suggests that in examples such as (51b), the *wa*-phrase is a ‘downgraded’ topic, where it is like a parenthetical, following Saito (1985), among others, for a different kind of sentences. However, the *wa*-phrase in (51b) does not behave like a parenthetical. See Sheard (1991) for discussion.

‘that dog-wa’ in the question in (50) is indeed a sentence topic is confirmed by the judgements of native speakers. My informants report that if uttered discourse-initially, *ano inu-wa* ‘that dog-wa’ must appear in clause-initial position, as shown above. On the other hand, if the discourse has been about how a particular dog has been violent, for instance, and the dog is thereby given in the discourse, the accusative *wh*-phrase can precede it. This section provides two further pieces of syntactic evidence that discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases such as the one in (52b) are not sentence topics on the notion adopted in this paper.

Firstly, there is evidence that non-contrastive topics and discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases are licensed in different syntactic structures. As noted in Section 3, it is a generally adopted view that a non-contrastive, nominal topic can be base-generated in a left-peripheral position and bind a *pro* in the thematic position, illustrated in (52).

(52) Topic_i [_{IP} pro_i]

This analysis explains the well-known observation that a non-contrastive topic can be linked to a position inside an island.²⁰ The point is often illustrated with a relative clause in the literature (Kuno (1973: 249), Saito 1985), but the same point can be illustrated with a simpler example in (53), where the *wa*-phrase is interpreted as the possessor of the subject. The empty pronominal *pro* can be overtly realised.

(53) John_i-wa kinoo [_{NP} pro_i / kare_i-no ototoo]-ga Mary-o mita.
 John-wa yesterday he-GEN brother-NOM Mary-ACC saw
 ‘Speaking of John, his brother saw Mary yesterday.’

If the proposal that topics must be licensed in clause-initial position is on the right track, it seems plausible that the structure in (52) is associated with non-contrastive ‘topics’, rather than non-contrastive *wa*-phrases in general. There appears to be no reason to assume that discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases are licensed in a dislocated position, as in (52).²¹ If this is the

²⁰ Kuroda (1986a,b), Sakai (1994) and Ishizuka (to app.) argue that topicalisation always involves movement, but the possibility of linking to a position inside a relative clause is still considered a characteristic of (a construction that feed into) topicalisation.

²¹ Kishimoto (2006) claims that *wa*-phrases always move to the CP-zone. The claim is based on the observation that the focus particle *dake* ‘only’ attached to a tensed verb cannot associate with a *wa*-marked subject in the same clause. He claims that *dake* undergoes QR at LF, adjoins to TP and associates with any item inside the TP.

case, we predict that a non-contrastive topic can appear in a dislocated position and be linked to a thematic position elsewhere in the sentence, as in (53), but a discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrase cannot. The prediction is correct. The following exchange shows that the sentence in (53), repeated as (55), is a felicitous answer to the request in (54).

- (54) John-nituite nanika osiete-kudasai.
 John-about something tell-please
 ‘Tell me something about John.’
- (55) John_i-wa kinoo [_{NP} pro_i ototoo]-ga Mary-o mita.
 John-wa yesterday brother-nom Mary-acc saw
 ‘Speaking of John, his brother saw Mary yesterday.’

Demonstrating the correctness of the prediction regarding discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases is a little more complex and we need the following ingredients. (i) The phrase that is marked with *wa* in the answer must be mentioned in the preceding question. (ii) In the answer, a fronted focus should be present, preceding the *wa*-phrase, to ensure independently on the interface grounds discussed in Section 4.3 that the *wa*-phrase is not a topic. (iii) Fronting of focus object is permitted in answering an object *wh*-question and is most natural if other items in the answer remained the same as in the question. Considering that we are attempting to see if a *wa*-phrase could bind a position inside the subject, it must already do so in the question. These ingredients yield the question in (56). As indicated, the reply in (57) is infelicitous. The discourse in (58)/(59) illustrates the same point in a case of correction, which also permits fronting of the object.²² Thus, only topics can be base-generated and licensed in a dislocated position.

- (56) John-wa kinoo [_{NP} pro_i ototoo]-ga dare-o mita no?
 John-wa yesterday brother-nom who-acc saw Q
 ‘Speaking of John, who did his brother see yesterday?’

The fact that the *wa*-marked subject cannot be associated with *dake* shows that it is higher than TP. Crucially, he claims that a *wa*-phrase may move to SpecCP covertly. The data in Section 3 show that the constraint in (3) pertains to overt syntax. My proposal here is that discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases are not in the configuration in (52) in overt syntax, an option that can be made compatible with Kishimoto’s proposal.

²²See Samek-Lodovici (2008) for a similar distinction between pre-focus items and post-focus items in Italian.

- (57) # MARY_j-O John_i-wa kinoo [_{NP} pro_i otooto]-ga t_j mita.
 Mary-acc John-wa yesterday brother-nom saw
 ‘John’s brother saw Mary yesterday.’
- (58) John-wa [_{NP} pro_i otooto]-ga Jane-to kekkon simasita.
 John-wa brother-NOM Jane-with married
 ‘Speaking of John, his brother married Jane.’
- (59) # tigua_yo, MARY_j-TO John-wa [_{NP} pro_i otooto]-ga t_j kekkon-sitanda yo.
 incorrect Mary-wih John-wa brother-nom married prt
 ‘No, John’s brother married Mary.’

So far, we have only considered cases where a subject is a discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrase referring back to a discourse topic. However, a discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrase need not be a subject or refer back to a discourse topic, and this provides a second piece of evidence that a *wa*-phrase that is not in clause-initial position is not a topic. For instance, an object in-situ can be marked with *wa* in a context where its referent is not established as a discourse topic, but is only previously mentioned. The example in (61) is uttered in response to the question in (60). Here, the object *ano hon* ‘that book’ is mentioned in the question, but it is marked with the accusative marker *o* there and is therefore not a sentence topic. Nevertheless, it can be marked with *wa* in the answer without giving rise to a contrast (modified from Kuroda 1969, ex. (93)).

- (60) Mary-wa ano hon-o tosyokan-de karita no?
 Mary-wa that book-acc library-at borrowed Q
 ‘Did Mary manage to borrow that book in the library?’
- (61) ie, Mary-wa ano hon-wa honya-de KAIMASITA.
 No, Mary-wa that book-wa book.shop-at bought
 ‘No, Mary bought that book at the bookshop.’

The claim that the object *wa*-phrase in the above example is not a topic predicts that it cannot be fronted in the same context. As we saw for contrastive *wa*-phrases in-situ in Section 4.2, if a *wa*-phrase is not a topic, its displacement to clause-initial position is not motivated. The prediction is borne out: (62) is an infelicitous reply to the question in (60).

Note that *Mary-wa* in the answer is discourse anaphoric, referring back to the sentence topic *Mary* in (60) and therefore need not appear in clause-initial position.

- (62) #Ie, ano hon_i-wa Mary-wa honya-de e_i KAIMASITA.
 No, that book-wa Mary-wa book.shop-at bought
 ‘No, Mary bought the book in the end at the bookshop.

Before concluding this section, I would like to make a few remarks about discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases. Its distribution is more restricted than one would expect for ordinary discourse anaphoric items, such as definite DPs in languages with definiteness marking. For instance, they cannot freely appear in non-root clauses (Maki et al. 1999, Kuroda 2005). Moreover, while discourse anaphoric subjects are typically *wa*-marked (Tomioka 2007, see also footnote 18), an accusative marker can be used for discourse anaphoric objects, even in discourse contexts such as (60)/(61).

It is often reported in the literature that an in-situ object *wa*-phrase must bear an emphatic stress and be contrastively interpreted (Saito 1985, Fiengo & McClure 2002, Watanabe 2003, Heycock 2007, Tomioka 2009). A typical example is provided below, and it is infelicitous on a non-contrastive reading of the object:

- (63) #John-ga ano hon-wa kinoo katta.
 John-nom that book-acc yesterday bought

Interestingly, this observation seems true only if the subject is marked with the nominative case marker.²³ If the subject is marked with *wa*, the discourse anaphoric interpretation of the object *wa*-phrase becomes readily available, as we saw in the example in (61). This parasitic nature of discourse anaphoric object *wa*-phrases can also be observed when the subject is a contrastive topic. In responding to (60), (64) can be uttered without contrastively interpreting the object *wa*-phrase. In addition, Kuroda (1969: 146) remarks that a non-contrastive interpretation of the *wa*-marked object in-situ is more easily available if there is an adverbial between it and the verb.

²³ See Tateishi 1994: 153-54 for some counter-examples to this generalisation. However, his judgement appears not to be shared by all speakers, including my informants and Watanabe (2003: 546).

- (64) hmm, Mary-wa doo-ka sir-anai kedo,
 well, Mary-wa how-whether know-not but
 BILL-WA ano hon-wa denwa-de tyuumon-simasita.
 Bill-wa that book-wa phone-by ordered
 ‘Well, I don’t know about Mary, but as for Bill, he ordered the book by phone.’

An anonymous reviewer points out that such distributional restrictions may actually suggest that what I have called ‘discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases’ are in fact topics. These *wa*-phrases do indeed seem to have a special discourse status. As mentioned in Section 2, some authors have argued for several types of topics in other languages, with each type having a different syntax (Givón 1983, Lambrecht 1994 Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl 2007). For instance, Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl (2007) classify what I call a non-contrastive topic as an ‘aboutness’ topic, and what I call discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases appear similar to their ‘familiar topic’. The latter in Italian occupies a lower position than the former. It is given in the discourse and it can, but need not, be interpreted as what the sentence is about.²⁴ Proposing different types of topics may indeed shed light on their discourse status and restricted distribution. The approach I pursue here is in fact not radically different. The fact remains that a distinction must still be made between these two types of *wa*-phrases, regardless of whether you treat them as different types of topics, or topics and non-topics, for their distinct sets of syntactic properties. The main concern in this paper is to provide a uniform account of the syntactic distribution of contrastive and non-contrastive topics in Japanese. The narrower notion of topic adopted here, which excludes discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases, allows for such an account. I leave this issue for future research and will continue to refer to non-clause-initial, non-contrastive *wa*-phrases as ‘discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases.’

In summary, like contrastive *wa*-phrases, non-contrastive *wa*-phrases appearing in positions other than clause-initial position are not sentence topics in the narrower sense adopted in this paper. They can follow a fronted focus, they are not licensed in a dislocated position and they cannot be displaced to clause-initial position.²⁵ The data considered in this

²⁴ Mara Frascarelli (p.c.) points out that a given item is not always a familiar topic, however. At an intuitive level, it is more salient than merely discourse-given items, but not as salient as an aboutness topic, an intuition that seems analogous to what I call discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases in Japanese.

²⁵ It is difficult to test the prediction that a topic cannot follow a fronted focus, discussed in Section 4.3, for non-contrastive topics. It seems possible, to some extent, to have a non-contrastive topic in an embedded clause,

and previous sections demonstrate that the presence of the particle *wa* alone is insufficient for identifying a sentence topic, contrastive or non-contrastive.

6 ONE TOPIC PER CLAUSE

I now turn to a further prediction of the constraint in (3), namely that there can be no more than one topic in a clause. It is possible for a clause to contain multiple *wa*-phrases.²⁶ In the following examples, the stressed object *Bill-wa* is a contrastive *wa*-phrase, while the subject *ano inu-wa* ‘that dog-wa’ is a non-contrastive *wa*-phrase. The order between the two arguments can be reversed.

- (65) a. *ano inu-wa BILL-WA moo sudeni kyonen kandeiru.*
 that dog-wa Bill-wa already last.year bite-perf.
 b. *BILL_i-WA ano inu-wa moo sudeni kyonen t_i kandeiru.*
 Bill-wa that dog-wa already last.year bite-perf.
 ‘That dog has already bitten Bill last year.’

especially with matrix verbs that allow main clause phenomena in the embedded clause, as (iia) shows. However, the context that identifies a non-contrastive topic, such as the request in (i), does not easily allow long-distance focus fronting in the answer, as shown in (iib).

- (i) *Tell me something about John.*
 (ii) a. [?]Mary-ga [_{CP} John-wa ano boosi-o katta]-to itta.
 Mary-nom John-wa that hat-acc bought-that said
 b. #ANO BOOSI_i-O Mary-ga [_{CP} John-wa t_i katta]-to itta.
 that hat-acc Mary-nom John-wa bought-that said

²⁶ It has sometimes been reported that multiple non-contrastive *wa*-phrases sound a little awkward, though multiple contrastive *wa*-phrases are fine (Tomioka 2009). However, a *wa*-marked adverbial may precede a *wa*-marked subject without either *wa*-phrase being interpreted as contrastive, as illustrated below (Kuroda 1965, 1986, 1988):

- (i) *kinoo-wa ano inu-wa kooene-de John-o kande-simatta*
 yesterday that dog-wa park-in John-acc bite-ended.up

I propose that *kinoo* here is the topic, while *ano inu-wa* is discourse anaphoric. The above sentence cannot be used where the subject is a topic: it cannot answer the request *tell me about the dog*. Rather, it is more naturally used as an answer to a question such as *I know that the dog bit Bill today, but what about yesterday?*

According to the clause-initialness constraint in (3), only the left-most *wa*-phrase in each of the above examples should display the characteristics we identified to be of topics in Sections 3-5. The prediction is borne out. Firstly, in the discourse contexts that force a *wa*-phrase to be a non-contrastive topic or contrastive topic, discussed in Section 3, the relevant *wa*-phrase must appear clause-initially. Thus, in replying to the request in (66), *ano inu-wa* ‘that dog-wa’ must precede *Bill-wa*, as (67) shows. *Bill-wa*, on the other hand, is interpreted only contrastively and not as a topic, as discussed in Section 4. Thus, it can also project to generate VP-contrast with the implicature that the dog has not yet committed any other violent act (see discussion around (32)).

(66) *ano inu-nituite nanika osiete-kudasai*
 that dog-about something tell-please
 ‘Tell me about that dog.’

(67) a. *ano inu-wa BILL-WA moo sudeni kyonen kandeiru.* (= (65a))
 that dog-wa Bill-wa already last.year bite-perf.
 b. *#BILL_i-WA ano inu-wa moo sudeni kyonen t_i kandeiru.* (= (65b))
 Bill-wa that dog-wa already last.year bite-perf.

Similarly, if *Bill-wa* is a contrastive topic, it must occupy clause-initial position, as illustrated by the contrast in (69), in answering the question in (68). *Ano inu-wa* ‘that dog-wa’ here is a discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrase.²⁷

²⁷ An anonymous reviewer suggests that multiple *wa*-phrases in sentences such as (67), (69) and also (61)/(62) are perhaps really multiple topics, with the speaker shifting the topic mid-sentence. Thus, in (67a), the speaker first introduces *ano inu* ‘that dog’, which is an appropriate topic for the preceding request, then shifts the topic to *Bill*. (67b) is infelicitous, because it first introduces *Bill*, an inappropriate topic following the request in (66), and only then returns to *ano inu* ‘that dog’. (S)he extends the idea to (61)/(62) and (69). However, this proposal is unlikely to be on the right track. It incorrectly predicts that a sentence like (i) would be a natural continuation to (67a). (i) starts with *Chris*, a topic contrasting with *Bill*, the last topic of the previous sentence. On the other hand, (ii) is a fine continuation, *kono inu* ‘this dog’, contrasting with *ano inu* ‘that dog’ in (67a). The same considerations apply to the cases in (61)/(62) and (69).

(i) *#CHRIS_i-WA kono inu-ga t_i kande-iru.* (ii) *KONO INU-WA Chris-o kande-iru*
 Chris-wa this dog-nom bite-perf. this dog-wa Chris-acc bite-perf.
 ‘as for Chris, this dog has bitten him.’ ‘as for this dog, it has bitten Chris.’

- (68) ano inu-wa John-o kanda no?
 that dog-wa John-acc bit Q
 ‘Did that dog bite John?’
- (69) hmm, John-wa doo-ka sir-anai-kedo,
 well, John-wa how-whether know-not-but
 ‘Well, I don’t know about John, but...’
- a. #ano inu-wa BILL-WA moo sudeni kyonen kandeiru. (= (65a))
 that dog-wa Bill-wa already last.year bite-perf.
- b. BILL_i-WA ano inu-wa moo sudeni kyonen t_i kandeiru. (= (65b))
 Bill-wa that dog-wa already last.year bite-perf.

A second piece of evidence is that a contrastive *wa*-phrase following a non-contrastive *wa*-phrase cannot optionally move to clause-initial position. As discussed in Section 4.2, this is a characteristic of contrastive *wa*-phrases that are not topics.

- (70) John-wa ziken-genba-de tasuke-no tetsudai-o sita no?
 John-wa accident-scene-at rescue-gen help-acc did Q
 ‘Did John help with the rescue operation at the accident scene?’
- (71) a. hai, John-wa 3-NIN-WA tasuke-masi-ta.
 yes, John-wa 3-cl.-wa rescue-polite-past
 ‘Yes, John rescued at least three people.’
- b. #hai, 3-NIN_i-WA John-wa t_i tasuke-masi-ta.
 yes 3-cl.-wa John-wa rescue-polite-past

The data in (66)-(71) clearly show that a clause can contain no more than one topic, further supporting the proposed clause-initialness constraint of topics.²⁸

²⁸ The test that non-contrastive topics, but not discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases, can bind an empty pronominal, discussed in Section 5, is not applicable here. In particular, the prediction for cannot be tested. The exact prediction is that a non-contrastive *wa*-phrase following a contrastive *wa*-phrase cannot bind an empty pronominal elsewhere in the clause. For a contrastive *wa*-phrase to move to clause-initial position, however, it must be a contrastive topic. A context that requires it to be a contrastive topic would be something like (i)/(ii). However, the exchange is already infelicitous at the first line of the response ‘*well, I don’t know about Mary*’. The initial question introduces *ano onnanoko* ‘that girl’ as the topic and speakers have a strong intuition that the

7 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO TOPICS

In this section, I compare my proposal with other analyses that have some similar ideas. In particular, I consider three that adopt a compositional approach to contrastive topics, and the so-called cartographic approach (Rizzi 1997), which treats topics as occupying one of the highest positions in a clause. First, Wagner (2008) proposes that contrastive topics in German and English can be decomposed into two attributes. On his view, a configuration which involves a contrastive topic and a focus is an instance of a structure involving two nested focus operators, such as the following (Wagner 2008: 10):

(72) [_{FOC.OP1} Even] the most poisonous snake frightens [_{FOC.OP2} only] Bill.

Here, the focus operator *even* takes scope over the other focus operator *only*. Adopting Rooth's (1985, 1992) Alternative Semantics to focus, Wagner demonstrates that the constituent marked with *only* must be part of every alternative in the set of alternatives generated by the focus *even the most poisonous snake* for the sentence to make sense.

Wagner argues that what is usually considered contrastive topic corresponds to the item associated with the focus operator with the wider scope. Being a kind of focus, contrastive topic generates a set of alternatives. The 'uncertainty' implicature derives from the tune that is associated with a construction involving a contrastive topic and a focus, namely the combination of A-accent and B-accent in English or the HAT contour in German. In contrast, on the analysis proposed in this paper, generation of a set of alternatives and the 'uncertainty' implicature are both part of the semantics associated with contrastive *wa*. Thus, on Wagner's account the two distinct attributes of contrastive topic are (i) generation of a set of

question is about *ano onnanoko*. Thus, it is strange to respond with an utterance which introduces *Mary* as a topic, potentially contrasting with *ano onnanoko*.

- (i) ano onnanoko_i-wa [_{NP} pro_i ototoo]-ga Mary-o mita no?
 that girl-wa brother-nom Mary-acc saw Q
 'Speaking of that girl, did her brother see Mary?'
- (ii) # hmm, Mary-wa doo-ka sir-anai kedo,
 well, Mary-wa how-whether know-not but
 BILL_k-WA ano onnanoko_i-wa [_{NP} pro_i ototoo]-ga t_k mita.
 Bill-wa that girl-wa brother-nom saw
 'Well, I don't know about Mary, but, as for Bill_j, the girl's brother saw him_j.'

alternatives and (ii) the uncertainty implicature; and on the account proposed here, they are (i) generation of a set of alternatives and the uncertainty implicature, and (ii) the discourse function of topic.

One might wonder whether Wagner's analysis can be carried over to Japanese, with contrastive *wa* corresponding to the tune implicating uncertainty, and the emphatic stress indicating its focal status. However, if contrastive topic is a kind of focus, it is difficult to maintain the generalisations that hold of contrastive topics and non-contrastive topics. For instance, it is unclear why contrastive topics, like non-contrastive topics, are interpreted as what the sentence is about. Focus is not usually what the sentence is about. Moreover, specifically for Japanese, it is surprising that contrastive topics, like non-contrastive topics, must occupy clause-initial position, while contrastive foci need not, a property which is demonstrated by examples such as (45) and (50)/(51).

Tomioka (2009) proposes an analysis of Japanese contrastive topics along a similar line to Wagner's. According to Tomioka, the emphatic stress of a contrastive *wa*-phrase gives it a focal status, generating a set of alternatives. Following Krifka (2001), he assumes that Speech Act is represented in the syntax as SpeechActP and as such it can be manipulated in the semantics. The particle *wa* is a marker for topic and a *wa*-marked item can be out of the scope of a speech act. Consequently, the alternatives generated by the presence of a stressed *wa*-marked item are alternative speech acts and not alternative propositions as typically assumed for focus. Uncertainty arises as a result of selection out of a set of alternative speech acts, as opposed to selection out of a set of propositions, which has implications for the truth-value of the alternatives. In contrast to Wagner's analysis, the claim that *wa* is a topic marker would explain why the discourse function of topic is associated with contrastive topics despite its focal status. However, Tomioka's analysis, like others in the literature, does not distinguish *wa*-phrases in-situ from those in clause-initial position and therefore cannot explain the distributional and interpretive facts of *wa*-phrases discussed in this article. Specifically, we saw that contrastive *wa*-phrases that appear in-situ, as opposed to those that have moved to clause-initial position, are not interpreted as what the rest of the sentence is about, they cannot undergo movement to clause-initial position and they are not subject to the syntactic distribution of 'topic' that is predicted by considerations at the interface.

Kuroda (2005) argues that a contrastive *wa*-phrase is not necessarily a contrastive topic: it can simply have a particular contrastive entailment with respect to its alternatives. Assuming that topics in general appear in SpecCP, he suggests, though without much discussion, that if the subject is a contrastive *wa*-phrase, it could also be a topic, i.e., a contrastive topic (Kuroda

2005: appendix II). The proposal put forward in this article shares and explicates the intuition behind this compositional analysis of contrastive topics in Japanese and the data presented here confirm this intuition. I have argued and demonstrated with object contrastive *wa*-phrases that contrastive *wa*-phrases generally have a particular contrastive interpretation, but only those in clause-initial position are contrastive topics. One area where Kuroda's proposal differs from the current proposal is the analysis of non-contrastive *wa*-phrases. He treats all non-contrastive *wa*-phrases (his “topic” *wa*) as non-contrastive topics. However, as we saw above, this is not the case. Non-contrastive *wa*-phrases that appear in positions other than clause-initial position show different syntactic behaviour from non-contrastive topics: they need not, in the case of subject, and cannot, in the case of object, appear in clause-initial position, and they cannot appear in a dislocated position and be construed as an argument elsewhere in the clause.

Finally, there have been several accounts of the Japanese left-periphery in the cartographic approach (Watanabe 2003, Munakata 2006, Endo 2007, Kuwahara 2008), where a designated functional projection for topic, TopP, is postulated as one of the highest functional projections in the CP-domain of the clause, with the complement of Top⁰ interpreted as the comment. One may wonder whether the clause-initialness of topics can be derived from such a clausal architecture. However, this approach faces some difficulties in capturing observations presented in the previous sections. Firstly, the particle *wa* is generally taken to be a manifestation of a ‘syntactic’ [+topic] feature on this approach. Thus, it clearly predicts that a *wa*-marked item should show a syntactically uniform behaviour, which we saw in Sections 3-6 not to be the case. Secondly, we saw that a focus can optionally be fronted to a position preceding a contrastive or non-contrastive *wa*-phrase, demonstrated by (47) and (51), respectively. This fact may at first sight appear to motivate TopP above as well as below FocP, as originally proposed by Rizzi (1997) and argued for by Endo (2007) for Japanese. However, the presence of multiple topic positions seems only to require further assumptions in explaining in what discourse context a *wa*-marked item must occupy the higher SpecTopP, and when it can occupy the lower SpecTopP.

I argued that a non-contrastive *wa*-marked item following a fronted focus is not a topic, but a discourse anaphoric item. One may thus suggest for Japanese that the lower TopP is in fact a projection which licenses discourse anaphoric items, bearing the label DiscAnaP, for instance. Such a proposal may account for some of the syntactic differences between *wa*-phrases in clause-initial position and those that can appear following a fronted focus, such as island (in)sensitivity, discussed in Section 5. This adjustment however still does not provide

an adequate account of the distribution of *wa*-phrases. Specifically, *ano inu-wa* ‘that dog-wa’ following a fronted focus in examples such as (4b) would occupy SpecDiscAnaP. As this *wa*-phrase can also precede the focus in the same context, as in the example in (4a), one must postulate another DiscAnaP above FocP. Moreover, examples such as (61) show that subject and object can be discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases simultaneously. DiscAnaP must therefore be recursive, resulting in a structure like the following.

(73) ... TopP DiscAnaP* FocP DiscAnaP* ...

We saw in (62), however, that discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases appear in a rigid order: a discourse anaphoric object *wa*-phrase cannot move above a discourse anaphoric subject *wa*-phrase.²⁹ Further assumptions are required to account for this in the above structure.

An anonymous reviewer points out that an example such as (74), where an adverbial precedes the non-contrastive topic *ano inu-wa* ‘that dog-wa’, is felicitous as a response to *tell me about that dog*. (S)he notes that this observation is problematic for the current analysis and can perhaps be better accounted for under an approach with a more articulated left periphery, such as the cartographic approach or Tateishi’s (1994) account, which also proposes several projections for *wa*-marked phrases.

(74) kinoo ano inu-wa kooene-de John-o kande-simat-ta
 yesterday that dog-wa park-at John-acc bite-end.up-PAST
 ‘Yesterday that dog bit John at the park.’

An example such as the above indeed is unaccounted for under the current proposal. In particular, it needs to be explained why an adverbial may be disregarded for satisfaction of the proposed clause-initialness constraint for topics. However, it seems to me that an

²⁹ Endo (2007) proposes that non-contrastive *wa*-phrases give rise to a relativized minimality effect. Thus, displacement of a non-contrastive object *wa*-phrase over a non-contrastive subject *wa*-phrase may be disallowed for this reason. However, such displacement is not generally disallowed (Kuroda 1969, ex. (93)). Moreover, the data in Section 6 are then difficult to account for on Endo’s analysis. He argues that contrastive and non-contrastive *wa*-phrases do not interact with respect to relativized minimality. Nonetheless, we saw that if the subject is a non-contrastive topic, on the notion adopted in this paper, an object contrastive *wa*-phrase may not move across it, while when it is a discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrase, the latter can, as illustrated below.

elaborate structure in the left periphery would not provide a more principled account than the current proposal.

Firstly, in Tateishi's account, the adverbial may presumably be adjoined to his IP, a projection that allows adjunction to it and immediately dominates AgrP whose specifier a subject *wa*-phrase occupies, be it a topic or discourse anaphoric on the notions assumed in this paper. However, he also allows a scrambled object to be adjoined to the same IP in other contexts (Tateishi 1994: 112). We saw that this option is unavailable if the subject *wa*-phrase is a topic, (15b). Thus, on Tateishi's account too, additional assumptions are required to explain why an adverbial can be adjoined to IP, but not an object, and only when the subject *wa*-phrase is a topic.

Secondly, under the cartographic approach, one may argue for a designated projection for the adverbial above the higher TopP. An obvious candidate is ModP, which Rizzi (2002) proposes below lower TopP for Italian, but there appears to be no principled reason to posit ModP above TopP in Japanese, other than to capture the data in (74). In both my approach and the cartographic approach, one option is to argue that an adverbial in examples like (74) need not be part of the comment of the topic. As far as I know, however, we currently understand very little about the notion 'comment' independently of 'topic'. The data such as (74) may thus shed light on what needs to be part of comment. I leave this issue for future research.

8 CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have provided a uniform account of the syntax of contrastive and non-contrastive topics in Japanese: they are both licensed in clause-initial position. I have presented a number of arguments in support. In specific contexts that require contrastive or non-contrastive topics, the relevant *wa*-phrase must appear in clause-initial position. Moreover, I have argued that those *wa*-phrases that can appear in other positions are not topics: they have discourse and syntactic properties that are different from their counterparts in clause-initial position. They are not necessarily understood as what the rest of the sentence is about. Contrastive *wa*-phrases in-situ only have the particular implicature with respect to the alternatives that were not selected. Non-contrastive *wa*-phrases that can follow other material are discourse anaphoric items and not topics in the narrower sense discussed in Section 2. They sometimes appear to be interpreted as what the rest of the sentence is about,

but this is so only because they happen to be anaphoric to the topic of discourse. As for the syntactic properties, contrastive *wa*-phrases that can appear in-situ cannot optionally undergo movement to clause-initial position, contrary to the standard description in the literature, and they are not subject to distributional constraints derived from considerations at the interface between information structure and syntax. Discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases are licensed in a different syntactic configuration from non-contrastive topics: only the latter can be base-generated in a dislocated position. The various kinds of *wa*-phrases are schematised below, repeated from (6):

(75) *Types of wa-phrases*

	non-contrastive <i>wa</i> -phrase (unstressed)	contrastive stressed <i>wa</i> -phrase (stressed)
clause-initial	non-contrastive topic	contrastive topic
non-clause-initial	discourse anaphoric	contrastive

A significant consequence of the proposal is that the particle *wa* is not a topic marker, contrary to the widely held assumption. An obvious next step in this research is to provide an account of the nature of those *wa*-phrases that are not in clause-initial position. It is often assumed that contrastive *wa* and non-contrastive *wa* are two separate lexical items. The prevalent idea that contrastive *wa* encodes uniform ‘contrastive’ interpretation, which I discussed in Section 4.1, is fitting with the compositional analysis of contrastive topics proposed here. Providing an accurate description of what I have called ‘discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases’ seems more challenging, as their distribution is more restricted than one expects for ordinary discourse anaphoric items, as discussed in Section 5. Nonetheless, the data presented in this paper makes it clear that they must be distinguished from those that obligatorily appear in clause-initial position, as they are associated with a distinct set of syntactic properties.

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