Particle Stranding in Japanese: Focus, Speech Acts, and the CP-Phase
(Category: formal syntax)

This paper deals with a less studied colloquial construction in Japanese exemplified by (1B) where an utterance begins with a particle that is not attached to an overt NP.

‘Did John go to OSAKA (rather than to Tokyo)?’ ‘To (OSAKA), he went.’

This pattern (call it particle stranding) is used in a question-answer context. The stranded particle bears a heavy pitch accent, which is commonly placed on a contrastively focused element. The gap before the particle refers back to the focused NP in the preceding question.

This construction, though noted in as early as the late 1940’s by Hattori (1949), came into frequent use quite recently. Existing analyses (Hayashi 2001, Yoshida 2004, Arita 2005, Sato and Ginsburg 2007) commonly characterize it as occurring “in the sentence-initial position.” This paper, on the other hand, proposes that the relevant position is not the sentence-initial position in the strict sense. That is, it is not the leftmost periphery of the highest projection of sentence structure. As far as a focus-type particle stranding is concerned, the so-called “initial” position corresponds to Spec-FocP in the split CP structure (Rizzi 1997 et seq.). Another claim to be defended is that particle stranding occurs only in the CP domain. This restriction is derived from a requirement that the stranded particle be licensed via Agree within the CP domain with a functional head encoding interpersonal communicative functions of an utterance.

Being a focus-bearing constituent, the stranded particle in (1B) can alternate with an overt focus phrase. They cannot be left unpronounced, which is a common feature of focused elements.

(2) {OSAKA-ni / ø-NI / *ø} itta n da yo. ‘To OSAKA, he went.’ (intended as a reply to (1A))

Their similarity in this respect suggests that the stranded particle occupies Spec-FocP, a position for a focused constituent in the articulated CP domain. In fact, particle stranding is inapplicable in a sentence lacking FocP. Kuwabara (2008) observes that Japanese has two kinds of interrogative sentence: One is the so-called no da focus type which contains FocP and the other is a non-focus type. While the former may contain a focused constituent, the latter cannot (see (3)). The same pattern emerges in declarative sentences. Being a no da focus sentence, (2) tolerates both an overt focus and particle stranding. By contrast, (4), which is not a no da sentence, cannot be a perfect reply to (1A). This also lends support to treating the stranded particle on a par with an overt focus element.

(3) Tokyo zyanakute OSAKA-ni {itta n desu ka / *iki-masi-ta ka}?
‘Did you go to OSAKA rather than Tokyo?’

(4) {??OSAKA-ni / ??ø-NI} iki-masi-ta.
Nevertheless, particle stranding is subject to restrictions that are not imposed on an overt focus phrase. First, it occurs only in the CP-domain. As illustrated by (5Bb), while an overt focus phrase can appear inside TP, particle stranding does not take place in this part of phrase structure.

(5) A: John-ga (Bill zyanakute) MARY-ni hanasikaketa no? ‘Did John speak to MARY?’

Yes -Nom friendlily -to -to spoke Comp Cop
‘Yes, to MARY, John spoke friendlily.’

yes -Nom friendlily -to -to spoke Comp Cop
‘Yes, John friendlily spoke to MARY.’

Second, particle stranding takes place only in a root clause. Similarly to a sentence-final particle, which is a typical root phenomenon, it is excluded from an embedded context.

(6) Yoogisya-wa (Tokyo dewanaku) OSAKA-ni iru noka to nandomo kikarete,
suspect-Top rather than -in is Q Comp again.and.again being.asked
soosa.tookyoku-wa tuini  [ {OSAKA-ni /*ø-NI} iru (*yo) to-no ]
investigating.authorities-Top finally -in -in is Prt Comp-Gen
mikata-o simesita.
view-Acc suggested
‘Being asked again and again whether the suspect was in Osaka (rather than in Tokyo), the investigating authorities finally suggested the view that he/she was there.’

The distributional parallelism between a stranded particle and a sentence-final particle is interrelated with pragmatic properties they have in common. They both fulfill interpersonal communicative functions and are closely related to particular speech acts. The sentence-final particle yo, for instance, signals that an utterance is directed to a particular addresssee the speaker has in mind (Kuroda 1973, Endo 2007). The stranded particle serves as a response marker, whereby the speaker signals to the hearer that s/he is performing an act of reply (Arita 2005).

In order to account for the restrictions on particle stranding in (5Bb, 6) while capturing its pragmatic similarity to sentence-final particles, I propose the following structure.

(7) \[
\text{SAP} \left[ \text{ForceP} \ldots \left[ \text{FocP} \right. \text{ø-NI} \left. \left. \text{[FocP [tp t, itta ] Fin0-n ] Foc0-desu ] \ldots \right\} \text{SA0-ø-yo } \right] = 1B \right] \\
\text{Agree}
\]

The functional projection SAP (Speech Act Phrase) above ForceP constitutes the outermost periphery of CP and hosts elements that encode speaker-hearer interactions. Its head position can be occupied by a sentence-final particle. On the other hand, the stranded particle, which originates in an argument position in TP, moves into Spec-FocP due to focalization, but does not undergo further movement into SAP. Nevertheless, it is also able to encode interpersonal communicative functions. I propose that this is made possible via Agree with the SA head.

In the proposed analysis, the inapplicability of particle stranding in (6) is attributable to the absence of SAP within the embedded clause. On the other hand, its inapplicability in (5Bb) is derived from general machinery of phase-based spell-out. Suppose that in the split CP structure only Fin0 and SA0 are qualified as CP-phase heads, whereas other heads are not. Then (5Ba) and (5Bb) are derived as follows. (Linear order is irrelevant; Phase heads are italicized)

(8) \[
a. \left[ \text{SAP } \text{SA0-ø-yo [FocP [tp t, itta ] Fin0-n ] Foc0-desu ] \ldots \right] \text{John-ga sitasigeni } t_{i} \text{ hanasikaketa } \ldots = 5Ba \right] \\
\text{Agree}
\]

b. \[
\left[ \text{SAP } \text{SA0-ø-yo [FocP [tp t, itta ] Fin0-n ] Foc0-desu ] \ldots \right] \text{John-ga sitasigeni } ø-NI \text{ hanasikaketa } \ldots = 5Bb \right] \\
\text{Agree blocked}
\]

As soon as the phase head SA0 is merged with ForceP, the domain of the lower phase head Fin0 (i.e., the shaded TP) is spelled out (Chomsky 2001). In (8a), the stranded particle in Spec-FocP successfully enters into Agree with SA0. By contrast, Agree is blocked in (8b) because the stranded particle staying in situ is spelled out and becomes inaccessible on the merger of SA0.

This paper makes descriptive and theoretical contributions to the study of Japanese. First, it provides a finer description of particle stranding, uncovering previously unnoted properties. Second, it serves to elucidate the syntax-pragmatics interface. The main observation is that (some) pragmatic factors such as speaker-hearer interactions are grammaticized and represented as a part of phrase structure. Third, it makes a novel proposal as to the theory of phrase structure and syntactic derivation. The proposed analysis derives limited distribution of particle stranding from general machinery of phase-based spell-out.

**REFERENCES**