



Scope Asymmetries between English and Japanese

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Abstract

This paper examines scope interactions between quantificational NPs (QPs) in simple transitive sentences in English and Japanese, and provides an account of well-known English/ Japanese scope asymmetries: unlike the case in English, Japanese sentences (in unmarked word order) are always scopally unambiguous, systematically disallowing wide scope of object over subject. I argue that this difference is not due to a radical structural difference between the two languages, but is due to a lexical variation of a particular functional head, which I label 'Dst'. The two languages differ in the selectional properties of Dst. Dst in Japanese is overtly expressed by *mo* and selects only NPs and PPs whereas Dst in English is covert and English speakers equate the selectional properties of Dst with those of conjunction.

About the Author

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