Scope and the Nature of Japanese *hoo* Comparatives

This talk presents an analysis of what I call *hoo* comparatives in Japanese based on the direct analysis of phrasal comparatives (Heim 1985, Bhatt & Takahashi 2007, Kennedy to appear), and shows that this analysis gives a further evidence for the idea of parasitic scope Barker (2007), Kennedy & Stanley (to appear), Sawada (to appear). The analysis raises more questions about the *hoo* morpheme with respect to its degree sensitive nature and flexibility of taking both nominal and clausal complements.

A phrasal comparative like (1) is ambiguous, meaning (2a) or (2b). In Japanese, adding *hoo*, a noun which originally means 'way, direction, side', disambiguates (1). When it attaches to the subject noun as in (3), it only means (2a), and when it attaches to the object noun as in (4), it only means (2b). First, what the ambiguity in (1) indicates is the existence of two different LF structures that ended up in the same surface structure. Why, then, can't the *hoo* comparatives (3-4) be ambiguous?

Suppose a comparative morpheme *-er* forms a constituent with a *than* phrase (English *than* is semantically vacuous). According to the direct analysis (Heim 1985, Bhatt & Takahashi 2007, Kennedy to appear), the comparative morpheme takes three arguments: two individuals and a gradable predicate P, where P is a predicate that takes two arguments, an entity and a degree (5). Following Kennedy (2007), Sawada (to appear), let us assume that *yori* in Japanese works the same way as *-er*, (6). (Note that there is no comparative morpheme analogous to *-er* in Japanese adjective inflection.) In this view, the reason why (1) is ambiguous is because there are two ways to create the gradable predicate P, where P is '$\lambda d\lambda x.x$ loves cats d-much' (7) meaning (2a), or '$\lambda d\lambda x.$ I love x d-much' (8) meaning (2b). Thus, having two choices of abstracting over an entity in the *hoo*-less sentence (1), there are possibly two different LF structures, resulting in ambiguity. Now, to see the unambiguous *hoo* sentences (3-4), we notice that what *hoo* is attached to is the noun phrase that is supposed to be higher up in the structures (7-8). I therefore suggest that this *hoo* is a morpheme that overtly marks LF noun movement. That is why *hoo* sentences are not ambiguous.

This analysis supports the mechanism of parasitic scope (as proposed in Barker (2007) for an analysis of *same* and Kennedy & Stanley (to appear) for *average*), whose idea is that the scope (structural position) of comparative phrase depends on the noun phrase raising, i.e. the *hoo*-phrase movement in my case. But this is insufficient for the understanding of *hoo*. If *hoo*'s job is merely to let the noun phrase scope over *than*-phrases, e.g. (9), that would not explain*hoo*'s degree sensitive nature in (10). Furthermore, we should make sure *hoo* is flexible enough so that it not only takes nominal argument but also clausal one as in (11), in which the sentence has a modal meaning. From the standpoint of possible world semantics, it is possible to imagine that *hoo* is acting on a proposition rather than an entity to make a connection between the proposition and the modality of the matrix clause.

(1) Watashi-wa John-yori neko-o aishiteiru
I-TOP John-than cats-ACC love.NONPAST
'I love cats more than John. Ambiguous between (2a) & (2b)

(2) a. The degree of my love of cats is greater than the degree of John's love of cats.
b. The degree of my love of cats is greater than the degree of my love of John.

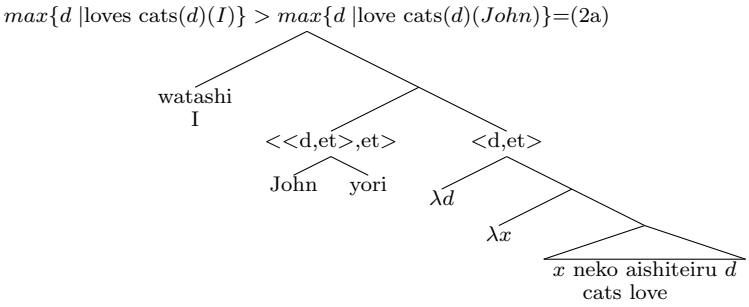
(3) Watashi-no-**hoo**-ga John-yori neko-o aishiteiru
I-GEN-**hoo**-NOM John-than cats-ACC love.NONPAST
'I love cats more than John does.' (2a)/*(2b)

(4) Watashi-wa John-yori neko-no-**hoo**-o aishiteiru
I-TOP John-than cats-GEN-**hoo**-ACC love.NONPAST
'I love cats more than John.' *(2a)/(2b)

(5) $[\![\text{yori}]\!] = [\![\text{-er}]\!] = \lambda y \lambda g_{<d,et>} \lambda x. max\{d \mid g(d)(x) = 1\} > max\{d \mid g(d)(y) = 1\}$

(6) $[\![\text{tall}]\!] = \lambda d \lambda x. x$ is d-tall

(7)



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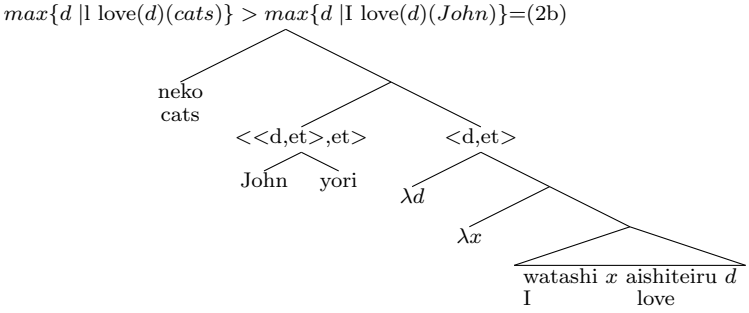

(9) a. Warashi-ga taberu.
I-GEN-hoo-NOM eat.NONPAST
'I eat.'
b. Warashi-no-**hoo**-ga taberu.
I-GEN-hoo-NOM eat.NONPAST
'I eat more.' (Implication: 'than someone')
NOT: 'I eat.'

(10) $[\![\text{hoo}]\!] = \lambda x \lambda f_{<e,t>}. f(x) = 1$ (Not sufficient?)

(11) [basu-de itta]-*(hoo)-ga iidesu yo.
bus-by go.PAST-hoo-NOM good.NONPAST *yo*
'You should go by bus.' 'You'd better go by bus.' (Suggestion)

(12) [basu-de ika-nai]-*(hoo)-ga iidesu yo.
bus-by go-not.NONPAST-hoo-NOM good.NONPAST *yo*
'You should not go by bus.' 'You'd better not go by bus.' (Suggestion)

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