

TOPICS IN JAPANESE: A UNIFIED ANALYSIS OF CONTRASTIVE AND NON-CONTRASTIVE TOPICS

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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 show that identification of topics in terms of the particle alone does not provide a satisfactory account of the interpretive as well as syntactic properties of topics. Examining particular contexts that require topics for independent discourse reasons, it is made apparent that there are *wa*-marked items that are topics, but there are also *wa*-marked items that are not. The alternative account proposed here advocates that topics in Japanese, both contrastive and non-contrastive types, should be identified in terms of the discourse notion ‘aboutness’ (Reinhart 1981). Identified as such, we can provide a straightforward account of the syntactic properties of topics in Japanese and explain the fact that *wa*-marked items that are not identified as topics in this way lack these properties. In addition, the proposed analysis captures generalisations that hold of contrastive topics and non-contrastive topics, which have previously been treated separately in the literature.

1 Introduction

This article is concerned with the syntactic distribution of topics in Japanese. It is a widely held assumption that the particle *wa* is a topic marker in this language. However, I show that this assumption cannot provide a straightforward account of the fact that *wa*-marked items have different interpretative and syntactic properties depending on the environment in which they appear. I propose instead that topics should be identified on the basis of independently motivated discourse considerations. This alternative allows for a straightforward account of the syntactic properties of both contrastive and non-contrastive topics in Japanese and also for the fact that there are *wa*-marked items that are not topics.

The standard characterisation of the particle *wa* in the literature on Japanese is that it has two uses: non-contrastive and contrastive (Kuno 1973).¹ A phrase marked by the former is unstressed, typically occupies clause-initial position and is interpreted as what the rest of the sentence is about. These properties are demonstrated in (1). I will call such a phrase ‘non-contrastive *wa*-phrase’. On the other hand, a phrase marked by the latter bears an emphatic stress, 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 ‘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. sono hon_i-wa John-ga *e_i* katta.
that book-wa John-nom bought
- b. #John-ga sono hon-wa katta.
John-nom that book-wa bought
‘Speaking of that book, John bought it.’

¹ Kuno (1973) calls the two uses ‘thematic’ and ‘contrastive’, and these terms are widely in use. However, following Heycock’s (2007) practice, I will call the former ‘non-contrastive’, in order to be less theory-specific.

- (2) contrastive *wa*:
- a. SONO HON_i-WA John-ga t_i katta.
that book-wa John-nom bought
 - b. John-ga SONO HON-WA katta.
John-nom that book-wa bought
'John bought that book.' (Implicature: '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 their syntactic distribution. On the view that the particle *wa* is a topic marker then, it is unclear what the notion of topicality is that is shared by the two types of topics.

In this paper, I argue that the particle *wa* is insufficient in identifying non-contrastive topics and contrastive topics. Rather, the two types of topics should be identified in terms of other factors. In particular, there are independent tests developed from considerations from discourse and the interface between syntax and information structure that can identify topics. Identified in terms of such tests, the two types of topics in fact can be shown to have syntactic and interpretive properties in common and I propose a uniform analysis of topics that can capture these properties. The specific proposal is that both types of topics are interpreted as what the rest of the sentence is about and they must both occupy clause-initial position. The proposal is formulated in the form of the constraint 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 the *wa*-phrases that appear in positions other than clause-initial position, such as *sono hon-wa* 'that book-wa' in (2b), is not a topic. I argue that this is a desirable consequence. Such *wa*-phrases implicate contrast, but are not topics. Evidence for this claim comes from considering various 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 be interpreted as what the rest of the sentence is about, it must remain in-situ, as in (2b). There are also syntactic differences between contrastive *wa*-phrases in-situ and those in clause-initial position.

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 a position other than clause-initial position under certain circumstances. The answer in (5b) to the question in (4) illustrates the point (Watanabe 2003, Heycock 2007).

- (4) sono inu-wa dare-o kande-simatta no?
that dog-nom who-acc bite-closed Q
'Who did the dog bite?'
- (5) a. sono inu-wa kinoo kooen-de JOHN-O kande-simatta
that dog-wa yesterday park-at John-acc bite-closed
b. JOHN_i-O sono inu-wa kinoo kooen-de t_i kande-simatta
John-acc that dog-wa yesterday park-at bite-closed
'The dog bit John in the park yesterday.'

I argue that, like contrastive *wa*-phrases, non-contrastive *wa*-phrases in a non-clause-initial position are not topics: they are simply discourse anaphoric in the sense that they have been mentioned previously in the discourse. Evidence similar in nature to that mentioned above for contrastive *wa*-phrases is available. In contexts that require non-contrastive topics, an utterance with the relevant *wa*-phrase in a non-clause-initial position like (5b) is infelicitous. Furthermore, a non-clause-initial phrase can be marked by non-contrastive *wa* when it is not what the rest of the sentence is about. Finally, such phrases do not display syntactic properties associated with non-contrastive topics.

The main claims are summarised in the following table:

(6)

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

Before considering the properties of the various types of *wa*-phrases in Japanese, I will first clarify in the following section what are meant by the terminologies ‘topic’, ‘discourse anaphoric’ and ‘contrast’ in this paper, also pointing out what 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 topics, contrastive and non-contrastive. It will be demonstrated that in such contexts, the relevant *wa*-marked item must appear in clause-initial position, 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 interpretation as well as their syntactic properties. Section 6 shows that a further prediction of the constraint in (3), namely that there can be no more than one topic per clause, as there is only one clause-initial position, is correct. Section 7 offers speculations on why the same particle *wa* is used to mark a variety of interpretations. In Section 8, the current proposal is compared with some recent approaches in the literature. Section 9 concludes the paper.

2 Topic, contrast and contrastive topics

Non-contrastive topic and contrastive topic often receive separate treatments in the literature. The former is described as what the sentence is about, while the latter has a particular implicature with respect to salient alternatives that are not selected (Büring 1997, 2003, Hara 2006, Wagner 2008). In this section, I propose that the notion of topic in terms of ‘aboutness’ in the sense of Reinhart (1981) is shared by both types of topics, but contrastive topics in addition are associated with a particular implicature of the kind proposed in the literature.

2.1 Topic

It is important to note at the outset that this paper is concerned with what Reinhart (1981) calls ‘sentence topic’ rather than ‘discourse topic’. Sentence topic is what the sentence is about and must correspond to a syntactic category, while discourse topic is what the whole discourse is about and can be more abstract. Specifically, I take sentence topic to be a syntactic expression that affects the discourse topic, for example, by introducing it, re-introducing it, shifting it from one item to another, narrowing down its referent or implicating

the existence of a salient alternative.² A sentence topic can be identified as the item *X* in the answer to requests such as *tell me about X* or *what about X?*. It is also associated with constructions such as *as for X...*, or *regarding X...*, where *X* is the sentence topic. A request such as *tell me about X* is an explicit instruction to the hearer to introduce *X* as the discourse topic. As such, *X* in the reply must be marked as a sentence topic.³ Thus, *John* in (7b) is a sentence topic.

- (7) a. Tell me about John.
b. John likes hiking.

Sentence topics must also be distinguished from items that simply refer back to them (Vallduví 1992, Lambrecht 1994, Vallduví & Engdahl 1996, Neeleman et. al. to app.). The point can be illustrated by the following discourse.

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

Uttered discourse-initially, the example in (8a) is about Maxine. *Maxine* functions as sentence topic, as it introduces Maxine as the topic of discourse. The pronoun *her* that appears in the same utterance has the same referent as the discourse topic, but is not itself a sentence topic. It simply 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 topic has been inherited from the previous utterance. In other words, the sentence in (8b) is about the referent of the subject *she*, but this is so only because *she* happens to be anaphoric to the discourse topic, what the whole discourse is about.

The same considerations can be applied 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 itself a sentence topic. It refers back to the discourse topic Max, which is introduced as such in the preceding question in (9a) by the appearance of *Max* as a sentence topic (Vallduví & Engdahl 1996). Thus, 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. Regarding this kind of context, it is often assumed, including by Reinhart (1981), that the subject in the answer is a sentence topic (Lambrecht 1994).⁴ However, there appears to be no reason why a pronominal that refers back to a discourse/sentence topic should also itself be a sentence topic. An anaphoric item

² These are functions that Vallduví (1992) attributes to his notion of 'link'.

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.

⁴ Lambrecht (1994) in fact makes a distinction between an item that introduces a topic, such as *Max* in (9a), which he calls 'reference-oriented topic', and an item that refers back to it, such as *he* in (9b), which he calls 'role-oriented topic'. See Section 5.1 for further discussion on this point with respect to Japanese and how an item like *he* in (9b) is not a kind of topic.

does not usually inherit the discourse-related properties of the antecedent. A pronoun that refers to a focus is not also therefore a focus, and similarly, a pronoun that refers to a contrastive topic is not therefore identified as a contrastive topic.

Note that *John* in (7b) cannot be analysed in the same way as *she* in (8b) or *he* in (9b). The request in (7a) mentions *John*, but it is not about John. It is an instruction to introduce it as the topic of discourse. Thus, *John* in (7b) is a sentence topic. On the other hand, *Maxine* and *Max* are introduced as discourse topics by the preceding statement in (8a) and the question in (9a), respectively. Consequently, *she* in (8b) and *he* in (9b) need not be marked as sentence topics.

In English, sentence topics are not necessarily marked overtly and can therefore be difficult to identify. For instance, if the full name *Max* is repeated as the subject in (9b) with no special accent, it is ambiguous as to whether it is part of the background or a sentence topic, re-introducing the discourse topic, somewhat unnecessarily here (Vallduví & Vilks 1996: 474). However, in languages such as Catalan, the distinction is formerly marked, for example in terms of the directionality of dislocation, i.e. left- or right-dislocation (Vallduví 1992). The distinction is also crucial to explaining the syntactic distribution of *wa*-marked phrases in Japanese, as I will show in Section 5. In the remainder of the paper, therefore, I will use the term ‘topic’ to refer only to syntactic constituents that the sentence is about and that affect the current topic of discourse. Items that refer back to discourse or sentence topics are not topics and will not be treated differently from other discourse anaphoric items.

2.2 Contrast and contrastive topics

I take contrastive topics to be topics, in the sense discussed above, which in addition implicate contrast of a particular type that presupposes at least one salient alternative in the discourse. 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 simply the existence of an alternative.⁵ An example is provided below (Büring 1997: 56). Here *I* in B’s utterance shifts the topic of discourse from *Fritz*:

- (10) A: Do you think that Fritz would buy this suit?
 B: Well, I certainly wouldn’t.

Contrastive topics in languages such as English are often identified as items that bear the so-called B-accent (Jackendoff 1972). There have been several proposals on what exactly is the meaning associated with accents such as the B-accent in English and the corresponding rising pitch accent in German (e.g., Büring 1997, 2003, Hara and van Rooij 2007, Wagner 2008). I will not go into the details of different proposals here (Section 4 discusses proposals for Japanese contrastive topics), but 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 topics in a most obvious way despite generating the same kind of contrastive interpretation. In the following examples from English and German, these accents are used to mark contrast on verbal items or quantified items. Being what the sentence is about, a topic must usually be specific. If we maintain that a topic is what the sentence is about, then it is difficult to see in what sense these non-specific items bearing a B-accent or a rising pitch accent in the examples below are what the sentences are about. Conversely, if contrastive

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

topics are identified simply as items bearing these accents, and not necessarily what the sentence is about, 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]_B 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 that is 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, discussed above. In other words, the contrastive interpretation and the topic interpretation of a contrastive topic are independent of each other.⁶ Thus, in the example in (10B), *I* is contrastive, because it bears a B-accent and therefore has the associated implicature, namely that the speaker is not sure about Fritz. It is also a topic, because the rest of the sentence is about the referent of this constituent and it has shifted the current topic of discourse from *Fritz* to *I*.

There is evidence that [contrast] is an autonomous information structural notion (Vallduví & Vilkuna 1998, Molnár 2002). Vallduví & Vilkuna, for example, 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. The relevant notion triggering the syntactic displacement must therefore be contrast ('kontrast' in their terminology), rather than focus or topic. Neither non-contrastive focus nor non-contrastive topic appears in this particular position in this language. Section 4 provides further syntactic arguments from Japanese for the idea that contrastive topic is a composite of two independent features, topic and contrast.

In sum, I take topic to be a syntactic constituent that is what the sentence is about and affects the current 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 with respect to 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. In doing so, I will also argue that the particle *wa* is not sufficient in identifying topics in Japanese.

⁶ Wagner (2008) makes a similar proposal. See section 4.1 for discussion on how his proposal differs from mine.

3 The distribution of topics in Japanese

This section provides empirical motivation in Japanese for the constraint in (3), repeated below as (14):

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

There are certain discourse contexts in which an item must be interpreted as a topic. As discussed in the previous section, a request such as *tell me about X* forces *X* to be a sentence topic in the following utterance. In Japanese, *X* in the reply must be marked by the particle *wa* and appear in clause-initial position. The point is demonstrated below. Here, a request about a particular dog, *sono inu* ‘that dog’, is being made. In the reply, *sono inu-wa* ‘that dog-wa’ must occupy clause-initial position, as shown in (16a); a reply in which the *wa*-phrase occupies a non-clause-initial position, as in (16b) is infelicitous.⁷

(15) sono inu-nituite osiete-kudasai
that dog-about tell-please
‘Tell me about that dog.’

(16) a. sono inu-wa kinoo kooen-de John-o kande-simatta
that dog-wa yesterday park-at John-acc bite-closed
b. # John_i-o sono inu-wa kinoo kooen-de t_i kande-simatta
John-acc that dog-wa yesterday park-at bite-closed
‘The dog bit John in the park yesterday.’

The example in (16b) is not ungrammatical, as shown by the acceptability of the example in (5b). Although *John-o* is stressed in the latter and not in the former, the lack of stress on the object is unlikely to be the source of infelicity, as it is possible in Japanese to scramble an object to a position in front of the subject without placing stress on the object (Tada 1993, Saito 1992, Ishihara 2001). This characteristic is often noted for sentences where the subject bears the nominative case marker *ga*. However, it is also possible when the subject is a *wa*-phrase, as demonstrated below. The utterance in (18) is a well-formed response to (17). Here, the verb is focussed and bears an emphatic stress, and the object is unstressed.

(17) Mary-o kootyoo sensee-ga kyoositu-de HOMETA no?
Mary-acc head teacher-nom classroom-in praised Q
Lit.: ‘Did the teacher praise Mary in the classroom?’
(18) Iya, Mary-o kotyoo sensee-wa kyoositu-de SIKATTA rasii.
No, Mary-acc teacher-wa classroom-at told.off seem
Lit.: ‘No, it seems that the teacher told off Mary.’

The same pattern obtains when the object is a non-contrastive topic in the reply. As (20) shows, a *wa*-marked object, about which a request is made in (19), must appear clause-initially. The nature of the empty category in (20a) will be discussed in Section 4.

⁷ See Portner & Yabushita (1998, 2001) for a formal account of ‘aboutness’ and ‘definiteness’ for non-contrastive topics.

- (19) sono boosi-nituite osiete-kudasai
 that hat-about tell-please
 ‘Tell me about that hat.’
- (20) a. sono boosi_i-wa John-ga kinoo _{e_i} kaimasita
 that hat-wa John-nom yesterday bought
 b. #John-ga sono boosi-wa kinoo kaimasita⁸
 John-nom that hat-wa yesterday bought
 ‘John bought that hat.’

It turns out that the distribution of contrastive topics is also restricted to clause-initial position. Contrastive topics in Japanese are marked with *wa* and carry an emphatic stress (Kuno 1973, Nakanishi 2001, among others). In the following discourse, information in relation to John is requested in (21). Not knowing the relevant information regarding John, a speaker may provide information with respect to Bill, as in (22). In doing so, s/he has shifted the topic of discourse from John to Bill, making *Bill-wa* a contrastive topic.⁹ As demonstrated by the contrast between (22a) and (22b), *Bill-wa* must appear in clause-initial position and cannot follow, for instance, the fronted object *mame-o* ‘beans-acc’.

- (21) John-wa/ga kinoo-no party-de nani-o tabeta no?
 John-wa/nom yesterday-gen party-at what-acc ate Q
 ‘what did John eat at the party yesterday?’
- (22) Hmm, John-wa doo-ka sira-nai-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 particle
 b. #MAME_i-O BILL-WA 8-zi-goro _{t_i} tabeteita (yo)
 beans-acc Bill-wa 8 o’clock-around eating particle
 ‘As for Bill, he was eating beans around 8 o’clock.’

The same pattern obtains when the object introduces a new topic as in (24):

- (23) kinoo-no party-de dare-ga pasta-o tabeta no?
 yesterday-gen party-at who-nom pasta-acc ate Q
 ‘Who ate the pasta at the party yesterday?’
- (24) Hmm, pasta-wa doo-ka sira-nai-kedo,
 well, pasta-top how-whether know-not-but,
 ‘Well, I don’t know about the pasta, but...’
- a. #BILL-GA MAME-WA 8-zi-goro tabeteita (yo)
 Bill-nom beans-wa 8 o’clock-around eating particle
 b. MAME_i-WA BILL-GA 8-zi-goro _{t_i} tabeteita (yo)
 beans-wa Bill-nom 8 o’clock-around eating particle
 ‘As for the beans, Bill was eating them around 8 o’clock.’

⁸ For reasons unknown to me, it appears that an object *wa*-phrase sometimes prefers not to surface adjacent to a verb, unless the latter is emphatically stressed. In order to circumvent this issue, 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 (20b). This does not affect the discussion in the main text.

⁹ The set-up of the context is due to Neeleman & van de Koot (2008).

The data considered in this section demonstrate clearly that topics, contrastive and non-contrastive, identified independently by the use of appropriate discourse contexts, must appear in clause-initial position, motivating the constraint in (3)/(14). I take the constraint to function as a trigger for the displacement of topical *wa*-phrases to clause-initial position.

Thus, syntactically, what is common to non-contrastive topics and contrastive topics is that they are licensed in clause-initial position. In terms of interpretation, I argue following the discussion in the previous section that they are both what the rest of the sentence is about. This is the standard view for non-contrastive topics. Contrastive topics, on the other hand, are not generally described in terms of ‘aboutness’. However, that aboutness is an essential part of the interpretation of contrastive topics can be made explicit, as in the English translations of the leading utterances in the examples in (22) and (24), *I don’t know about John*, and *I don’t know about the pasta*. They indicate that the following statements are going to be ‘about’ an alternative subject and an alternative object, respectively.

As mentioned in the introduction, a significant consequence of the constraint in (3)/(14) is that *wa*-marked phrases that are not in clause-initial position cannot be topics. I will show in the following two sections that this is a desirable outcome for both contrastive and non-contrastive *wa*-phrases. The constraint also predicts that there can be no more than one topic per clause, as there is only one clause-initial position. I will return to this prediction in Section 6, where it is shown to be correct.

4 Contrastive *wa*-phrases in-situ

What is the nature of contrastive *wa*-phrases in-situ? I argue in this section that they are contrastive items, whose contrastive interpretation is contributed by the particle *wa* in its contrastive use, but they lack the topical interpretation. I will also provide two syntactic arguments that contrastive *wa*-phrases in-situ are not topics.

4.1 Contrastive interpretation

There has recently been much work on the precise interpretation of contrastive *wa*-phrases (Hara 2006, Hara & van Rooij 2007, Oshima to app., Tomioka 2007b). Many authors recognise that there are similarities between contrastive *wa*-phrases and contrastive topics in languages such as German and English. They can be used in similar contexts and they give the impression that the speaker is not entirely sure about some relevant alternatives in the discourse. However, they also point out that unlike contrastive topics in German, contrastive *wa*-phrases do not require the presence of a focus in the sentence.

Adapting Buring’s (1997, 2003) analysis of contrastive topics in German, Hara (2006) argues that a sentence containing a contrastive *wa*-phrase induces the presupposition that a scalar alternative stronger than the assertion exists and also the implicature that the stronger alternative could be false. To illustrate, let us consider the following example, which has the implicature ‘not everyone came’.

- (25) NANNINKA-WA kita
 some people-wa came
 ‘some people came.’ (Implicature: ‘Not everyone came’)

The above example has the meaning given in (26a). According to Hara’s analysis, it has the presupposition that there is a stronger scalar alternative such as (26b), ‘everyone came’. 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’.

- (26) a. $\exists(x) [[\text{person}(x)] [\text{came}(x)]]$
 b. stronger scalar alternative: $\forall(x) [[\text{person}(x)] [\text{came}(x)]]$
 c. (b) can be false.

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.

- (27) *MINNA-WA kita
 everyone-wa came
 'Everyone came.'

The analysis is extended to non-quantified DPs. It is possible for a contrastive *wa*-phrase to answer the *wh*-part of a preceding question with the implicature that the speaker is unsure about the alternatives.¹⁰ In cases where there are only two individuals, say *Mary* and *John*, the implicature of a sentence such (28b) is that John did not pass the exam.

- (28) 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 didn't pass')

The stronger alternative that the utterance in (28b) 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, including Hara (2006), involve predominantly cases where the subject bears contrastive *wa*. The same contrastive interpretation in fact 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 (29) gives rise to the implicature 'John did not help everyone', because 'John helped everyone' is a stronger scalar alternative and contrastive *wa* implicates that the stronger scalar alternative could be false. It is not possible to have a universal quantifier *minna* 'everyone' marked with contrastive *wa*, as in (30), because there is no stronger scalar alternative and therefore the presupposition is not met. 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 exactly the same way as in (28b).

¹⁰ As Kuroda (1965, 2005) and Oshima (to app.) point out, this kind of example, where a *wa*-phrase answers a *wh*-part of a question, suggests that contrastive *wa* may be more akin to other focal particles such as *mo* 'also' and *sae* 'even'. Further support for the non-topical status of such a *wa*-phrase comes from the fact that if the *wa*-phrase in the answer is an object, it appears in-situ and it cannot undergo movement, which, as we will see in the next subsection, is a property of a contrastive *wa*-phrase that is not a topic:

- (i) *What did John buy?*
 a. John-wa OSENBEE-WA katta.
 John-wa rice.crackers-wa bought
 b. #OSENBEE-WA John-wa katta.

- (29) John-ga NANNINKA-WA tasuketa
 John-nom some.people-wa helped
 ‘John helped some people.’ (Implicature: ‘John didn’t help everyone.’)
- (30) #John-ga MINNA-WA tasuketa (modified from Hara to appear: 6)
 John-nom everyone-wa helped
 ‘John helped everyone.’
- (31) 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 all argue that the use of a contrastive *wa*-phrase generates a set of alternatives, and that there is a particular implicature regarding the alternatives, that gives rise to the impression of 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, there is nothing inherent in this kind of interpretation itself that makes a contrastive *wa*-phrase a contrastive *topic*, i.e., what the rest of the sentence is about, affecting the current topic of discourse. Recall that the same point was made in Section 2 with respect to items with a B-accent in English and a rising pitch accent in German.

I propose then that contrastive *wa*-phrases in general have the type of interpretation proposed in the recent literature, but those that move to clause-initial position are interpreted additionally as topics. In other words, topicality and the particular contrastive interpretation associated with contrastive *wa*-phrases are two independent features of a contrastive topic (Kuroda 2005, Tomioka 2007b).

Some authors do in fact refrain from using the term ‘contrastive topic’ and simply refer to them as ‘contrastive *wa*-phrases’ or talk in terms of the function of contrastive *wa* (Hara 2006, Yamato 2007, among others). However, these authors, like others, do not distinguish contrastive *wa*-phrases in clause-initial position from those in-situ. Their accounts are therefore unable to explain why they must appear in clause-initial position in certain discourse contexts, as discussed in Section 3. Section 8 compares the present approach with some other compositional approaches to contrastive topics offered in the literature. I now turn to the two syntactic arguments that support the present approach to contrastive topics in Japanese.

4.2 Contrastive *wa*-phrases in-situ can’t move

The current proposal predicts that contrastive *wa*-phrases that 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 therefore no trigger for movement. Recall that the constraint on the clause-initialness of topics in (3) functions as a trigger for the displacement of topics. The prediction is borne out and this is shown in three different contexts.

¹¹ Fiengo & McClure (2002) offer a different kind of explanation for the contrastive reading of *wa*. On their account, the availability of the contrastive interpretation depends on the *wa*-phrase occupying a non-clause-initial position. However, as many examples in this article show, the interpretation is not limited to clause-medial positions. In addition, their account predicts all non-clause-initial *wa*-phrase to be contrastive, which we have seen in (5b) and will see in Section 5, is also incorrect.

Firstly, the object in the answer to a question like (32) can be a contrastive *wa*-phrase in-situ. As (33b) shows however, the *wa*-phrase cannot be fronted.

- (32) 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?’
- (33) a. JOHN-GA 3-NIN-WA tasuketa
 John-nom 3-cl.-wa rescued
 ‘John rescued at least three people.’
 b. #3-NIN-WA JOHN-GA 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 (33a) is a contrastive topic. The sentence is not about the *wa*-phrase. It does not mean ‘as for at least three people, John rescued them.’ The example in (33b) is felicitous if *3-nin* ‘three people’ referred to specific three people who may be salient in the discourse. In this case, however, the statement must be about specific three people. Considering that topics must usually be specific, 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 (see also footnote 8).

Secondly, it is possible to mark an item with *wa* when it is explicitly contrasted with another salient item. In (34), the verb is stressed and marked with *wa* in each conjunct. As shown in (34b), the verbs cannot be moved to clause-initial position in either of the conjuncts.¹²

- (34) a. John-ga sono 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 sono 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
 ‘John bought that book, but he didn’t read it there.’

The final context exemplifies a further peculiar property of contrastive *wa*, namely that it can project the contrastive interpretation to a larger constituent. In the following example, the subject in the first conjunct *ame* ‘rain’ is marked with contrastive *wa* and in the second conjunct, the object *kasa* ‘umbrella’ is marked with contrastive *wa*. (The example is modified from one cited in Kuno (1973: 46) attributed to Minoru Nakau (p.c.)) The interpretation here is not that rain is contrasted with an umbrella. It is also not that the first conjunct is about rain and the second conjunct is about an umbrella. Rather, the events described by the two conjuncts are contrasted with each other. Again, as (35b) demonstrates clearly, this context does not permit the *wa*-phrase in the second conjunct to move to clause-initial position.

- (35) a. [AME-WA hutteita-ga] [John-ga KASA-WA motteikanakatta] (hanasi)
 rain-wa falling-but John-nom umbrella-wa bring-went-not (story)
 ‘(The story that) It was raining, but John did not bring an umbrella.’

¹² The infelicity of the example in (34b) cannot be reduced to the idea that verbs are moved into phrasal positions. See Vermeulen (to app.) for discussion.

- b. #[AME-WA hutteita-ga] [KASA-WA John-ga motte-ika-nakatta] (hanasi)
rain-wa falling-but umbrella-wa John-nom bring-go-not.past (story)
‘(The story that) It was raining, but John did not bring an umbrella.’

In sum, contrastive *wa*-phrases in-situ are not contrastive topics: they simply indicate contrast of a particular type. Only those in clause-initial position have the topical interpretation.

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 structure cannot be part of the background of a focus, an observation that was initially noted by the Prague School (Lambrecht 1994, Hajičová, et al 1998).

(36) Information Structure

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

In relation to how such constraints may be represented in the syntax, it has been argued by Rizzi (1997), and more recently by Neeleman & van de Koot (2008), that the sister constituent of a fronted topic is interpreted as the comment, and that of a fronted focus is interpreted as the background.¹³

(37) Syntax – Information structure

- a. XP_i $\left[\begin{array}{cc} YP & t_i \end{array} \right]$
| $\underbrace{\hspace{1.5cm}}$
Topic comment
- b. XP_i $\left[\begin{array}{cc} YP & t_i \end{array} \right]$
| $\underbrace{\hspace{1.5cm}}$
Focus background

These two considerations together make predictions regarding the syntactic distribution of topic and focus, which are schematised in (38): a focus can follow a fronted topic, but a topic cannot follow a fronted focus. Neeleman & van de Koot show in detail that the predictions are borne out for Dutch. The cross-linguistic observation that topics generally precede foci also partially confirm these predictions (Hajičová, et al 1998).

(38) Syntax

- a. topic_i $\left[\begin{array}{ccc} YP & \text{FOCUS} & t_i \end{array} \right]$
b. *FOCUS_i $\left[\begin{array}{ccc} YP & \text{topic} & t_i \end{array} \right]$

At first sight, given the clause-initialness constraint in (3), it may seem that the prediction in (38b) would be untestable in Japanese and the above considerations regarding mapping between syntax-information structure in (37) are perhaps irrelevant for this language. However, close examination of examples involving embedded clauses demonstrates that the prediction in (38b) can be shown to be correct and hence the mapping considerations in (37) are relevant in Japanese. Furthermore, and more importantly, it is only those *wa*-phrases in clause-initial position that show the predicted distribution of ‘topic’ in (38).

¹³ Neeleman et al (to app.) makes a further modification of this mapping for Dutch. However, the mapping constraints in (37) are still maintained.

Let us first consider whether the prediction in (38b) is borne out. It is possible for a contrastive topic to appear in an embedded clause, as shown in (40), uttered in the context in (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, perhaps with the intention of finding out where Sue obtained 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 in a context of correction. Thus, in 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:¹⁴

(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
 Lit.: ‘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.’

The precise prediction that follows from the constraint in (37b) is that it should be impossible to combine the above two operations, as this will result in a structure like the following:

(43) *Foc_i [... [_{CP} Top ... t_i ...]]
└──────────┘
Background

The prediction is borne out. The example in (45), uttered in correcting the statement in (44), 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 a contrastive topic and is moved to initial position in the embedded clause.¹⁵

¹⁴ Some of my informants allowed long-distance movement of a focus also for answering a wh-question. Thus, for the latter group of speakers, the example in (42) without *tigauyo* ‘incorrect’ can be used as an answer to a question like to whom_i did Bill say that Mary gave this CD t_i in his shop?. (see Saito 1989, Miyagawa 2006 for the required contrastive reading on long-distance moved focus)

¹⁵ There is slight unnaturalness here that also arises from the repeated mentioning of *Bill-wa*. But this is beside the point being made here.

- (44) 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
 Lit.: ‘Bill_j said Mary gave this book to Jenny in his_j shop.’
- (45) Tigau-yo. Bill-wa sono hon-nituite-wa sira-nakat-ta-kedo...
 Incorrect-prt Bill-wa this book-wa know-not-past-but
 ‘No, Bill didn’t know anything about this 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
 ‘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:

- (46) ... 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.’

The following data show furthermore that contrastive *wa*-phrases in-situ are not subject to the syntactic distribution predicted for ‘topic’ in (38b). The utterance in (47) 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 (48). The contrast between (48) and (45) is unexpected if all contrastive *wa*-phrases were contrastive topics.

- (47) Bill_j-wa [_{CP} Mary-ga sukunakutomo3-NIN-NI-WA Jane-o kare_j-no mise-de
 Bill-wa Mary-nom at.least 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.’
- (48) ²Tigau-yo, SUE_i-O Bill_j-wa [_{CP} Mary-ga sukunakutomo3-NIN-NI-WA t_i
 Incorrect-prt, Sue-acc Bill-wa Mary-nom at.least 3-cl.-to-wa
 kare_j-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.’

The data considered in this section show that the particle *wa* alone is not sufficient in identifying contrastive topics, because contrastive *wa*-phrases that are not in clause-initial position are not topics: they are not necessarily interpreted as what the sentence is about; they cannot undergo movement and; they do not show the syntactic distribution of ‘topic’ that is predicted from considerations at the interface.

5 Non-contrastive *wa*-phrases in non-clause-initial position

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 optionally appear elsewhere in the clause under certain circumstances. The relevant examples are repeated below. The request in (49) forces the *wa*-phrase in the answers in (50) to be a non-contrastive topic, and

hence it must occupy clause-initial position. On the other hand, (51) provides a context in which the *wa*-phrase in the answer need not be clause-initial. The *wa*-phrase in (50b) therefore cannot be a topic. Moreover, notice that what precedes the *wa*-phrase in (52b) is a focus and we saw in the previous section that interface considerations disallow a moved focus to precede a topic. Considering that the context is the same for (52a) and (52b), I take the *wa*-phrase in the former, despite appearing in clause-initial position, is also not a topic. This section is concerned with the nature of non-contrastive *wa*-phrases in (52).

(49) sono inu-nituite osiete-kudasai (= (15)/(16))
 that dog-about tell-please
 ‘Tell me about that dog.’

(50) a. sono inu-wa kinoo kooen-de John-o kande-simatta
 that dog-wa yesterday park-at John-acc bite-closed
 b. #John_i-o sono inu-wa kinoo kooen-de t_i kande-simatta
 John-acc that dog-wa yesterday park-at bite-closed
 ‘The dog bit John in the park yesterday.’

(51) sono inu-wa dare-o kande-simatta no? (= (4)/(5))
 that dog-nom who-acc bite-closed Q
 ‘Who did the dog bite?’

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

5.1 Discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases

As discussed in Section 2, the request *tell me about X* is an explicit instruction to the hearer to introduce *X* as the topic of discourse. Thus, *sono inu-wa* ‘that dog-wa’ in (50) must be a sentence topic.¹⁶ I also argued that in a context such as (51)/(52), the subject in the answer, *sono inu-wa* ‘that dog-wa’ is not a sentence topic, but is an anaphoric item referring back to the discourse topic, which is established as such in the preceding question.¹⁷ That *sono inu-wa* ‘that dog-wa’ in the question is indeed a sentence topic can be seen from the fact that it

¹⁶ In footnote 3, I noted that there are other constructions which introduces a nominal and induces that nominal to be marked as a topic in the subsequent utterance. In Japanese too, Portner & Yabushita (2001: 279-80) report that marking a nominal with *aru* ‘certain’ privileges that nominal to be a topic in the continuation, although the initial *aru NP* is not a topic, as illustrated below:

(i) a. Kinoo keikan-ga aru otoko-o yobitomemasi-ta. Otoko-wa ... / ?Keikan-wa...
 yesterday policeman-nom certain man-acc call-and-stop-past. The man-top ... / the policeman-top...
 ‘Yesterday, a policeman called a certain man to stop.’ ‘The man... / The policeman...’
 b. Kinoo aru otoko-ga keikan-o yobitomemasi-ta. Otoko-wa ... / ?Keikan-wa...
 yesterday certain man-nom policeman-acc call-and-stop-past. The man-top ... / the policeman-top...
 ‘Yesterday, a certain man called a policeman to stop.’ ‘The man... / The policeman...’

¹⁷ In the English example in (9), corresponding to the Japanese example in (51)/(52), the subject in the answer is a pronominal, while in the Japanese example, a full DP is repeated. Pronominals in Japanese are not used in the same contexts as in English. They 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 expressed as an empty pronominal. This is indeed true, and discourse anaphoric items are most frequently not overtly expressed. However, there is evidence that an item must be mentioned twice before it can be pro-dropped (Clancy 1980). This is in contrast to English, where one mention licenses a subsequent use of a pronominal immediately. Thus, there is no awkwardness arising from the use of the full DP in (52), which would be present in (9b) if *Max* were repeated.

must appear in clause-initial position, if it has not been mentioned previously. If it has been previously mentioned, the accusative *wa*-phrase can precede it, indicating that it is a discourse anaphoric item. I will call such non-topical *wa*-phrases as *sono inu-wa* in (52) ‘discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases’. Further syntactic arguments for the distinction between topic *wa*-phrases licensed in contexts such as (49)/(50) and discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases appearing in contexts such as (51)/(52) will be provided in the next subsection.

The distinction between an item that introduces a discourse topic and an item that refers back to it is widely recognised. For instance, Lambrecht (1994) calls the former ‘reference-oriented topic’ and the latter ‘role-oriented topic’. Thus, one may wonder whether what I call ‘discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases’ are simply a different type of topic. However, it is unlikely to be the case. A non-contrastive *wa*-phrase can refer back to an item that is not a discourse topic. For instance, an object in-situ can be marked with *wa* in a context where it is not a discourse topic (see also Vallduví & Engdahl 1996). The example in (54) is uttered in response to the question in (53). Here, the object *sono hon* ‘that book’ is mentioned in the question, marked with the accusative marker *o* and it can be marked with *wa* in the answer without giving rise to a contrast.¹⁸

- (53) Mary-wa sono hon-o tosyokan-de kari-reta no?
 Mary-wa that book-acc library-at borrow-could Q
 ‘Did Mary manage to borrow that book in the library?’
- (54) Ie, Mary-wa kekkyoku sono hon-wa honya-de KAIMASITA.
 No, Mary-wa in.the.end that book-wa book.shop-at bought
 ‘No, Mary bought the book in the end at the bookshop.’

The claim that the object *wa*-phrase in the above example is not a topic receives further support from the observation that it cannot be fronted in the same context, as shown below. If it is not a topic, there is no trigger for it to appear in clause-initial position. Note that *Mary-wa* in the answer is a discourse anaphoric item, referring back to the sentence topic *Mary* in (53) and therefore need not appear in clause-initial position.

- (55) #Ie, sono hon_i-wa Mary-wa kekkyoku honya-de *e_i* KAIMASITA.
 No, that book-wa Mary-wa in.the.end book.shop-at bought
 ‘No, Mary bought the book in the end at the bookshop.’

5.2 Topicalisation and island

In addition to the positions in which they can appear, non-contrastive topics and discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases differ in the syntactic structure in which they are licensed. There is a

¹⁸ It is often reported in the literature that an object *wa*-phrase in-situ must bear an emphatic stress and be contrastively interpreted (Saito 1985, Fiengo & McClure 2002, Watanabe 2003, Heycock 2007, Tomioka 2007b). This indeed is true if the subject is marked with the particle *ga*, usually considered the nominative case marker:

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

Interestingly, if the subject is marked with *wa*, the discourse anaphoric interpretation of the object *wa*-phrase becomes available, as demonstrated by the example in (54). This is also the case when the subject is a contrastive topic: in responding to (53), (ii) can be uttered without a contrastive interpretation of the object *wa*-phrase:

- (ii) Hmm, Mary-wa doo-ka sira-nai-kedo, BILL-WA sono hon-wa denwa-de tyuumon-simasita.
 well, Mary-wa how-whether know-not-but Bill-wa that book-wa phone-by ordered
 ‘Well, I don’t know about Mary, but Bill ordered the book by phone.’

I have no insightful explanation for this parasitic nature of discourse anaphoric object *wa*-phrases, but what is important here is that the examples show that *wa* marks discourse anaphoricity.

general agreement in the literature that non-contrastive *wa*-phrases are base-generated in a left-peripheral position, binding a *pro* internally to the clause in their thematic position, as illustrated below.

(56) Topic_i [_{TP} pro_i]

This analysis explains the widely noted observation that a non-contrastive topic can be associated with a position inside an island, such as a relative clause.¹⁹ Thus, in the following example, *sono sinshi* ‘that gentleman’ appears in the matrix clause and is interpreted as the subject inside the relative clause. The presence of the empty pronominal *pro* can be seen from the fact that it is possible to overtly realise it (Perlmutter 1972, Kuno 1973, Saito 1985).

(57) sono sinshi-wa kyoo [_{TP}[_{NP} Ø_j [_{TP} pro / kare_i-ga kinoo e_j kitei-ta]
that gentleman-wa today he-nom yesterday wearing-Past
yohohuku]-ga yogoretei-ta.
suit-nom dirty-Past
‘Speaking of that gentleman, the suit (he) was wearing was dirty.’
(modified from Kuno (1973: 249))

Clause-initial contrastive topics, on the other hand, are generally assumed to undergo movement, based on evidence from facts involving Weak Crossover, resumptive pronouns and parasitic gaps (Hoji 1985, Saito 1985). Thus, they cannot be associated with a position internally to an island (Hoji 1985: 161):

(58) *(Susan zya nakute) MARY-WA_i [_{TP} John-ga [_{NP} [_{TP} e_j e_i/ kanozoyo_i-o butta]
(not Susan, but) Mary-wa John-NOM she-ACC hit
hito_j]-o sagasite-iru]
person-ACC looking.for
Lit.: ‘(Not Susan, but) Mary, John is looking for a person who hit (her).’

Considering that topics must be licensed in clause-initial position, it is plausible that the structure in (56) is associated with non-contrastive ‘topics’, rather than with non-contrastive *wa*-phrases in general. There appears to be no reason to assume that discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases are displaced from their thematic position, or that they bind an empty pronominal. If this is the case, we predict a contrast between non-contrastive topics and discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrases. It should be possible for a non-contrastive topic to appear in a non-thematic position and be construed as an argument inside a relative clause, as, given the structure in (56), such a structure can be base-generated. On the other hand, it should be impossible for a discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrase to appear in the same structure, as it can be achieved only by movement out of the relative clause in violation of the island constraints. The prediction is correct. In responding to the request regarding *sono kodomo* ‘that child’ in (59), *sono kodomo-wa* ‘that child-wa’ can indeed be construed as an argument inside a relative clause, as in (60).

¹⁹ Kuroda (1988), Sakai (1994) and Watanabe (2003) argue that topicalisation always involves movement. However, the possibility of linking to a position inside a relative clause is still considered to be a characteristic of (a construction that can feed into) topicalisation.

- (59) sono kodomo-nituite osiete-kudasai.
 that child-about tell-please
 ‘Tell me about that child.’
- (60) sono kodomo_i-wa kooen-de [_{NP} [_{TP} pro_i/kare_i-ga e_j kinoo katta] inu_j]-ga
 that child-wa park-in he-nom yesterday bought dog-nom
 John-o kande-simatta.
 John-acc bite-closed
 ‘As for that child, the dog that (he) bought yesterday bit John in the park.’

By contrast, the same sentence is infelicitous if uttered as an answer to the question in (61), which merely mentions *sono kodomo* ‘that child’, as illustrated in (62), even though it occupies clause-initial position.

- (61) [_{NP} [_{TP} sono kodomo-ga e_j kinoo katta]inu_j]-ga dare-o kanda no?
 that child-nom yesterday bought dog-nom who-acc bit Q
 ‘Who did the dog that the child bought yesterday bite?’
- (62) #sono kodomo_i-wa kooen-de [_{NP} [_{TP} pro_i/kare_i-ga e_j kinoo katta] inu_j]-ga/wa
 that child-wa park-in he-nom yesterday bought dog-nom/wa
 JOHN-O kande-simatta.
 John-acc bite-closed
 ‘The dog that the child bought yesterday bit John in the park.’

If all non-contrastive *wa*-phrases were non-contrastive topics and licensed uniformly in the syntax as in (56), their distribution in the syntax should not differ.

The above syntactic difference predicts furthermore that if a non-contrastive *wa*-phrase that appears in a position following a fronted focus is a discourse anaphoric item, as I have argued it is above, then it cannot be construed as an argument inside a relative clause. The prediction is borne out: the sentence in (63) is plainly infelicitous.

- (63) #JOHN_k-O sono kodomo_i-wa kooen-de [_{NP} [_{TP} pro_i/kare_i-ga e_j kinoo katta]
 John-acc that child-wa park-in he-nom yesterday bought
 inu_j]-ga t_k kanda.
 dog-nom bit
 ‘The dog that this child bought yesterday bit John in the park.’

Crucially, the example becomes acceptable if the non-contrastive *wa*-phrase preceded the fronted focus *John-o*, as demonstrated by (64), allowing the *wa*-phrase to occupy clause-initial position and be interpreted as a non-contrastive topic. An appropriate preceding request would be (59).

- (64) sono kodomo_i-wa JOHN_k-O kooen-de [_{NP} [_{TP} pro_i/kare_i-ga e_j kinoo katta]
 that child-wa John-acc park-in he-nom yesterday bought
 inu_j]-ga t_k kanda.
 dog-nom bit

In sum, like contrastive *wa*-phrases, non-contrastive *wa*-phrases that can appear in positions other than clause-initial position are not topics: they are discourse anaphoric items and they are not licensed in a dislocated position binding a clause-internal empty

pronominal.²⁰ The data considered in this section and Section 4 demonstrate clearly that the presence of the particle *wa* alone is insufficient in identifying a topic, contrastive or non-contrastive. As we saw, *wa* is associated with contrastive interpretation as well as discourse anaphoricity, independently of the topic status of its host item. Section 7 offers some remarks on why topic, discourse anaphoricity and the particular contrastive interpretation are marked with the particle *wa*.

6 One topic per clause

I now turn briefly to a further prediction of the constraint in (3), namely that there can be no more than one topic in a clause. It has often been noted that a clause in Japanese may contain multiple *wa*-phrases. A clause may contain multiple contrastive *wa*-phrases, but sounds a little awkward with more than one non-contrastive *wa*-phrase (Kuno 1973, Tomioka 2007a and Heycock 2007, cf. Kuroda 1988). In the following examples, the object *Bill-wa* is a contrastive *wa*-phrase, while the subject *sono inu-wa* ‘that dog-wa’ is a non-contrastive *wa*-phrase. The order between the two arguments can be reversed.

- (65) a. sono inu-wa BILL-WA moo sudeni kyonen kandeiru.
 that dog-wa Bill-wa already last.year bite-perf.
 b. BILL_i-WA sono 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.’

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), *sono inu-wa* ‘that dog-wa’ must precede the other *wa*-phrase *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 (35)).

- (66) sono inu-nituite osiete-kudasai
 that dog-about tell-please
 ‘Tell me about that dog.’
 (67) a. sono inu-wa BILL-WA moo sudeni kyonen kandeiru. (=(65a))
 that dog-wa Bill-wa already last.year bite-perf.
 b. #BILL_i-WA sono 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). *Sono inu-wa* here is a discourse anaphoric item.

²⁰ See Samek-Lodovici (2008) for a similar distinction between pre-focus items and post-focus items in Italian, where he argues the former are topics, while the latter are discourse anaphoric

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

Data involving relative clauses further confirm the claim that there can be no more than one topic per clause. The prediction is that a non-contrastive *wa*-phrase cannot be interpreted as an argument inside a relative clause if it follows a contrastive *wa*-phrase, but it can be if it precedes the contrastive *wa*-phrase. If it follows the contrastive *wa*-phrase, it must be a discourse anaphoric *wa*-phrase, which does not have the privilege to be associated with a position inside a relative clause. The following example shows this is true. *Sono onnanoko* ‘that girl’ is intended to be construed as the subject of *katteiru* ‘have’ in the relative clause, but the sentence is not acceptable.

- (70) #BILL_k-WA sono onnanoko_i-wa [_{NP} [_{TP} pro_i e_j katteiru] inu_j]-ga kinoo
 Bill-wa that girl-wa have dog-nom yesterday
 t_k kande-simtta.
 bite-closed
 ‘As for Bill_j, and speaking of that girl_i, the dog that she_i has bitten him_j.’

On the other hand, if *Bill-wa* stays in-situ, allowing *sono onnanoko-wa* ‘that girl-wa’ to occupy clause-initial position, the sentence becomes acceptable:²¹

- (71) sono onnanoko_i-wa [_{NP} [_{TP} pro_i e_j katteiru] inu_j]-ga BILL-WA kinoo
 that girl-wa have dog-nom Bill-wa yesterday
 kande simtta.
 bite-closed

The above data show clearly that a clause can contain no more than one topic, lending further support to the claim that a topic must appear in clause-initial position.

²¹ It is interesting to note that if *BILL-WA*, is fronted to a position following *sono onnanoko-wa* ‘that girl-wa’, as in (i), the sentence is infelicitous. The discussion in the main text suggests that this sentence should in fact be acceptable with *sono onnanoko-wa* being interpreted as a topic and *Bill-wa* as simply contrastive as in (65a).

(i) #sono onnanoko_i-wa BILL_k-WA [_{NP} [_{TP} pro_i e_j katteiru] inu_j]-ga kinoo t_k kande simtta.
 that girl-wa Bill-wa have dog-nom yesterday bite-closed

Considering that movement requires motivation, it seems reasonable to assume that a *wa*-phrase moves in order to be interpreted as a topic. This, in essence, is my claim that the clause-initialness constraint in (3)/(14) functions as a trigger for displacement of *wa*-phrases. In (i), *Bill-wa* has undergone movement, and should therefore be a topic, but it is not in clause-initial position. I argue that this is the source of the unacceptability. Some speakers find (71) marginal, but report a clear contrast between (i) and (71).

7 The function of *wa*

In the preceding sections, we have seen that *wa* marks non-contrastive as well as contrastive topics, discourse anaphoricity and a contrastive interpretation with a particular implicature. It therefore cannot be that the particle *wa* marks only topics. A question then naturally arises as to what the function of *wa* is. In this section, I offer some speculations on this issue. Specifically, I explore the idea that the effect of the particle *wa* marking these disparate interpretations is to do with the fact that without the particle, it would be difficult to distinguish various kinds of structures.

Let us first consider cases where a *wa*-marked item is a topic. Japanese does not have the phonological correlates of what Jackendoff (1972) calls A-accent and B-accent found in languages such as English to help distinguish focus and (contrastive) topic: A-accent indicates focus, while B-accent (contrastive) topic.²² Thus, a sentence containing an object non-contrastive topic such as (72a) has the same intonation as a sentence in which the object has undergone A-scrambling to a position in front of the subject, such as (72b) (Ishihara 2001). The pre-verbal item, the subject *John-ga*, bears the main stress in both. Similarly, a sentence in which the object is a contrastive topic, such as (73a), has the same intonation as a sentence with a fronted accusative object, which is interpreted as contrastive focus, as in (73b). Here, the main stress falls on the object, with the rest of the sentence deaccented (Ishihara 2001, Tomioka 2007b). In each case, I suggest that the particle *wa* helps distinguish topics from their non-topical counterpart.

- (72) a. sono hon-wa John-ga yonda.
 that book-wa John-nom read
 ‘Speaking of that book, John read it.’
 b. sono hon-o John-ga yonda.
 that book-acc John-nom read
 ‘John read that book.’
- (73) a. SONO HON-WA John-ga yonda.
 that book-wa John-nom read
 ‘John read that book’ (Implicature: the speaker is not sure about other books).
 b. SONO HON-O John-ga yonda.
 that book-acc John-nom read
 ‘John read that book (and not another one).’

The same considerations extend to cases where *wa* marks the particular contrastive interpretation. More or less the same reasoning as for (73) above can be applied. When an accusative object is in-situ and stressed, the only interpretation available is that of contrastive focus. In order to have the particular contrastive interpretation typically associated with B-accent in English, some different marking is required and I argue that this marking is *wa*. The relevant examples are provided below, where the difference in the interpretation of the object is made explicit in the English translations.

²² Japanese does have what is known as prominence lending rise, which has some pragmatic effects (Oshima in press). However, it does not appear to systematically distinguish topic from focus. Hayashishita (2007) claims that Japanese does have the correlate of A-accent and B-accent, and they are realised by different locations within the unit of Noun + Case marker in which an emphatic stress may be placed. However, his generalization does not seem to apply to nouns that are lexically unaccented. In addition, he does not discuss cases of nouns marked by *wa*. If he maintains that the B-accent counterpart in Japanese is Noun + Case with a particular placement of an emphatic stress, it is unclear how he can explain similarities in the use of the B-accent and contrastive *wa*-phrases we observe in this article.

- (74) a. John-ga 3-NIN-WA tasuketa
 John-nom 3-cl.-wa rescued
 ‘John rescued at least three people.’
 b. John-ga 3-NIN-O tasuketa
 John-nom 3-cl.-acc rescued
 ‘It is (those) three people that John rescued.’

In each of the three cases considered in (72)-(74), the case-marked arguments are associated with a specific interpretation and *wa* is used in order to avoid that interpretation. Thus, in some sense, the distribution of *wa* can be seen to be regulated by the Elsewhere Condition (Kiparsky 1973 and much subsequent work). Simply put, the idea is that there is an opposition in the interpretation between a case-marked item and a *wa*-marked item when they appear in the same environment. My claim is that the case marker marks a specific interpretation and *wa* marks anything but that interpretation in the same environment. The specific interpretation associated with the case marker depends on the environment in which the item appears. Thus, in (72b), it is an interpretation that is associated with a A-scrambled object, in (73b), it is that of a fronted contrastive focus, and in (74b), it is that of contrastive focus in-situ.²³ In all these instances, *wa* is used to mark interpretations other than the ones associated with the case marker and because the interpretation associated with the case marker is different in each environment, *wa* marks disparate interpretations overall. In this sense, *wa* can be considered an ‘elsewhere marker’.

This idea receives initial support from instances where it marks discourse anaphoricity. It is well-known that a nominative subject in the matrix clause in Japanese disallows discourse anaphoric interpretation. It strongly favours a focal interpretation: it is either interpreted as focus or part of focus (Kuno 1973, Heycock 1993, Tomioka 2007a).²⁴ The point can be demonstrated with the following mini-discourse taken from Tomioka (2007a: 888). Here, the subject of the second sentence *inu* ‘dog’ is mentioned in the first sentence. It is therefore discourse anaphoric, and as indicated, it must be marked with *wa* and cannot be marked with *ga*. In terms of the idea being put forward here, *wa* is used on the subject in order to avoid the focus interpretation it would otherwise receive were it to be marked with the nominative case marker.

- (75) Kinoo uti-no mise-ni okyaku-ga inu-o tureteyatte-ita.
 yesterday my store-loc customer-nom dog-acc with come-past
 Inu-#ga/-wa akai tyokki-o kis-se-rare-tei-ta.
 dog-nom/-top red vest-acc wear-cause-pass-prog-past
 ‘Yesterday, a customer came to our store with a dog. The dog was wearing a red vest.’

²³ At present, it is not entirely clear to me what the precise interpretation is that is associated with sentences where the object has A-scrambled to a position above the subject. The difference between fronted contrastive focus and contrastive focus in-situ is a subtle one. Following Neeleman & van de Koot (2008), I assume that movement of a contrastive focus to clause-initial position marks the rest of the clause as its background, allowing for a transparent mapping between syntax and information structure, as hinted by the structure in (37).

²⁴ It is important to note that the reported interpretive restriction is not associated with the particle *ga*, but with nominative subjects in matrix clauses. Thus, objects of some stative verbs which appear with the particle *ga* are not necessarily interpreted as focus. I have argued elsewhere (Vermeulen 2005a,b) that the particle *ga* functions as a focus marker under certain circumstances. My claim in these works was that *ga* functions as a focus marker only when attached to left-peripheral items that can be realised with an alternative case marker or postposition. Such items include the possessor of a subject, some adjuncts and the subject of a stative predicate in multiple nominative constructions. The *ga*-marked subjects considered here cannot be marked with an alternative case marker or postposition. Thus, no issue arises in calling *ga*-marked subjects in the main text ‘nominative’ subjects.

Interestingly, in embedded clauses, a nominative subject need not receive a focus interpretation (Kuroda 1988, Heycock 1993, Tomioka 2007a) and in such cases, the use of *wa* is strongly disfavoured (modified from Tomioka 2007a: 889):²⁵

- (76) Kinoo uti-no mise-ni okyaku-ga inu-o turete yattek-ita.
 yesterday my store-loc customer-nom dog-acc with come-past
 Inu-ga/#wa akai tyokki-o kis-se-rare-tei-ta-node, warat-te-simatta.
 dog-nom red vest-acc wear-cause-pass-prog-past-because laugh-perf-past
 ‘Yesterday, a customer came to our store with a dog. Because the dog was wearing a red vest, I couldn’t help laughing.’

The above observation follows straight forwardly from the idea that *wa* is the elsewhere marker. In the matrix clause, where a nominative subject must be interpreted as focus or part of focus, the subject must be marked by *wa*, if it is to be interpreted as non-focus, which include both topic and discourse anaphoric. However, where the effect of the obligatory focus reading is suppressed, as in the embedded clause, the use of the elsewhere marker *wa* is no longer permitted to mark the same non-focus interpretation, as the case marker allows this interpretation.

In sum, the fact that the particle *wa* marks a set of seemingly disparate interpretations can be understood if the use of *wa* is viewed as an elsewhere case: *wa* is used in order to avoid the interpretation that is otherwise associated with the host argument were it to be marked by a case marker. Needless to say, further research is required to determine whether these speculations are on the right track.

8 Other compositional approaches to contrastive topics

It seems at this point instructive to compare my proposal with other recent analyses that share some similarities. In particular, I consider three that also adopt a compositional approach to contrastive topics. Firstly, Wagner (2008) proposes that contrastive topics in German and English can be decomposed into two aspects. 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):

- (77) [_{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*, or the sentence does not make sense. 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*, as shown below (Wagner 2008: 10). Without *only*, the likelihood will reverse and the use of *even* is infelicitous.

- (78) { The most poisonous snake frightens only Bill (least likely); average poisonous snake frighten only Bill (more likely); mildly poisonous snakes frighten only Bill (yet more likely);... }

²⁵ As noted in footnote 16, the use of *wa* on a discourse anaphoric object is much more restricted than on the subject. This could be related to the fact that an accusative object can be interpreted as discourse anaphoric. At present, it is not entirely clear to me what the difference is between a discourse anaphoric object marked with *wa* and one marked with *o*, the accusative marker. I leave this issue for future research.

Wagner argues that what is usually considered contrastive topic corresponds to the item associated with the focus operator with wider scope. Being a kind of focus, contrastive topic generates a set of alternatives (Rooth 1985, 1992). The ‘uncertainty’ implicature derives from the tune that is usually associated with a construction involving a contrastive topic and a focus, namely the combination of A-accent and B-accent and in English or the HAT contour in German.²⁶ In contrast, on the analysis being proposed in this paper, generation of a set of alternatives and the ‘uncertainty’ implicature are both part of the semantics associated with contrastive *wa*, while ‘aboutness’ is derived from the pragmatics. Thus, on Wagner’s account the two aspects of contrastive topic that are being differentiated are (i) generation of a set of alternatives and (ii) the uncertainty implicature; and on the account proposed here, the two separate aspects are (i) generation of a set of alternatives and the uncertainty implicature, and (ii) the aboutness interpretation.

One might wonder whether Wagner’s analysis can be carried over to Japanese, with contrastive *wa* corresponding to the tune implicating uncertainty, and the stress indicating its focal status. However, if contrastive topic is treated as a kind of focus, it is difficult to maintain the generalisations that hold of contrastive topics and non-contrastive topics. Firstly, it is unclear why ‘aboutness’ pertains to both types of topics. Focus is not usually interpreted as what the sentence is about. Secondly, and specifically for Japanese, it would be difficult to provide a straightforward account of the syntactic distribution of the two types of topics. They must both appear in clause-initial position. Moreover, if contrastive topics were a kind of focus, then it is surprising that they must occupy clause-initial position, while contrastive foci need not, a property which is demonstrated by examples such as (46) and (51)/(52).

Tomioka (2007b) 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 an emphatically 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 notion of ‘aboutness’ is associated with contrastive topics despite its focal status. However, his 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.

Finally, 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 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

²⁶ Wagner argues that what are commonly called B-accent and HAT contour do not always have the same instantiation semantically or phonologically. I refer the reader to Wagner (2008) for further discussion.

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 may simply be discourse anaphoric and they need not be interpreted as what the sentence is about. This point was most clearly illustrated by the example where an accusative object, that is not what the sentence is about, mentioned in the question is marked by the particle *wa* in the answer (see (53)/(54)). Moreover, they show different syntactic behaviour from non-contrastive topics: they need not appear in clause-initial position, and they cannot appear in a left-peripheral position and be construed as an argument inside a relative clause.

9 Conclusion

In this paper, I have provided a uniform account of contrastive and non-contrastive topics in Japanese: they are both interpreted as what the rest of the sentence is about and they are both licensed in clause-initial position. I have presented a number of arguments in support of this account. In the specific contexts that require contrastive or non-contrastive topics, the relevant *wa*-phrase must appear in clause-initial position and those *wa*-phrases that can appear in other positions are not topics: they have interpretive and syntactic properties that are different from their counterparts in clause-initial position. In terms of interpretation, 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. 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 in-situ cannot undergo movement to clause-initial position and they are not subject to distributional constraints that derive 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 bind an empty pronominal. One consequence is that the former are unable to appear in a non-thematic position and be construed as an argument inside a relative clause. The different interpretations associated with a *wa*-phrase are schematised below, repeated from (6):

(79)

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

A significant consequence of the claims I have made is that the particle *wa* is not a topic marker, contrary to the widely held assumption: it is insufficient in identifying topics, because it also marks interpretations other than topicality, namely discourse anaphoricity and contrastiveness. In an attempt to understand why the particle *wa* marks these disparate interpretation, I have suggested that this effect derives from the particle *wa* being an elsewhere marker. Case-marked arguments are associated with particular interpretations, such

as focus. Thus, in order to mark an argument as having any other interpretation, which includes discourse anaphoricity, topicality and a contrastive interpretation that is not that of contrastive focus, it must be marked with some other marker. My speculation is that the particle *wa* subsumes this function.

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