

CENTER FOR COGNITIVE SCIENCE

University at Buffalo, State University of New York

Wednesday, April 10, 2002

280 Park Hall

North Campus

2:00 pm –4:00 pm

“A Mismatch between Acceptability Judgment and Discourse Frequency – the Sentence Processing View of Internally Headed Relative clause and Quantifier Float in Japanese”

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The past syntactic studies have mostly been concerned with grammaticality or acceptability of a given sentence, and this tradition may be seen as reflection of a theoretical focus on "competence", rather than "performance". However, such a scope of study would make us unable to see a mismatch between speaker's acceptability judgment and discourse tokens, and consequently the theoretical significance of such observation. In this study, I will discuss two syntactic phenomena regularly studied in Japanese syntax - internally headed relative clause and quantifier float construction, and point out a serious discrepancy between speaker's acceptability judgment for the constructions and the observed range of discourse distribution, which have been either unnoticed or disregarded as mere performance issue. While the discourse tokens are expected to reflect the discourse function of a given construction, I suggest that the observed mismatch also reflects a processing ground, where cognitive focus of attention and availability of memory resources interplay to define processing complexity. Furthermore, the discourse and processing based study of the syntactic phenomena points to interplay of the intrinsic discourse function of a given construction and the processingly characterized sentence complexity, and thus predicts the different patterns of token distribution for the two types of construction.

**Refreshments will be available
Everyone is welcome!**

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<http://wings.buffalo.edu/cogsci/html/2002spring.htm>