

# Information Structure and Bare Nominals in Colloquial Japanese

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## 1 Introduction

In formal Japanese, an argument nominal must be accompanied by a particle (*ga*, *wa*, etc.). In colloquial Japanese, on the other hand, an argument nominal may be bare, or ZERO-marked ( $\emptyset$ -marked). While in many cases ZERO may alternate with (i) nominative-marking *ga* or accusative-marking *o*, or (ii) the information-structural particle *wa*, under certain configurations ZERO is preferred to *ga/o* or *wa*, and vice versa.<sup>1</sup>

- (1)      Watashi (wa) sandoitchi (o) kaimashita.  
          I        *wa* sandwich ACC buy.PLT.PST  
          ‘I bought a sandwich.’
- (2)      a. (In a library, pointing at a clock on the wall)  
          Are, ano tokei {#*ga*/?/?*wa*/ $\emptyset$ } tomatte ru.  
          oh that clock NOM/*wa*/ $\emptyset$  stop.GER NPFV.NPST  
          ‘Oh, that clock is not working.’

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<sup>1</sup> The less standard abbreviations in glosses are: ATTR = attributive; COND = conditional; DES = desiderative; DAUX = discourse auxiliary; DP = discourse particle; EVID = evidential; GER = gerund; HT = honorific title; INTJ = interjection; NPFV = nonperfective; NPST = nonpast; PLT = polite; VOL = volitional.

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- b. ('What is Ken like?')
- |             |              |          |          |       |         |     |
|-------------|--------------|----------|----------|-------|---------|-----|
| Aitsu       | {#ga/wa/??Ø} | majime   | na       | yatsu | da      | yo. |
| that_person | NOM/wa/Ø     | studious | COP.ATTR | guy   | COP.PRS | DP  |
- 'He is a studious guy.'

This work discusses information-structural conditions licensing and motivating *wa*- and ZERO-marking on argument nominals in colloquial Japanese. Additionally, it makes a proposal as to how *wa*-marking on adjuncts is regulated in both colloquial and formal registers.

## 2 *Wa*-Marking in Formal Japanese

Oshima (2021: e333) puts forth a principle along the lines of (3)—the *Wa*-Marking Principle (WMP)—to account for the conditions under which argument nominals in root environments are marked by *wa* (in its 'thematic', as opposed to 'contrastive', use)<sup>2</sup> in formal registers.

- (3) **The *Wa*-Marking Principle** (for argument nominals) [formal Japanese]  
 Let  $\alpha$  be a nonfocal, explicit argument of a given root clause.
- $\alpha$  is obligatorily *wa*-marked if it is the highest ranked on the argument hierarchy among the nonfocal, explicit arguments of the clause.  
 [exception] *Wa*-marking becomes optional when this condition holds but  $\alpha$  occurs within the domain of post-focal tonal reduction.
  - $\alpha$  is optionally *wa*-marked if  $\alpha$  qualifies as a contrastive topic (in Büring's 2003 sense).
  - $\alpha$  is not *wa*-marked otherwise.
- (4) **Argument Hierarchy**<sup>3</sup>  
 (major) subject (< minor subject) < dative object < accusative/nominative object

The WMP successfully accounts for the distributive patterns of particles seen in (5)/(6), without having recourse to the slippery notion of "aboutness topic".

- (5) ('Where did you buy your ticket?')
- Watashi {wa/#ga} chiketto o [konbini de]<sub>F</sub> kaimashita.  
 I wa/NOM ticket ACC convenience\_store at buy.PLT.PST  
 '[I]<sub>{wa/#NOM}</sub> bought [my ticket]<sub>ACC</sub> [at a convenience store]<sub>F</sub>.'
  - #Chiketto {wa/o} watashi ga [konbini de]<sub>F</sub> kaimashita.  
 ticket wa/ACC I NOM convenience\_store at buy.PLT.PST  
 '[I]<sub>NOM</sub> bought [my ticket]<sub>{wa/#ACC}</sub> [at a convenience store]<sub>F</sub>.'
  - Chiketto {wa/#o} [konbini de]<sub>F</sub> kaimashita.  
 ticket wa/ACC convenience\_store at buy.PLT.PST  
 '(I) bought [my ticket]<sub>{wa/#ACC}</sub> [at a convenience store]<sub>F</sub>.'

<sup>2</sup> Here, '*wa* in its contrastive use (contrastive *wa*)' is equated with those instances of *wa* that occur on a focus item (Oshima 2021: e321; see Oshima 2020 and references therein for the semantics of contrastive *wa*). This work focuses on thematic *wa*, which occurs on a ground (nonfocus) item. As will be discussed, however, the notion of contrast plays a significant role in the semantics of thematic *wa*, as well.

<sup>3</sup> A major subject refers to the canonically leftmost subject in the so-called 'multiple subject construction', and a minor subject the canonically subsequent one(s).

- (6) ('Who made this soup?')
- Kono suupu {wa/#o} [Suzuki]<sub>F</sub> ga tsukurimashita.  
 this soup wa/ACC S. NOM make.PLT.PST  
 '[Suzuki]<sub>F</sub> made [this soup]<sub>{wa/#ACC}</sub>.'

(7) illustrates the argument structures and focus/ground configurations of (5a–c) and (6). Subscript F and G stand for 'focus' and 'ground (nonfocus)'; the boldfaced items—the leftmost G-marked explicit arguments—are correctly predicted to be *wa*-marked by Clause (a) of the WMP.

- (7) (5a,b): {**watashi**<sub>G</sub> 'I', **chiketto**<sub>G</sub> '(the) ticket'}
- (5c): {*prog*, **chiketto**<sub>G</sub> '(the) ticket'}
- (6): {Suzuki<sub>F</sub>, [**kono suupu**]<sub>G</sub> 'this soup'}

In (8), *wa*-marking on the two object nominals is licensed due to their qualifying as contrastive topics in the given context.

- (8) ('When is it that Yumi read *Yukiguni* and *Kokoro*, respectively?')
- Yumi wa *Yukiguni* {wa/o} [shigatsu ni]<sub>F</sub> yonde, *Kokoro* {wa/o} [gogatsu ni]<sub>F</sub> yonda.  
 Y. wa Y. wa/ACC April in read.GER K. wa/ACC May in read.PST  
 'Yumi read [*Yukiguni*]<sub>{wa/ACC}</sub> [in April]<sub>F</sub>, and read [*Kokoro*]<sub>{wa/ACC}</sub> [in May]<sub>F</sub>.'

Unlike in formal Japanese (FJ), in colloquial Japanese (CJ), an argument may be ZERO-marked, instead of *wa*- or case-marked. With Hasegawa (1993), Kariyado (2004), and Nakagawa (2020), I adopt the view that ZERO-marking on argument nominals is to be classified into two types, which respectively correspond to what has been informally referred to as (i) 'omission of *wa* (*wa*-drop)' and (ii) 'omission of a case particle (case drop)'. For convenience—that is, without being committed to the existence of null markers in syntax—I will refer to the two types as  $\emptyset_{IS}$ -marking and  $\emptyset_C$ -marking, where IS and C stand for 'information structure' and 'case', respectively.  $\emptyset_{IS}$  can be seen as a null variant of *wa*, and  $\emptyset_C$  a null variant of a case particle.

- (9) Watashi {wa/ $\emptyset_{IS}$ } sandoitchi {o/ $\emptyset_C$ } kaimashita.  
 I wa/ $\emptyset_{IS}$  sandwich ACC/ $\emptyset_C$  buy.PLT.PST  
 'I bought a sandwich.'

### 3 The Choice Between *Wa* and ZERO ( $\emptyset_{IS}$ )

This section proposes and justifies a variant of the WMP for CJ that covers both *wa* and  $\emptyset_{IS}$ .

#### 3.1 The *Wa*/ZERO-Marking Principle

The key claim of Oshima (2021) is that (in FJ) *wa* typically marks the highest-ranked among the nonfocal, explicit arguments. In essence, *wa* indicates the groundhood (nonfocus status) of the targeted nominal. I propose that, in CJ, this function is split between *wa* and  $\emptyset_{IS}$ . Put conversely, the contrast between *wa* and  $\emptyset_{IS}$  is neutralized in FJ.

For the purpose of accounting for how the choice between *wa* and  $\emptyset_{IS}$  is regulated, I introduce two additional information-structural features, on top of groundhood and contrastive-topichood: (i) 'first mention' ([ $\pm$ FM]) and (ii) 'contrast item' ([ $\pm$ CI]). A nominal is [ $-$ FM] if it has already been mentioned in the current discourse; otherwise, it is [ $+$ FM]. [ $\pm$ FM] roughly corresponds to

Prince's (1992) 'discourse-new/discourse-old' distinction. The two oppositions are not completely aligned, however; while entities that are present in the discourse situation (e.g. the speaker) count as discourse-old, by virtue of being 'situationally evoked', only 'linguistically evoked' entities are [-FM]. A contrast item (CI) is an item referring to an entity that is contrasted or compared with one or more alternatives in the current discourse. The status as a CI is taken to be strictly weaker than the status as a contrastive topic (CT; Büring 2003). An item that is [+CT] is necessarily [+CI] as well, but not vice versa. The boldfaced items in (10)–(11) exemplify nominals that are [+CI] (but [-CT]). A semiformal definition of the feature [ $\pm$ CI] is given in (12).

- (10) (Watching a Yankees game on TV)  
 A: The Yankees are doing pretty well this year.  
 B: How are **the Mets** doing?  
 A: **The Mets?** **They** are having a tough time.
- (11)  
 A: I love video games.  
 B: Does **your girlfriend** play video games, too?  
 A: Nope. **She** is more like a sports lover.
- (12) Let S be a clause and X be an item occurring in S and denoting  $\alpha$ . X is [+CI] iff either of the following conditions holds:  
 a. (i) S is a declarative denoting  $P(\alpha)$  or a polar interrogative, imperative, or cohorative whose prejacent denotes  $P(\alpha)$ , and (ii) there is some alternative of  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , such that some proposition  $Q(\beta)$ , where  $Q$  is an alternative of  $P$ , has been evoked, or it is plausible that such a proposition is to be evoked, in the current discourse.  
 b. (i) S is a content or alternative interrogative that denotes  $\{P(\alpha), P'(\alpha), P''(\alpha), \dots\}$ , and (ii) there is some alternative  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , such that some proposition  $p \in \{P(\beta), P'(\beta), P''(\beta), \dots\}$  has been evoked, or it is plausible that such a proposition is to be evoked, in the current discourse.

I put forth (13) as a CJ counterpart of the WMP concerning nominative and accusative argument nominals (dative arguments will be discussed in Section 6);  $X_{IS}$  is posited as an abstract underlying form of  $wa$  and  $\emptyset_{IS}$ .

- (13) **The *Wa*/ZERO-Marking Principle** (for nominative/accusative argument nominals) [colloquial Japanese]  
 Let  $\alpha$  be a nonfocal, explicit nominative or accusative argument of a given root clause.  
 a.  $\alpha$  is obligatorily  $X_{IS}$ -marked if it is the highest-ranked on the argument hierarchy among the nonfocal, explicit arguments of the clause.  
 [exception]  
 $X_{IS}$ -marking becomes optional when this condition holds but  $\alpha$  occurs within the domain of post-focal tonal reduction.  
 [resolution rules]  
 (i)  $X_{IS}$  is resolved into  $wa$  if  $\alpha$  is [+CI].  
 (ii)  $X_{IS}$  may be resolved into either  $wa$  or  $\emptyset_{IS}$  if  $\alpha$  is [-CI] and [-FM].  
 (iii)  $X_{IS}$  is resolved into  $\emptyset_{IS}$  if  $\alpha$  is [-CI] and [+FM].  
 b.  $\alpha$  is optionally  $wa$ -marked if  $\alpha$  qualifies as a contrastive topic.  
 c.  $\alpha$  is neither  $wa$ -marked nor  $\emptyset_{IS}$ -marked otherwise.

The WMP for FJ can be seen as a simpler, or degenerate, variant of this *Wa*/ZERO-Marking Principle (WZMP), with  $X_{IS}$  being invariably resolved into  $wa$ . As a consequence of the WZMP,  $wa$ -marking (on a nominative/accusative argument) in CJ conveys (i) contrastiveness (in a relatively

weak sense) or (ii) an ‘old’ discourse status. This aligns well with the common suppositions in the literature (i) that (not only contrastive *wa* but also) thematic *wa* tends to induce a sense of contrast (Hasegawa 1993, Kikuchi 2006), and (ii) that *wa* tends to indicate givenness/familiarity (Niwa 2006: 299–301).

### 3.2 The Effect of Contrast

The supposition that the choice of *wa* over  $\emptyset_{IS}$  is favored when the nominal is a contrast item is motivated by data like (14); here, the Mets are evidently contrasted with an alternative (the Yankees), while the Yankees, at the point when it is mentioned, need not be taken to be contrasted with an alternative.

- (14) (Watching a Yankees game on TV)  
 A: Yankees {*wa*/ $\emptyset_{IS}$ } kotoshi wa zenzen dame da na.  
 Y. *wa*/ $\emptyset_{IS}$  this\_year *wa* totally bad COP.NPST DP  
 ‘[The Yankees]<sub>{*wa*/ $\emptyset$ }</sub> suck this year.’  
 B: Mets {*wa*/ $\emptyset_{IS}$ } doo desu ka?  
 M. *wa*/ $\emptyset_{IS}$  how COP.PLT.NPST DP  
 ‘What about [the Mets]<sub>{*wa*/ $\emptyset$ }</sub>?’  
 A: Mets {*wa*/ $\emptyset_{IS}$ } kentoo shite ru yo.  
 M. *wa*/ $\emptyset_{IS}$  fight\_well do.GER NPFV.NPST DP  
 ‘[The Mets]<sub>{*wa*/ $\emptyset$ }</sub> are doing well.’

I assume that in utterances like (15B) (see also (2b)) and (16), the purposes of which are to attribute a certain characteristic feature to some entity under discussion, are unavoidably associated with a sense of contrast, because a characteristic feature can be identified as such only through comparison. This makes *aitsu* in (15B) and *tetsugakusha* in (16) [+CI]; hence, they resist ZERO-marking.

- (15) A: Ken tte donna hito?  
 K. TOP what\_kind person  
 ‘What is Ken like?’  
 B: Aitsu {*wa*/ $\emptyset_{IS}$ } majime na otoko desu yo.  
 that\_person *wa*/ $\emptyset_{IS}$  studious COP.ATTR man COP.PLT.PRS DP  
 ‘[He]<sub>{*wa*/ $\emptyset$ }</sub> is a studious man.’
- (16) (‘I hear that Mari is dating with a would-be philosopher. What are philosophers like?’)  
 Tetsugakusha {*wa*/ $\emptyset_{IS}$ } kawarimono ga ooi yo.  
 philosopher *wa*/ $\emptyset_{IS}$  eccentric\_person NOM many.NPST DP  
 ‘[Philosophers]<sub>{*wa*/ $\emptyset$ }</sub> tend to be eccentric.’ (adapted from Kikuchi 2006: 15)

Kikuchi (2006) observes that the choice between *wa* versus ZERO on a first-person-referring expression may be influenced by the hierarchical social relationship between the interlocutors, a lower-ranked party tending to avoid *wa*. (17)–(18), adapted from Kikuchi (2006: 6–7), illustrate this point.

- (17) (A boss to his subordinate)  
 Boku {*wa*/ $\emptyset_{IS}$ } kyoo gogo kara kenchoo ni dekakeru kara, rusu-chuu  
 I *wa*/ $\emptyset_{IS}$  today afternoon from prefectural\_office DAT go.NPST because absence-during

nanika attara ...  
 something exist.COND  
 '[I]<sub>{wa/Ø}</sub> am going to the prefectural office this afternoon, so if anything happens while I'm away ...'

- (18) (A subordinate to his boss)  
 Ano, watashi {?wa/Ø<sub>IS</sub>} kyoo gogo kara kenchoo ni dekakemasu node,  
 um I wa/Ø<sub>IS</sub> today afternoon from prefectural\_office DAT go.PLT.NPST as  
 rusu-chuu nanika arimashitara ...  
 absence-during something exist.PLT.COND  
 'Um, [I]<sub>{?wa/Ø}</sub> am going to the prefectural office this afternoon, so if anything happens while I'm away ...'

Assuming that in (17)–(18) the first-person subjects are [+FM], the use of *wa* conveys that their referent, the speaker, is contrasted with some other entity, most plausibly the hearer. Consequently, the choice of *wa* implicates that some mention should also be made of the hearer's attributes or actions. Inquiring about the attributes or actions of a superior tends to constitute a face-threatening act. It appears that in the context of (18), the speaker likely avoids choosing *wa* in consideration of the addressee's face.

### 3.3 The Effect of the 'Already Mentioned' Status

In the exchange in (19), the interlocutors are solely interested in the whereabouts of Yamada, making the boldfaced nominals [–CI]. The choice of *wa* is unnatural with the first occurrence of *Yamada san*, while it is natural with the second. This illustrates the effect of the feature [±FM].

- (19) (On the phone)  
 A: Gomen, **Yamada-san** {??wa/Ø<sub>IS</sub>} soko ni iru?  
 sorry Y.-HT wa/Ø<sub>IS</sub> there DAT exist.NPST  
 'Sorry for bothering you, but is Yamada<sub>{??wa/Ø}</sub> there?'  
 B: Eeto, ... un, **Yamada-san** {wa/Ø<sub>IS</sub>} mada iru yo.  
 INTJ yes Y.-HT wa/Ø<sub>IS</sub> still exist.NPST DP  
 'Let me see, ... yes, [Yamada]<sub>{wa/Ø}</sub> is still here.'

To further illustrate, in (20) and (21) (see also (2a)), the subject nominals are most naturally construed as [+FM, –CI], resulting in the unnaturalness of *wa*. In these examples, the choice of *wa* is natural if some alternatives of the subject's referent (e.g. other kinds of food in the case of (20a)) have been, or are expected to be, evoked in the utterance context.

- (20) a. Kono chokoreeto {#ga/#wa/Ø<sub>IS</sub>} oishii ne.  
 this chocolate NOM/wa/Ø<sub>IS</sub> good.NPST DP  
 '[This chocolate]<sub>{#NOM/#wa/Ø}</sub> is good, isn't it?'  
 b. Miro! Ano saru {#ga/#wa/Ø<sub>IS</sub>} ki kara ochita yo  
 see.IMP that monkey NOM/wa/Ø<sub>IS</sub> tree from fall.PST DP  
 'Look! [That monkey]<sub>{#NOM/#wa/Ø}</sub> fell from the tree.'

(Onoe 1987, cited in Otani 1995: 288)

- (21) A, kono tokei {#ga/#wa/Ø<sub>IS</sub>} kowarete ru.  
 oh this clock NOM/wa/Ø<sub>IS</sub> break.GER NPFV.NPST  
 'Oh, [this clock]<sub>{#NOM/#wa/Ø}</sub> is broken.'

(adapted from Kai 1991: 120)

## 4 Case Drop ( $\emptyset_C$ )

In CJ, the nominative particle *ga* and accusative particle *o* can optionally be replaced with  $\emptyset_C$  ('case drop'). The preference for the retention/dropping of a case particle is influenced by various factors including (i) the degree of formality; (ii) the semantic predictability of the nominal; and (iii) the phonological features of the nominal (Niwa 1989, 2006, Fry 2001, Kurumada & Jaeger 2015). Here I discuss a handful of factors that seem to exert especially robust and systematic effects.

### 4.1 Factors that Hinder Case Drop

Two conditions that significantly degrade the acceptability of case drop can be pointed out. First, when an argument nominal is a part (or the whole) of the focus and occurs in a position not adjacent to the predicate, case drop tends to incur unnaturalness (Tsutsui 1983, Niwa 1989).

- (22) a. [Booshi no ue ni choocho {ga/ $\emptyset_C$ } tomatte ru yo]<sub>F</sub>.  
 hat GEN top DAT butterfly NOM/ $\emptyset_C$  land.GER NPFV.NPST DP  
 '[There's a butterfly on your hat]<sub>F</sub>.'
- b. [Choocho {ga/? $\emptyset_C$ } booshi no ue ni tomatte ru yo]<sub>F</sub>.  
 butterfly NOM/ $\emptyset_C$  hat GEN top DAT land.GER NPFV.NPST DP  
 '[There's a butterfly on your hat]<sub>F</sub>.'
- (23) ('What did you have for lunch?')
- a. [Gakushoku de]<sub>F</sub> [raamen]<sub>F</sub> {o/ $\emptyset_C$ } tabeta.  
 school\_cafeteria at ramen ACC/ $\emptyset_C$  eat.PST  
 '(I) ate [ramen noodles]<sub>F</sub> [at the school cafeteria]<sub>F</sub>.'
- b. [Raamen]<sub>F</sub> {o/? $\emptyset_C$ } [gakushoku de]<sub>F</sub> tabeta.  
 ramen ACC/ $\emptyset_C$  school\_cafeteria at eat.PST  
 '(I) ate [ramen noodles]<sub>F</sub> [at the school cafeteria]<sub>F</sub>.'

Second, when a nominative subject nominal is a narrow focus, case drop incurs unnaturalness (Takami & Kuno 2006: 212); the same does not hold for an object nominal.

- (24) ('What happened?')
- [Koppu {ga/ $\emptyset_C$ } wareta]<sub>F</sub>.  
 cup NOM/ $\emptyset_C$  break.PST  
 '[A cup broke]<sub>F</sub>.'
- (25) ('What broke?')
- [Koppu]<sub>F</sub> {ga/? $\emptyset_C$ } wareta.  
 cup NOM/ $\emptyset_C$  break.PST  
 '[A cup]<sub>F</sub> broke.'
- (26) ('What did you buy?')
- [Koppu]<sub>F</sub> {o/ $\emptyset_C$ } katta.  
 cup ACC/ $\emptyset_C$  buy.PST  
 'I bought [a cup]<sub>F</sub>.'

### 4.2 Argument Nominals that are Nonfocal but are not *Wa*/ $\emptyset_{IS}$ -Marked

Case drop is generally optional. That is,  $\emptyset_C$  generally can be replaced by an explicit particle without incurring serious unnaturalness, although it may affect the stylistic tone. However, with a

ground item that does not undergo  $X_{IS}$ -marking (*wa*- or  $\emptyset_{IS}$ -marking), dropping seems to be preferred. I assume that in (27), the focus consists of the adjunct phrase *kookoo ichinen no toki ni* and the affirmative polarity within the predicate.

- (27) ('I love this book. Have you read it?')
- Un, ore wa kono hon { $?o/\emptyset_C$ } kookoo ichinen no toki ni yonda.  
 yes I *wa* this book ACC/ $\emptyset_C$  highschool 1st\_year GEN time in read.PST  
 'Yes, I read [this book]<sub>{ $?_{ACC}/\emptyset$ }</sub> in my first year of high school.'

Note that ground argument nominals that do not undergo  $X_{IS}$ -marking are quite rare, present only in a clause containing multiple explicit ground argument nominals, as in (5a) and (8).

## 5 The Offer Construction

It has been argued so far that a bare argument nominal in CJ corresponds either to (i) a *wa*-marked nominal or (ii) a case-marked nominal in a formal rendition of the same sentence. There is one environment, however, in which (what appears to be) a bare object nominal robustly resists a case particle as well as *wa*. This happens in sentences like (28a–b), which (i) take the form of an interrogative with an implicit second-person subject, but (ii) are used to carry out an indirect speech act of offering (Hasegawa 1993: 165, Kato 1997: 66–7).

- (28) a. (To a child in the living room)  
 Keeki { $\#wa/\#o/\#ga/\emptyset$ } tabetai?  
 cake *wa*/ACC/NOM/ $\emptyset$  eat.DES.NPST  
 'Do you want to eat some cake?'
- b. (To a house guest)  
 Koohii { $\#wa/\#o/\emptyset$ } nomimasu?  
 coffee *wa*/ACC/ $\emptyset$  drink.PLT.NPST  
 'Would you like some coffee?'

I suggest that (28a–b) are instances of a conventionalized construction—the 'offer construction', to give it a label—for which the occurrence of a bare object is a coded feature.

This supposition is corroborated by the observation that case drop is optional in (29), which formally resembles (28b) and carries a similar but slightly different illocutionary force ('cohortation' rather than 'offer').

- (29) Koohii { $\#wa/o/\emptyset$ } nomimashoo.  
 coffee *wa*/ACC/ $\emptyset$  drink.PLT.VOL  
 'Let's have some coffee.'

It is also worth noting that (28b) with *o* is fine if interpreted as a regular question inquiring about the hearer's plans, habits, and so forth (e.g. 'Will you drink some coffee (later)?' or 'Do you (regularly) drink coffee?').

## 6 Bare Dative Arguments

In FJ, a dative argument (i.e. an argument that is canonically marked by the particle *ni*) can be *wa*-marked, in which case the dative marker *ni* is usually retained (Oshima 2021: e329–30).

- (30) Haruna ni wa sandoitchi o agemashita.  
 H. DAT wa sandwich ACC give.PLT.PST  
 '(I) gave Haruna a sandwich.'

It has been recognized that in CJ, some but not all types of dative arguments can be ZERO-marked (Niwa 1989, Kato 1997). Dative arguments can be classified into three types, depending on their tolerance for ZERO-marking.

- (31) **Class A:** GOAL arguments of motion verbs such as *iku* 'go', *kuru* 'come', *hairu* 'enter', and *tsuku* 'arrive'  
 ⇒ Both  $\emptyset_{IS}$ -marking and  $\emptyset_C$ -marking are allowed.<sup>4</sup>  
**Class B:** Dative objects of two-place verbs such as *au* 'meet, see' and *gookaku suru* 'pass (a test)'; dative subjects of two-place verbs such as *wakaru* 'understand, figure out' and *aru* 'have'  
 ⇒  $\emptyset_{IS}$ -marking is allowed, but  $\emptyset_C$ -marking is not.<sup>5</sup>  
**Class C:** RECIPIENT arguments of three-place verbs such as *ageru* 'give', *watasu* 'hand', and *tsutaeru* 'communicate, tell'  
 ⇒ ZERO-marking is not allowed.

A nonfocal dative argument of Class A or B undergoes *wa*-marking and  $\emptyset_{IS}$ -marking in the same way as a nonfocal nominative/accusative argument does. When *wa*-marking takes place, the dative particle *ni* may either be retained or dropped. With a dative argument of Class C,  $\emptyset_{IS}$ -marking is at best marginal; when it is *wa*-marked, the dropping of *ni* is strongly dispreferred.

- (32) a. Tokyo {ni wa/wa/ $\emptyset_{IS}$ } raishuu iku.  
 T. {DAT wa/wa/ $\emptyset_{IS}$ } next\_week go.NPST  
 '(I) will go to Tokyo next week.' (Class A)  
 b. Sato-san {ni wa/wa/ $\emptyset_{IS}$ } senshuu atta.  
 S.-HT {DAT wa/wa/ $\emptyset_{IS}$ } last\_week meet.PST  
 '(I) saw Sato last week.' (Class B)  
 c. Haruna {ni wa/?wa/?? $\emptyset_{IS}$ } sandoitchi (o) ageta.  
 H. {DAT wa/wa/ $\emptyset_{IS}$ } sandwich ACC give.PST  
 '(I) gave Haruna a sandwich.' (Class C)

Dative arguments of Class C can be seen as being subject to the WMP, rather than the WZMP, not only in FJ but also in CJ.

$\emptyset_C$ -marking is possible only with a dative argument of Class A.

- (33) a. ('Where did Reiko go?')  
 Toshokan {ni/ $\emptyset_C$ } itta.  
 library DAT/ $\emptyset_C$  go.PST  
 '(She) went to the library.' (Class A)  
 b. ('Who did you see?')  
 Jun {ni/# $\emptyset_C$ } atta.  
 J. DAT/ $\emptyset_C$  meet.PST  
 '(I) saw Jun.' (Class B)

<sup>4</sup> GOAL arguments of three-place placement verbs such as *oku* 'put ... on' and *ireru* 'put ... in' exhibit a pattern similar to Class A but appear to be somewhat less tolerant of ZERO-marking.

<sup>5</sup> The *to*-marked (comitative-marked) object of a verb like *tatakau* 'battle, fight with' behaves like a Class B dative argument, too.

## 7 *Wa*-Marking on Adjuncts

In both FJ and CJ, adjuncts too may be *wa*-marked. Oshima (2021) remarks that (in FJ) (i) ground-hood does not suffice to trigger *wa*-marking on an adjunct (i.e., a nonfocal adjunct is not necessarily *wa*-marked), and (ii) an adjunct seems not to be required to qualify as a contrastive topic to be *wa*-marked (i.e., a *wa*-marked adjunct seems not necessarily to be a contrastive topic). (34) illustrates the first point, and (35) and (36) the second.

- (34) A: Shokudoo de nanika atta no?  
cafeteria in something exist.PST DAUX  
'Did something happen in the cafeteria?'  
B: Un, shokudoo de {??*wa*/Ø} [okyakusan ga koronde kega o shita]<sub>F</sub> rashii.  
yes cafeteria in *wa*/Ø customer NOM fall.GER injury ACC do.PST EVID.NPST  
'Yeah, it appears that [a customer fell and was injured]<sub>F</sub> [in the cafeteria]<sub>{??*wa*/Ø}</sub>.'
- (35) ('Where did you park your car?')  
Kyoo {*wa*/(?*Ø*)} chikatetsu de kita.  
today *wa*/Ø subway by come.PST  
'I came by subway [today]<sub>{*wa*/(?*Ø*)}</sub>.'
- (36) (Reading a travel brochure)  
Kono chiiki de {*wa*?/Ø} shoogatsu ni sanma no sushi o taberu ndatte.  
this region in *wa*/Ø New\_Year in saury GEN sushi ACC eat.NPST EVID  
'(It says that) [in this region]<sub>{*wa*?/Ø}</sub> they eat sushi with saury in the New Year.'

I suggest that in both FJ and CJ, *wa*-marking on an adjunct is controlled by the 'contrast item' ([±CI]) feature. (37) will complement the WMP and WZMP, extending their coverage to adjuncts.

- (37) **Addendum to the WMP/WZMP**  
Let  $\alpha$  be a nonfocal adjunct of a given root clause.  $\alpha$  is *wa*-marked iff it is a contrast item ([+CI]).

## 8 Summary

This work proposed some information-structural principles that account for conditions under which argument nominals are case-marked, *wa*-marked, and ZERO-marked in colloquial Japanese. It was argued that two types of ZERO-marking are to be distinguished: Ø<sub>IS</sub> and Ø<sub>C</sub>. Like *wa*, Ø<sub>IS</sub> marks a ground (nonfocus) item. The choice between Ø<sub>IS</sub> and *wa* is regulated by two pragmatic features: [±FM] (first mention) and [±CI] (contrast item). This implies that *wa* conveys a more elaborate information-structural meaning in colloquial registers than in formal registers. Ø<sub>C</sub> may replace the case particles *ga*, *o*, and *ni*; some conditions that affect the acceptability and naturalness of Ø<sub>C</sub> were discussed. Finally, it was suggested that the feature [±CI] plays a key role in accounting for *wa*-marking on adjuncts (in both colloquial and formal registers), too.

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