

Japanese: Syntactic structure

Consider the following data from Japanese. (A hyphen shows a morpheme boundary **inside** a word.) These examples are carefully chosen so that the word categories match those of their English translations (not always the case in reality!).

- What does the X-bar schema for Japanese look like: What is the position of the complement? Of the specifier?
- What other aspects of Japanese syntax look either similar to, or different from, English?

Note: Japanese main-clause subjects are often marked with the “topic marker” *wa* instead of the *ga* suffix that is shown here. As a consequence, some of the sentences shown below may sound a little odd without a prior conversational context.

[kono hon]
'this book'

[watafi-no hon]
'my book'

[kono hon de]
'with this book'

[watafi-no hon kara]
'from my book'

[kono hon-o katta]
'...bought this book'

[watafi-no hon-o jonda]
'...read my book'

[Aya-ga kono hon-o katta]
'Aya bought this book.'

[Ken-ga watafi-no hon-o jonda]
'Ken read my book.'

[Aya-ga kono hon-o katta ka]
'Did Aya buy this book?'

[watafi-ga [Ken-ga kono hon-o jonda] to omou]
'I think that Ken read this book.'