

1 Tomioka's pragmatic account

This is perhaps somewhat of a tangent, but...

Tomioka (2007) proposes that the origin of “intervention effects” is the placing of ATI (anti-topic items) in places they can't go. Also, he observes that embedding intervention effect configurations makes them sound better. He says “We certainly do not need, or even want, to articulate the topic-focus distinction recursively for every level of embedding.” But I think it's important for him that there not be one for any level of embedding where the intervention effect is ameliorated.

So, try this out. See if you can come up with evidence one way or another for whether there are embedded topics and foci. Note that a *quotation* could have a topic and a focus. So: “It's John who left” has *John* as a focus, and “Bill said ‘It's John who left’.” also has *John* as a focus, embedded, but it doesn't really count, because that “embedded” sentence is a main clause that Bill said. (Cf. “Bill asked ‘Will John leave?’”).

One way you can be sure you don't have a quotation is to use *binding*. I'll try to explain this, but the idea is: “Every student turned in her homework.” Here the homework is different depending on the student. And you can't say: “Every student asked ‘Is her homework difficult?’” really—it is trying to be a quotation but also trying to bind, and it won't work.

Ok, time's up. Have to print this and go.

- (1) To create a topic in English, you can use “as for X, ...”
- (2) To create a focus in English, you can use “it is X that...”
- (3) To embed one sentence inside another, you can use verbs like *say* or *think* or *believe*.
- (4) Can you create some test sentences (using the binding trick) to see if there can be embedded topics/foci?
- (5) What do you think, can there?

References

Tomioka, Satoshi. 2007. Pragmatics of LF intervention effects: Japanese and Korean wh-interrogatives. *Journal of Pragmatics* 39: 1570–1590.