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Variation of Cannonical Sentence Structure in Korean & Japanese Dialects & its Implication

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Abstract

The main purpose of this squib is to provide a new principled account for variation of canonical sentence structure in Korean and Japanese based on the linguistic data commonly observed in some dialects of Korean and Japanese. Unlike the English case in which Comp(lementizer) such as 'that' in an embedded clause freely drops as far as the ECP (Lasnik & Saito 1992)[1] is obeyed, some dialects of both Korean and Japanese show interesting linguistic data very different from those of English, thereby leading us to reasonably doubt the traditionally-accepted paradigm of the canonical sentence structure of CP for all languages. In this squib I propose, based on Korean & Japanese dialects and by developing the Minimal Structure Principle (MSP) (Bošković 1997, p. 25)[2], that the cannonical structure of a sentence is not fixed, from the beginning at all, to be one single maximal category, CP. Instead, it should be decided to be either CP or IP, based on the feature of [±markedness] and MSP, and the marked (or non-cannonical) embedded sentence needs to satisfy ECP for adjacency (or feature-licensing by the matrix verb in the MP terminology).

Keywords: *canonical sentence structure, comp(lementizer)-drop, Markedness, dialects, feature-licencing, ECP*

1. Introduction

English can drop the declarative complementizer *that* of the embedded sentence without causing any semantic difference, as is shown in (1) below:

(1) a. Tom knows that Mary loves music.
b. Tom knows ***e*** Mary loves music.

This phenomenon has been called "Comp(lementizer)-Drop". And (1b) was traditionally assumed to be derived from (1a) by Comp deletion. These kinds of evidence collected from many languages have led us to admit the cannonical structure of sentence as CP in generative grammar. Comp-Drop, however, cannot occur freely. Consider:

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(2) a. Tom knew *immediately* that Mary loves music.
b.*Tom knew *immediately* ***e*** Mary loves music.

When the adjacency relation between the matrix verb *knew* and the following embedded sentence is interrupted, here by the intervening adverbial phrase *immediately*, Comp-Drop is not permitted as shown in (2b). This observation has been generalized as an adjacency condition for Comp-Drop, and later explained by the Empty Category Principle (ECP).

(3) ECP: A trace must be properly governed. *(Lasnik & Saito 1992)*

(4) Proper Government[3]: α properly governs β iff
i) α is a lexical category (x^0), or
ii) α and β are co-indexed.

Korean and Japanese, which do not belong to the Indo-European language family to which English does, have also been assumed to have the same cannonical sentence structure of which the root category should be a CP. However, some dialects of both language are showing very interesting linguistic data which avoid the paradigm of cannonical sentence structure that has been maintained since early 80's. This squib deals with the problem in applying the cannonical sentence structure of CP to Korean and Japanese dialects, and suggests another way of thinking on "sentence structure". This new idea fits the core spirit of the current minimalist program better and can explain the diverse aspects of languages world-wide better.

2. Discussion

2.1 Data Analysis of Korean and Japanese Dialects

Korean and Japanese dialects take different positions on Comp-Drop. Consider:

(5) Korean

■ **Standard Korean (SK): Comp-Drop <u>not permitted</u>**

a. Maryi-ga John-εgε [CP [IP PROi Seoul-ε ganda]IP -ko]CP malhæ t-da.[4],[5]
Mary$_i$-Nom John-to Seoul-to go-would *Comp* said-DECL
'*Mary said to John that she would go to Seoul*.'

b.*Mary$_i$-ga John-εgε [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ PRO$_i$ Seoul-ε ganda]$_{IP}$ ***<u>e</u>***]$_{CP}$ malhæ t-da

■ **Colloquial Korean (CK): Comp-Drop <u>permitted</u>**

c. Mary$_i$-ga John-εgε [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ PRO$_i$ Seoul-ε ganda]$_{IP}$ -***<u>ko</u>***]$_{CP}$ malhæ t-da.
Mary$_i$-Nom John-to Seoul-to go-would Comp said-DECL
'*Mary said to John that she would go to Seoul*.'

d. Mary$_i$-ga John-εgε [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ PRO$_i$ Seoul-ε ganda]$_{IP}$ ***<u>e</u>***]$_{CP}$ malhæ t-da.

As shown in (5a & 5b), SK does not allow Comp-Drop at all, while CK does as in (5c & 5d). Next are the data from Japanese dialects. Consider:

(6) Japanese (Fukuda 2000, p39)[6]

■ **Standard Japanese (SJ): Comp-Drop <u>Not permitted</u>**

a. Mary$_i$-ga John-ni [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ PRO$_i$ Kobe-ni iku]$_{IP}$ -***<u>to</u>***]$_{CP}$ itta.
Mary-Nom John-to Kobe-to go Comp said
'*Mary said to John that she would go to Kobe*.'

b.*Mary$_i$-ga John-ni [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ PRO$_i$ Kobe-ni iku]$_{IP}$ ***<u>e</u>***]$_{CP}$ itta.

■ **the Western (Kobe) Dialect (KJ): Comp-Drop <u>permitted</u>**

c. Mary$_i$-ga John-ni [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ PRO$_i$ Kobe-ni iku]$_{IP}$ -***<u>te</u>***]$_{CP}$ itta. (□te = to□)
Mary-Nom John-to Kobe-to go Comp said
'*Mary said to John that she would go to Kobe*.'

d. Mary$_i$-ga John-ni [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ PRO$_i$ Kobe-ni iku]$_{IP}$ ***<u>e</u>***]$_{CP}$ itta.

SJ does not allow Comp-Drop as shown in (6a & 6b). It shows the same Comp-Drop pattern as SK (5a&b). On the other hand, KJ allows Comp-Drop as in (6c&d), which is parallel with the case of CK (5c & 5d). In both languages, CK & KJ are showing the same pattern as English with respect to Comp-Drop, while SK and SJ seems very reluctant to Comp-Drop. From the data contrast from dialects of both languages, we could observe that both Korean and Japanese also have Comp-Drop phenomenon as well as English. Then, now let's us try to find out if ECP, or more simply the adjacency condition, is also working for both languages.

2.2 Is ECP Working for Comp-Drop in Korean & Japanese Dialects?

As we identified above, ECP – or simply the adjacency condition – needs to be obeyed for Comp-Drop to occur in English, as 2a & 2b show. Is this also true for Korean and Japanese dialects? Consider:

(7) Korean

a. Mary$_i$-ga [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ PRO$_i$ Seoul-ε ganda]$_{IP}$ -***<u>ko</u>***]$_{CP}$ **<u>John-εgε</u>** malhæt-da.
Mary$_i$-N. Seoul-to go-would *Comp* John-to said-DECL
'*Mary said to John that she would go to Seoul*.'

b.*****Mary$_i$-ga [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ PRO$_i$ Seoul-ε ganda]$_{IP}$ ***<u>e</u>***]$_{CP}$ **<u>John-εgε</u>** malhæt-da.

Korean is an agglutinative language and is (relatively) free in moving constituents of a sentence to the front or back. (7a) shows that the PP "<u>John-εgε</u>"can move backward to the front of the matrix verb "malhæt-da". This movement is possible as far as the comp of the embedded sentence "-<u>ko</u>" is still there. However, the story becomes different for (7b). The adjacency relation between the embedded sentence of CP and the matrix verb "malhæt-da" is also interrupted by the intervening maximal category "<u>John-εgε</u>" like 7a. One difference between (7a) and (7b), however, is that in (7b) the complementizer is missing. Thus, based on the data (7a&b), we can say that when the comp is overt, ECP need not be satisfied, but when the comp is missing, then ECP is necessary to obey for Comp-Drop in Korean dialects as in English. Now let's take a look at Japanese data.

(8) Japanese

a. Mary$_i$-ga [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ PRO$_i$ Kobe-ni iku]$_{IP}$ -***<u>te</u>***]$_{CP}$ **<u>John-ni</u>** itta.
Mary-N. Kobe-to go Comp John-to said
'*Mary said to John that she would go to Kobe*.'

b.*Mary$_i$-ga [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ PRO$_i$ Kobe-ni iku]$_{IP}$ ***e***]$_{CP}$ **John-ni** itta

8(a&b) show that the Japanese situations are exactly the same as those of Korean dialects of (7a&b) concerning Comp-Drop. Based on the discussion so far, we may generalize that Korean and Japanese as well as English clearly have the Comp-Drop phenomenon, and in order for the Comp to drop, ECP needs to be obeyed in languages world-wide. In the next section, I will show some data from Korean and Japanese dialects which will lead us to become seriously suspicious about the validity of the cannonical sentence structure of CP which has been assumed to be part of the Universal Grammar long tome.

2.3 Is ECP not Working for Comp-Drop in Korean & Japanese Dialects?

Very different from the expectation, some Korean and Japanese dialects show data which lead us to think otherwise than the unified view on the cannonical sentence structure of CP. Consider the following data:

(9) The Eastern (Kyeongsang) Dialect of Korea (KK)

a. Ni-ga **Mary-hantɛ** [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ Tom-i mæ ŋha-da]$_{IP}$ ***e***]$_{CP}$ an-kæ t-na?

you-N. Mary-to Tom-N. stupid-be-DECL Comp not-said-Q

'*You said to Mary that Tom is stupid, didn't you*?'

b. Ni$_i$-ga [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ Tom-i mæ ŋha-da]$_{IP}$ ***e***]$_{CP}$ **Mary-hantɛ** an-kæ t-na?

Both (9a) and (9b) from Kyeongsang Province, the south-east part of Korea, do have a complementizer missing in each of the embedded clauses. (9a) obeys ECP. That is, the embedded clause is close enough to the matrix verb cluster "an-kæ t-na" (ECP obeyed), and, on top of it, the comple- -mentizer "-ko" is missing. This situation is not new to us, and Comp-Drop is permitted in Korean and Japanese in this situation as well as in English. However, a big question arises when we consider (9b): The ECP – or the adjacency relation between the embedded clause and the matrix verb cluster - is interrupted due to the intervening "Mary-hantɛ". And the complementizer "-ko" is missing. Comparison between (9b) and (7b) definitely shows that this datum (9b) makes a big problem against the mainstream view on the cannonical sentence structure of CP.

Take another problematic set of data from a Japanese dialect listed below as (10).

(10) The Hiroshima Prefecture Dialect (HJ)[7] (Shibata 1988, p612)

a. Omae **Sensei-ni** [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ Taroo-ga manuke-ja] ***e***]$_{CP}$ yuuta rooga?

you-N. teacher-to Taroo-N. stupid-be Comp said, not+Q

'You said to Mary that Tom is stupid, didn't you?'

b. Omae [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ Taroo-ga manuke-ja] ***e***]$_{CP}$ **Sensei-ni** yuuta rooga?

(10a&b) also show the same pattern as that of Korean data in (9a&b). To sum up the observation we got from (9a&b) and (10a&b):

(1) In some Korean and Japanese dialects, Comp-Drop occurs even under no ECP-satisfying situation without the complementizer realized.

(2) In some Korean and Japanese dialects, the embedded clause never occurs with a complementizer. If with the complementizer, the whole sentence becomes ungrammatical.

With these findings from Korean and Japanese dialects in mind, let's try to find out a solution to explain all the variations of Korean and Japanese.

2.4 A Simplified Sentence Structure Hypothesis

In order to explain the problematic cases of (9b) of KK and (10b) of HJ in which no complementizer is "permitted" in an embedded clause, let us start with a rather simplified assumption on the sentence structure, as defined in (11) below:

(11) An Assumption on a Simplified Sentence: "The complement clause that lacks a complementizer is IP rather than CP."

The idea of (11) sounds more suitable for the core spirit of the current theory of syntax called the Minimalist Program, which requires less dependence on theory-internal stipulative technicalia. So "minimize syntactic processes and minimize syntactic computations". Following this perspective, there is no reason for keeping a CP as the root maximal projection for the sentences with no complementizer appearing ever in cases like (9b) of KK and (10b) in HJ. This argumentation implies that a sentence without a complementizer appearing on the Comp position should be analyzed as an IP (or TP = T(ense) P(hrase) more recently).

This perspective is shared by Ž. Bošković, among others, in his Minimal Structure Principle (MSP) as described in the following:

(12) Minimal Structure Principle (MSP)[2] (Bošković 1997, p25)
: "Provided that lexical requirements of relevant elements are satisfied, if two representations have the same lexical structure and serve the same function, then the representation that has *fewer projections is to be chosen as the syntactic representation serving that function.*"

One point we need to be clear at this point of discussion is that all this discussion for the simplified sentence structure is not to exclude a CP clause at all. When a complementizer or any maximal categories appears on the Spec of CP, it should be analyzed as a CP as it used to be. What we are trying to argue here for is to find a more reasonable – or more minimal – way to analyze linguistic data on the generative tradition of syntax.

With this idea in mind, let us talk about the CP-IP decision matter. It would be reasonable for us to decide on the root category of a sentence based on how more often a CP or IP structure of a sentence is used. For example, when a CP structure is more often used than an IP structure, then the unmarked structure of a sentence will be a CP. When an IP structure is more often used for a sentence, then the IP will be an unmarked structure for the sentence and CP will become a marked structure for the sentence, if found. In the following section, we will apply the new idea on the sentence structure to the data from each of Korean and Japanese dialect.

3. Application of a New Theory

Applying the new idea we have been developing so far to each data of the Korean and Japanese dialects, the results will be as follows:

(13) Korean

(a) Standard Korean (SK):	CP(unmarked)	⇐ (5a,b)
(b) Colloquial Korean (CK):	CP(unmarked), IP(marked)	⇐ (5c,d)
(c) Kyeongsang Dialect (KK):	IP(unmarked)	⇐ (9a,b)

(14) Japanese

(a) Standard Japanese (SJ):	CP(unmarked)	⇐ (6a,b)
(b) Kobe Dialect (KJ):	CP(unmarked), IP(marked)	⇐ (6c,d)
(c) Hiroshima Pref. Dialect (HJ):	IP(unmarked)	⇐ (10a,b)

Now we do not maintain the term "cannonical sentence structure" any more. Instead, we have "unmarked and marked" sentence structures only. For SK, we have one sentence structure: the unmarked one of CP. This indicates that in SK, a sentence without a complementizer in an embedded sentence is automatically judged ungrammatical, regardless of moved or unmoved constituents. For CK, we have two sentence structures: unmarked (CP) and marked (IP). For KK, we have only one sentence structure of unmarked IP. For KK, a sentence with a complementizer occurring in the Comp position of the embedded sentence automatically results in being judged as ungrammatical. The sentence structures of Japanese dialects are showing the exactly same classification as those of Korean dialects.

Lastly, let's see how well the new theory on sentence structure can explain the grammaticality of somewhat complicated cases of CK. All data from CK are repeated as (15) below. Consider:

(15) Repeated Data from CK (= 5c&d, 7a&b)

(5c) Mary$_i$-ga John-εgε [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ PRO$_i$ Seoul-ε ganda]$_{IP}$ -***ko***]$_{CP}$ malhæt-da.
Mary$_i$-Nom John-to Seoul-to go-would Comp said-DECL
'*Mary said to John that she would go to Seoul.*'

(5d) Mary$_i$-ga John-εgε [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ PRO$_i$ Seoul-ε ganda]$_{IP}$ ***e***]$_{CP}$ malhæt-da.

(7a) Mary$_i$-ga [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ PRO$_i$ Seoul-ε ganda]$_{IP}$ -***ko***]$_{CP}$ **John-εgε** malhæt-da.
Mary$_i$-N. Seoul-to go-would *Comp* John-to said-DECL
'*Mary said to John that she would go to Seoul.*'

(7b) ***Mary$_i$-ga [$_{CP}$ [$_{IP}$ PRO$_i$ Seoul-ε ganda]$_{IP}$ ***e***]$_{CP}$ **John-εgε** malhæt-da.

(5c&d) have constituents unmoved from their original positions, while
(7a&b) have moved constituents.

First, lets consider (5c&d). In CK, the unmarked sentence structure is CP, and the marked one is IP. As mentioned above , the ECP issue (or the adjacency condition) does not apply for the unmarked sentence structure. So, 5c is judged grammatical. Concerning 5d which is marked case of sentence structure, the ECP issue takes place. But, here for 5d, the embedded clause without the complementizer is closely placed to the matrix verb "malhæt-da". So no violation takes place and 5d is judged grammatical as expected. *For (7a), it has a moved constituent. But it has a complementizer "-ko"* at the embedded clause: an unmarked structure in KK. So the interrupted adjacency relation between the embedded clause and the matrix verb does not cause any problem at all: another grammatical sentence. For (7b), it lacks a complementizer "-*ko*" , and has a marked structure. Accordingly, it needs to obey the ECP. But the ECP is impossible to obey due to the interrupted constituent "John-εgε". So it is correctly judged as ungrammatical.

4. Conclusion

It is true that since its introduction to the generative framework, the paradigm of "cannonical" sentence structure as CP for all languages has been considered to have many theoretical advantages over the other approaches especially within the perspective of Universal Grammar. However, it has also been true that it has failed to become the best shot in explaining some "seemingly" exceptional data not only from English itself but also from many other languages. The data from Korean and Japanese dialects discussed in this squib could be counted some of the "seemingly" exceptional data that may undermine the validity of the long-maintained theory of cannonical sentence structure. In this squib, I argued against the cannonical sentence structure of CP -only, and suggested an alternative approach, based on the syntactic feature of [±markedness] and ECP for adjacency condition (or licensing relation (Nakajima 1999, 335))[8]. I showed that the new theory developed here can well-explain every data in this squib.

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