ELLIPSIS AND PRONOMINAL REFERENCE IN JAPANESE CLEFTS

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This paper presents my work in progress on two problems related to Japanese clefts. I will argue that the relevant phenomena provide supporting evidence for the recent proposal by Oku 1998 and Kim 1999 that Japanese/Korean allow argument ellipsis.

It is pointed out in Hoji 1990 and Murasugi 1991 that Japanese clefts exhibit the two patterns shown in (1).

(1) a.
$$[CP[TP...e.]]$$
 no]-wa NP da (It is NP that ...) that-TOP is

b.
$$[_{CP}[_{TP} \dots e \dots]]$$
 no]-wa NP-Case/postposition da (It is NP-Case/postposion that ...) that-TOP is

The second is subject to Subjacency but the first is not. According to Hoji and Murasugi, the empty category in (1a) can be pro, while (1b) must involve empty operator movement to CP Spec so that the Case or the postposition in the focused constituent is licensed.

The two problems mentioned above both have to do with the fact that the CP expressing the presupposition in (1b) can be empty or pronominalized. Thus, (2) is possible with an appropriate discourse context.

The first problem concerns the fact that the empty subject as in (2) allows sloppy interpretation. An example from Takahashi 1994 is provided in (3).

(3) John-wa [zibun-ga naze sikarareta ka] wakatteinai ga, Mary-wa -TOP self -NOM why scolded-was Q know-not though -TOP

^{&#}x27;John doesn't know why he was scolded, but Mary knows why'

The second has to do with Nishigauchi's 1990 observation that apparent Subjacency effects are observed with some cases of question-answer pairs as in (4).

(4) A. [[Dare-ga dare-ni kaita] tegami]-ga mitukarimasita ka who -NOM who-to wrote letter -NOM found-was Q

'[A letter [that who wrote to whom]] was found'

B. #Tanaka-san-ga Nakasone-san-ni desu
-NOM -to is

'It is [Mr. Tanaka to Mr. Nakasone]'

The answer in (4B) is plausibly a cleft sentence with an empty CP subject.

Neither of these facts receives an explanation under the standard hypothesis that the missing CP subject is a pronoun without phonetic content (pro). I will argue that they provide evidence that the CP is subject to deletion, and consequently support the hypothesis of Oku 1998 and Kim 1999 that Japanese/Korean allow argument ellipsis. (3) allows sloppy reading as it can be derived by subject deletion. And (4B) violates Subjacency because the subject CP is generated prior to the application of deletion.

References

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