[Review]

Japanese Syntax in Comparative Perspective

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1. Introduction

The principles and parameters approach to syntax has led to an explosion of research in comparative syntax and deepened our understanding of Universal Grammar with many insightful results. Investigations of the Japanese language from a comparative perspective have also contributed to our understanding of Universal Grammar (see Fukui (1986) and Kuroda (1988), among others). However, as Mamoru Saito, the editor of this volume, correctly points out, “when it comes to comparative syntax, Japanese has been compared mostly with English (p. vii).” The volume under review contains ten chapters that provide detailed comparative studies of Japanese and various other languages including Chinese, Korean, Turkish, and the Dravidian and Indo-Aryan languages of India, which bring new insights into universals and variations among languages and inspire the reader to pursue new questions. The chapters can be divided into four sections based on topics (see Saito’s summaries of the chapters in the preface). Chapters 1, 2, and 3 discuss noun phrase structure, Chapters 4 and 5 discuss ellipsis, Chapters 6, 7, and 8 discuss movement dependencies, and Chapters 9 and 10 discuss non-nominative subjects. In this brief review, I will provide summaries of the ten chapters with some core examples discussed in each chapter and

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highlight some remarkable aspects of the volume.

2. Summaries of The Ten Chapters

In Chapter 1, “N’-ellipsis and the Structure of Noun Phrases in Chinese and Japanese,” Saito et al. provide a comparative study of Chinese and Japanese noun phrases, which resemble each other at first glance:¹

- (1) Laowang *de* che
 Laowang *de* car
 ‘Laowang’s car’ (Chinese; p. 1)
- (2) Haruki *no* kuruma
 Haruki *no* car
 ‘Haruki’s car’ (Japanese; p. 1)

(1) and (2) both involve a “modifying marker” before each head noun: *de* for Chinese and *no* for Japanese. Furthermore, (1) and (2) both show a head-final order with the head noun following the possessor. However, there are some important differences between Chinese and Japanese noun phrases, some of which are: (i) *de* cannot follow a nominal adjunct while *no* must follow a nominal adjunct and (ii) two arguments of a single noun cannot be followed by *de* while there is no such restriction with respect to *no*. Based on these and other differences including those concerning NP-ellipsis in the two languages analyzed under the DP hypothesis, Saito et al. argue that *de* in Chinese is D (Simpson (2002)) and *no* in Japanese is a genuine modifying marker, which is inserted by a language-specific rule to any element that does not bear Tense (Kitagawa and Ross (1982)). Saito et al. also show that numerals and relative clauses in the two languages involve a different syntax (see below). It is furthermore suggested that the value of the head-parameter (head-initial for Chinese and head-final for Japanese) is at least in part responsible for the observed differences.

In Chapter 2, “Number and Classifier,” Ueda extends Saito et al.’s (2008/this volume) hypothesis in the realm of number and classifiers. Neither Chinese nor Japanese represents number and both languages use classifiers extensively. The example in (4b) is adapted from Chapter 1.

- (3) a. gou
 dog
 ‘a dog/dogs’ (Chinese; p. 25)

¹ This chapter originally appeared as Saito et al. (2008).

- b. inu
dog
'a dog/dogs' (Japanese; p. 25)
- (4) a. san-ben shu
three-CL book
'three books' (Chinese; p. 34)
- b. san-satu no hon
three-CL no book
'three books' (Japanese; p. 12)

Despite these initial similarities, Ueda argues, following Saito et al. (2008/this volume), that noun phrases of the two languages are indeed different. First, based on the distribution of *yishang* 'more than' in Chinese and *izyoo* 'more than' in Japanese, Ueda provides new evidence that Classifier Phrases (CLP) dominate NPs in Chinese (Tang (1990)) while CLPs in Japanese are adjuncts to NPs (Saito et al. (2008/this volume)). This conclusion goes against the hypothesis that a Classifier Phrase (CLP) is equivalent to a Number Phrase (NumP) (Watanabe (2006)), which is assumed to dominate an NP universally; if a CLP were to correspond to a NumP, a CLP could never be realized as an adjunct. Furthermore, extending Li's (1999) analysis of the Chinese plural marker *-men* to the Japanese plural marker *-tati*, Ueda concludes that both Chinese and Japanese have NumP, which is distinct from CLP. Ueda suggests that NumP is present universally.

In Chapter 3, "On Chinese and Japanese Relative Clauses and NP-ellipsis," Miyamoto compares Chinese and Japanese relative clauses, taking Saito et al.'s (2008/this volume) analysis as a starting point. In Chinese, some relative clauses can be remnants of NP-ellipsis while others cannot. As discussed by Saito et al. (2008/this volume), there are relative clauses that can be remnants of NP-ellipsis, where a DP-internal NP is elided when preceded by an antecedent. (5) is adapted from Saito et al. (2008: 263), which is reprinted as Chapter 1.

- (5) [[Wo zuotian kanjian] de [_{NP} nanhai]] bi [[ni zuotian
I yesterday see de boy than you yesterday
kanjian] de [_{NP} nanhai]] geng youqian.
see de boy more rich
'The boy I saw yesterday is richer than the boy you saw yesterday.'
(Chinese; p. 52)

Here the NP *hanhai* 'boy' in the second conjunct can be elided, stranding a relative clause. Interestingly, some instances of Chinese relative clauses fail to be remnants of NP ellipsis. (6) is adapted from Aoun and Li (2003:

181).

- (6) *[[Ta xiu che] de [_{NP} fangfa]] bi [[wo xiu che] de
 he fix car de method compare I fix car de
 [_{NP} fangfa]] hao.
 method good

‘The way he fixes cars is better than the way I fix cars.’

(Chinese; p. 63)

Fangfa ‘method’ in the second conjunct in (6) cannot be elided, which indicates that NP-ellipsis is unavailable here. In contrast, Japanese relative clauses disallow NP-ellipsis altogether. (7) is adapted from Saito et al. (2008: 263), which is reprinted as Chapter 1.

- (7) *[[Taroo-ga kinoo at-ta] [_{NP} hito]-wa] yasasi-i ga,
 Taroo-Nom yesterday see-Past person-Top kind-Pres though
 [[Hanako-ga kinoo at-ta] [_{NP} hito]-wa] kowa-i.
 Hanako-Nom yesterday see-Past person-Top scary-Pres
 ‘The person Taroo saw yesterday is kind, but the person Hanako
 saw yesterday is scary.’ (Japanese; p. 82)

Miyamoto proposes a “hybrid” analysis that includes two types of relative clauses, of which only one type can be a remnant of NP-ellipsis. The relative clause in (5) is analyzed in terms of the head-raising analysis, where a relative head moves into a CP dominated by a DP (see Kayne (1994) and Simpson (2002)). Assuming that NP-ellipsis is allowed with the head-raising derivation, the acceptability of (5) is accounted for. On the other hand, the relative clause in (6) is analyzed as an adjunct to an NP. The relative clauses of this kind fail to be remnants of NP-ellipsis. Miyamoto assumes with Saito (1985) and Murasugi (1991) that Japanese relative clauses are TPs adjoined to NPs. Japanese relative clauses including the one in (7) thus fail to be remnants of NP-ellipsis (see Saito et al. (2008/ this volume)). It is also suggested that the difference between Chinese and Japanese in the availability of NP-ellipsis with relative clause remnants is reduced to the availability of the complementizer that is necessary for the formation of head-raising relatives.

In Chapter 4, “Argument Ellipsis, Anti-agreement, and Scrambling,” Takahashi examines cross-linguistic variations concerning the availability of *argument ellipsis*, which refers to a phenomenon where arguments are elided:

- (8) a. Taroo-wa zibun-no hahaoya-o sonkeisitei-ru.
 Taroo-Top self-Gen mother-Acc respect-Pres
 Lit. ‘Taroo respects self’s mother.’

b. Ken-mo ~~zibun-no hahaoya-o~~ sonkeisitei-ru.

Ken-also self-Gen mother-Acc respect-Pres

Lit. 'Ken respects self's mother, too.' (Japanese; p. 89)

Taking (8a) as its antecedent, (8b) allows the ellipsis of the object *zibun-no hahaoya* 'self's mother.' This analysis straightforwardly captures the availability of sloppy interpretation in (8b), where it is implied that Ken also respects Ken's mother, which is also available when the object *zibun-no hahaoya* 'self's mother' is not elided. Takahashi provides a detailed comparison of the two analyses that are proposed to explain the cross-linguistic distribution of argument ellipsis: the scrambling analysis, where the availability of argument ellipsis is tied to that of Japanese-style scrambling (Oku (1998)) and the anti-agreement analysis, where the availability of argument ellipsis is tied to the lack of syntactic agreement (Saito (2007)). Takahashi shows that (i) Turkish, which has both scrambling and subject-predicate agreement, blocks ellipsis of subjects when the latter takes place and (ii) Chinese, which does not have either scrambling or object agreement, permits the ellipsis of objects via argument ellipsis. The two observations are immediately accounted for under the anti-agreement analysis: agreement blocks argument (i.e. subject) ellipsis in Turkish while the absence of agreement allows argument (i.e. object) ellipsis in Chinese. However, the observations contradict the scrambling analysis because the hypothesis predicts that Turkish, which has scrambling, allows subject ellipsis, while Chinese, which does not have scrambling, does not allow object ellipsis. Takahashi therefore concludes the anti-agreement analysis is superior to the scrambling analysis. It is also suggested that subjects in Chinese, but not those in Japanese, agree with Tense based on the observation that Chinese, in contrast to Japanese, disallows subject ellipsis.

In Chapter 5, "A Comparative Syntax of Ellipsis in Japanese and Korean," Saito and An compare three instances of ellipsis (argument ellipsis, "sluicing," and NP-ellipsis) in Japanese and Korean.² Saito and An argue that the "sluicing" construction in both Japanese and Korean involves ellipsis of a presuppositional CP argument:

² This chapter originally appeared as Saito and An (2010).

- (9) John-un [_{CP} caki-ka way honnassnu-nci] molu-ciman,
 John-Top self-Nom why was.scolded-Q not.know-though
 Mary-nun [wai-i-nci] anta.
 Mary-Top why-Cop-Q know
 ‘John doesn’t know why he was scolded, but Mary knows why
 (he/she was scolded).’ (Korean; p. 122)

This sentence allows the sloppy interpretation where Mary knows why she was scolded, which indicates that (9) involves ellipsis. Saito and An argue with Saito (2004) that (9) involves ellipsis of the presuppositional CP of the cleft sentence, which is understood as another instance of argument ellipsis:

- (10) John-un [_{CP} caki-ka way honnassnu-nci] molu-ciman
 John-Top self-Nom why was.scolded-Q not.know-though
 Mary-nun [[_{CP} Θ_{pi} [_{TP} eaki-ka t_i honnan]—kes]-i
 Mary-Top self-Nom was.scolded Comp-Nom
 way_i-i-nci] anta.
 why-Cop-Q know (Korean; pp. 125–126)

The CP argument of the cleft construction is elided here. The availability of the sloppy interpretation naturally follows under this analysis because the interpretation is available without ellipsis in (10). Saito and An then consider some discrepancies between Korean cleft sentences and their “sluicing” counterparts and attempt to explain them in terms of LF-copying. Furthermore, Saito and An discuss a difference between Japanese and Korean in the availability of NP-ellipsis and argue that the difference follows from a variation in the rule that assigns genitive Case to elements within nominals.

In Chapter 6, “A Comparative Approach to Japanese Postposing,” Takano discusses postposing in Japanese and Turkish, where elements are placed after a verb ((12b) is adapted from Kornfilt (1997: 206)):

- (11) a. Ken-ga Masao-ni hon-o age-ta yo.
 Ken-Nom Masao-Dat book-Acc give-Past Prt
 ‘Masao gave a book to Masao.’
 b. Masao-ni hon-o age-ta yo Ken-ga. (Japanese; p. 139)
 (12) a. Hasan Ali-ye kibab-ı verdi.
 Hasan Ali-Dat book-Acc gave
 ‘Hasan gave the book to Ali.’
 b. Ali-ye kibab-ı verdi Hasan. (Turkish; p. 139)

(11a) and (12a) are ditransitive sentences without postposing and (12b) and (11b) both involve the postposing of the subjects *Ken* and *Hasan*, respectively. Although there are some common properties between Japanese and Turkish postposing, there are some important differences between the two:

(i) Turkish postposing is sensitive to syntactic islands while Japanese postposing is not; (ii) postposing within embedded clauses is possible in Turkish but not in Japanese; (iii) postposing of DP-internal modifiers is impossible in Turkish while such postposing is possible in Japanese, and (iv) postposing of two elements originating from different clauses is possible in Turkish, but such postposing is not available in Japanese. Takano derives the above differences as well as some other properties by assuming that (i) postposing in Turkish takes place in syntax and (ii) postposing in Japanese can take place either in syntax or in the phonological component. Furthermore, Takano argues that syntactic postposing in Japanese is more restricted than that in Turkish because the complementizers in Japanese, but not those in Turkish, are affixes and need to be adjacent to Tense.

In Chapter 7, “Comparative Remarks on *Wh*-adverbials in Situ in Japanese and Chinese,” Fujii et al. closely examine *wh*-adverbials in Chinese and Japanese. In particular, an observation concerning island-sensitivity of *wei(-le) shenme* ‘for what’ and *weishenme* ‘why’ in Chinese is extended. Fujii et al. claim that a Japanese *wh*-adverbial *nande* provides new evidence for what they call the Noun Versus Adverb generalization (NAG) (Huang 1982), which states that “[a]n in-situ *wh*-phrase is island-insensitive iff it is (or contains) a *wh*-nominal (p. 182).” *Nande* has two interpretations when it is not contained within an island: it can be a *wh*-phrase for reasons or a *wh*-phrase for instruments. Significantly, *nande* is only interpreted as a *wh*-phrase for instruments within an island:

- (13) Ken-wa [[Mari-ga {a. *nande*, b. *donna doogu-de*,
Ken-Top Mari-Nom *nande* what instrument-with
c. *donna riyuu-de*} kai-ta] ronbun]-o hihansi-ta-no?
what reason-with write-Past paper-Acc criticize-Past-Q
a. ‘What is the thing x such that Ken criticized the paper that
Mari wrote with x?’
b. ‘What is the instrument x such that Ken criticized the paper
that Mari wrote with x?’
c. ‘What is the reason x such that Ken criticized the paper that
Mari wrote for x?’
(13a)=(13b); ≠(13c) (Japanese; p. 188)

The three *wh*-phrases in (13) are all contained in the relative clause island. Significantly, *nande* in (13a) can be understood as meaning *donna doogu-de* ‘with what instruments’ but not as meaning *donna riyuu-de* ‘for what reason.’ (13a) can thus be understood as (13b), but not as (13c). Fujii et al. claim that the instrumental *nande* is a PP consisting of a postposition *de*

In Chapter 8, “On Multiple *Wh*-Questions with ‘Why’ in Japanese and Chinese,” Takita and Yang discuss some differences between Chinese and Japanese with respect to *wh*-questions with ‘why.’ Chinese and Japanese are both *wh*-in-situ languages but there are some differences between the two. One such difference is illustrated below ((15) is adapted from Huang (1982: 545)):

- While *naze* 'why' can co-occur with another argument *wh*-phrase within a clause when the former precedes the latter, *weishenme* 'why' cannot co-occur with another *wh*-phrase within a clause. Takita and Yang argue that the above difference between Chinese and Japanese comes from the difference in the nature of covert *wh*-movement of 'why' in the two languages: while *weishenme* undergoes covert feature movement, whose landing site is C, *naze* undergoes covert phrasal movement, whose landing site is CP Spec (cf. Pesetsky (2000)). Assuming that a Q-operator is adjoined to C in both languages when there is an argument *wh*-phrase, the difference between the two languages is accounted for in the following way. As *weishenme* has to adjoin to C via covert feature movement, it competes with a Q-operator adjoined to C (Tsai (2008)). As heads do not allow multiple adjunctions, (15), which requires multiple adjunctions, is ruled out. On the other hand, there is no such competition in the case of *naze*, which moves to CP Spec. (14) is thus predicted to be acceptable.

(16) Tyaalaa tiin mula aahet.
he.Dat three kids be.Pres.Pl
'He has three kids.'
(Marathi; p. 229)

- (17) Maadzhi phajiti jhaali.
 I.Gen embarrassment.F.Sg became.F.Sg
 'I was embarrassed.' (Marathi; p. 229)

In contrast, as Kishimoto points out, while Japanese dative subjects have been studied in the generative literature, there seems to have been no claim that Japanese has a genitive subject construction that corresponds to (17). Kishimoto argues that Japanese also has a genitive subject construction like (17) based on his analysis of the following examples:

- (18) a. Mary-ni-wa sono koto-ga nayami-dat-ta.
 Mary-Dat-Top that fact-Nom worry-Cop-Past
 Lit. 'To Mary, that was a worry.'
 b. Sono koto-ga Mary-no nayami-dat-ta.
 that fact-Nom Mary-Gen worry-Cop-Past
 Lit. 'That was Mary's worry.' (Japanese; p. 232)

(18a) and (18b) convey the same meaning. However, the experiencer *Mary* receives dative Case in (18a) and genitive Case in (18b). Kishimoto argues that while the dative experiencer (18a) moves to TP Spec in overt syntax, the genitive experiencer (18b) moves to TP Spec at LF. A piece of evidence for this claim comes from an observation that both of the experiencer arguments can bind the subject-oriented anaphor *zibun* 'self.' The Indo-Aryan languages and Japanese, therefore, do not differ in the availability of non-nominative subjects.

In Chapter 10, "Dative Subjects and Impersonals in Null-Subject Languages," Ura provides a comparative study of the dative subject construction and the "impersonal" construction in Japanese and Dravidian languages. The central question addressed in this chapter is why languages like Malayalam and Kannada do not have dative subjects. Consider (19), adapted from Amritavalli (2004: 15).

- (19) Avan-ige aashcharya-Ø aay-itu.
 he-Dat surprise-Nom happen-Past(3.Sg.Neut)
 Lit. 'To him felt surprise.' (Kannada; p. 280)

It has been observed that neither the dative argument nor the nominative argument in (19) is in the subject position (i.e. TP Spec) (Amritavalli (2004)). Hence, (19) is an example of an "impersonal" construction, where there is no overt element in TP Spec, which is occupied by a null expletive. Ura argues that the dative argument in the impersonal construction cannot move into TP Spec because the dative experiencer receives inherent dative Case tied to the theta-role assigned by the complex head consisting of the verb and the nominative theme argument. Specifically, Ura argues

that inherent Case tied to a theta-role assigned by a complex head makes an NP inaccessible for A-movement and makes the NP an intervener for A-movement. In (19), the dative argument receives a theta-role and inherent Case from the complex head formed by *aashcharya* 'surprise' and *aay* 'happen,' which means that the dative argument is inaccessible for A-movement into TP Spec. Furthermore, the dative argument blocks A-movement of the lower nominative theme argument across the dative argument. The proposed analysis is independently supported by the impersonal construction in Japanese:

- (20) John-ni [_{SC} ketyuago-ga muzukasi-ku] kikoe-ta.
 John-Dat Quechua-Nom difficult-Inf sound-Past
 Lit. 'It sounds John(Dat) [Quechua(Nom) difficult].
 (To John, Quechua sounds difficult.)' (Japanese; p. 283)

Here dative Case is tied to the theta-role assigned by the complex head consisting of *muzukasi* 'difficult' and *kikoe* 'sound.' Ura claims that TP Spec in (20) is occupied by a null expletive.

3. Concluding Remarks

I hope to have demonstrated in the preceding pages how successful this volume is in showing the fruitfulness of comparative syntax of Japanese and languages other than English. In the remainder of this review, I highlight some aspects of the present volume that seem particularly remarkable.

First, the chapters in this volume are quite instructive in that they offer new perspectives on the nature of cross-linguistic variations by making explicit proposals on the points of the variations. For example, the points of variations between Chinese and Japanese discussed in this volume are: the value of the head-parameter (Chapter 1), the structural status of Classifier Phrase (Chapter 2), the (un)availability of a complementizer that is necessary for head-raising relatives (Chapter 3), the presence or absence of syntactic agreement with Tense (Chapter 4), and the nature of the covert *wh*-movement of 'why' (Chapter 8). Further examinations of these proposals should advance our understanding of cross-linguistic variations.

Second, the results of the chapters in this volume invite the reader to compare the results of this volume with those in other works on comparative syntax. One interesting research question in this respect concerns the status of nominal projection. One major conclusion in Chapter 1 is that both Chinese and Japanese have DP, which provides a principled account of the patterns of NP-ellipsis in the two languages. On the other hand,

based on a number of typological generalizations, Bošković (2012) argues that languages without definite articles like Chinese and Japanese lack DP (see also Fukui (1986)). It would, therefore, be interesting to ask how we can resolve these conflicting results (see Cheng (2013) and Takahashi (2011) for discussion). Another question concerns the cross-linguistic distribution of argument ellipsis. While it is argued in Chapter 4 that argument ellipsis is constrained by the presence or absence of syntactic agreement, Ohtaki (2014) argues that the cross-linguistic distribution in question is, rather, constrained by case morphology. Ohtaki (2014) argues that argument ellipsis is available only in languages with non-fusional case morphology (see Ohtaki (2014) for his critical evaluations of the scrambling analysis and the anti-agreement analysis and a theoretical explanation of his generalization). A comparison of Ohtaki (2014) and Chapter 4 would shed a new light on the cross-linguistic distribution of argument ellipsis (see also Cheng (2013)).

I recommend this volume to anyone interested in comparative syntax as well as those working on Japanese syntax.

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