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A Major Object Analysis of the so-called Raising-to-Object Construction in Japanese (and Korean)

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Abstract

Empirically, this talk is concerned with examples such as (1).

- (1) John-wa Mary-o Itariazin da to omotteita.
John-TOP Mary-ACC Italian be that thought
- (2) a. 'John believed about Mary that she was Italian.'
b. 'John believed Mary to be Italian.'

I have the following three goals in mind for this presentation.

- (3) a. To argue for and defend a Major Object analysis of the so-called Raising-to-Object (henceforth simply *RtoO*) Construction in Japanese (and Korean), as in Hoji 1991, according to which *NP-o* that corresponds to *Mary-o* in (1) is 'base-generated' in the matrix clause and is not part of the embedded CP at any stage of derivation, and (1) corresponds more closely to (2a) than to (2b), in terms of the relevant formal properties.
- b. To give a brief illustration of how we/I have been trying to conduct syntactic experiments, and what 'criteria' can be profitably placed in determining when a hypothesis is *falsified* and when it is *corroborated* (the latter not in the Popperian sense).
- c. To explore (further) consequences of the proposed analysis alluded to in (3a).

I have concrete things/results to say/report about (3a) and (3b), and feedback from the workshop participants would be much appreciated. As to (3c), I have specific issues I have been concerned

with, but without clear answers yet, and I am hoping to be able to make some progress in regard to those issues through the discussion at the workshop.

I will try to do (3a) by examining (i) what negative predictions the proposed analysis makes, in conjunction with an independent hypothesis, and (ii) how the predictions are borne out. An answer to (ii) brings us to (3b), whose main points have to do with when a hypothesis is to be considered as being *falsified* and when it is to be considered as being *corroborated* (not in Popper's sense). I wish to adopt the following 'criterion' for evaluating our hypotheses. A hypothesis is *falsified* if examples that are predicted to be unacceptable (under a specified interpretation) are judged acceptable (under the specified interpretation), and it is *corroborated* if it is not *falsified* and a sufficiently compelling degree of contrast is detected between (i) the examples that are predicted to be unacceptable and (ii) those that are not so predicted by virtue of being minimally different from the former in regard to the grammatical or formal factor that is hypothesized to be responsible for the status of the former. A concrete way to execute this idea will be introduced, along with a way to conduct relevant syntactic experiments in which judgments are solicited from informants.

The experiments whose results I will report in this presentation include those on (4).

- (4) a. the distribution of negation-sensitive elements (often referred to in the literature as "negative polarity items") in Japanese
- b. the effects of Proper Binding Condition in the 'scrambling construction' and RtoO

The result on the experiment on (4a) corroborates the Major Object hypothesis, and that on the experiment on (4b) fails to corroborate, if not simply falsifies, a hypothesis that RtoO necessarily involves syntactic movement of the relevant *o*-marked NP in RtoO and its trace is subject to the Proper Binding Condition.

In addition to providing support for the Major Object analysis of the so-called RtoO in Japanese (and arguably in Korean), I suggest in this talk that it is necessary for us to bind ourselves by the criteria of the sort alluded to above in regard to *falsification* and *corroboration*, if we want to be taken seriously by people outside the field of generative grammar, and perhaps more importantly by those in the neighboring disciplines and beyond, in regard to the claim that we are engaged in an empirical science *with progress in mind*.