

A Cross-Linguistic Study on SFPs---From the viewpoint of Cognitive Pragmatics

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Abstract. The utterance interpretation process is divided mainly into the restorative processes of explicatures and implicatures. The restorative process of explicatures consists of restoration of the proposition expressed and higher-level explicatures that reflect the speech act and the speaker's mental attitude towards the proposition[14]. Here I observe how a higher-level explicature is represented with SFPs in Japanese. I also make an analysis on Mongolian SFPs and Chinese SFPs and discuss that the same phenomena can be seen in Mongolian and Chinese.

1. Introduction

In this paper, I will observe how a higher-level explicature is represented with SFPs in Japanese. I also make an analysis on Mongolian SFPs and Chinese SFPs and discuss that higher-level explicature can be represented explicitly in Mongolian and Chinese.

2. Previous Studies

2.1. Explicatures and Higher-level explicatures

In RT, explicatures are considered as decoded linguistically and also inferred contextually. The propositional form of an utterance is its main explicature and carries the truth conditional content of the utterance. In order to recover a propositional form, an utterance must be decoded, a process which yields a logical form, and these pragmatic inferential processes contribute to the formation of the explicatures [4, 11].

Higher-level explicature is one of the main notions in Relevance Theory proposed by Wilson and Sperber. Following them, the utterance interpretation process is divided mainly into the restorative processes of explicatures and implicatures. The restorative process of explicatures consists of restoration of the proposition

expressed and higher-level explicatures that reflect the speech act and the speaker's mental attitude towards the proposition. Moreover, they also propose that descriptive use expresses truth or falsehood, and interpretive use is the method of interpreting the representation of an utterance or thought, which is based on truthfulness [3, 11, 14].

Let us look at the following example[3]:

(1) Bill: Did your son visit you at the weekend?

Mary (visibly happy): He did.

(2) a. Mary's son visited her at the weekend.

b. Mary says that her son visited her at the weekend.

c. Mary believes that her son visited her at the weekend.

d. Mary is happy that her son visited her at the weekend.

In the example given above, (2a) expresses basic-level explicature; (2b-d) express higher-level explicatures, but not all the higher-level explicatures in (2b-d) are necessarily communicated and only the assumptions that are essential for achieving the cognitive effect that agrees to processing effort are derived.

2.2 Explicitness of Japanese[12,13]

Uchida argues from the relevance theoretic view Japanese SFPs like *yo*, *ne*, *noda*, etc. contribute to higher-level explicatures.

(3) a. Ame ga futteiru *yo*.

'It is raining now + *yo*'

b. Kimi wa asu kuji kokoni kuru *nda*.

'Came here at nine tomorrow + *nda*'

Yo in (3a) has the function of communicating new information to the hearer. Although it is not concerned with the true-false judgment of the basic level explicature 'Ame ga futteiru,' it introduces various higher-level explicatures as shown below:

(4) a. I say that it's raining.

- b. I'm telling you that it's raining.
- c. I regret that it's raining.
- d. I'm delighted that it's raining.

And, *noda* in (3b) can express the following higher-level explicatures:

- (5) a. I tell you that you will be here at 9:00 tomorrow morning.
- b. I ask you that you will be here at 9:00 tomorrow morning.
- c. I order you that you will be here at 9:00 tomorrow morning.

Noda encodes procedural meaning and contributes to the recovery of higher-level explicatures.

Furthermore, Uchida proposes that higher-level explicatures in Japanese are always represented explicitly, but in English, it is not always necessarily so.

- (6) He is coming toward us.
- (7) a. *Kocchi e kuru yo.* (informing)
- b. *Kocchi e kuru zo.* (warning)
- c. *Kocchi e kuru ne.* (confirmation)
- d. *Kocchi e kuru sa.* (expectation)

Comparing English utterance (6), various SFPs can be added in (7) of Japanese to express various kinds of higher-level explicatures.

3. An analysis on Mongolian SFPs

Now let us move to the Mongolian cases, Mongolian being an SOV language, similar to Japanese. We saw that sentence final particles also appear in Mongolian, they are included in *sula* *#ge* (or free particles), and the free particles that appear at the end of a sentence are quite similar to Japanese SFPs. They have been treated as taking a very small role in a sentence and have only been given a lesser degree of grammatical explanation [1,5], and have not been analyzed in any theoretical approach.

I will present some cases and explain from the viewpoint of RT:

(8) a. Odo le yabuhu cag bolula *da*. (affirmation)

‘It’s time for leaving + *da*.’

b. Cimagi oci gezu hen helegsen *yum*? (questioning)

‘Who told you to go + *yum*?’

c. Bide margasi yabuhu ber bolula *siu*. (informing)

‘We decided to leave tomorrow + *siu*.’

d. Ta nadadu yaguma boduzai *ba*? (confirmation or guess)

‘You take it personally, right?’

Free particles such as *da*, *yum*, *siu* and *ba* in (8) can be regarded as expressing affirmation, questioning, informing and confirmation or guessing (rather than questioning) respectively. They may be integrated into an assumption schema form of *the speaker says/tells/asks/guess that P* (the propositional form) and express speech acts or propositional attitudes.

Bayantai suggests that most of the free particles are similar to Japanese SFPs. Let us see the comparative cases given by Bayantai [2]:

(9) a. Kondo machigaetara shochi shinai *zo*.

b. Ene odaga tashiyarabal zubsiyerehu ugei *siu*.

‘I’m not going to let you get away with making another mistake + FP.’

(10) a. Yoku benkyo shinasai *yo*.

b. Saidur cirmagarai *da*.

‘Study hard + FP.’

We can see in cases (9) and (10) that Japanese *zo* and *yo* correspond to *siu* and *da* respectively. According to the suggestion we know that Japanese SFPs *yo*, *ze*, *zo* encode procedural information and are closely connected with the restoration of higher-level explicatures. On the other hand, Bayantai points out that the free particles *siu* and *da* carry the properties of their translated corresponding words.

Thus, I believe these Mongolian free particles concern higher-level explicatures and can be interpreted as

follows:

- (9') a. The speaker says that the speaker is not going to let the hearer get away with making another mistake.
- b. The speaker is telling the hearer that the speaker is not going to let the hearer get away with making another mistake.
- c. The speaker informs the hearer that the speaker is not going to let the hearer get away with making another mistake.
- (10') a. The speaker is telling the hearer to study hard.
- b. The speaker advises the hearer to study hard.

It seems that the two same word-order languages i.e. SOV languages have the same phenomenon in which higher-level explicatures are represented explicitly with the sentence final particles in an utterance. However, in Chinese, which is an SVO language, we can also observe the same phenomenon observed in Japanese and Mongolian.

4. An analysis on Chinese SFPs

Palmer suggests, that Chinese sentence final particles *le*, *ne*, *ba*, *ou*, *a/ya*, *ma* express modality. The core point of modality is mood, and it concerns the speaker's cognitive, emotive attitude [10].

Le currently relevant state

ne response to questions

ba solicit agreement

ou friendly warning

a/ya reduce forcefulness

ma question

Let us observe some associated examples:

(11)¹ a. Tāmen yǒu sān tiáo niú *ne*.

¹ If we follow the standard way of Chinese tone attachment to pinyin, *yoǔ*, *san*, *Wo*, *he* and *bei* should be corrected as: *yǒu*, *sān*, *Wǒ*, *hē* and *bēi*.

‘(Listen) they have three cows.’

b. Wo he bàn bei *ba*.

‘I’ll drink half a glass, OK?’

From case (11a), compared with its English parallel, we can see that the function of the sentence final particle *ne* is to draw the hearer’s attention or to urge the hearer to listen to the speaker; in other words, *ne* emphasizes what is said. On the other hand, *ba* in (11b) seems to function as asking a person’s opinion or expressing confirmation.

Thus, we can understand (11a) and (11b) in the same sense as (12a) and (12b) respectively given below:

(12) a. I am telling you that they have three cows.

b. I am asking you if I could drink half a glass.

Chinese carries the same basic word order of SVO as English and that diverseness can also be seen between their sentence constituents; that is, postpositional items like sentence final particles appear in Chinese, but not in their corresponding English sentences. In Chinese, these tonal particles are usually uttered at the end of the sentence; they are regarded as meaningless, but considered as providing the pragmatic effect to the utterance by easing the tone of the utterance. Let us focus our main concentration on the items that appear at the end of the sentences in Chinese [7]:

(13) Tā bù tóng yì *ma*?

(14) Tā bù tóng yì *ba*?

(15) Tā bù tóng yì *ne*?

the tonal particles in Chinese can be added at the end of the utterance to express certain tones,

All of the utterances in (13)-(15), although having the tone of an interrogative, show the tones differently. That is, (13) shows purely a tone of doubt, (14) shows the tone of lacking confidence, (15) carries the hypothetical tone of “if so”. If we convert (13)-(15) into English (13’)-(15’), we get the following result:

(13’) He doesn’t agree *ma*?

(14’) He doesn’t agree *ba*?

(15') He doesn't agree *ne*?

If we delete the final particles *ma*, *ba* and *ne* from each sentence, they will become the same interrogative: "Doesn't he agree?", and thus all of the examples are viewed as merely the same simple interrogative. On this occasion we cannot distinguish among them. But doubtlessly, each of the utterances still carries the tone of an interrogative.

On the other hand, while the final particles *ma*, *ba* and *ne* are added at the end of the utterance, (13)-(15) can be interpreted as (13'')-(15'') respectively:

(13'') a. I am asking you if he doesn't agree.

b. I am asking you whether he agrees or not.

(14'') a. I believe that he doesn't agree.

b. I think he does not agree.

(15'') a. I guess that he doesn't agree.

b. I am telling you that we cannot eliminate the condition that he does not agree.

Higashimori and Yoshimura suggest that mood indicators such as interrogatives and imperatives constrain higher-level explicatures. They also claim that the word order of statement, imperative or interrogative that represents the force of utterance perfectly carries the abstract characteristic of the informative intention of the speaker. In other words, the word order of the statement, imperative or interrogative shows a tendency in which the relevance is explicit, and it should be considered that those which represent the force of utterance encode the procedural constraint on the construction of higher-level explicatures [6].

Furthermore, let's analyze the following example:

(16) a. Tā bù shuō huǎng.

'He does not tell lies.'

b. Tā bù shuō huǎng *de*.

'He does not tell lies+ *de*.'

c. Tā *shi* bù shuō huǎng *de*.

'He(*shi*) does not tell lies+ *de*.'

(16a-c) carry the common truth conditional content that *he does not tell lies*. (16a) is a predicative sentence, the affirmative tone is weak, and it has a tendency of placing importance on denial/negation. In order to provide the affirmative tone that the judgment sentence carries, by making use of tonal particle *de* as in (16b), the meaning is expressed that the fact that *he does not tell lies* is the same both in the past time and at the present time [7]. However, in modern Chinese, *shi* is needed in a judgment sentence as in (16c); this can be emphasized further than in (16b), where the expression *shi* does not participate. Thus, either (16b) or (16c) can be interpreted in the tone of "be sure or doubtless", as below:

(16') a. I say that he does not tell lies.

b. I am telling you that he doesn't tell lies.

c. I believe that he doesn't tell lies.

SFP *de* here can be considered that contribute to a sort of speech act or propositional attitude information, which falls under the concept of higher-level explicatures.

5. Summary

In this paper, first I introduced the explicatures and higher level explicatures, and also observed how Japanese SFPs contribute to higher level explicatures. Then I mainly analyzed Mongolian SFPs and Chinese SFPs. In a word, SFPs are closely concerned with higher-level explicatures, whether they appear in an SOV language, i.e. Japanese and Mongolian, or in an SVO language, i.e. Chinese.

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