

Relative tense or tenseless: the case of Japanese present tense

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There has been a debate as to the structure of Japanese prenominal modifiers in expressions like *kuro-i neko* ‘black cat’. They can be analyzed as having a direct attributive structure or a relative clause structure.

- (1) a. [AP kuro-i] neko
b. [CP OP₁ [TP t₁ kuro-i]] neko

Researchers more or less agree that the relative clause parse is attested and the debate is whether the attributive structure is available in Japanese or not (see Kuno 1973, Nishiyama 1999, Shimoyama 2014 among others).

In English, this difference is detected in the ordering of the modifier and the modifiee as well as the presence of overt relative pronouns.

- (2) a. [AP black] cat
b. cat [CP which₁ [TP t₁ is black]]

These English structures also show that the former is tenseless whereas the latter is tensed.

In this talk, I examine the structure and interpretation of Japanese prenominal modifiers and argue for the position that prenominal modifiers are tenseless and that what is often assumed to be a morphological realization of the present tense on adjectives is not a relative tense. I also try to extend the analysis to verbal prenominal modifiers such as *ne-tei-ru neko* ‘sleeping cat’.

- (3) a. [VP ne-tei-ru] neko
b. [CP OP₁ [TP t₁ ne-tei-ru]] neko

Finally, I discuss unexpected differences between English and Japanese in their ability to co-occur with temporal adverbials.

- (4) a. the cat sleeping on the couch yesterday
b. * kinoo kauti-de ne-tei-ru neko
yesterday couch-at sleep-prog-pres cat

Kuno, Susumu. 1973. *The structure of the Japanese language*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
Nishiyama, Kunio. 1999. Adjectives and the copulas in Japanese. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics* 8: 183–222.

Shimoyama, Junko. 2014. The size of noun modifiers and degree quantifier movement. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics* 23: 307-331.

On the Nature of Control in Japanese

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Takano (2010) examines the weak crossover (WCO) phenomena observed in Japanese ‘control’ and claims that a movement theory of control, advocated by Hornstein (1998, 1999, 2001), Boeckx and Hornstein (2004, 2006), and others, best accounts for the phenomena in question. Of particular interest for the current paper is the fact that Takano’s analysis assumes that the trace/copy in the embedded subject position is relevant in calculating bound pronominal interpretation and WCO effects. We know independently, however, that the trace/copy in the embedded subject position in the typical control construction is to be ignored for the purpose of, for example, Condition A, as illustrated in the contrast between (1a) and (1b) (Landau 2003, 2013):

- (1) a. One interpreter each₁ seemed e_1 to have been assigned to the visiting diplomats.
b. *One interpreter each₁ tried e_1 to be assigned to the visiting diplomats.

Given this grammatical contrast, we are led to conclude that the Japanese ‘control’ Takano discusses may not be an instance of typical control.

In the current paper, under the assumption that scope ambiguity arises only with clause-mate QPs (May 1977), we first provide additional data that supports Takano’s claim that the trace/copy in the embedded subject position participates in scope interaction with other QPs within the embedded clause. Relevant examples are given in (2):

- (2) a. Nani-o₂ Hanako-ga Taro-to-Jiro₁-ni [e_1 t_2 koonyuusuru yoo(-ni)]
what-ACC Hanako-NOM Taro-and-Jiro-DAT buy C
susumeta no.
recommended Q
‘What did Hanako recommend to Taro and Jiro that they would buy?’
- b. Nani-o₂ Taro-to-Jiro₁-ga Hanako₁-ni [e_1 t_2 koonyuusuru yoo(-ni)]
what-ACC Taro-and-Jiro-NOM Hanako-DAT buy C
susumeta no.
recommended Q
‘What did Taro and Jiro recommend to Hanako that she would buy?’

In these examples, the WH-phrase *nani-o* is scrambled to the sentence-initial position, which Nemoto argues is an instance of A-scrambling. Although the judgment is rather delicate, distributive interpretation is easier to obtain in (2a). We analyze these and other examples under Watanabe’s (2000) derivational approach to scope determination (see also Miyamoto 2009), and conclude, following Takano (2010), that movement is involved in Japanese ‘control’.

Given the ungrammaticality of (1b), however, we propose an alternative account to Takano (2010), based on Kayne’s (2002) proposal for antecedent-pronoun relations. According to Kayne, the antecedent (*Hanako* in (3a)) is subject to movement of the type illustrated in (3b, c):

- (3) a. Hanako thinks that she is smart.
b. _____ thinks that [Hanako₁, she₁] is smart.

c. Hanako₁ thinks that [*t*₁, she₁] is smart.

First, the antecedent *Hanako* and *she* are base-generated as a constituent in the embedded subject position, as shown in (3b), and then, *Hanako* is raised to the matrix subject position, as illustrated in (3c). We argue that what Takano dubs ‘control’ in Japanese is realized with the complex given in (4), undergoing the same derivational steps:

(4) [antecedent₁, pro₁]

In short, Japanese ‘control’ is an instance of a covert pronoun located in the embedded subject position with its antecedent.

It has been argued (e.g., Akuzawa 2017) that Japanese ‘control’ makes use of a covert pronoun. The current proposal therefore might be taken as further support for this tenet of Japanese ‘control’, along with Takano’s (2010) finding that movement is involved in the construction in question. Notice that covert pronouns are not available in English, which in turn provides a means to account for the fact that the same derivation is not available in English.

Usage-based Construction Grammar and the Study of Language Variation and Change

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The history of Cognitive Linguistics (CL) dates back to at least the late 1970s (e.g., Lakoff 1977; Talmy 1978; Langacker 1979). In the late 1980s, a series of major works representing the theoretical advancement of CL were published (e.g., Lakoff 1987; Langacker 1987; Talmy 1988), and attention to this framework in linguistic research increased significantly. Subsequently, in the 1990s, the scope of CL expanded greatly, as research in the fields of functionalist typology (e.g., Croft 1991; Kemmer 1993; Bybee et al. 1994; van der Auwera and Plungian 1998) and historical linguistics (e.g., Heine et al. 1991; Traugott and Heine 1991; Hopper and Traugott 1993), as well as language acquisition (e.g., Tomasello 1995, 1999; Carpenter et al. 1998; Pine et al. 1998) was conducted based on the principles and assumptions of CL. In the 21st century, CL has undergone two important turning points. The first was the quantitative turn (Janda 2013), which signified a shift toward more objective research; while CL in the 20th century was dominated by discussions based on analysts' introspection, the quantitative turn led to a dramatic increase in quantitative research using corpora and experiments (e.g., Bencini and Goldberg 2000; Gries 2003; Hilpert 2006; Dąbrowska 2008; Gilquin and Gries 2009; Glynn and Fischer 2010; Boyd and Goldberg 2011). The second important change that has occurred in CL is the social turn (Harder 2010; see also Croft 2009). This represents a move toward understanding language not only from a cognitive perspective, but also from a social perspective.

In this talk, I will focus on the social turn which unfortunately is still not as well-established in CL as the quantitative turn. In order to emphasize the need for a social turn in CL, I will discuss the close relationship between the study of language variation and change and usage-based Construction Grammar (CxG) (e.g. Croft 2001; Goldberg 2006), one of the approaches that constitute CL (for details on this approach, see Croft and Cruse 2004: Chapter 11). Variation and change represent two fundamental aspects that characterize human language. Research on language variation and change has been most actively undertaken in a branch of sociolinguistics called "language variation and change (LVC)" or "variationist sociolinguistics" (e.g. Bayley 2013). In this presentation, I will argue that insights from usage-based CxG can also make an important contribution to the study of language variation and change. Importantly, the usefulness of usage-based CxG does not end with its contribution to language variation and change research. Usage-based CxG also has important theoretical implications for linguistic research as a whole. This is because the involvement of usage-based CxG in the study of language variation and change will enable a close connection between approaches concerned with the study of language use, such as usage-based CxG, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and typology, which in turn will facilitate the creation of a theory of language (Croft 2000, 2010).

Targeting in Language: Unifying Deixis and Anaphora

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This talk proposes that a single cognitive system underlies the two domains of linguistic reference traditionally termed anaphora and deixis. In anaphora, the referent is an element of the current discourse itself, whereas in deixis, the referent is outside the discourse in its spatiotemporal surroundings. This difference between the lexical and the physical has traditionally led to distinct theoretical treatments of such referents. We propose instead that language engages a single linguistic/cognitive system -- "targeting" -- to single out a referent whether it is speech-internal or speech-external. To outline this system:

As a speaker communicates with a hearer, her attention can come to be on something in the environment -- her "target" -- that she wants to refer to at a certain point in her discourse. This target can be located near or far in either the speech-external (deictic) or the speech-internal (anaphoric) environment. She thus needs the hearer to know what her intended target is and to have his attention on it jointly with her own at the relevant point in her discourse. The problem, though, is how to bring this about.

Language solves this problem through targeting. First, at the intended point in her discourse, the speaker places a "trigger" -- one out of a specialized set of mostly closed-class forms. English triggers include: *this/these, that/those, here, there, yonder, now, then, therefore, thus, so, such, yay, the*, personal pronouns, relative pronouns, and tense markers.

Next, on hearing the trigger, the hearer undertakes a particular 3-stage procedure. In the first stage, he seeks all available "cues" to the target. Such cues belong to ten distinct categories, representing ten different sources of information about the target. In the second stage, he combines these cues so as to narrow down to the one intended target and rule out alternative candidates. In the third stage, he maps the concept of the target he has found back onto the original trigger for integration with the sentence's overall reference.

This talk is based on the overview portion of a book -- *The Targeting System of Language*, MIT Press, 2018.