

# Pragmatics-Grammar Interface and Relational Noun Modifying Clause Constructions: Where and How Japanese, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, and Armenian Differ

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This study aims to investigate a noun-modifying clausal construction which hasn't received much typological attention, i.e. a "relational" Noun Modifying Clause Construction (NMCC).

"Relative clauses (RCs)" (e.g. (1)) have been a topic of intense scrutiny in linguistic typology since the 1970s, originally inspired by the seminal work (Keenan and Comrie 1977) on the NP accessibility hierarchy.

More recently, however, the notion of "General Noun Modifying Clause Constructions (GNMCCs)" was introduced into the field (e.g. Matsumoto 1997, Matsumoto, Comrie, and Sells 2017). A GNMCC is a single noun-modifying construction covering a wide range of interpretations including, but not limited to a "relative clause" interpretation. GNMCCs are known to be prevalent in the languages of East and Southeast Asia, but are also attested in other regions including Europe. The notion of GNMCCs enabled typologists to identify varying types of NMCCs wherein the interpretive relationship between its head noun and the modifying clause is more "oblique" than those traditionally identified as RCs.

Of particular interest are the subtype of NMCCs referred to as "Relational NMCCs" by Matsumoto (1997) such as (2) in Japanese. Relational NMCCs, which are abundant in Japanese, are characterized by the co-occurring head noun signaling a relational concept of varying semantic subtypes, e.g. "causal relation" (e.g. *gen'in* (the cause of X), as in (2), "temporal relation" (e.g. *asa* (the morning of day X), as in (3), and "spatial relation" (e.g. *mae* (the front side of X) ), as in (4).

The current study thus compares four languages that have been identified to possess relational NMCCs, i.e. Japanese (isolate), Korean (isolate), Mandarin Chinese (Tibeto-Burman, Sinitic), and Armenian (Indo-European), to explore the range and the nature of possible crosslinguistic variation.

Our investigation finds that the four languages differ in terms of their native speakers' acceptability of relational NMCCs. As previously observed, relational NMCCs of various semantic subtypes were judged to be acceptable in Japanese (see (2)-(4)), while the other three languages show the lesser degrees of native speaker acceptability toward relational NMCCs.

Among the three semantic subtypes, i.e. "causal" (e.g. (2)), "temporal" (e.g. (3)), and "spatial" (e.g. (4)), "causal" NMCCs tend to be accepted by the native speakers in all four languages, as shown in (2').

"Temporal" NMCCs such as (3), to be interpreted in the intended sense, need additional linguistic specification (e.g. *the next day, one night*) in some but not all languages, as shown in the contrast between Japanese/Armenian ((3), (3')) and Mandarin Chinese/Korean ((3''), (3''')).

Finally, "spatial" NMCCs seem to present a most complex cross-linguistic picture. In Mandarin Chinese, spatial NMCCs tend to be not judged acceptable (4'), while in Korean such NMCCs seem to require additional linguistic coding like the reference point locational noun (*cali* 'seat') (4''). In Armenian, some "spatial" NMCCs like (4''') are not deemed acceptable, but there seem to exist acceptable spatial NMCCs like (5).

This preliminary study argues that relational NMCCs, particularly of "spatial" and "temporal" subtypes, serve to highlight the differing manifestations of grammar-pragmatics interface between languages. In languages like Japanese, a wide range of spatial and temporal NMCCs are possible arguably owing to the extensive role of pragmatic inference helping to interpret semantically underspecified MCs. The role of pragmatic inference is more limited in other languages wherein semantically underspecified MCs receive

cross-linguistically differential acceptability judgements. This preliminary study thus calls for further investigations into relational NMCCs, which promise to shed light on the typology of grammar-pragmatics interface.

### Examples (as they appear on page 1)

(1) (a) *the dog [that bit me]*

(b) *the TV program [she loves to watch every day]*

(2) (Japanese) [*kazi-ga hirogat-ta] gen'in*

fire-NOM spread-PST cause 'the reason that/why a fire spread'

(3) (Japanese) [*Kansai-ni tomat-ta] asa*

Kansai area-LOC stay-PST morning

(lit.) 'the (next) morning that I stayed overnight in Kansai'

(4) (Japanese) [*Ooku-no yakuin-ga tyakusekis-ite iru] mae-de...*

large quantity-GEN board member-NOM sit-PROG:NONPAST front side-LOC

'in front of (the location) where many board members were seated...'

(2') (Chinese) [*huǒzāi mànyán de] yuányīn*

fire spread ATTR reason

'the reason why/that a fire spread'

(3') (Armenian) [*Kansay-um gišer-el-u-s] (haĵord) aravotə*

Kansai-LOC overnight-INF-GEN-my next morning.DEF

(3'') (Chinese) [*zài Guānxī zhù le \*(yì wǎn) hòu de] zǎoshang*

LOC Kansai stay PRF one night after ATTR morning

(3''') (Korean) [*Kansai-ey memu-n] \*(ithutnal) achim*

Kansai-LOC stay-PST the next day morning

(lit.) 'the (next) morning that I stayed overnight in Kansai'

(4') (Chinese)\*[*zài duō wèi lǐngdǎo jiùzuò de] miànqián*

LOC many CLF board member sit ATTR in front of

(4'') (Korean) [*manhun imwen-i chaksekha-ko iss-nun] \*(cali) aph-eyse*

many board member-NOM be seated-PROG-ATTR seat front-LOC

(lit.) 'in front of (**the seats**) where many board members were seated'

(4''') (Armenian) \* [*bazmat 'iv hyureri nst-ac-i] dimac '...*

many guest.PL.GEN sit-PTCP.RES-GEN in front of

(5) (Armenian) [*Fumikoyi nst-a-ci] hetewum gtnv-ol patuhanə...*

Fumiko-GEN sit-PTCP.RES-GEN behind.LOC locate-PTCP.SUBJ window.DEF

'the window behind (**the location**) where Fumiko was seated'

**Abbreviations:** PTCP.RES: Resultative Participle, PTCP SUBJ: Subjective Participle (Armenian)

### References

- Keenan, Edward and Bernard Comrie (1977) "Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy and Universal Grammar," *Linguistic Inquiry* 8, 63-99.
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## In the Treetops: From Proposition to Illocutionary Force

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What is language designed for? Although we use it for communication, it has been argued that its core role is as a tool for representing thought (Hinzen 2006, Chomsky 2013). While thought is internal to the cognitive system, communication takes place, for the most part, external to it. The question is, is there anything in language that supports its use as a tool for communication? In this talk, I will argue, based on the work of many scholars, that beyond the CP, which contains the core proposition that embodies thought, syntax has extended its structure to include the representation of the speaker and the addressee, and a structure that connects this Speaker-Addressee projection to the proposition, in order to support the use of language for communication. I will draw from the recent LI monograph, *Syntax in the treetops* (Miyagawa 2022) and Miyagawa and Hill (in press, *LI*), which in turn draw from important research by such scholars as Krifka (2020), Portner, Pak & Zanuttini (2019), Speas & Tenny (2003), Wiltschko (2020), and Yamada (2019).

To develop the idea for the Speaker-Addressee projection, I will draw on two early works in the development of generative grammar, Ross (1970) and Emonds (1970), who put forth separate but equally bold proposals. Ross argued that there is a layer of superstructure that contains representations of the speaker and the addressee as well as the predicate representing the speech act of the utterance. Emonds proposed that there is a layer of representation he called the Root created by non-structure preserving transformations. Both came under heavy criticism, which led to these proposals largely disappearing from core discussion in syntax. I will argue that, once we account for the problems, the two proposals turn out to be about the same phenomenon. They point to the existence of a projection at the highest point in the structure that is the locus of illocutionary force of the utterance (Ross 1970) and the precise distribution of this projection in syntax (Emonds 1970). Using a recent proposal by Krifka (e.g., 2020) as a starting point, I will argue, following earlier works (e.g., Miyagawa 2012, Portner, Pak, and Zanuttini 2019, Speas and Tenny 2003, Wiltschko 2017) for the existence of what I call the Speaker-Addressee Projection (SAP) at the top of the tree. Evidence will be drawn from a wide range of languages including Basque, Japanese, Magahi, and Romanian. As Ross noted, SAP by itself is not sufficient; some layer must connect it to the proposition in the CP. Unlike Ross, who posited a performative predicate for this purpose, I will follow Krifka in positing the Commitment Phrase (CommitP), similar to Wiltschko's "grounding phrase." I will give evidence for the existence of the CommitP from Japanese and Romanian sentence particles (Miyagawa and Hill, in press, *LI*). Finally, I will speculate on how the treetop structure could account for the unusual distribution of sentence-final particles in young Japanese speakers with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

## Japanese Noun Classes and Numerals

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In this talk, I would like to point out that there are a sizable number of cases where a numeral can be directly combined with a noun in Japanese and that the distribution of such cases prompts us to take noun classification in terms of syntactic and semantic considerations quite seriously. The idea of noun classification usually leads to the topic of numeral classifiers, but the cases that concern us are characterized by the absence of classifiers.

A detailed proposal about verb classes was made by Levin (1993), who bases her classification on the English data concerning argument structure alternation, namely, patterns of syntactic realization of arguments. Verb classes are organized by semantic considerations, but syntactic patterns of argument structure alternation play a key role in deciding class membership.

No comparable proposal exists for nouns. Allan (1980) identified eight classes of nouns in relation to countability. Grimm and Wahlang (2021) have picked up this classification and expanded it into 13. These results, however, are far smaller than Levin's 49 major classes, many of which are further subdivided. It is time to start thinking about the project of noun classification on a scale that takes into account the size of verb classification.

The project will ultimately contribute to elucidating the nature of the atoms of computation, a basic task formulated by Chomsky (2010). He has been arguing that curious concepts encoded in these "word-like" objects cannot be captured by the notion of reference to mind-independent entities and that they are derived from innate cognitive powers (Chomsky 2000, for example). Interestingly, the examples taken up are mostly nouns like *house*, *London*, and *water*. It is a bit too challenging to take on the entire category of nouns. The strategy must be divide and conquer.

My data set comes from the list of "auxiliary numerals" or *josuushi* in NHK (2016), which includes nouns in addition to genuine numeral classifiers. Inspection of the list reveals that particular noun classes are prominent in allowing direct combination with a numeral. Among them are containers and textual units, which are not mentioned by Downing (1996). Another noteworthy fact is the presence of Sino-Japanese bound morphemes such as *shoo* 'win', *teki* 'drop of liquid', and *wa* 'episode', which cannot be used without being combined with a numeral or some other Sino-Japanese morpheme but are nothing other than nouns. In the talk, I will highlight the syntactic properties of some of these classes.