Japanese Clausal Coordination and Inferential Processing Units

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Sentences in which two clauses are coordinated with *and* convey a range of inferential relations, such as causal or parallel ones, between the conjuncts. According to Blakemore and Carston (2005), every sentence of the form *P and Q* explicitly communicates three propositions: a conjoined [P & Q] and the propositions of the individual conjuncts [P], [Q]. These propositions function as inferential processing units to yield a cognitive effect.

(1) John missed the usual train and he was late for work.

(2) We still keep in touch, and we go out for a meal.

In (1), the conjoined proposition including a causal relation, "John missed the usual train and, as a result, he was late for work," functions as a premise to derive a cognitive effect, for example, an implicature such as "John will get a lecture from his boss." In (2), the propositions of the individual conjuncts function as premises to derive the same implicature, "We've been good friends." Japanese clausal coordination corresponding to the *and* structure, in contrast, can be expressed with a variety of linguistic forms, typical examples of which are the adverbial form (so-called *renyo* form) of a predicate, the suffixes *-te, -tari,* and *-shi* (Ohori 2004). From a relevance-theoretic perspective (Sperber & Wilson 1995), this paper reveals that the *-tari* and *-shi* structures explicitly communicate the individual propositions [P], [Q] but not a conjoined proposition [P & Q] and claims that Blakemore and Carston's proposal does not apply to all structures for Japanese clausal coordination.

The adverbial form of a predicate in a clause *P* connects another clause *Q* in the form of *P (adv. form), Q,* and *-te* connects two clauses in the form of *P-te, Q.* Both structures explicitly communicate the three propositions, [P & Q] and [P], [Q], since they convey temporal or causal relations between states of affairs, as shown in (3), and derive an implicature from the conjuncts, as in (4).

(3) John   wa   itsumono   densha   ni   {a. noriokure   / b. noriokure-*te*},   shigoto   ni
    John TOP   usual   train   DAT miss (*adv. form*)   miss-*te*   work   DAT
    chikoku   shita.
    late   did
    'John missed the usual train and he was late for work.'

(4) Watashitachi   wa   imademo   renraku   o   {a. totte-ori   / b. totte-i-*te*},   gohan
       we   TOP   still   contact   ACC take-be (*adv. form*)   take-be-*te*   meal
    o   tabe   ni   iku.
    ACC   eat   PURP   go
    'We still keep in touch, and we go out for a meal.'

-Tari takes the form *P-tari, Q-tari suru* (=do), and *-shi* takes the form *P-shi, Q.* These structures, on the other hand, are used not for the narrative purpose, as in (5), but for the derivation of an implicature from *P* and *Q,* as in (6).

(5) John   wa   itsumono   densha   ni {a. *noriokure-*tari* / b. *noriokureta-*shi*},   shigoto   ni
    John TOP   usual   train   DAT   miss-*tari*   missed-*shi*   work   DAT
    chikoku   {a. *shi-*tari*} shita.
    late   do-*tari*   did
    'John missed the usual train and he was late for work.' [intended]

(6) Watashitachi   wa   imademo   renraku   o   {a. tot-*tari*   / b. toru-*shi*},   gohan   o
      we   TOP   still   contact   ACC take-*tari*   take-*shi*   meal   ACC
    tabe   ni   {a. it-*tari*   suru / b. iku}.
    eat   PURP   go-*tari*   do   go
    'We still keep in touch, and we go out for a meal.'

Example (5) indicates that the *-tari* and *-shi* structures might not exploit a conjoined proposition [P & Q] as a premise. Observing what interpretation they demand, this paper demonstrates that the proposition [P & Q] is not used in their inferential processes.

The form *P-tari, Q-tari suru* demands to be interpreted in such a way that each conjunct is an illustration of a certain abstract assumption about a state of affairs. (7) is an explanation of what the outcome is if someone's name is blacklisted by credit rating organizations.

(7) The person cannot obtain a credit card *-tari*, (s/he) cannot take out a bank loan *-tari suru*.

(Miyuki Miyabe (1998) *Kasha*, p. 30; my translation)

P ("the person cannot obtain a credit card") and *Q* ("(s/he) cannot take out a bank loan") are both concrete instances of some abstract assumption related to the context, for example, a person whose name is blacklisted cannot do what is involved in credit. The individual propositions [P], [Q] function as an inferential processing unit in that each of them has an "instance-abstract" relationship with the assumption; however, the conjoined [P & Q] plays no role in the interpretation since it does not derive an implicature.

The form *P-shi, Q* demands to be interpreted in such a way that *Q* strengthens the assumption for which *P* provides evidence. (8) is uttered by a detective whom a man asked to find his missing friend.

(8) There are still too many unknowns *-shi*, let's just see what we have to go on.

(*ibid.*, p. 39; my translation)

P ("there are still too many unknowns") provides evidence for the assumption that the detective is hesitant about undertaking the job, and *Q* ("let's just see what we have to go on") strengthens the assumption by suggesting that they collect information about the missing person before an investigation. The individual propositions [P], [Q] function as an inferential processing unit in that each of them supports the assumption; the conjoined [P & Q] does not function as a premise in the derivation of any implicatures. Furthermore, the conjoined proposition itself may not be constructed from the conjuncts since they are different in mood; that is, *P* is indicative and *Q* is imperative, as (8') with English *and* shows.

(8') ?? There are still too many unknowns, *and* let's just see what we have to go on.

Contrary to the adverbial form of a predicate and *-te*, the *-tari* and *-shi* structures do not exploit a conjoined proposition [P & Q] as an inferential processing unit to yield a cognitive effect, to which extent they do not explicitly communicate the proposition. The four structures can be categorized into two types on the basis of whether a whole inferential processing unit [P & Q] plays a role in comprehension: *P (adv. form), Q* and *P-te, Q* versus *P-tari, Q-tari suru* and *P-shi, Q*. The present paper leads us to the conclusion that not all Japanese clausal coordinating structures explicitly communicate a conjoined proposition; this casts doubt on the universality of Blakemore and Carston's proposal.

References
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