A pragmatic analysis of Japanese *koto* and *no*: with and without a complement clause

Japanese has a lexical noun *koto* 'intangible thing' and an indefinite pronoun *no* 'one'. When *koto* and *no* take a clausal complement, they have been referred to as complementizers. It has been commonly claimed that *no* occurs when its clausal complement denotes a spatio-temporal entity as in (1), and *koto* occurs for a non-spatio-temporal entity as in (2).

(1)   Watasi-wa [Taroo-ga   oyoideiru] **no**-o   mita.
        I-TOP   Taroo-NOM is swimming one-ACC   saw
        'I saw Taroo swimming.'

(2)   [Kuzira-ga   honyuu-doobutu dearu] **koto**-o   sitteiru.
         whale-NOM   mammal   is   thing-ACC know
        'I know that a whale is a mammal.'

This paper first argues that, based on their syntactic characteristics, *koto* and *no* in this syntactic position are nouns, not complementizers. This paper then demonstrates that the distribution of *koto* as a lexical noun, *no* as an indefinite pronoun, and *koto* and *no* when they have a clausal complement are all pragmatically unified. This study shows that *no* is used when the speaker believes that the denotation of the noun phrase is in the addressee's consciousness, while *koto* is used when the speaker does not believe this.

Syntactically, when *koto* and *no* occur with their complement clauses, they display the same syntactic properties as ordinary nouns. These properties are: 1) a case particle follows, 2) the attributive form of the copula must occur in an adnominal clause, and 3) nominative and genitive case markers can alternate in an adnominal clause. Example (3) demonstrates this. The accusative marker *o* follows *koto* and *no*. The copula verb occurs in its attributive form *na*, but not in its conclusive form *da*. The nominative case marker *ga* and the genitive case marker *no* can alternate. This shows that *koto* and *no* are nouns even when they take a complement clause.

(3)   Watasi-wa [zyogingu-ga/no   taisetu   <u>na/*da</u>] **koto/no**-o   sitta.
        I-TOP   jogging-NOM/GEN important COP   thing/one-ACC got to know
        'I got to know the importance of jogging.'

Previous accounts have argued that *no* is used when the denotation of the complement clause is perceived through sensory organs (Horie 1993), and is a spatio-temporal entity (Terakura 1980). They also argue that *koto* is used when the clausal complement refers to states of affairs conceived of and registered in the mind (Horie 1993), and are non-spatio-temporal entities (Terakura 1980). Yet, these accounts fail to correctly predict that *no* can be used when the eventuality denoted by the complement clause is salient to the addressee although the eventuality is a non-spatio temporal entity, as in (4). In this example, the addressee has proposed the idea described in the complement clause prior to the speaker's utterance. Nor do they explain the occurrence of *koto* when the speaker re-focuses on the eventuality, as in (5), where the idea expressed by the complement clause is physically perceived, thus a spatio-temporal entity.

(4)   [Uti-ni   tanin-ga   hairikomu] **no**-wa   gomen da   tte.
        House-in outsider-NOM enter   one-TOP   hate   COP QT.
        'He said that he hates that others are coming into the house.'

(5)   Sooda   yo, [osikko-si-tai]   **koto**-nante   wasuretyae.
        That's right, SFP go to the bathroom-want situation-TOP let's forget
        'That's right, let's forget about wanting to go to the bathroom.'

What has gone unnoticed in the past analyses of *koto* and *no* occurring with their complement clause is their syntactic status as nouns and pronouns respectively. A satisfactory account of the distribution of *koto* and *no* needs to consider the speaker's belief that is involved

when nouns and pronouns are used. A pronoun is used when the speaker believes that the referent is in the addressee's consciousness, and a noun is used when the speaker does not believe this, following Chafe (1994). This pragmatic analysis predicts that the distributions of *koto* and *no* with and without a complement clause are the same.

      First, the hypothesis based on the speaker's belief predicts that when it is socially acceptable for the speaker to display her belief about the addressee, such as in a casual conversation, *no* is used, as in (6). *Koto* is used when a societal convention demands it, such as in a formal conversation with a higher-ranking addressee, as in (7). In Japan, displaying a belief about a higher-ranking addressee is considered presumptuous and impolite.

(6a) Sonna **no**-wa   boku-ga yaru yo.
    Such   one-TOP I-NOM do SFP
    'I do such things.'

(7a) Sonna **koto**-wa   watasi-ga simasu.
    Such   thing-TOP I-NOM   do
    'I do such things.'

(6b) [Kenkyuusuru]**no**-wa   omosiroi?
    Doing research one-TOP fun
    'Is doing research fun?'

(7b) [Kenkyuusuru]**koto**-wa omosiroi desu?
    Doing research one-TOP fun
    'Is doing research fun?'

      Second, when the speaker says things to the addressee out of the blue, or when the speaker newly realizes something, *koto* is used as in (5) and (8). Example (5) is uttered when the speaker suddenly comes upon an idea. Example (8) is uttered when the speaker talks to her mother upon coming home. In this latter example, the speaker does not believe that the referent is in the mother's consciousness. In contrast, because *no* is used when the speaker believes the addressee is conscious of the referent, *no* is used when the speaker refers to what the addressee has just mentioned, as in (4) and (9).

(8) Kyoo ii   **koto**-ga   atta   yo.
    Today good thing-NOM existed SFP.
    'There was a good thing today.'

(9) Sooyuu   **no** kanasii ne.
    Like that one sad   SFP
    'That's sad, isn't it?'

      Third, *koto* and *no* can be used to indicate a discussion boundary. *Koto* is used when the speaker signals the addressee that a new discussion has begun. This is because the use of *koto* implicates that the referent is not in the addressee's consciousness. Even in the case in which the referent has been discussed, thus in the addressee's consciousness, the use of *koto* makes it look like the referent is new. Thus, the addressee infers that a new discussion has begun. In contrast, *no* is used when the speaker continues the discussion since the use of *no* implicates that the addressee is conscious of the referent.

      The present analysis demonstrates that the uses of *koto* and *no* with a clausal complement are analyzed in the same way as nouns and pronouns without stipulating independent principles for each use. It also shows that the uses of *koto* and *no* are functions of social convention and the speaker's intentions.

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