

NPI Licensing and Head Movement

This presentation investigates how the Negative Polarity Item (NPI) *-sika* ‘only’ in Japanese are licensed syntactically in a comparative perspective with a focus on the role of Tense and head movement. Specifically, I argue that the NPI being c-commanded by the Neg head alone is not sufficient but Neg must head-raise to T along with V for successful licensing in Japanese. In addition, I provide an account for an important difference in NPI licensing between English and Japanese, namely their (non-)occurrence in [Spec, TP].

It has been widely accepted that NPIs can appear only in a c-command domain of Neg. Given this, we need to provide a parametric explanation for the asymmetry between Japanese and English shown in (1)(2): English does not allow an NPI in subject position, but Japanese does. Takahashi(1990) and Aoyagi and Ishii(1994), among others, claim that this difference can be accounted for by positing that subject stays in [Spec, VP] in Japanese while it occupies [Spec, TP] in English, along with the concomitant assumption that NegP is located between TP and VP in both languages. This claim, however, has some serious problems. First, it is in conflict with the observation that Nominative subject is in [Spec, TP] also in Japanese (Takezawa 1987, among others). Second, it wrongly excludes grammatical sentences like (3) that contain an NPI in a TP adjunct position (cf. Koizumi 1993). Moreover, it cannot accommodate the contrast of the acceptability between the NPI *-sika* appearing in a tenseless clause (small clause) and one in a tensed clause, as shown in (4)(5).

The sentences in (4)(5) show that the NPI *-sika* is not licensed by Neg alone but together with Tense, which in turn indicates that Neg must move to T, so that Neg extends its domain up to TP, contrary to Takahashi’s and Aoyagi and Ishii’s analyses. In other words, the above facts clearly demonstrate that in Japanese T is essential to NPI licensing and string-vacuous head movement occurs up to T (cf. Koizumi 2000).

Furthermore, observing some different items in verbal complexes (e.g. the focus particles *-mo* (also), *-wa* (contrast), the potential morpheme *-rare* and the causative morpheme *-sase*) in terms of NPI licensing, I conclude that NPI licensing can be done not only by Neg-T complex but by V-Neg-T complex and that Neg-movement (or head movement) discussed above is motivated by morphological property [+verbal] of Neg element (cf. Ouhalla 1991). First, the contrast of acceptability between (6a)(6b) and (6c) should be accounted for by assuming that an NPI also requires V as its licenser in a verbal complex in addition to Neg and T, that is, NPI licensing is in need of V-Neg-T complex. Second, the contrast between (6a)(6b) and (7a)(7b) shows that focus particles interrupt the formation of V-Neg-T complexes, whereas *-rare* and *-sase* do not. This fact can be captured by their morphological properties: the latter have [+verbal], while the former do not have. Therefore, the movement of Neg to T can be also explained from its property [+verbal].

Notice that contrary to the head movement analysis proposed here, the morphological merger analysis has been also proposed so far for the formation of verbal complexes in Japanese (Fukui and Sakai 2003, among others). However, if the analysis here is on the right track, the fact that NPI licensing requires head movement in verbal complexes obviously throws doubt on the morphological merger analysis which assumes that verbal complexes are formed at PF.

Finally, based on the discussion so far, the difference between English and Japanese can be accounted for as follows. In English Neg does not move, so that NPIs can be licensed only in the VP domain below NegP, while in Japanese Neg moves to T, whereby extending its domain up to TP. The last question is, then, what motivates this head movement in Japanese. Following Ouhalla(1991), I suggest that the Neg element *-nai* in Japanese is a bound morpheme which has [+verbal] and therefore must be supported by a morphological host, while *not* in English is a free morpheme which can be licensed independently without its morphological host.

- (1) a. * Anyone did not see John.
 b. John did not see anyone.
- (2) a. John-sika Mary-o sikara-nakat-ta
 -only -Acc scold-Neg-Past ‘Only John scolded Mary.’
 b. John-ga Mary-sika sikara-nakat-ta
 -Nom -only ‘John scolded only Mary.’
- (3) a. John-wa [kaisya-e iku toki]-sika kawagutu-o haka-na-i
 -Top company-to go time-only leather shoes-Acc put on-Neg-Pres
 ‘John puts on leather shoes only when he goes to the office.’
 b. John-wa [Mary-ga kuru-mae]-sika heya-o katazuke-na-i
 -Top -Nom come-before-only room-Acc clean-Neg-Pres
 ‘John cleans his room only before Mary comes.’
- (4) a.?* John-wa [_{SC} kono-eiga-sika mi-taku-naku] omotteiru
 -Top this-movie-only see-want-Neg(Inf) think
 b. John-wa [_{CP} kono-eiga-sika mi-taku-na-i to] omotteiru
 see-want-Neg-T Comp
 ‘John wants to see only this movie.’
- (5) a.?* Sono ensyutuka-wa [_{SC} syujinkoo-sika medata-naku] sita
 that director-Top hero-only stand out-Neg(Inf) did
 b. Sono ensyutuka-wa [_{CP} syujinkoo-sika medata-na-i yooni] sita
 stand out-Neg-T Comp
 ‘The director made only the hero stand out.’
- (6) a.* John-ga ringo-sika tabe-mo/wa si-na-katta
 -Nom apple-only eat-FP do-Neg-Past
 b.* John-ga ringo-sika tabe-naku-mo/wa na-katta
 -Nom apple-only eat-Neg-FP Neg-Past
 c. John-ga ringo-sika tabe-na-katta (-koto-wa-na-i)
 -Nom apple-only eat-Neg-Past (-Nomin-FP-Neg-Pres)
- (7) a. John-ga ringo-sika tabe-rare-na-katta
 -Nom apple-only eat-Poten-Neg-Past
 ‘John cannot eat anything but an apple.’
 b. John-ga Mary-ni ringo-sika tabe-sase-na-katta
 -Nom -Dat apple-only eat-Caus-Neg-Past
 ‘John made Mary eat only an apple.’

References

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