A Contrastive Analysis of the Sentential Use of Noun Phrases
− Focusing on the Japanese, Korean, and English Languages −

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1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to verify some features of noun phrases (or NPs) in Japanese, Korean, and English through a contrastive analysis of the sentential use of the NPs in those languages. The sentential use of NPs is defined as uttering an NP that is similar to a full sentence in situations in which the NP is not understood as a part of any other specific sentence said by the speaker. Such Japanese NPs or just simple nouns have been dealt in several preceding studies, and we will partially adopt some notions relevant to the utterance situation in Ogoshi (2002)[1] and the classification of the noun utterances in Onoe (1998),[2] which are widely accepted for related research. Hereinafter, the term "NP-sentence" will be used to refer to an NP that is used as a full sentence for the given situation. We will begin by applying the theoretical notions from the above-mentioned studies and split the utterance situations where the NP-sentences are likely to appear into four scenes: Scene 1, Scene 2, Scene 3, and Scene 4, according to how long it takes the speaker to utter the given expression once he/she has found or noticed something. The details of each scene and the relation to the benchmark Japanese will be offered in Section 2. Then, in Section 3 and 4, we will contrastively describe the utterances for the other two languages that include the NP-sentences. Section 5 offers some explanations of the general features of each language that account for the similarities and differences. The conclusions are given in Section 6, along with a summary of the study.

2. Criteria from Japanese NP-sentences

The four utterance situations that we created for looking at NP-sentences are as follows: Scene 1 is the short time span just after a speaker finds something or notices some occurrence; Scene 2 is virtually the same time-zone as Scene 1, but the speaker has a little more time to express some feeling or assess against what he/she has found; Scene 3 is a situation where the speaker has enough time to think about or assess what he/she has found or noticed, such as when the situation has ended so that the scene has changed; Scene 4 is every possible situation where the speaker gives an assessment or overall opinion toward a thing, the behavior of other people, a state of affairs, or whatever he/she encounters in daily life.

For each scene, except Scene 4, NP-sentences in Japanese are common. The Japanese examples in (1)-(3) are introduced in Ogoshi (2002). Ogoshi did not specifically analyze the examples in (1), since his research was focused on NPs with attributive adjectives as in (2) or (3), but his research is effective for this study in terms of classifying the samples in (1) as a group separate from (2) or (3). The examples in

(1), (2), and (3) show the NP-sentences in Scene 1, Scene 2, and Scene 3 set by this study, respectively.[3]

(1) a. *jishin*!   (2) a. *kireina hana*!   (3) a. *shinsetsuna hito*!

    earthquake   beautiful[ADN] flower   kind[ADN] person

    "Earthquake"   "Beautiful flowers"   "A kind person"

  b. *saifu*!   b. *ii tenki*!   b. *okina kojo*!

    wallet   good weather   big[ADN] plant

    "Wallet"   "Good weather"   "A big plant"

The speakers in (1) utter the NP-sentences right after sensing the shaking of the earthquake or noticing that the wallet has fallen on the ground. NP-sentences of this kind present "recognition of existence" of something which acts as an exclamation according to Onoe (1998). He notes that such NPs directly represent both the finding and the exclamation instantaneously and are discriminated from ones that represent "acknowledgment" such as saying "(what's this? it is an) earthquake!". The time zone of Scene 2 may fall into Onoe's "acknowledgement" but NP-sentences in (2) bear adjectival modifiers, which means that the speakers in (2) offer some feelings or judgements regarding what they have found in addition to a simple acknowledgment of the thing or situation. In other words, by saying NP-sentences, the speakers in (2) convey the meaning that "the flowers are beautiful" that they have seen while walking along the street or that "the weather is good" when they have opened the window to look outside. This interpretation applies to the case of (3) as well. The NP-sentence in (3a) could be used when a person is kind to the speaker and helps with his/her packages before leaving. Likewise, (3b) may be uttered after the speaker looks at a plant of their friend for the first time. It is clear that the NP-sentences in (3) imply the speaker's feelings or assessments towards what they have found and the utterances *shinsetsuna hito*! ("A kind person") and *okina kojo*! ("A big plant") are exclamatory remarks that convey the meaning that "the person is kind" and "this plant is big" respectively.

The key point here is that Japanese NP-sentences can be used for all these scenes without any contrivances. This is quite unique especially when compared to the other languages that we are examining in the study. The only scene where Japanese NP-sentences never appear is Scene 4, which is in fact established for the contrastive analysis with English. The details of Japanese expressions for Scene 4 and the contrastive explanation will be developed in Section 4.

3. Korean NP-sentences

Many people, even linguistic researchers, tend to treat Korean as almost the same language as Japanese because of the similarity of grammar. More contrastive research, however, reveals that the two languages are considerably different in various aspects. The current study will focus on some of the differences with regard to the use of NP-sentences. The examples below are Korean translations of the Japanese NP-sentences in (1)-(3). The situations in (4), (5), and (6) correspond to Scene 1, Scene 2, and Scene 3, respectivly.[4]

(4) a. *cicin*!   (5) a. *#yeyppu-n kkoch*!   (6) a. *#chincelha-n salam*!

earthquake   beautiful-ADN flower   kind-ADN person

"Earthquake"   "Beautiful flowers"   "A kind person"

b. *cikap*!   b. *#coh-un nalssi*!   b. *#khu-n kongcang*!

wallet   good-ADN weather   big-ADN plant

"Wallet"   "A good weather"   "A big plant"

The Korean NP-sentences that consist only of a simple noun in Scene 1 can express the finding and exclamation in the Japanese NP-sentences without difficulty. However, despite the similarity in the time zone, the NP-sentences in (5) are not acceptable in Korean, and the same can be said for Scene 3. As shown in (7) and (8), only full sentences with a verb are acceptable in Korean for Scene 2 and Scene 3.

(7) a. *kkoch yeyppu-ta*!   (8) a. *ce salam (cincca) chincelha-ta*!

flower beautiful-DEC   that person (really) kind-DEC

"The flowers are beautiful"   "That person is (really) kind"

b. *nalssi coh-ta*!   b. *kongcang (cincca) khu-ta*!

weather good-DEC   plant (really) big-DEC

"The weather is good"   "The plant is (really) big"

In terms of the NP forms that are not NP-sentences, it is acceptable in Scene 3 to use a copular sentence that consists of an NP and the copula *ita* such as *(cincca) chincelhan salam-ita*! ("[he/she] is a (really) kind person") or *(cincca) khun kongcang-ita*! ("[this] is a (really) big plant.") This is because the speakers assess the person or the plant and describe what they are like, and the copular sentences only lack a subject, as is common in Korean. In other words, it would be acceptable in (6) if each NP has the copula *ita*. This explanation, however, is not applicable to Scene 2 in (5); i.e. the copular sentences cannot be used for Scene 2. Kim (2021)[5] stated the reason why the copular sentences with NPs of Scene 2 are inappropriate in Korean as follows: The NP with adjectival modifiers in Korean always works as a predicate for a verbal sentence and an adjective could be a predicate.[6] To give a predicate implies that it takes the speaker some time not only to acknowledge the target of the utterance but also to experience and judge it as in the case of (8) for Scene 3. But Scene 2 does not allow an adequate time span, which is why the Korean copular sentence does not appear in the scene even though a sentence containing the target and the only predicate is acceptable, as in (7).

Based on the above, we can say that examples in (5) and (6) are unacceptable in Korean because the adjectives denoting the speakers' way of thinking are not predicative. That is, the adjective that expresses the speaker's feeling or assessment should be predicative in the Korean sentences. "Expressing the speaker's feeling or assessment" is important since the Korean NP-sentences with adjectives that present objective properties such as color, shape, or size (compared to something) for which it is hard to infer the speaker's judgement are acceptable even in Scene 2, as in example (9), as indicated in Ogoshi (2002). It is a matter of course that Japanese NP-sentences corresponding to (9) are completely natural in Scene 2 and elsewhere.

(9) a. *ppalka-n say*!
  red-ADN bird
  "A red bird"
 b. *ttokkath-un kapang*!
  same-ADN bag
  "The same bag"

Thus, the argument presented in this section is that the use of NP-sentences is considerably more restricted in Korean than in Japanese. Conversely, this shows that the Japanese NP-sentences are used extensively regardless of scenes and adjective (or predicate) restrictions. In relation to this feature of Japanese, some research insists that Japanese is a nominal language, and it could be said that contrastive analyses with Korean for the NP-sentences seems to support this argument.

4. English NP-sentences

In Section 2 and 3, we looked at the Japanese and Korean NP-sentences in Scene 1 to Scene 3, investigating the similarities and differences between the two languages. This section deals with the English NP-sentences, along with the contrastive analysis to Japanese and Korean. First, the English counterparts to (1)-(3) or (4)-(6) are given in (10)-(12).

(10) a. Earthquake!   (11) a. #Beautiful flowers!   (12) a. #A/The kind person!
   b. ??Wallet!   b. #Good weather!   b. #A/The big plant!

For (10a) in Scene 1, the English does not seem to differ from the Japanese or Korean: The speaker utters an NP-sentence that consists of a single noun to make an exclamatory remark about what he/she has noticed. Such use of nouns, however, is neither typical nor grammatical for a normal English noun. The acceptability of (10a) may be associated with the unusual or tense situation in which an earthquake has occurred, as demonstrated by the fact that English native speakers have difficulties telling whether (10b) is adequate for Scene 1 or not. In fact, the verbal sentences in (13) should be the most natural utterances for English speakers in Scene 1.

(13) a. (Oh, look at it!) There is a wallet.
   b. Look at the cat! (Why is it there?)

Incidentally, the acceptability of English NP-sentences in Scene 2 and Scene 3 is basically equivalent to the Korean cases, apart from some specific differences. The typical English expressions for Scene 2 and Scene 3 are listed in (14) and (15) below, which still involve attributive noun phrases, whereas the typical Korean expressions are the verbal sentences in the above-referenced (7) and (8) examples.[7]

(14) a. What lovely flowers!   (15) a. What a kind person!
    b. What good weather!   b. What a big plant!
(7) a. *kkoch yeyppu-ta*!   (8) a. *ce salam (cincca) chincelha-ta*!
    flower beautiful-DEC   that person (really) kind-DEC
    "The flowers are beautiful"   "That person is (really) kind"
    b. *nalssi coh-ta*!   b. *kongcang (cincca) khu-ta*!
    weather good-DEC   plant (really) big-DEC
    "The weather is good"   "The plant is (really) big"

Given that the English examples contain attributive noun phrases, one might say that English is somewhat closer to Japanese than Korean in this case. Nevertheless, it is hard to discuss the similarity between English and Japanese or English and Korean for Scene 2 or Scene 3 because, unlike English, Japanese and Korean do not have any construction similar to English exclamations that use "What." However, with respect to the NP-sentence, characteristic English examples are as listed below for the Scene 4 NP-sentences referred to in Section 2.

(16) a. Nice try.   d. Big deal.   g. Best time of my life.
    b. Big mistake.   e. Great idea.   h. Good man.
    c. Cute shoes.   f. Total nightmare.   i. Good luck.

As noted earlier, Scene 4 involves situations where a speaker gives an assessment or overall opinion toward anything that he/she encounters in daily life. The literal translations into Japanese or Korean in this scene could be a noun phrase embedded in a sentence, but not an NP-sentence. One important feature of the NP-sentences in (16) is that they are not grammatical noun phrases in English: e.g. the determiners are omitted for many cases. These "perfect" NP-sentences would be the regular noun phrases in full English sentences, as in (16'), if they were used in a normal way, whereas the NP-sentences in (16) are, in many cases, used in nonstandard ways (e.g., to express humor, irony, or cynicism).

(16') a. You made a nice try.   f. It was a total nightmare.
    b. I/You made a big mistake.   g. It was the best time of my life.
    c. These are cute shoes.   h. You are a good man.
    d. That is a big deal.   i. I hope you have good luck.
    e. That is a great idea.

The following sort of situations underlie the use of the NP-sentences listed above: Speaker B in (17) is making it clear that he/she was not fooled by the attempt to distract his/her attention made by speaker A. The expression "Big deal!" in (18) in fact conveys the opposite meaning: "It is *not* a big deal." Similarly, in (19) the speaker is expressing a degree of dissatisfaction with the idea, as it is not directly related to the matter at hand. For example (20), the use of "Good man!" is not a literal statement regarding the

person's character in general, but simply a small compliment along the lines of "You did well." In (21), "Total nightmare!" expresses the meaning of "worst outcome possible" in an even more emphatic way than in the expression "It was a total nightmare." Similarly, "Best time of my life" in (22), which often would be used as an exaggeration but could be literally true, is more emphatic than "It was the best time of my life."

(17) A: What's that behind you?

     B: <u>Nice try</u>, but you'll have to do better than that!

(18) So, he earns more than me. <u>Big deal</u>!

(19) <u>Great idea</u>, but not before we talk over a little business proposition, all right?

(20) A: I've ordered some drinks.

     B: <u>Good man</u>!

(21) A: Did your presentation go well?

     B: <u>Total nightmare</u>! I was too nervous to remember what I was going to say.

(22) A: How was your trip to Italy?

     B: <u>Best time of my life</u>. It's really hard to come back to the office.

The Korean NPs corresponding to the samples in (16), meanwhile, generally need to be accompanied by a verb, whether an active verb such as *hata* ("do") or the copula *ita* ("be"). Japanese is not so different from Korean in terms of the use of NPs in (16), but it has much more copular cases for Scene 4 from a global point of view, as illustrated in Kim (2021).

5. Discussion

Table 1 presents how the acceptability of the NP-sentences varies in the three languages that we have examined so far. Basically, the NP-sentence of Japanese is the typical utterance for Scene 1 to 3, while that of Korean and English is only partially so. Korean only allows the NP-sentence in Scene 1, whereas the verbal sentences are always used for the other scenes. The NP-sentence of English is largely unacceptable for Scene 1 to 3, apart from tense situations such as an emergency. For Scene 4, English is more oriented toward NP-sentences than Japanese or Korean.

The tense situation, among the various utterance situations of Scene 1, could be a highly special case, so that it might be better to establish a separate category for tense situations insofar as it would be a scene common to all three languages. In such a situation, the speaker instantly lets out the name of what he/she has noticed, which is the "recognition of existence" (Onoe 1998). The noun itself in this case is not a part of a verbal sentence; in other words, it is not a predicate—not *jishin* "earthquake" in *jishin-da* ("It is an earthquake") or *jishinga okita* ("An earthquake occurred"), etc.[8] This is the reason the English "Earthquake!", which is usually ungrammatical, can be used in this scene.

Table 1. Acceptability of the NP-sentence in Japanese, Korean, and English

Scene	NP-sentence	Japanese	Korean	English
1	**NP-sentence**	***jishin*!** ***saifu*!**	***cicin*!** ***cikap*!**	**Earthquake!** **??Wallet!**
2	**NP-sentence**	***kireina hana*!**	**#*yeyppu-n kkoch*!**	**#Beautiful flowers!**
	alternative		*kkoch yeyppu-ta*! "The flowers are beautiful"	What lovely flowers!
3	**NP-sentence**	***shinsetsuna hito*!**	**#*chincelha-n salam*!**	**#A/The kind person!**
	alternative		*ce salam chincelha-ta*! "That person is kind"	What a kind person!
4	**NP-sentence**	**#*yoi kokoromi*.**	**#*cohun sito*.**	**Nice try.**
	alternative	*oshikattane*. "It was too bad" …	*sitonun cohasse*. "The try was good" …	

On the other hand, in a normal situation for Scene 1, Japanese and Korean speakers can say *saifu-da* or *cikap-ita* ("It is a Wallet") apart from the NP-sentences. This shows the possibility that the nouns are predicates, and in fact, we can say so for Japanese. However, the Korean noun in Scene 1 still cannot be a predicate because a Korean copular sentence usually does not lack the copula *ita* "be," as discussed in Kim (2021). The English NP-sentence "Wallet!" should not be a predicate of a sentence because it is ungrammatical as well, but if the use of "A wallet!" is somewhat acceptable, it should be a fragment of sentences in (13). Why the English sentences assumed for the scene are not sentences such as "It/That is a wallet" can be explained from diverse perspectives, but the sentence "There is a wallet" corresponds to our assumption that the cognitive behavior of the speakers in Scene 1 is a "recognition of existence." It is thus necessary to explain the reason why the Japanese and Korean NP-sentence in Scene 1 could be a part of a copular sentence, or why a copular sentence is used instead of the NP-sentence in Scene 1 for Japanese and Korean. The reason is simply that Japanese *da* and Korean *ita* ("be") refer to the existence of something as well as a categorical proportion of something, as previous research has noted.

The same argument applies even more obviously to Scene 2 and 3. For Scene 2, only Japanese allows the NP-sentence and the copular sentence *kireina hana-da* ("[They] are beautiful flowers") can be used as well. One might say that the Japanese NP-sentence is a form of omitting the copula, i.e. the linking verb *da* ("be"). From a contrastive point of view, however, it is hard to say *da* in Scene 2 is a normal copula from the fact that a copular sentence cannot appear in Scene 2. Kim (2021) argued that *da* in Scene 2 is not a predicative copula but a sentence-ending particle, which shows a psychological attitude of speakers just like other sentence-ending particles such as *yo*, *ne*, *na*, and so on. On the other hand, since both Japanese and Korean allow the copular expression for Scene 3, if they are used with *da* and *ita* respectively, they are normal copulas as linking verbs.[9] The English sentences in Scene 2 and 3 are utterances from which "he/she/it is" or "they are" are omitted. The exclamation using "What" is a specific construction both for Scene 2 and 3 in English, which means it is not necessary to separate the

utterance types from each other.

Even Japanese NP-sentences as well as Korean ones are limited for Scene 4. If the sentences are accompanied by copulas, however, "nominal" sentences are commonly used for the scene, although more Japanese cases are acceptable than Korean ones according to the related literature.

To sum up, if the tense situation in Scene 1, where all the languages have their own NP-sentences, is the most typical for the NP-sentence, it is fundamentally a construction by which the speaker acknowledges the existence of the reference once he/she has noticed a thing or situation. Specifically for Japanese, however, the NP-sentence presents the speaker's judgement on what has been noticed apart from the existence of the thing/situation. There are different methods depending on languages when the speaker adds an expression of judgment to the existence in Scene 2 to 4: Korean is basically verbal, requiring the presentation of a subject and verb (adjective), while English has a specific instrument (the "What" construction) for situations involving exclamations that is unique compared to Japanese and Korean. The English NP-sentence in Scene 4 is unique as well since the other two languages have few idiomatic noun phrases for the scene. With respect to the nominal property or nominality of a language, Korean can be considered the least nominal language of the three as demonstrated in this study, if the English "What" phrases are not classified as nominal utterances.

6. Conclusion

This study examined how NP-sentences in Japanese, Korean, and English appear through Scene 1 to 4, which are categorized according to the timing for which a speaker notices something, the utterance situation, and the NP-sentence type. In Section 1, we presented a definition of the NP-sentence and classified the scenes. The Japanese NP-sentences used as the criteria for this study were illustrated in Section 2, where we showed that the Japanese NP-sentences are widely used in Scene 1 to 4. Section 3 dealt with the Korean examples that are used in the scenes to the corresponding to the Japanese examples. Basically, Korean tends to prefer verbal sentence structures and exceptionally allows for NP-sentences in Scene 1. English examples are investigated in Section 4, where we examined the considerable overlap in acceptability between the NP-sentences in English and Korean, while noting that English has its own constructions to express the remarks corresponding to the Japanese NP-sentences for each scene, and that these constructions are quite different from Korean. Section 5 presented some conclusions from our analysis, focusing on why the languages differ from each other.

It remains to be seen if the divergence between languages can be explained from other perspectives. For instance, the cognitive perspective regarding the NP category may help to explain why Japanese or English speakers prefer the NP-sentences and Korean the verbal sentences. Some accounts of this tendency point out that the linguistic expressions vary depending on how the subject of the cognition (the speaker) captures the event, so that the expression will be nominal if the speaker comprehends the event as "a thing" and verbal if he/she captures it as "a relation" (Croft 1991[10]; Uehara 2010[11]). Further research may also be needed to classify and analyze the scenes on the basis of greater linguistic data.

Notes and References

1) Ogoshi, Naoki (2002). Nihongo chosengo niokeru rentaishushokuhyogen no tsukaikata — "kireina hana" taipu no bun wo chushinni — (How to use the expression of noun-modification: focusing on the type of "Beautiful flowers!"). *Language Sciences 4. Contrastive Linguistics*. University of Tokyo Press.

2) Onoe, Keisuke (1998). Ichigobun no yoho — ima koko wo hanarenai bun no kento no tameni — (The uses of one-word sentences — for a study on sentences within "now, here" —). 東京大学国語研究室創設百周年記念国語研究論集 . Tokyo: Kyuko Shoin. 888-908.

3) These NPs may appear with *da*, a form known as one of Japanese *be* verbs, as in *jishin-da* "(it) is an earthquake," *kireina hana-da*! "(they) are beautiful flowers," *shinsetsuna hito-da* "(he/she) is a kind person," and so on. This use of *da* is also an important target of observation in a copular perspective, and some relevant arguments were given in Kim (2021). (See Note 5.) This study, however, concentrates on the use of NP-sentences in the same situations.

4) The # mark indicates that the example which follows is grammatically correct in itself but not pragmatically appropriate for the utterance situation.

5) Kim, Jihyun (2021). *A Contrastive study on copular constructions in Japanese and Korean languages*. Tokyo: Hituzi Syobo.

6) An adjectival predicate performs a function like a verb in Korean and Japanese as compared to English, as seen in (7) and (8).

7) Korean has the "nominal" expressions that can be used in Scene 2 or Scene 3, as below. Nevertheless, these are considered to be rather literary expressions that are rarely used in daily conversations, and they still have the copular verb *ita*, in contrast to the English cases in those scenes.

  (i) *elmana alumtawu-n kkoch-i-nka!*

    how beautiful-ADN flower-COP-INT

    "What beautiful flowers"

8) Onoe refers to this as *kantai*.

9) See Kim (2021) for a more detailed discussion of copular sentences in Japanese and Korean.

10) Croft, William (1991). *Syntactic Categories and Grammatical Relations: the cognitive organization of information.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

11) Uehara, Satoshi (2010). Meishika to meishisei — sono imi to katachi — (Nominalization and nominality: the meaning and form). 日本語学 29(11): 24-38.

Abbreviations

ADN   adnominal ending or form (no marking if it is the same as the final ending or form)

COP   copula

DEC   declarative sentence-closing ending

INT   interrogative sentence-closing ending

名詞句の文的使用に関する対照分析
－日韓英語を中心に－

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要　旨

　本研究は、韓国語、日本語、英語の談話において名詞句が一つの発話文として用いられる現象を対照的に分析し、この種の使用にかかわる各言語の名詞句の特徴を明らかにすることを目的とする。単独の名詞句からなる発話文は、日本語では名詞一語文として様々に分類されることがあるが、本研究では「地震！」「きれいな花！」「親切な人！」など、話し手がものや状況を発見または認知した際にその内容を発話するような場面を取り上げ、三言語の間で見られる類似点や相違点をまとめる。この場面における名詞表現の対照分析は日韓両言語で一部なされてきているが、本研究では英語を観察対象に含め、巨視的な観点から同現象を捉え直すことを試みる。結論的に、緊迫した状況を名詞句として表す用法は三言語で共通しているものの、発話状況への考慮や話し手の判断が介入する場面になるほど名詞句表現の許容度は各言語で異なってくることを明らかにした。なお、英語は他の言語とは区別される名詞句の用法が観察されるが、それについても説明を与えた。