SOME APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE TYPOLOGY FROM JAPANESE

Vera Isaakovna PODLESSKAYA
Research associate
Department of Languages, Institute of Oriental Studies
USSR Academy of Sciences
101031 Moscow, Rozhdestvenka 12, USSR

1. Introduction

Data from Japanese have been widely involved in recent typological investigations. Nevertheless, there still exist areas of language typology where Japanese can help a lot to substantiate principle arguments. One of these areas is the typology of predicative coordination.

It is a well known observation that natural languages provide two basic types of combining clauses into compound or complex sentences. These two types could be labeled as 'analytic' and 'synthetic' with respect to their technical properties. What really underlies this distinction is the morphological status of linguistic devices used for linking clauses. The analytic type uses conjunctions, particles, formal nouns and other form-words, whereas the synthetic type uses inflectional endings or suffixes which do not constitute a separate lexical item, but are inserted into a verbal form.

Some typological and genetic groups of languages (Altaic, for example) are distinguished by a highly developed system of synthetic complex sentences, or a clause-chaining system[1]. In these languages, there exists a highly developed system of the so-called non-finite (or medial) verbal forms. These forms usually take the same tense and mood as the final verb, and are used to modify the final verb, expressing its logical and temporal conditions, reasons, and manner.

While most non-finite forms introduce a subordinate clause, there still exist some cases where a semantic relationship between clauses within a clause-chain should be interpreted as coordination rather than as subordination. For a more detailed discussion of this problem I would like to bring in some examples from Japanese. In Japanese mainly two medial forms are used in this formally subordinate, but conceptually coordinate position. These two are -te form (gerund) and -i form (conjunctive)[2]. Consider the

following examples:
(1) sora   wa   kumotte,   samui
sky   SUBJTOP[3]   clouds=overNF[4] cold
kadze   ga fuite iru [MS,3].
wind   SUBJ blows
'The sky clouds over, and a cold wind is blowing.'
(2) aoi   hikari   no   naka de   uma   wa
pale light   ATT<u>R</u> in   LOC   horse   SUBJTOP
hissori to   Taro   o   mitsume, Taro
silently   DOBJ   gazeNF
wa   sono mae   ni   tachitsukushita
SUBJTOP it in=front=of   LOC   stood=stock=still
[AK6,2]
'In the pale light the horse gazed silently at Taro
and Taro stood stock-still in front of it.'
In *(1) kumotte* is a gerund of the verb *kumoru* 'to cloud
over' and in *(2) mitsume* is a conjunctive of the verb
mitsumeru 'to gaze'. In the above examples each clause
has its own subject. Medial and final verbs each
designate two independent events, and their
relationship with each other seems to be logically
symmetric. Sentences like *(1)* and *(2)* could be treated
as obvious cases of predicate coordination were it not
for the fact that one of two clauses has a non-finite
verbal form as a head. Much of the debate among
grammarians revolves around deciding exactly whether
this sort of construction should be regarded as
coordinate or subordinate. Noting that one verb has a
medial form and the other verb has a final form, some
scholars argue that sentences similar to *(1)*, *(2)*
should be regarded as subordinate. Others claim that
these morphological considerations should be ignored in
favor of semantic ones, and, thus, the fact that the
clauses are logically symmetric is a weighty enough
argument to call them coordinated[5].
     I side with those linguists [Foley-Van Valin 1984;
Foley- Olson 1985; Lehmann 1984; Koenig-Auwera 1988],
who consider it more fruitful to reject the notion that
coordination and subordination are mutually exclusive
and regard them rather as a scalar sequence. The scalar
approach leads to a uniform description of both
coordinate sentences and sentences with sentential
circumstantials. In addition, this approach leads to a
uniform description of both synthetic and analytic
complex sentences.
     This paper aims at formulating basic principles of
the scalar approach to predicate coordination. The line
of reasoning is developed mainly on data from the
Japanese language.

2. The scale of coordinateness

2.1. In this paper we consider only predicate coordination; we will not attempt to solve the general problem of coordination in all its diversity. Our primary concern is thus the syntactic predicate.

We define a syntactic predicate as a unit that either can function as a head of a simple sentence on its own, or belongs to a paradigm containing at least one form that is able to function as a head of a simple sentence. Thus, in Japanese syntactic predicates are verbs, predicative adjectives and a copula.

We define then a multipredicate construction (MPC) as a syntactic construction containing more than one syntactic predicate.

2.2. The main principles of the scalar approach to predicate coordination are the the following.

A. Coordinate constructions do not form a closed class of MPCs. Presence or absence of coordination between syntactic predicates cannot be treated as a dichotomy: a MPC can be more coordinate or less coordinate, i.e. MPCs form a scale of coordinateness.

B. Coordination is a syntactic strategy for expressing symmetric situations. Coordinate constructions tend to use symmetric language devices in consequence of the general iconicity principle[6]. Thus, the more symmetric (i.e.homogeneous) the coordinated predicates are, the more coordinate is the MPC.

2.3. Before we discuss in detail different types of symmetry that influence the degree of coordinateness, we will define more precisely the place of coordinate constructions in the general classification of MPCs.

Suppose MPC components manifest two elements (P_1 and P_2) of semantic code. Then we may set out two main types of semantic structure MPCs are based on and, accordingly, two main classes of MPCs:

Class 1. $P_1 \leftarrow P_2$. One MPC component takes another as an argument according to its valence potential. The most obvious example of this is sentential complementation.

Class 2. $P_1 \leftarrow P_3 \rightarrow P_2$. Both MPC components are arguments of a semantic element P_3, which we shall call a dominant. For example, if a dominant is manifested by a causative conjunction (e.g. Japanese *kara*) it takes both main and subordinate clauses as arguments[7].

Usually a dominant is manifested by those units which tend to lose their syntactic independence. The tighter bound they become to one of the MPC components, the more a MPC shifts from analytic type to synthetic.

Thus the opposition "analytic vs synthetic" should be also viewed as a scale rather than as a dichotomy.

The scale of coordinateness is formed only by MPCs of Class 2. One extreme of this scale is "minimum of coordinateness" with MPCs that contain sentential circumstantials, or "true" subordinate adverbial clauses. Another extreme is "maximum of coordinateness" with "true" coordinate MPCs.

The position of a MPC on this scale seems to be simultaneously governed by several factors. Most of them deal with different kinds of linguistic symmetry in that components of "true" coordinate MPC are homogeneous with respect to their morphological, syntactic, semantic and communicative parameters.

3.Degree of coordinateness and linguistic symmetry

3.1. The position of MPC on the scale of coordinateness is correlated first and foremost with logical symmetry of its dominant. As a rule, a dominant is a logical or temporal relation. Symmetric relation (e.g. logical conjunction or disjunction) is a base for coordinate MPCs. Asymmetric relation (e.g. logical implication) is a base for MPCs with a sentential circumstantial.

In a natural language, however, even the meaning of elementary conjunctions, such as *if* or *and*, is not equal to its logical correlate. As a result, the semantic nuances of a dominant could alter the degree of coordinateness of a given MPC.

Thus a dominant can indicate whether MPC components are of different importance within the situation being described. For instance, the meaning of Japanese conjunction *shi* is asymmetric: *X shi Y* means '*Y* is more important than *X*, but does not contradict *X*'.This meaning approximately corresponds to English *and what is more.*The conjunction *shi* may be supported by lexical devices that increase semantic asymmetry:

(3) *sore de   chidory   ga   kanaradzu*
      thus   plover   SUBJ   surely
      sukuidaseru   to   wa   ienai
      can=be=rescued   QUOT   TOP   one=can't=say
      shi   sore ni sore   o   suru
      and=what=is=more besides this   DOBJ   do
      ni   wa   omae   wa   totemo   tsurai me   ni
      to   TOP you   SUBJTOP   very   hardship   IOBJ
      awanakute wa iranai   no da yo   [AK2,106]
      you'll=have=to=meet   the=fact=is
      'I cannot say that this is an unfailing way to rescue the plover, and what is more, in doing this you will have a   lot of trouble.'

Semantic symmetry may also reveal itself in that the same semantic constraints may be applied to both