

Secondary Predication in Japanese and Aspectual Structure

This paper presents an empirical argument based on Japanese data for the recent view that the two types of secondary predicates—depictives and resultatives—represent two distinct aspectual structures (cf. Cormack and Smith 1999, Rothstein 2003, 2004, Tenny 1994, among others). The evidence to support such a claim is not readily available in languages like English, due to a superficial syntactic similarity between the two types of constructions. Japanese, unlike such languages, has the depictive and resultative constructions that display a morphological difference. I argue that this variation, as discussed in previous works (see Nishiyama 1999, Takezawa 1993) but thus far left unexplained, reflects the difference in the aspectual structure between depictive and resultative predication.

The nominal predicates in the two types of secondary predication in Japanese are marked by different particles, *de* and *ni*, which are in complementary distribution: in depictive sentences like (1), the predicate is marked by *de*, not *ni*, whereas in resultatives like (2), it is marked by *ni*, not *de*. A question arises from this set of data. Are the two particles, *de* and *ni*, both being NP predicate markers, unconnected morphemes? If the answer is no, contrary to the treatment in Takezawa (1993) and Nishiyama (1999), then the occurrence of the two particles may stem from some principled factor. One possible analysis of the *de/ni*-distribution is the following: the *de* is the morphologically or phonologically contracted form of two syntactic items—*ni* and *te*. Two arguments support this analysis. First, the depictive sentences are not totally unacceptable when *de* is replaced by *ni-te*. Second, the original form of *de* in Old Japanese is *ni-te* (cf. Hashimoto 1969). This “*ni-te*” analysis suggests that *ni* is a genuine NP predicate marker in Japanese, and the form *de* appears only if *ni* is followed by *te*. More specifically, I propose that *ni* is the head of PredP, in the sense of Bowers (1993), which takes an NP as its complement, and that *te* is a T (cf. Nakatani 2003, 2004), which takes the PredP as its complement. One function of the *te* in Japanese is to denote aspect. The *te* in the “V-*te*-V” complex predicates, like *tabe-te-iru* ‘eating,’ and *mi-te-kuru* ‘see and come,’ conveys the temporal information that is internal to the predicate, such as duration or perfectivity (see Nakatani 2004). Just as the *te* that is embedded into the “V-*te*-V” predicates, the *de* in depictives, that is, our “*ni-te*”, is assumed to be structurally located within the matrix argument structure. I thus argue that the *te* in the “*ni-te*” sequence refers to the aspectual property of the event described by its complement, the PredP. The relevant structure of sentence (1b) under the current analysis is given in (3). The occurrence of *pro* in the specifier of the PredP in this example predicts that a lexical NP may also occur in this position. Example (4) illustrates such an instance.

This analysis is in line with recent developments in the study of secondary predication. In a discussion on depictive constructions, Rothstein (2004) argues that depictives contain the temporal dependency constraint between the matrix and the secondary events: the two events must go on simultaneously and their run time must coincide. As an example that clearly delineates this constraint, she cites sentence (5). It asserts that the events of driving and of being drunk lasted for an hour-long each. As this adverbial fact confirms, the depictive constructions require that the depictive predicate have its own aspectual property, that is, duration. This argument explains for the occurrence of *de* in the Japanese depictives, under the “*ni-te*” analysis. A PredP (*ni*P) requires a TP (*te*P) to indicate its aspectual property, giving rise to *de*.

The “*ni-te*” analysis is compatible also with the aspectual structure of resultative constructions that is discussed in the literature. A shared assumption on these constructions, like example (6), is that the state described by the resultative predicate is associated with an incremental process: that is, its temporal property is unspecified at a starting point of the matrix event (e.g., a *hammering* event in (6)), and the result state is attained only at a definite end point (see Rothstein 2004, Wechsler 2005). This characteristic of resultatives is confirmed by, for example, the fact that *John is hammering the metal flat* does not entail that *John hammered the metal flat* (Wechsler 2005: 258). On this view, we can explain why a resultative predicate in Japanese is marked by *ni*, not *de*. The resultative PredP lacks an inherent temporal property, therefore appearing without a *te*P.

The “*ni-te*” analysis makes a correct prediction on the distribution of *de/ni*-predicates in the following two contexts. The first one is a small clause construction, as given in (7). Takezawa (1993: fn. 18) notes, though without an explanation, that this construction allows a *ni*-predicate and not a *de*-predicate. With the general assumption that small clauses lack tense (cf. Hoekstra 1988,

Stowell 1991), we can now explain the non-occurrence of the *de*-predicate. The PredP in a small clause, without a temporal structure, does not require the presence of a *te*P. Therefore, *de* does not appear. The other expected phenomenon under our analysis is a so-called identity sentence as in (8). When an expression of identity is marked by *ni*, the sentence is highly deviant. It is observed cross-linguistically that the identity constituent requires the presence of an Infl for it to be licensed (cf. Doron 1983, Rothstein 1995). If this requirement in identity sentences is imposed also in Japanese, the low acceptability of the *ni*-predicate, that is, the *ni*P without a *te*P, is expected.

Finally, the proposal that the depictive construction involves a TP adjunct (cf. (3)-(4)) may hold cross-linguistically, to the extent that the presupposed analysis of the aspectual structures of the secondary predication is valid across languages. One might question whether English depictives, for example, have the T head corresponding to the Japanese *te*, since such an element is not visible in the structure. However, it is not surprising that a given functional category, such as T, is covert in some languages and overt in others.

In sum, the analysis of Japanese secondary predication provided in this paper empirically supports the argument that the depictive and resultative constructions differ in their aspectual structures.

Data

- (1) a. John-ga [hadaka**-ni/-de*] sakana-o tabe-ta
 John-NOM nude-*ni/-de* fish-ACC eat-past
 'John ate the fish nude.' (Takezawa 1993: 50)
- b. John-ga sakana-o [nama**-ni/-de*] tabe-ta
 John-NOM fish-ACC raw-*ni/-de* eat-past
 'John ate the fish raw.' (Takezawa 1993: 50)
- (2) John-ga kabe-o [massiro-*ni/*-de*] nut-ta
 John-NOM wall-ACC pure white-*ni/-de* paint-past
 'John painted the wall white.' (Takezawa 1993: 50)
- (3) [_{VP} John-ga [_{VP} sakana_i-o [_{Adjunct} TP [_{PredP} pro_i [_{Pred'} nama-*ni*]]-te] tabe]-ta
- (4) [_{VP} John-ga [_{VP} sakana_i-o [_{Adjunct} TP [_{PredP} nakami-o [_{Pred'} nama-*ni*]]-te] tabe]-ta
 John-NOM fish-ACC insides-ACC raw-*ni-te* eat-past
 'John ate the insides of the fish raw.'
- (5) John drove the car drunk for an hour. (Rothstein 2004: 68)
- (6) John hammered the metal flat. (Wechsler 2005: 259)
- (7) John-ga Mary-o totemo miryokuteki-*ni/*-de* omot-ta
 John-NOM Mary-ACC very attractive-*ni/-de* consider-past
 'John considered Mary very attractive.' (Takezawa 1993: 53; footnote 18)
- (8) Taroo-ga kare-o Tanaka san*[?]-*ni/-de*-aru-to omot-ta
 Taro-NOM he-ACC Mr. Tanaka-*ni/-de*-be-that consider-past
 'Taro considered him Mr. Tanaka/Taro considered that he was Mr. Tanaka'

Selected references

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