

Verbal/Adjectival Predicate Clauses and Nominal Predicate Clauses
in Japanese and Korean: A Contrastive Linguistic Approach

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Summary

In Japanese, nominal predicate clauses can normally be used on behalf of verbal/adjectival predicate clauses, which are sometimes regarded as unnatural, as shown in (1) and (2).

- (1) a. *mamonaku tookyoo eki ni tootyaku desu.*
soon Tokyo station at arrival COP:POL
(Lit.) ‘(It) is soon the arrival at Tokyo Station.’ (Inoue and Hasoo Kim 1998: 457)
- b. *mamonaku tookyoo eki ni tootyaku-si-masu.*
soon Tokyo station at arrival-do-POL
‘(We) will soon arrive at Tokyo Station.’ (Inoue and Hasoo Kim 1998: 457)
- (2) a. *kyoo wa ii tenki da.*
today TOP good weather COP
(Lit.) ‘As for today, (it) is a good weather.’ (Inoue and Hasoo Kim 1998: 463)
- b. *kyoo wa tenki ga ii.*
today TOP weather NOM good
(Lit.) ‘As for today, the weather is good.’ (Inoue and Hasoo Kim 1998: 463)

In Korean, on the other hand, the use of nominal predicate clauses results in unacceptable expressions; verbal/adjectival predicate clauses are normally used, as shown in (3) and (4).

- (3) a. ?? *kot tongkyeng-yek-ey tochak-i-pni-ta.*
soon Tokyo-station-at arrival-COP-POL-IND
(Lit.) ‘(It) is soon the arrival at Tokyo Station.’ (Inoue and Hasoo Kim 1998: 457)
- b. *kot tongkyeng-yek-ey tochak-ha-keyss-supni-ta.*
soon Tokyo-station-at arrival-do-INT-POL-IND
‘(We) will soon arrive at Tokyo Station.’ (Inoue and Hasoo Kim 1998: 457)

- (4) a. ?? *onul-un coh-un nalssi(-i)-ta.*
 today-TOP good-RL:PRES weather(-COP)-IND
 (Lit.) ‘As for today, (it) is a good weather.’ (Inoue and Hasoo Kim 1998: 463)
- b. *onul-un nalssi-ka coh-ta.*
 today-TOP weather-NOM good-IND
 (Lit.) ‘As for today, the weather is good.’ (Inoue and Hasoo Kim 1998: 463)

In this way, nominal predicate clauses are more frequently used in Japanese than in Korean.

Focusing on nominal predicate clauses, there exist nominal predicate clauses including a general noun in both Japanese and Korean in the same way, as shown in (5) and (6).

- (5) a. Japanese
kaigi o kaisai-suru yotei da.
 meeting ACC holding-do schedule COP
 (Lit.) ‘(It) is the plan to hold a meeting.’
- b. Korean
hoyuy-lul kaychoy-ha-l yeyceng-i-ta.
 meeting-ACC holding-do-RL:PRS schedule-COP-IND
 (Lit.) ‘(It) is the plan to hold a meeting.’
- (6) a. Japanese
koosoo mansyon o kensetu-suru keikaku da.
 high-rise apartment ACC building-do plan COP
 (Lit.) ‘(It) is the plan to build a high-rise apartment.’
- b. Korean
kochung aphathu-lul kensel-ha-l kyeyhoyk-i-ta.
 high-rise apartment-ACC building-do-RL:PRS plan-COP-IND
 (Lit.) ‘(It) is the plan to build a high-rise apartment.’

However, as for nominal predicate clauses involving a formal noun, a variety of them can be found in Japanese, as shown in (7)-(11), whereas they are extremely limited in Korean, as shown in (12).

- (7) *kare wa isya ni nat-ta no da.*
 he TOP medical.doctor DAT become-PAST thing(formal noun) COP
 ‘He became a medical doctor.’

- (8) *kondo koso umaku iku hazu da.*
this.time really well go should(formal noun) COP
'It should go well this time.'
- (9) *zibun no koto wa zibun de suru mono da.*
self GEN thing TOP self by do thing(formal noun) COP
'You should look after yourself.'
- (10) *kare mo yatto rikai-si-ta wake da.*
he too now/finally understanding-do-PAST reason(formal noun) COP
'(This is the reason why) he finally understood that.'
- (11) *ima kangae-te iru tokoro da.*
now think-CONJ be place(formal noun) COP
'I am thinking now.'
- (12) *na-nun nayil cip-ey eps-ul*
I-TOP tomorrow home-at not.be-RL:PRS
ke(s-i)-pni-ta.
thing(formal noun)(-COP)-POL-IND
'I will not be at home tomorrow.' (Paek, Pong-ja 2004: 97)

The above-mentioned fact on nominal predicate clauses leads to a piece of evidence for a fundamental principle that grammaticalization occurs more frequently in Japanese than in Korean.