Syntactic and textual features of subjects in English and Japanese

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ABSTRACT: Following Chomsky's original 1965 model of transformational generative grammar, we present a syntactic definition of subjects in English and Japanese in the framework of the so-called standard theory. As a result, we find that in Japanese, the theme—except when a deep noun phrase (NP) is thematized as the subject—neither functions as a surface subject nor coincides with it, as in English. In fact, in Japanese, theme itself does not have the same syntactic functions as subject. It becomes evident that subjects in English and Japanese differ markedly in their syntactic features. Then, we attempt to clarify some textual features of subjects in the two languages by analyzing them from a semantic viewpoint. We find that they exhibit four corresponding textual interpretations: theme, contrast, neutral description, and exhaustive listing, and then, we touch upon some syntactic restrictions on the neutral-description sentence. It is also stated that, since the so-called standard theory has developed into the minimalist program, some linguists may say that it is not appropriate to analyze syntactic phenomena based on the standard theory, but we claim that it is very explicit and effective when syntactic phenomena are analyzed individually rather than comprehensively.

Key words: Subjects in English and Japanese, Comparative linguistics, Comparison between English and Japanese

1. Subjects in English and Japanese

1-1. Subject and textual function

In order to make our utterance satisfactory, sentences we utter must not only be grammatically acceptable, but also be consistent with the stream of discourse, since all utterance comes into existence in accordance with its consituation[1].

From the point of view of the presentation of a message in sequence, the initial element of a clause is of great significance, in the following two respects: first, as the communicative point of transfer of the preceding context, and secondly, as the communicative point of departure for the rest of a clause.

The initial element of a clause may be called its "theme". In a declarative sentence, it is common that what is placed in the initial position of a clause is, both in English and in Japanese, the subject.

In this sense subjects both in English and in Japanese seem to play an important role in textual function as well as in syntactic function.

Consequently this paper, firstly, gives a syntactic definition of what the "subjects in English and Japanese" mentioned here are in the framework of the so-called standard theory, the original model of transformational generative grammar laid out by Chomsky in 1965. Secondly, this paper attempts to clarify some textual features of the two subjects through observing them from a semantic viewpoint. It goes without saying that in the process of analysis we shall have to make explicit the definitions of the various conceptions often used ambiguously in the explanation of discourse stream. For the sake of simplicity and to put the limitation on our discussion, the subjects dealt with here are all limited to those in the simple, affirmative, and declarative sentences of active voice. Consequently, the term "clause" used above will henceforth be referred to as "sentence".

1-2. Subject and discourse component

When we say "syntactic and textual features of subjects in English and Japanese," we have to make clear first whether the "subjects in English and Japanese" are the ones in deep structure or in surface structure. The answer to this question will be given by defining the extent where the discourse component functions.

It is generally recognized in the framework of transformational generative grammar that the
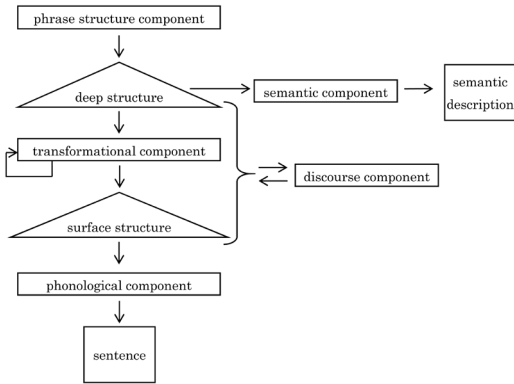
Fig. 1. The extent where the discourse component functions

discourse component is the one where surface structure or the process in which surface structure is generated from deep structure should be filtered. Kuno[2] illustrates this as in Fig. 1.

Then, as far as subject is concerned, it is surface subject or what may be called "new derived subject formation transformations"[3] that should be filtered in the discourse component. Thus it follows that the subjects we are going to analyze from syntactic and textual viewpoints are surface subjects.

1-3. English surface subject

We have stated above that subjects dealt with in this paper are surface subjects. Our task here must therefore be to briefly define English surface subject, especially its function.

Surface subject is often called grammatical subject or derived subject, whereas deep subject is often called logical subject. Grammatically speaking, what may come into our mind first as the functions of English surface subject or English grammatical subject are the following two: one is that surface subject determines concord, and the other is that it is the part of the sentence that changes its position as we go from statement to question. True, these two functions are of great importance especially in the practical use of English. However, a little further consideration will show that they are insufficient to explain the whole surface subject with: it is not that they cause English surface subject, but that they result from the existence of English surface subject. In defining English surface subject, it is also necessary to clarify what it must exist for. Hence, in order to answer the problem properly, we must begin by treating English surface subject as related to English deep subject.

Since Chomsky wrote *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* in 1965, it has been widely recognized that in analyzing a sentence in deep structure into noun phrase (NP) and Predicate-Phrase (S→NP⌢Predicate-Phrase), the leftmost NP immediately dominated by S can be defined as the Subject-of the sentence, and the rest of the string as the Predicate-of the sentence. Here we have to note of course that the notion "Subject," as distinct from the notion "NP," designates a grammatical function rather than a grammatical category, and that it is, in other words, an inherently relational notion. So the "Subject-of" a sentence is the relation holding between the NP of the sentence of the form NP⌢Predicate-Phrase and the whole sentence[4].

In any event, this rewriting rule (S→NP⌢Predicate-Phrase), though conventionally used, seems to have a crucial meaning in that at least English is taken to represent the universe by making a twofold division of it. The most commonplace dichotomy taken in such a case would be that of "what is discussed" versus "what is said concerning it." The former is called "theme" and the latter "rheme." In English where linear word order performs a grammatically crucial function, the assumption that deep subject is positioned before deep predicate seems to imply that deep subject and deep predicate are already in possession of the function of theme and that of rheme respectively.

However, this is of course a general characteristic and is not applicable to all cases. Here let us look at the following surface sentences:

(1) There is a book on the table.

(2) Round the bend came the train.

(1) is called an existential sentence and (2) a presentational sentence. It seems that although they have their own subjects and predicates grammatically, none of them, communicatively speaking, can be divided into two parts, that is, theme and rheme. The reason is that, for example, from (2) we cannot make such an interrogative sentence as in the following:

(3) What came round the bend?

Whereas this interrogative sentence has a presupposition that something came round the bend, (2) has no such implication. Communicatively speaking, (2) seems to be a sentence that represents the event that the train came round the bend in one framework. Thus we might say that (2) consists of rheme only. This assumption about surface structure seems to correspond also to deep structure with respect to the divisional way we represent the universe. At any rate, for the sake of simplicity and to put some limitation on our discussion, let us exclude such cases as (1) and (2) in this paper.

As far as surface structure is concerned, Chomsky[5] proposes that Theme-Rheme (Topic-Comment in

Chomsky's term) should be the basic grammatical relation of surface structure corresponding (roughly) to the fundamental Subject-Predicate relation of deep structure, and that thus we might define the Theme-of the sentence as the leftmost NP immediately dominated by S in the surface structure, and the Rheme-of the sentence as the rest of the string. If we follow Chomsky, theme and subject will coincide in surface structure unless root transformations are applied to the surface structure. This condition has significance to some extent because if a root transformation such as topicalization is applied to a sentence, for example, "I like apples," we shall get such a sentence as in the following: "Apples I like." Since in this case the theme is not "I" but "apples," the theme and the subject do not coincide in the surface structure. Consequently, strictly speaking, we should take "in surface structure" mentioned above as "in shallow surface structure."

From this let us tentatively define surface subject as the leftmost NP immediately dominated by S in the surface structure.

Now that we have, though roughly, taken surface subject as being put in an initial position of a sentence and therefore as coinciding with the theme, we wonder what the difference between surface subject and deep subject is. Hence we have to search for an inherent function in English surface subject somewhere else.

We may assume that one major function of the transformation is, in a word, to map a theme-rheme relation of deep structure into that of surface structure, perhaps reordering elements in various ways in the course of this operation. In the process of the operation, deep subjects may or may not come into existence in surface structures as surface subjects. Similarly, deep predicates may or may not come into existence as surface predicates. In any case, what we can say confidently here is that surface subject has a wider range in application of items than deep subject owing to the transformations, that is, what may be called "new derived subject formation transformations": more kinds of items can appear as surface subject than as deep subject.

In considering the reason, we should be reminded that the initial element of a sentence (the theme and at the same time the surface subject) is the communicative point of transfer of the preceding context and at the same time the communicative point of departure for the rest of the sentence. From this we may assume that more kinds of items can come into existence as surface subject so that they may function as both the communicative point of transfer of the preceding context and the communicative point of

departure for the rest of the sentence. As will be easily understood, what functions as both must be what the hearer has already known, or what he or she can easily guess. It follows then that the English surface subject must function fundamentally as something already given or known, that is, what is called "given item" and at the same time "old information."

It seems that we have come at last to the inherent function in surface subject. However, this conclusion will be abundantly disproved in detail. But we shall not go into the question any more fully here because it is related to information structure and will be referred to in detail in the next issue.

1-4. Japanese surface subject

"Subject" in Japanese had long been taken in Japanese grammars to be equivalent to "subjective case" shown by the particle *ga* or "theme" shown by the particle *wa*. However, since Akira Mikami, a Japanese linguist, wrote *Gendai Goho Shinsetsu* in 1955, it has been claimed that this definition is too ambiguous to be considered as describing subject in Japanese correctly.

Shibatani[6] gives us such a convincing argument about subject in Japanese, partly accepting Mikami and partly not, that we shall start our argument by depending chiefly on him and as briefly as possible again.

First of all, we may consider *Ga*-pattern (from this pattern we will exclude the *ga* of objective case as in the following: *Watasi wa mizu ga nomitai.*) and *Wa*-pattern as basic sentence patterns in Japanese deep structure. However, with respect to subject in Japanese, we have only to deal with *Ga*-pattern here, since *wa* shows the notion of theme quite different from that of subject.

In a survey of *Ga*-pattern we find that the noun clause (here we call 'NP + particle' as noun clause (=NC)) of subjective case (the NP-*ga*) in a sentence has no more concord with the predicate-clause (here we call all the constituents or the combinations of the constituents functioning as predicate as predicate-clause (=P-C)) than the other noun clauses do, and besides, that even if it has some grammatical relations with the predicate-clause, it is on the same level as the other noun clauses. Thus the structure of (4a) should be shown not as (4b) but as (4c):

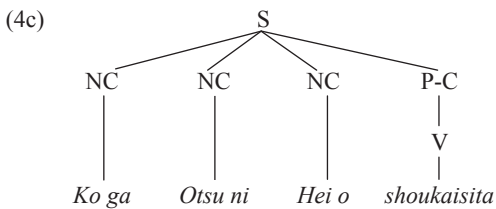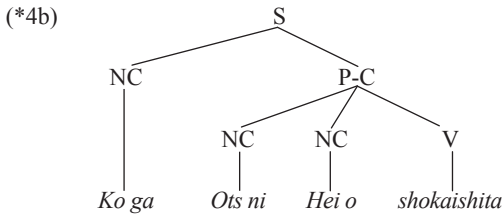(4) a. *Ko ga Otsu ni Hei o shokaishita.*
     'Ko introduced Hei to Otsu.'

   b. **Ko ga/Otsu ni Hei o shokaishita.*
     * at the head stands for "unacceptable."

　　c. *Ko ga*
　　　Otsu ni ⟶ *shokaishita.*
　　　Hei o
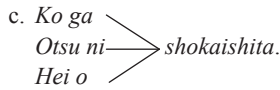
or, if by a tree-diagram, not as (4b) but as (4c):

(*4b)

(4c)

The reason for this analysis is that, for example, even if we exchange *Ko ga* for *Otsu ni* in order as in (5), it makes no differences in meaning between (4a) and (5):

(5) *Otsu ni Ko ga Hei o shokaishita.*
　　'Ko introduced Hei to Otsu.'

Of course, this is not true of English, so we can say that linear word order is not so grammatically crucial in Japanese as in English.

Anyway, from this arises a question of whether or not a noun clause of subjective case in Japanese has something to do with the notion of subject as in English, since it has no grammatical predominance over the predicate-clause or the other noun clauses. In order to answer the question properly, we should begin by observing the grammatical features of noun clauses with more care than ever.

Shibatani[7] observes that a noun phrase in a deep structure has different grammatical features from those of the other noun phrases in some respects. The summary is as in the following:

(6) a. It can be usually put in an initial position of a sentence except in an existential sentence.
　　b. It can be usually shown by *ga* or rarely by *ni*, unless it is thematized.
　　c. It can cause honorification.
　　d. It can cause reflexivization.

Shibatani also proposes that we should look upon the noun phrase to which the transformational rules corresponding to (6) can be applied as the deep subject in Japanese. That is to say, he considers deep subject in Japanese as a category where noun phrases grammatically distinct from the other noun phrases in sentences are grouped together. We shall not go further into the question here, and, accepting his position on deep subject in Japanese, begin to define surface subject in Japanese.

First, it goes without saying that when a deep subject is converted into the surface structure as a result of the application of the transformational rules corresponding to (6), it can be defined as Japanese surface subject. For example, look at the following deep structure:

(7) [*Otsu　Ko sensei no musuko　shokaishita Ko sensei*]
　　'Otsu　　　Mr. Ko's son　　introduced　Mr. Ko.'

Let us tentatively assume the NP *Ko sensei* to be the deep subject, the NP *Otsu* the indirect object, the NP *Ko sensei no musuko* the direct object, and the verb *shokaishita* the predicate-clause, and then we can get (8) by placing the deep subject in initial position, the indirect object second, the direct object third, and the predicate-clause last:

(8) [*Ko sensei Otsu Ko sensei no musuko shokaishita*]
　　We can get (9) by inserting the particles, *ga*, *ni*, and *o* into (8):

(9) [*Ko sensei_i ga Otsu ni Ko sensei_i no musuko o shokaishita*]
　　'Mr. Ko introduced Mr. Ko's son to Otsu.'

The initial *Ko sensei* in (9) (to be exact, the NP *Ko sensei* in (7) can cause reflexivization to the second *Ko sensei* as follows:

(10) *Ko sensei ga Otsu ni <u>jibun</u> no musuko o shokaishita.*
　　'Mr. Ko introduced <u>his</u> son to Otsu.'

and can also cause honorification to the verb *shokaishta* as follows:

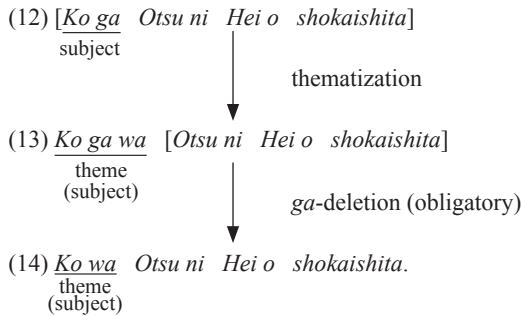(11) *Ko sensei ga Otsu ni <u>jibun</u> no musuko o <u>goshokaini</u> <u>natta</u>.*[#1]
　　'Mr. Ko introduced his son to Otsu.'

In such a case the NP *Ko sensei* in (7), satisfying all the conditions in (6), can be defined as the deep subject, and the initial NC *Ko sensei ga* in (11) as a result of the application of the transformational rules can be defined as the surface subject.

Secondly, we sometimes have Japanese surface subject as a result of the thematization of a deep subject. In this case we have on the surface a *Wa*-pattern sentence, but we should note that it is quite different from that of deep structure. For example, when the deep NC as the subject in (12) is thematized (to be exact, the structure in (12) is also an intermediate stage one), we can get (14) through the
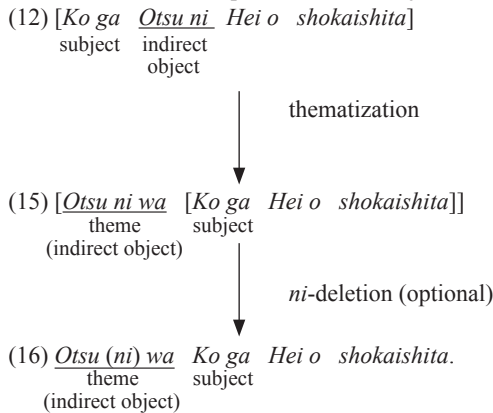

[#1]This is optional: it is applied only when the NP as the subject represents a person worthy of respect.

intermediate stage (13):

(12) [*Ko ga   Otsu ni   Hei o   shokaishita*]
      subject

               ↓ thematization

(13) *Ko ga wa* [*Otsu ni   Hei o   shokaishita*]
      theme
      (subject)

               ↓ *ga*-deletion (obligatory)

(14) *Ko wa   Otsu ni   Hei o   shokaishita.*
      theme
      (subject)

Since the theme in (14) has (or more exactly, seems to have) the function of subject, we will also define the NC as the theme in (14) as Japanese surface subject.

Talking of the thematization of a deep subject, we should note that when the deep NC as the indirect object in (12) is thematized, the NC as the theme in (16) cannot be defined as Japanese surface subject:

(12) [*Ko ga   Otsu ni   Hei o   shokaishita*]
      subject indirect
               object

               ↓ thematization

(15) [*Otsu ni wa* [*Ko ga   Hei o   shokaishita*]]
      theme   subject
      (indirect object)

               ↓ *ni*-deletion (optional)

(16) *Otsu (ni) wa   Ko ga   Hei o   shokaishita.*
      theme   subject
      (indirect object)

and the same is the case with the deep direct object in (12).

Lastly, we shall touch upon the other basic sentence pattern in Japanese deep structure, that is, *Wa*-pattern.

This pattern has theme-predicate structure in it, where there exists no notion of subject at all. However, in the sense of dichotomy, we may take this pattern to be similar to English. Shibatani[8] also proposes that there should be, semantically speaking, two types of theme-predicate structure in Japanese deep structure.

First, look at the deep structure in (17), from which (18) is derived, (18a) without any transformation, and (18b) by the deletion of the identical noun phrase and the particle *no* in the predicate clause:

(17) a. [*Hana wa* [*sakura ga   kireida*]]
         theme   predicate

     b. [*Zo wa* [*zo no hana ga   nagai*]]
         theme   predicate

(18) a. *Hana wa   sakura ga   kireida.*
        'Speaking of blossoms, cherry blossoms are the most beautiful.'

   b. *Zo wa   hana ga   nagai.*
      'The elephant has a long trunk.'

Here we can see that there is a "whole-part" relation between the themes and the underlined NPs in (17).

Secondly, look at the deep structures in (19), from which (20) is derived without any transformation:

(19) a. [*Kono kaze wa* [*taifu ga   kuru ni   chigainai*]]
         theme   predicate

     b. [*Chizu wa* [*ura o   goran   kudasai*]]
         theme   predicate

(20) a. *Kono kaze wa taifu ga kuru ni   chigainai.*
        'Judging from the wind, a typhoon must be coming.'

   b. *Chizu wa   ura o   goran   kudasai.*
      'As for the map, see overleaf.'

In the case of (19), the themes and the predicates are related to each other only through context or general knowledge.

After all, we can say that the theme in Japanese, except that the deep NP as the subject is thematized, neither functions as the surface subject nor coincides with it like the theme in English, and that, to be exact, theme itself does not have the same syntactic functions as subject.

As might be apparent from what has been referred to so far, subjects in English and Japanese are quite different from each other in their syntactic features. However, what will result if we observe them from the textual viewpoint?

2. Four Interpretations of Subjects in English and Japanese

2-1. Correspondence of interpretations

From this chapter we shall start our textual analysis of the surface subjects in English and Japanese which were defined syntactically in the previous chapter.

In analyzing the subjects from the textual viewpoint, the first thing we must do would be to know how many and what readings or interpretations they will bear according to the stream of the discourse.

Kuno[9] proposes that there should be four textual interpretations in the English and Japanese subjects respectively, and also that they should correspond to each other respectively. Let us adopt his four interpretations as they are, and in the former part of this chapter we will endeavour to prove the truth of his proposal of correspondence, since he does not give any theoretical evidence. If it is proved that they correspond to each other respectively, it will be suggested that the English and Japanese subjects may have the same textual features. In the process of analysis of the sentences we shall use the conceptions

of "markedness" and "unmarkedness" as the measure to depend upon.

With regard to the four textual interpretations of the Japanese subject, Kuno[10] enumerates two different uses of *wa* and *ga*. The summary is as in the following:

(21) a. *wa* for the theme of a sentence: "Speaking of …; Talking about …"
　　　John wa gakusei desu.
　　　'Speaking of John, he is a student.'

　　b. *wa* for contrasts: "*X* …, but …; As for *X* …"
　　　Ame wa hutte imasu ga …
　　　'It is raining, but …'

　　c. *ga* for neutral descriptions of actions or temporary states:
　　　Ame ga hutte imasu.
　　　'It is raining.'

　　d. *ga* for exhaustive listing: "*X* (and only X) …"
　　　"It is *X* that …"
　　　John *ga* gakusei desu.
　　　'(Of all the people under discussion) John (and only John) is a student.'
　　　'It is John that is a student.'

These uses will henceforth be referred to as thematic *wa*, contrastive *wa*, descriptive *ga*, and exhaustive-listing *ga* based on Kuno.

Here we notice that while the examples in (21b) and (21d) have some contrastive sense in them, those in (21a) and (21c) do not. That is to say, while noun phrases preceding the contrastive *wa* and the exhaustive-listing *ga* receive some contrastive sense, those preceding the thematic *wa* and the descriptive *ga* do not.

From the viewpoint of "marked" or "unmarked," the former two are marked because of having prominent sense, and the latter two are unmarked because of having no prominent sense.

This can also be proved by accent. As Mikami[11] shows, the former two receive stressed accent, whereas the latter two receive unstressed one. Judging from the principle of economy of speech, we may assume that "unstressed" is normal, and "stressed" not. Thus we can say again that the former two are marked because of having prominent accent, and the latter two are unmarked because of having no prominent accent. It may be said that stressed accent produces the sense of contrast.

With regard to the textual interpretations of the English subject, Kuno[12] also proposes as in the following (We must add that we have changed the word "kissed" in the original instance into "hit."):

(22) Alexander hit Mary.
　　a. Whom did Alexander hit?

　　　Alexander hit MARY.　　　　　　(theme)

　　b. Did Alexander and Tom hit Mary?
　　　ALEXANDER hit Mary, but TOM didn't.
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(contrast)

　　c. What happened next?
　　　Alexander hit Mary.　　(neutral description)

　　d. Who hit Mary?
　　　ALEXANDER hit Mary. (exhaustive listing)

As was mentioned in previous chapter, subject in English coincides fundamentally with theme. It follows then that the subject Alexander in (22) functions as the theme when it is seen out of context. However, seen in the stream of the discourse, it receives the four interpretations of theme, contrast, neutral description, and exhaustive listing according to Kuno. Furthermore, Kuno[13], quoting Dwight Bolinger, shows these four distinctions in intonation as in the following (we must add that we have changed the word "kissed" in the original instance into "hit."):

(23) a. (theme): Al$_{ex}^{an}_{der hit}$ ^{Ma}$_{ry}$

　　b. (contrast): Al$_{ex}^{an}_{der hit}$ $_{Ma}$^{ry}

　　c. (neutral description): Al$_{ex}$^{an}der hit ^{Ma}$_{ry}$

　　d. (exhaustive listing): Al$_{ex}^{an}_{der hit Mary}$

Before examining these four textual interpretations from the viewpoint of "marked" or "unmarked," it is necessary to give our notion with regard to the focus of information.

Roughly speaking, the focus of information indicates where the most important part in a statement is. We may say, in other words, that it is a solution or answer to a problem or question. In English it is usually signaled by intonation nucleus. And it might be reasonable to think that the focus of information (hereafter called "focus") does not fall on the theme but on any of the elements within the rheme in a statement. The reason is that since rheme is what is said about someone or something, it bears in its nature the function of making definite what is indefinite in the presupposition of a statement. This is illustrated as in the following:

(24) Whom did Alexander hit?
　　Alexander hit MARY.
　　　theme　　　rheme
　　　　　　　　　focus

<u>Alexander hit someone.</u>
     presupposition

As a rule, focus, accompanying intonation nucleus with it, tends to come on the final element in a sentence. Strictly speaking, focus as a rule falls on the last open-class item or proper noun in a sentence. This phenomenon is what we call the principle of end-focus, and the focus in this case, coming on the neutral position of focus, may be called "unmarked" focus. However, it often happens that focus, accompanying intonation nucleus with it, may come on any of the non-final elements in a sentence and cause it to bear some contrastive sense. The focus in such a case, not coming on the neutral position of focus, may be called "marked" focus. Also, when the marked focus falls on the theme of a sentence, the theme becomes "marked" theme and bears some contrastive sense. It goes without saying that the theme on which marked focus does not fall is unmarked theme and bears no contrastive sense.

Now, on the basis of what has been mentioned above we shall start the examination of the four textual interpretations of English subject from the viewpoint of "marked" or "unmarked."

In (22a) the solution to the question is <u>Mary</u>, and so the solution does not come on the <u>theme</u>. Consequently we can say that the theme in this case is unmarked.

In (22b) the solution to the question is <u>ALEXANDER</u>, and so the solution does come on the theme. Consequently we can say that the theme in this case is marked.

(22c) needs further consideration. In (22c) the solution to the question is the whole statement, and so the scope of marked focus extends over the whole statement. What we cannot emphasize too much here is that the fact that the whole statement is within the scope of marked focus shows that no elements in the statement receive marked focus and contrastive sense. The reason is that the existence of the element of marked focus presupposes that of at least one element of no marked focus. For example, consider the existence of the notion of sickness: it presupposes the existence of people who are not sick. If all people were sick (marked), the notion of sickness would disappear from use, and the state of being sick would be normal (unmarked). Thus we may assume that all the elements in (22c) are unmarked and have no contrastive sense even though intonation nucleus falls on <u>Mary</u> according to the stress rule that nucleus assumes the final position in a focus scope[14]. This explains that the theme in (22c) is unmarked, and at the same time why the end-focus element is unmarked

in spite of having the intonation nucleus on it. Here arises a problem. It should be remembered that <u>Mary</u> in (22a) was taken as "marked" focus because of it being the solution to the question though it is on the neutral position of focus. Furthermore it should be noted that if <u>Alexander hit Mary</u> in (22) were said in response to the question <u>what did Alexander do?</u>, the predicate <u>hit Mary</u> would be "marked" focus though <u>Mary</u> is on the neutral position of focus. From these it must be added that "unmarked" focus is typical of the final element in the neutral-description sentence only. That is to say, the neutral-description sentence such as in (22c) is "the true case of 'neutral information focus', where there are no specific prior assumptions at all."[14]

In (22d) the solution to the question is <u>ALEXANDER</u>, and so the solution does come on the theme. Consequently we can say that the theme is marked.

Here we notice that there is a parallelism between the Japanese and English subjects when they are seen from the viewpoint of "marked" or "unmarked." That is to say, when subject in English is unmarked theme, it corresponds to the use of either thematic *wa* or descriptive *ga*, and when it is marked theme, it corresponds to the use of either contrastive *wa* or exhaustive-listing *ga*. Going further still, we may assume that the unmarked theme corresponds to the use of thematic *wa* in case marked focus falls on any element within the rheme as in (22a), and to the use of descriptive *ga* in case the scope of marked focus extends over the whole statement as in (22c). The marked theme corresponds to the use of contrastive *wa* in case it represents an enumerative choice as in (22b), and to the use of exhaustive-listing *ga* in case it represents an exclusive choice as in (22d).

From what has been mentioned so far, we can conclude that subjects in English and Japanese coincide in their four textual interpretations as Kuno suggested. This conclusion will help us to assume that the English and Japanese subjects may have the same textual features, and at the same time to describe them together from the point of view of information structure in the next issue.

2-2. Restrictions on neutral-description sentences

The neutral-description sentence represents an objectively observable action, existence, or temporary state as a new event. For this reason it seems that it is in possession of some syntactic restrictions unlike the sentences of the other three interpretations. So it would be necessary to touch upon them here in the latter half of this chapter. Kuno[15] gives us such a

convincing argument about these that we shall begin our discussion by depending chiefly upon him again.

First of all, it should be noted that in order to receive the neutral-description, both English and Japanese sentences must have predicates that represent an action, or existence, or temporary state as in the following:

(25) a. Oh, look! John is running.　　　　(action)
　　 b. *Oya, Taro ga asoko ni iru*.　　　(existence)
　　　 'Look! Taro is over there.'
　　 c. Look! The sky is red.　　　(temporary state)

It should be noted that the sky in (25c) is not a generic noun phrase in this case, but one referred to demonstratively by the speaker in the present discourse. It follows then that the definite article the in (25c) is an exophoric one. If the sky in (25c) were taken as a generic noun phrase, the sentence the sky is red in (25c) would receive the thematic interpretation and therefore be unacceptable as an absurdity, though not grammatically.

When the predicates, on the contrary, represent a habitual action or stable state, the English and Japanese sentences cannot receive the neutral-description interpretation, but any of the other three as in (26) and (27):

(26) a. *Look! John goes to school every day.
　　　　　　　　　　　(neutral description)
　　 b. Where does John go every day?
　　　 John goes to school every day.　　(theme)
　　 c. Does John and Tom go to school every day?
　　　 John goes to school every day, but …(contrast)
　　 d. Who goes to school every day?
　　　 John goes to school every day.
　　　　　　　　　　　(exhaustive listing)
(27) a. *Taro ga wakai*.　　(neutral description)
　　　 'Look! Taro is young! '
　　 b. *Taro wa wakai*.　　　　(theme)
　　　 'Taro is young.'
　　 c. *Taro wa wakai*.　　　　　(contrast)
　　　 'Taro is young, but …'
　　 d. *Taro ga wakai*.　　(exhaustive listing)
　　　 'It is Taro who is young.'

Furthermore it should be noted that the English sentences whose subjects are indefinite noun phrases and at the same time whose predicates represent habitual actions or stable states are unacceptable as in the following:

(28) *A boy was tall.

It is needless to say that such an English sentence as (28) sometimes becomes acceptable in the interpretation of theme when the subject of indefinite noun phrase is taken as generic as in the following:

(29) A whale is big.　　　　　　　　(theme)

However, when the subject contains a stressed numeral or quantifier, a grammatical sentence results:

(30) a. *Twŏ bóys were tall.
　　 b. Twó boys were tall.[16]

The sentence in (30b) would be acceptable not as the descriptive interpretation but as the thematic one, because two boys in this case seems to mean "two of the boys" and therefore to be in reality a definite noun phrase even though it seems an indefinite one outwardly.

We can also observe a similar phenomenon in Japanese. The Japanese sentences whose subjects are indefinite noun phrases and at the same time whose predicates represent habitual actions or stable states are unacceptable as the descriptive interpretation:

(31) *Gakusei ga dokusin desu.* (neutral description)
　　 'Students are single.'

However, when a numeral or a quantifier is found in the Japanese subject of a stative predicate, a grammatical sentence results as the descriptive (and probably exhaustive-listing as well) interpretation as follows:

(32) *Daibubun no gakusei ga dokusin desu*.
　　　　　　　　　　　(neutral description)
　　 'Most of the students are single.'

Sentences that indicate the existence or coming into existence of something at the place of the speaker seem most readily amenable to the neutral-description interpretation[17]. Example (33) is a perfectly natural sentence because it describes John's appearance toward the speaker:

(33) *Kinoo, John ga kimasita*.
　　 'Yesterday, John came (to see me).'

On the other hand, it is difficult to assign the neutral-description interpretation to (34) because John's movement is away from the speaker:

(34) ?*Kinoo, John ga Boston ni ikimasita.* ? at the head stands for "awkward."
　　 'Yesterday, John went to Boston.'

Similarly, (35) is a natural sentence because it describes John's existence at the place of the speaker:

(35) *John ga asoko ni imasu*.
　　 '(Look!) John is over there.'

However, (36) is awkward as a sentence of neutral description because John is somewhere else:

(36) ?*John ga Boston ni imasu*.
　　 'John is in Boston.'

It also seems that the speaker is not allowed to look at his or her own action or existence objectively and to describe it as if it were a new event. This seems to be why it is next to impossible to interpret sentences with the first person subject, such as (37) and (38), as sentences of neutral description:

(37) *Boku ga Boston ni ikimasita.
     'I went to Boston.'
(38) *Boku ga koko ni imasu.
     'I am here.'

They almost invariably receive the exhaustive-listing interpretation. What has been mentioned above seems to have something to do with what is called "empathy" in Kuno's term, and in a broad sense with "deixis" that is said to be one of the various fields in discourse grammar (as for the term "empathy," refer to *Danwa no Bunpo*, p. 134.). Therefore, it can be said that the neutral-d escription sentences receive not only syntactic but also textual restrictions.

In any event, from our syntactic observation of the restrictions of the neutral-description sentences which present an objectively observable action, existence, or temporary state as a new event, we may at least assume that in determining the interpretation of neutral description, the nature of the predicate has a more crucial meaning than that of the subject both in English and in Japanese.

3. Conclusion

In this paper, firstly, we gave a syntactic definition of what the subjects in English and Japanese mentioned here were in the framework of the so-called standard theory, the original model of transformational generative grammar laid out by Chomsky in 1965. As a result, we could say that the theme in Japanese, except that the deep NP as the subject was thematized, neither functioned as the surface subject nor coincided with it like the theme in English, and that, to be exact, theme itself did not have the same syntactic functions as subject. Eventually, it became evident that subjects in English and Japanese were quite different from each other in their syntactic features.

Some linguists may say that, since the so-called standard theory has developed into the minimalist program, it is not appropriate to analyze syntactic phenomena based on this standard theory. However, we should note that it is because transformational generative grammar pursues 'universal grammar' that the standard theory has developed into the minimalist program. The standard theory is very explicit and effective even now when syntactic phenomena are analyzed individually rather than comprehensively, as was seen in 1–4.

Secondly, we attempted to clarify some textual features of the two subjects through analyzing them from a semantic viewpoint. As a result, we found that they exhibited four corresponding textual interpretations, that is to say, theme, contrast,

neutral description, and exhaustive listing. Also, we indicated that the neutral-description sentence had some syntactic restrictions unlike the sentences of the other three interpretations, since it represented an objectively observable action, existence, or temporary state as a new event.

However, judging from the fact that these interpretations are produced in the stream of discourse, we may assume that they have something to do with information structure which has great influence on the stream of discourse.

Hence, our main task to do next would be to characterize these four interpretations from the point of view of information structure. By doing so we will be able to clarify the textual features of subjects in English and Japanese more exactly.

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