

Syntactic Amalgams in Japanese

Masako Maeda (Seinan Gakuin University) and Kensuke Takita (Doshisha University)

Since Lakoff (1974), a phenomenon called syntactic amalgams (SAs) has been a mystery and its empirical domain has been virtually confined to English and a few European languages (see Guimarães 2004, Grosu 2006, Kluck 2011, a.o.). This paper first observes that there is a comparable phenomenon in Japanese, and then argues that the surface differences between English SAs and their Japanese counterparts can be reduced to independently attested ones, thus expanding its empirical domain.

The two sub-varieties of English SAs are exemplified in (1). In both cases, a clausal constituent seems to occupy the complement position where usually only a nominal can appear (following Kluck's (2011) terminology, we call the bracketed part (i.e. the clausal constituent) *Interrupting Clause* (IC) and the underlined part that at least semantically functions as the "real" complement *content kernel*).

- (1) a. John invited [you'll never guess how many people] to his party. [called *Andrews Amalgam*]
 b. John is going to, [I think it's Chicago] on Sunday. [called *Horn Amalgam*]

To resolve this and other mysterious properties of SAs, Kluck (2011, 2014) argues for the sluicing-based approach. According to this analysis, (1a) is analyzed as having a structure in (2), where the IC contains a sluicing structure within the constituent labeled as CP and modifies the null indefinite \emptyset as a parenthetical expression. Being a parenthetical, the CP specifies the semantic content of the null indefinite, which in turn serves as the matrix argument.

- (2) John invited [\emptyset [_{CP} you'll never guess how many people; ~~John invited t_i to his party~~]] to his party.

In Japanese, the bracketed constituent in (3) consisting of a wh-phrase *dare* 'who', past/non-past form of the copula *da(tta)*, and the question-marker *ka*, which normally functions as an interrogative CP, serves as if it were a non-CP argument of the matrix predicate. That is, in (3), the bracketed constituent occupies the subject position of the clause containing the verb *iku* 'go', which takes a nominal subject but not a clausal subject. In this sense, the apparent clausal subject is similar to IC in SAs. Taking this similarity seriously, we propose that (3a) is derived from (3b), where the CP is a cleft clause whose focus phrase corresponds to content kernel in English SAs, by eliding the α P, which is the subject of the cleft clause. The CP is then modifies the null indefinite as a parenthetical, just like in (2).

- (3) a. Kinoo [dare da(tta) ka]-ga Oslo-ni iku to kiita
 yesterday who Cop Q-Nom Oslo-to go C heard
 '(lit.) Yesterday, I heard that [who it is] would go to Oslo.'
 b. Kinoo [[_{CP} [~~t_i Oslo-ni iku no~~]-ga dare_i da(tta) ka] \emptyset]-ga Oslo-ni iku to kiita
 yesterday Oslo-to go C-Nom who Cop Q -Nom Oslo-to go C heard
 '(lit.) Yesterday, I heard that [who it is [~~that would go to Oslo~~]] would go to Oslo.'

This analysis also captures another similarity between English SAs and their Japanese counterparts (which we claim are instantiated by (3a)), namely obligatory application of ellipsis: Both (2) and (3b) become ungrammatical when the alleged elided part is overtly realized.

Although obligatory ellipsis makes it hard to ensure that there is an elided clausal part, a piece of evidence can be gained by looking at examples like (4) and (5). The examples in (4a) and (5a) indicate that not only the nominative Case-marker but also the accusative Case-marker and even postpositions can be attached to the IC. These Case-markers/postpositions can be attached to the content kernel as in (4b) and (5b). Crucially, both the content kernel and the IC can be accompanied with them at the same time, as shown in (4c) and (5c), although they are not perfectly well-formed for some speakers.

- (4) Mati-de {a. [dare da(tta) ka]-o / b. [dare-o da(tta) ka] / c. ?[dare-o da(tta) ka]-o} mita
 town-at who Cop Q-Acc who-Acc Cop Q who-Acc Cop Q-Acc saw
 '(lit.) I saw [who it is] in town.'
 (5) Hon-ga {a. [dare da(tta) ka]-kara / b. [dare-kara da(tta) ka] / c. ?[dare-kara da(tta) ka]-kara} kita
 book-Nom who Cop Q-from who-from Cop Q who-form Cop Q-from came
 '(lit.) A book came [from whom it is].'

We interpret this observation as a support for postulating the elided structure as in (6). That is, while the matrix predicate licenses the Case-marker/postposition attached to the null indefinite, the one on the content kernel comes from the predicate within the elided cleft subject (see Hoji 1990, Hiraiwa & Ishihara 2012, a.o. for Case/postposition marking on focus phrases in Japanese cleft constructions).

- (6) a. Mati-de [[_{CP} [~~t_i Op_i [mati de t_i mita no~~]]-ga dare_i-o da(tta) ka] \emptyset]-o mita
 town-at town-at saw C-Nom who-Acc Cop Q -Acc saw
 '(lit.) I saw [who it is [~~that I saw in town~~]] in town.'
 b. Hon-ga [[_{CP} [~~t_i Op_i [hon ga t_i kita no~~]]-ga dare-kara da(tta) ka] \emptyset]-kara kita

book-Nom book-Nom came C-Nom who-from Cop Q -from came
 '(lit.) A book came [from whom it is ~~that a book came~~].'

Another argument for the cleft + ellipsis analysis comes from examples like (7). In these examples, the content kernel is a non-wh-phrase, unlike (3)-(5). Under the proposed analysis, (7b), for instance, is analyzed as having a structure like (8) with a non-wh-focus cleft, which is independently available.

(7) a. Kono resutoran-wa [Oslo da(tta) ka]-ni honten-ga aru rasii
 this restaurant-Top Oslo Cop Q-in main.shop-Nom is I.heard
 '(lit.) I heard that this restaurant's main shop is [whether it is in Oslo].'

b. Erika-ga [keeki-ka kukkii da(tta) ka]-o yaita rasii
 Erika-Nom cake-or cookie Cop Q-Acc baked I.heard
 '(lit.) I heard that Erika baked [whether it is cakes or cookies].'

(8) Erika-ga [[_{CP} [_{CP} Erika-ga ~~e_i yaita no~~]-ga [keeki-ka kukkii]_i da(tta) ka] Ø]-o yaita rasii
 Erika-Nom Erika-Nom baked C-Nom cake-or cookie Cop Q -Acc baked I.heard
 '(lit.) I heard that Erika baked [it is cakes or cookies ~~that Erika baked~~].'

The proposed analysis thus fits into the general pattern of Japanese "sluicing"-like constructions, which have been argued as derived from cleft (Nishiyama, Whitman & Yi 1996, Saito 2004, a.o.).

An obvious difference between English SA and the phenomena under investigation is that the IC is a declarative clause in English SAs (as in (1)) while the one in Japanese is an interrogative clause headed by the question-marker *ka*. In fact, other complementizers in Japanese, namely *no*, *to*, and null C (notated as \emptyset), can never appear instead of *ka*, as shown in (9).

(9) Mati-de [dare da(tta) {ka/*no/*to/* \emptyset }]_i-o mita
 town-at who Cop Q C C -Acc saw '(lit.) I saw [who it is] in town.'

However, this difference can be captured by considering the semantic nature of SAs. Kluck (2011) points out that SAs in general express *conventional implicature* in the sense of Potts (2005), and argues in particular that Horn Amalgams like (1b) express hedge interpretation. In this respect, Japanese SAs pattern with Horn Amalgams. Given that the complementizers *no*, *to* and \emptyset express something like declarative, presupposition or report while *ka* expresses question in Japanese (Saito 2012), only *ka* can appear in Japanese SAs because the others are incompatible with the hedge interpretation.

The fact that SAs express conventional implicature is a motivation for Kluck's (2011) claim that the IC is introduced to the structure as a parenthetical expression, modifying a null indefinite \emptyset (see (2)). This also explains another property of SAs exemplified by (10): The matrix element cannot bind into the non-content kernel part of the IC, hence variable-binding fails in (10a) and the Condition C effect is absent in (10b). This follows if parentheticals are syntactically opaque from the matrix clause.

(10) a. *No professor_i taught_i [he_i/his_i students claimed it was a boring class]. (Kluck 2011:97)

b. He_i had been kissing_i [the professor_i finally admitted it was Bea]. (Kluck 2011:101)

Although Japanese SAs also express conventional implicature as noted above, they exhibit the opposite pattern with respect to the opacity effect, as exemplified by (11).

(11) a. Daremo_i-ga [dono onnanoko da(tta) to soitu_i-no hahaoya-ga itta ka]-to dekaketa
 everyone-Nom which girl Cop C his-Gen mother-Nom said Q-with went.out
 '(lit.) Everyone went out with [which girl his mother said it was].'

b. *Kanozoyo_i-wa [dare da(tta) to Hanako_i-ga itteita ka]-ga kuru to itta
 she-Top who Cop C Hanako-Nom said Q-Nom come C said
 '(lit.) She said that [who Hanako said it was] would come.'

This observation rather supports the idea that Japanese SAs involve parentheticals, however. As extensively discussed by del Gobbo (2017), appositive relative clauses like the one in (12a), another class of parentheticals, are opaque from the matrix clause in English while the ones in Japanese are transparent so that variable-binding possible, as shown in (12b) (based on del Gobbo 2017:23).

(12) a. *Every Christian_i forgives John, who harms him_i.

b. Dono gakusei_i-mo [soitu_i-o hihansuru] Yamada-sensei-ni kansyasiteiru
 which student-all his-Acc criticize Yamada-professor-to is.appreciating
 '(lit.) Every student_i is appreciating Prof. Yamada, who criticizes him_i.'

Hence, the difference between English and Japanese SAs with respect to the opacity of the IC can be reduced to a more general pattern concerning parenthetical expressions in the two languages.

Selected References: Lakoff, G. 1974. Syntactic Amalgams. *CLS* 10. | Kluck, M. 2011. *Sentence Amalgamation*, Ph.D. diss, U. of Groningen. | del Gobbo, F. 2017 More appositives in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your linguistics, *Glossa* 2(1):49.