Morphosyntactic multifunctionality in Korean and Japanese: a comparative study

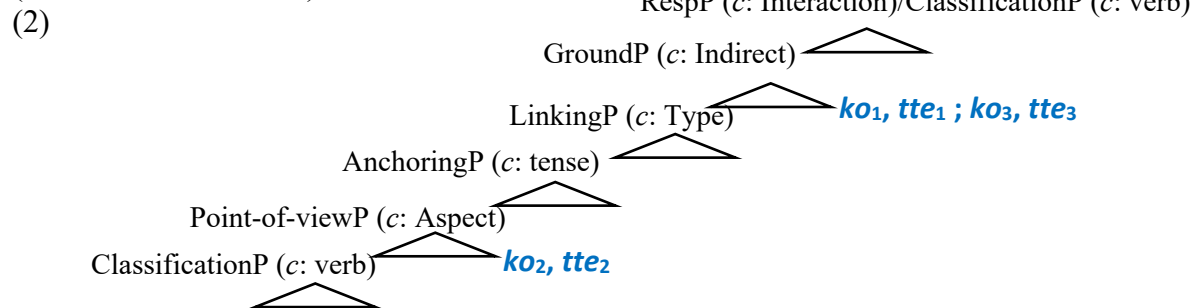Hailey Hyekyeong Ceong-University of Victoria
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Investigating ubiquitous Japanese quotative *tte*, Okamoto and Ono (2008) argue that the categorical demarcation of clauses with *tte* concerning their structural independence is non-discrete and on a continuum. In this paper, I argue that this non-discrete nature of *tte*-clauses can be analyzed as their associations with a distinct hierarchical structure. Comparing the distributions of Japanese *tte* (Hirose & Nawata 2016; Suzuki 2007) with those of Korean *ko* (Sohn 2015), which exhibits considerable similarities, I analyze them as multifunctional units within the framework of the Universal Spine Hypothesis (Wiltschko 2014, 2017; Wiltschko & Heim 2016) and provide a morphosyntactic account of instances of *tte* and *ko*.

Despite their similar properties, Korean *ko* and Japanese *tte* have not been compared in this way yet. Both *ko* (1a) and *tte* (1b) exhibit ubiquitous distributions and a complex interaction between syntax and pragmatics at the right edge of the clause. This position is the first domain shared by ko_1 and tte_1 'I said; I heard'; the second is the domain between VP and vP expressing imperfect/progressive aspect (ko_2 and tte_2) and the third is the domain between a clausal complement and a matrix verb of saying (ko_3 and tte_3 'that'), as illustrated in (1).

(1) a. *koyngcangha-ta-ko_3*   *malha-ko_2 iss-ess-ta-ko_1*.   (Korean, cf. Sohn 2015)
         terrible-DECL-COMP   say   exist-PST-DECL-COMP
         '(I said they) were saying that it was terrible.'
     b. *sugoi-∅-tte_3*   *i-tte_2 (i-)ta-∅-tte_1*.   (Japanese, cf. Okamoto & One 2008)
         terrible-DECL-COMP   say   exist-PST-DECL-COMP
         '(I heard they) were saying that it was terrible.'

I argue that the three instances of both *ko* and *tte* in (1) are distinct because each instance is associated with a different domain, depending on its function. The tree in (2) shows the hierarchical domains that *ko* and *tte* can be associated with in the structure of the universal spine (Wiltschko 2014, 2017).

(2)

RespP (*c*: Interaction)/ClassificationP (*c*: verb)

GroundP (*c*: Indirect)

LinkingP (*c*: Type)   **ko_1, tte_1 ; ko_3, tte_3**

AnchoringP (*c*: tense)

Point-of-viewP (*c*: Aspect)

ClassificationP (*c*: verb)   **ko_2, tte_2**

Linguistic units in an identical phonetic form with distinct functions can be seen as multifunctional elements rather than homophones (Wiltschko 2014). In this regard, the multiple instances of the Korean *ko* and Japanese *tte* in (1) are multifunctional units; different functions of the same form emerge from different morphosyntactic contexts. When *ko* and *tte* are selected by matrix verbs, they are the head of a dependent clause; when they are selected by an interactional element in the Responding Spine (Wiltschko & Heim 2016), they are the head of an independent clause. A linguistic unit in a well-formed clause must be associated with a structural position in a process of derivation, so there must be no non-discrete category. It is predicted that different functions of *ko* and *tte* are associated with either distinct domains or distinct morphosyntactic contexts if the domains overlap. Cross-linguistic comparison of multifunctional elements has not

been the subject of the Universal Spine Hypothesis. Comparing languages with similar characteristics shows the variation of multifunctional elements within Universal Grammar; investigation of these elements can illuminate our understanding of multifunctional elements in unrelated languages, such as *que* in Spanish (Corr 2018; Demonte & Fernández-Soriano 2009, 2014).

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