

Integration of frames: The case of Japanese noun-modifying constructions

The Japanese noun-modifying construction (NMC), schematically shown as [[Predicate (finite)] Noun], lacks explicit marking that would indicate the grammatical and semantic relationship between the head noun and the subordinate clause, but presents a wider range of semantic relationships between the two constituents than those in what are conventionally called relative clause and noun complement clause constructions (e.g. Matsumoto 1997). Examples include (1) and (2); the latter being what is often termed a head-internal relative clause.

- (1) *[[honyaku-sita] o-kane], zenbu tabe-tyatta no?*
translated money all eaten-have NOM
'Have you eaten all the money (which you earned by) (your) having translated (X) ?'
- (2) *[[ninniku o kitta] no] o tukatte...*
garlic ACC cut thing ACC use
'Using the garlic that (you) sliced...' ((lit.)Using the thing that (you) sliced garlic)

A corollary of the absence of explicit marking is that the construal of the relationship between the two main constituents and the acceptability of an NMC must rely upon an aggregate of semantic and pragmatic factors, including the semantics of the head noun and the interlocutors' contextual and broader knowledge of the world. The semantics of the head noun can be rich, as in (1) ('money' evokes a commercial transaction frame), or spare, as in (2). A collection of naturally-occurring NMCs from multiple sources show that the interlocutors' assessment of the contextual knowledge as well as lexical semantic information are essential to the use and construal of these constructions. The ideas of frame semantics (e.g. Fillmore 1977, 1982) provide a theoretical background to an approach that represents such integration of cognitive, pragmatic or contextual knowledge in grammatical structure.

My paper contrasts an examination of NMCs in spoken data (Takara 2009), which exhibits frequent uses of NMCs with 'light' semantic head noun such as (2), with an analysis of a published promotional interview of an author of a book on house design. The interview contains a total of 118 sentences and 13 instances of NMCs with *ie* 'house, household, family, home' as the head noun. I show that the interview context supports multiple cultural meanings of *ie* and the strategic use of NMCs that do not fit neatly within the categories of relative clause or noun complement constructions.

Building on the ideas of frame semantics, conceptual blending (Fauconnier and Turner 2002), and contextually-based construction grammar (Östman and Fried 2005), and extending a previous account of NMCs in terms of conceptual integration (e.g. Matsumoto 2007), I describe Japanese NMCs in terms of cognitive, discursal and social factors; i.e., (1) vital relations (Fauconnier and Turner 2002), which function to conceptually integrate the two constituents; and (2) the interlocutors' understanding of the world in which the NMC is used -- the genre of the discourse, such as a promotional article or spoken discourse. I show how various factors are integrated to achieve understanding of the construction. I also suggest that this approach can offer an analytical basis for constructions that share the characteristics of Japanese NMCs in other languages, such as Chinese and Korean.