A Cognitive Pragmatic Approach on Mongolian Parentheses

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The parentheses in English, such as that is or in other words are applied in linguistic context or discourse context. As for the Japanese parentheticals, a comparative study can be observed between English and Japanese, such as in Uchida (2001). However, parentheses such as olan nu helelcehu ber, Õgere ber helebel,.....ect. in Mongolian mostly introduce us the grammatical function and do not make any further analysis or discussion regarding them. Here I make a discussion on the Mongolian parentheses from the relevance theoretic approach.

Keywords: cognitive pragmatic approach, parenthesis, RT

Introduction

Haserdeni et al. (1996) suggest that orogulagsan bu rildegu, or parentheses such as olan nu helelcehu ber, ŭnen degen, Õgere ber helebel, eimu in tula, yariyan ugei in Mongolian generally indicate the insertion of the speaker’s attitude towards what is said or how he/she regards or considers what is said. This suggestion on Mongolian parenthesis, I believe, merely offers us their general grammatical function. Haserdeni et al. (1996) do not make any further analysis or discussion regarding them. Here, I will analyze the parentheses to see what we can tell from the relevance theoretic approach.

Previous Studies

In this section, let us see how the parentheticals in English and Japanese are analyzed and discussed respectively.

The Discussion on Reformulation Markers in English

Let us observe the English parentheticals first. With respect to the English parentheticals, we can observe them as analyzed by Wilson and Sperber (1993), Blakemore (1996) or Carston (2002).

According to Blakemore (1996), the discourse markers such as so and after all can be applied in a non-linguistic context, but that is, in other words are applied only in linguistic context or discourse context. Observe the following examples (1a, b) and (2a, b):

(1) a. [the speaker notices a blackbird singing outside]
   So spring is here.

b. [the speaker takes an extremely large slice of cake]
   After all, it is my birthday.

(2) a. [the speaker notices a blackbird singing outside]
   [that is]
   So spring is here.

b. [the speaker takes an extremely large slice of cake]
   [in other words]
   After all, it is my birthday.
(2) a. In other words, I’m fired.
   b. That is to say, he knows the combination. (Blakemore, 1996, pp. 337-338)

Blakemore (1996) claims that reformulation markers such as that is, in other words and in short reach relevance by reformulating the original utterance Q with precise utterance P, or by recovering the proposition [The speaker believes that P is a faithful representation of a thought Q] as a higher-level explication of the host clause. She also comments that (3B) shares the logical form or contextual implication of (3A), and in this sense, we can say that there is a strong resemblance between them.

(3) A: We will have to let her go.
   B: In other words/In short, she’s fired. (Blakemore, 1996, p. 338)

However, in an utterance like (4), in other words is not the discourse connective but encodes the concept that contributes to the truth conditional content of the utterance.

(4) He asked me to put it in other words. (Blakemore, 1996, p. 334)

Carston (2002) claims, it is possible that some utterances represent multiple propositions, and thus carry multiple truth conditions. The utterances that hold the speech act as adverbial or as parentheticals like I think are exemplified as follows:

(5) a. Mary is in the garden, I think.
   b. Mary is in the garden.
   c. I think this. (Carston, 2002, p. 128)

(5a) has the propositions as in (5b) and (5c), and also it can communicate explications as in (5’):

(5’) a. The speaker says that Mary is in the garden.
   b. The speaker believes that Mary is in the garden.
   c. Mary is in the garden. (Carston, 2002, p. 128)

Moreover, a second-order speech act like I think affects the modulation of higher-level explications via slightly weakening the faithfulness of the speaker.

The Comparative Analysis on Parentheticals between Japanese and English

As for the Japanese parentheticals, Uchida (2000, 2001) claims that Japanese basic word order is SOV, and sentence final particles in Japanese correlate to the parentheticals in the utterances, but this phenomenon is not seen in English. According to him, the sentence final particles are closely connected with higher-level explications. The following cases (6) and (7) are the examples of the comparative analysis on reformulation markers between English and Japanese given in Uchida (2001):

(6) a. Tsumari, fujin wa negai goto o kanaete kureru majo de ari, soshite watashi ni wa negai goto ga atta no da.
   b. In short, she was a witch who could make wishes come true. I had a wish.

(7) a. Sunawachi, ko-do moderu to suiron moderu no dochira mo gengo dentatsu kenkyuu ni koken suru koto ga dekiru no de aru.
   b. In short, she was a witch who could make wishes come true. I had a wish.
communication study to contribution do matter SUB can FP

b. *Thus* both the code model and the inferential model can contribute to the study of verbal communication. (Uchida, 2001, p. 13)

We can see that in (6a) and (7a), *no da* or its other form *no de aru* appears at the end of the sentence in Japanese, and correlate to the reformulation markers *tsumari* and *sunawachi* respectively. On the other hand, in their corresponding English utterances (6b) and (7b), there are no final particles that correlate to the reformulation markers *in short* and *thus*.

**Analysis and Discussion on Mongolian Parentheses**

Now I would like to analyze the parentheses in Mongolian whose word order is SOV, similar to Japanese. I will give some cases of the Mongolian parentheses as below:

(8) a. *Minu boduhu ber*, Garudi gi sain surgahu heregtei.
   I think Garudi OBJ well educate need
   *(*I think, we need to educate Garudi well.*)

b. *Aza ber*, bide u nu borogan du norugdagsan u gei.
   Fortunately we today rain by soaked not
   *(Fortunately, we had not gotten soaked in the rain today.*) *(Haserdeni et al., 1996, pp. 709-710)*

c. Bide asagudal i uzehu degen yariyan ugei zur burugoy tala ece
   we OBJ see when of course right wrong two side from
   ocizu nigtalan uzehu heregtei.
   go carefully see need
   *(Of course, we need to judge very carefully whether a problem is right or wrong.*) *(B. Wangcug, 1997, p. 437)*

(9) a. *Olan nu helelcehu ber*, ene zon borogan yehetei gene.
   everyone says this summer rain much that-say
   *(It is said that there will be much rain this summer.*) *(Haserdeni et al., 1996, p. 710)*

b. *Өgere ber helebel*, Өber un cirmailga bol hamug un cihula yum.
   in other words own GEN effort TOP most GEN important FP
   *(In other words, an effort is the most important thing for a person.*) *(B. Wangcug, 1997, p. 143)*

We can observe that in examples (8a-c) and (9a, b), in which Mongolian parentheses are utilized, there are occasions where final free particles are correlated to parentheses; i.e. in (9a, b) *gene* correlates to *Olan nu helelcehu ber* and *yum* to *Өgere ber helebel* respectively, and on the other hand, there are also occasions in which no free particles appear at the end of the parentheses participation sentences; i.e. no final particle correlates to the parenthesis *minu boduhu ber* or *aza ber* or *yariyan ugei* in cases (8a-c).

*Minu boduhu ber* in (8a) is similar to the parenthetical *I think* in English. Thus, (8a) can be considered as expressing two propositions, as in (10a) and (10b):

(10) a. Garudi gi sain surgahu heregtei.
   Garudi OBJ well educate need
   *(We need to educate Garudi well.*)
b. Bi inggizu boduzu baina.
   I so think ing
   (I think so.)

Simultaneously, it can express the following explicatures:

(10') a. The speaker says that they should educate Garudi well.
b. The speaker thinks that they should educate Garudi well.
c. The speaker believes that they should educate Garudi well.

Aza ber in (8b) parallels fortunately in English. Fortunately is an attitudinal adverbial and treated as making no contribution to the truth conditions of an utterance in which it occurs. Wilson and Sperber (1993) discuss the attitudinal adverb happily following Recanati (1987):

Deleting the adverb would not change the proposition expressed by the utterance...because the modification introduced by the adverb is external to the proposition and concerns the speaker’s emotional attitude to the latter. This attitude is neither ‘stated’ nor ‘described’, but only ‘indicated’. (Wilson & Sperber, 1993, p.11)

Aza ber seems to have the property of the attitudinal adverbial fortunately, and thus can be considered to be expressing the mental attitude of the speaker.

Furthermore, we can add affirmative free particles in cases (8a-c) and at least we can make use of yum in these cases, as follows:

(8') a. Minu boduhu ber, Garudi gi sain surgahu heregtei yum.
   I think Garudi OBJ well educate need FP
   (I think, we need to educate Garudi well.)
b. Aza er, bide un dar borogan du norugdasan ugei yum.
   fortunately we today rain by soaked not FP
   (Fortunately, we had not gotten soaked in the rain.)
c. Bide asagudal i uzehu degen yariyan ugei zab burugu hoyar tala ece
   we problem OBJ see when of course right wrong two side from
   ocizu nigtalan uzehu heregtei yum.
   go carefully see need FP
   (Of course, we need to judge very carefully whether a problem is right or wrong.)

Now let me analyze the cases in (9a, b). The phenomena in (9a, b) are quite similar to those in Japanese. That is to say, a sentence final expression correlates to the parenthesis in the utterances obligatorily. If we remove gene from (9a) it will become unacceptable as in (11a), and if yum is removed from (9b) it can be considered a little odd as in (11b):

(11) a.*Olan nu helelcehu ber, ene zon borogan yehetei.
   everyone says this summer rain much
   (It is said, there is much rain in this summer.)
b. ?Ogere ber helebel, Öber un cirmailga bol hamug un cihula.
   in other words own GEN effort TOP most GEN important
   (In other words, an effort is the most important thing for a person.)
On the other hand, the parenthesis olan nu helelcehu ber in (9a) carries the function of conveying hearsay and means like everyone says, it is said or it is reported. Gene attaches to the end of the sentence here and is a final particle that may be viewed as a marker of hearsay which in some degree corresponds to the hearsay particle tte in Japanese. Moreover, even if the parenthesis olan nu helelcehu ber is omitted in the utterance, the final particle gene can be maintained and conveys the same meaning, as follows:

(12) Ene zon borogan yehetei gene.
this summer rain much that-say
(It is said, there is much rain in this summer.)

Following Itani (1998), a definition of hearsay particles can be built around the Relevance notion of ‘attributive’ use. She claims the main function of a hearsay particle is to indicate that the propositional form of an utterance is attributed to an utterance of someone else or the speaker in the past, i.e. it is ‘quotative’. Whether the utterance achieves relevance as a reported speech or as an echoic utterance is a matter that is determined pragmatically. Tte is a hearsay particle and what tte itself encodes is that the utterance it is attached to is based on another utterance. The hearsay particle tte is appended to utterances whose propositional forms are directly attributed to someone’s thoughts, but not to their utterances, and thus there is a conflict with the encoded content of tte.

This definition of a hearsay particle naturally accounts for the straight case of reported speech, i.e. one of the ways the second order interpretation achieves relevance. (Itani, 1998, p. 53)

According to Uchida (2000), the Japanese hearsay particle tte is connected to higher-level explicatures. I believe, gene (9a) here has the same property of the Japanese hearsay particle tte, and it can be considered as concerning higher-level explicatures.

The parenthesis Ōgere ber helebel in (9b) is similar to the reformulation marker in other words in English. Thus, we can say that it reformulates the original utterance with the more understandable utterance that follows it. Namely, the utterance Ōber un cirmailga bol hamug un cihula in (9b) shares the logical form or contextual implication of the immediate preceding utterance (though the preceding utterance of Ōgere ber helebel does not appear in this utterance).

**Conclusion**

In this article I adopt the relevance theoretic view to examine the parentheses of Mongolian. I observed that there are occasions in which a sentence final particle (e.g. yum, gene) correlates to the parenthesis in an utterance. I made the further conclusion that sentence final particles, where higher-level explicatures are realized, are observed in Mongolian in the same manner as in Japanese.

**Note**

1. SUB, OBJ, TOP, GEN, FP, Q, which are adopted in this paper, refer to subject particle, object particle, topic particle, genitive particle, final particle and question particle.
2. SOV, which is adopted in this paper, means subject, object and verb.
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