

## Towards An NP/N'-Substitute Analysis of the Null Argument in Japanese and Korean

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1. This paper examines Oku's (1998) and Takahashi's (2011, 2014) ellipsis analysis of the null argument (NA) in Japanese and Korean (J & K), and the licensing condition on it. Oku proposed that the elliptical NA in these languages is literally unrealized in overt syntax, but is reconstructed in covert syntax to meet the 'weak' selectional feature of a verb. Takahashi proposed to attribute the delaying of the structure building for the NA to the absence of agreement/phi-features. Departing from Oku and Takahashi, we explore an alternative analysis of the NA, proposing that it is not a DP-substitute but an NP/N'-substitute. Based on this proposal, we provide an account not only of the reason for the NA and the lack of verbal agreement in J & K, but also of the parametric variation in the availability of the NA.

2. Takahashi (2008: 310) notes that in (1b) of Japanese, the object NA is construed in a different way from the overt object pronoun:

- (1)a. Hanako-ga **taitei-no sensei-o** sonkeisiteiru. b. Taroo-mo [e](=~~taitei-no sensei-o~~)/karera-o sonkeisiteiru.  
Hanako-NOM **most-GEN teacher-ACC** respect Taroo-also **them** respect  
'Hanako respects most teachers.' '(Lit.) Taroo respects [e]/them, too.'

In (1b) the overt object *karera-o* 'them' can be either referential or anaphoric. In the latter construal, where the overt pronoun in (1b) is anaphoric to the object in (1a), it serves as what is called an E-type pronoun. The anaphoric use of object NA in (1b), in contrast, permits another reading in addition to the E-type pronoun interpretation. In this additional reading, the NA is interpreted as another token of *taitei-no sensei-o* 'most teachers.' Takahashi proposes that the NA in (1b) derives from argument ellipsis, where the italicized portion is not constructed in overt syntax but reconstructed as a full-fledged quantifier at covert syntax. Takahashi's analysis crucially hinges on the DP analysis of the NA in Japanese. However, it is not clear whether the nominal expressions formed by the quantifiers like *taitei-no* 'most' in Japanese involve DP. In English, the strong quantifiers like *most* undoubtedly occur in the determiner position. In contrast, in Japanese the nominal expressions formed by the quantifiers like *taitei-no* 'most' seem to be replaced by the NP/N'-substituting expression, as in (2):

- (2) Hanako-wa John-no **2-satu-no/hotondo-no/subete-no** hon-o yonda-kedo, Taroo-wa **Mary-no-(<sup>(?)</sup>no)-o** yonda.  
Hanako-Top John-Gen **2-CL-Gen/most-Gen/all-Gen** book-Acc read-but Taroo-Top **Mary-Gen-Acc** read  
'(Lit.) Hanako read John's two books/most/all of John books, but Taroo read Mary's ones.'

One point about (2) is that without the additional *no*, this sentence is acceptable. It is, however, somewhat controversial what syntactic category intervenes between *Mary-no* 'Mary's' and *o* 'Accusative Case marker' in the second conjunct clause of (2). Saito and Murasugi (1990) and Saito et al. (2008) argue that it derives from NP/N'-ellipsis, whereas Okutsu (1974), Li (2011), and Bae (2012) argue that it derives from the suppression of the second occurrence of the anaphoric expression *no* 'one/ones' after *Mary-no* because of haplology. We take the second analysis to be right, because the addition of the anaphoric expression *no* as in (2) does not result in yielding a completely bad sentence. Since haplology is presumably a phonologically governed process, (2) is syntactically right, but it becomes unacceptable phonologically. The other point pertinent to our discussion is that the overt or covert anaphoric *no* after *Mary-no* substitutes for the NP/N' including one of the quantifiers.

To make the point clearer, let's look at the sentence that does not involve haplology, as in (3), adapted

after Maeda and Takahashi (2013):

- (3) Toyota-no diiraa-wa akai *ni-dai-no/hotondo-no/subete-no* kuruma-o utta-kedo, Nissan-no diiraa-wa *aoi no-o* utta  
Toyota-GEN dealer-TOP red two-CL-GEN most-GEN all-GEN car-ACC sold-but, Nissan-GEN dealer-TOP blue ones-ACC sold  
'The Toyota dealer sold red two-CL/most/all cars, but the Nissan dealer sold blue ones.'

In (3) the two adjectives are not attached with the genitive marker *no* when they modify the following nouns. Thus, the expression *no* after the adjective in the second conjunct of (3) is an anaphoric expression that corresponds to the English NP substitute *one/ones*. Note that this anaphoric expression *no* in (3) can mean 'two/most/all cars'. In addition, it is notable that the set of cars sold by the Toyota dealer can be different from the set of cars sold by the Nissan dealer.

3. The lessons we get from this discussion are: First, the quantifiers in J & K are different from those in English. In the latter, strong quantifiers occur in the determiner position, but weak quantifiers behave like adjectives, modifying NPs/N's. In the former, however, both strong and weak quantifiers behave like adjectives, as shown by the fact that they are included by the portion replaced by the NP/N'-replacing anaphoric expression such as *no* in Japanese and *kes* in Korean. Second, the behavior of the quantifiers in J & K provides compelling evidence supporting the NP/N', rather than DP, analysis of these languages (cf. Fukui (1988); Chierchia (1998); Bošković and Gajewski (2010), among others). This means that the kind of quantificational expression in the object position of (1a) is not DP but NP/N'. Thus, the corresponding object NA in (1b) anaphoric to this overt quantificational expression is not DP, but NP/N'.

The possible alternative form substituting for the whole argument NP/N' in these languages is to use the anaphoric expression *no* 'thing' in Japanese or *kes* 'thing' in Korean, which correspond to *one/ones* in English. However, these expressions in J & K (as well as English) are syntactically incomplete/dependent nouns, which cannot occur alone without being aided by the preceding expressions like a demonstrative or adjective. Thus, when the whole NP/N' that the speaker construes as definite is substituted for, the corresponding substituting expression will be either the overtly realized demonstrative plus generic noun like *mye* 'woman' and *kes* 'thing' in Korean, or the NA (i.e., *pro*-NP/N'). When, on the other hand, the whole NP/N' that the speaker construes as indefinite is substituted for, the corresponding substituting expression is bound to be the NA. Thus, except for the substituting expression overtly realized with the demonstrative, the NP/N'-substituting expression is always lexicalized as a null category in J & K.

4. As generally acknowledged (cf. Greenberg (1966)), agreement as manifested via subject/object-verb relation has developed from incorporation/copy-raising/Agree of a determiner to a higher functional category like Tense/*v*. To the extent that this thesis is right, absence of verbal phi-feature agreement in J & K follows from the lack of the grammaticalized determiner system. Takahashi's (2011, 2014) anti-agreement hypothesis of imputing the availability of NAs to absence of agreement is observationally right, but his proposal that NAs derive from argument ellipsis because of absence of agreement must be wrong, as ellipsis is known to require agreement.

Given the proposed *NA as NP/N' substitute* hypothesis, it is now possible to account for parametric differences among J & K, English, and Spanish. English and Spanish certainly have the grammaticalized determiner system, which J & K are lacking in. Thus, English and Spanish use DP-substituting ordinary pronouns when the whole DPs are replaced. However, they differ, in that English only uses overt pronouns, but Spanish can use null pronouns for subject positions; this difference is known to be ascribed to the strength of phi-features on T. In J & K, by contrast, what constitutes the subject or object is NP/N' or *pro*-NP/N', in which the absence of D results in the lack in overt realization of agreement on T/*v*.