

A Cross-linguistic Study on Connectives—Constraints on Implicatures or Explicatures?

Bai Arong

College of Foreign Studies Guilin University of Technology

No. 12, Jian'gan Road, Guilin China

261396255@qq.com

Keywords: Cross-linguistic, connective, implicature, explicature.

Abstract. In the relevance theoretic framework, the inferential process of utterance interpretation is generally divided into restorative process of explicatures and that of implicatures. In this paper, I make a comparison among English, Japanese and Chinese on connectives. I mainly focus on English connectives because, so and the counterparts in Japanese and Chinese. From the discussion I conclude that the sentence final particles (=SFPs) which correlate to the connectives in utterance, where higher-level explicatures are realized, are observed in Japanese and Chinese, but not in English.

1. Introduction

In this paper, I make a comparison among English, Japanese and Chinese on connectives. I mainly analyze and observe English connectives because and so and the counterparts in Japanese and Chinese. Through the comparative study on connectives among them, we may discover some regularity that cannot be discovered merely through the study of any single language among them.

2. Implicatures vs. Explicatures

In RT, the inferential process of utterance interpretation is generally involved in restorative process of explicatures and that of implicatures. Explicatures are considered as decoded linguistically and also inferred contextually, they are viewed as the development of the logical form and contribute to the explicit side of an utterance. A higher-level explicature expresses a speech act or propositional attitude, which is similar to a basic-level explicature in the sense that its content is representational, but it is different from the basic-level explicature as it doesn't contribute to the truth conditions of the

utterance.

Now let's observe how higher-level explicatures are applied and represented in an utterance:

(1) a. Peter: Can you help me?

b. Mary (sadly): I can't.

In case (1), Mary communicates her sadness to Peter ostensively, not linguistically but via the tone of voice or facial expression as a paralinguistic clue functioning on the linguistic communication.

Mary's utterance (1b) is concerned with the speech act and propositional attitudes in (2a-c):

(2) a. Mary says that she cannot help Peter to find a job.

b. Mary believes that she cannot help Peter to find a job.

c. Mary regrets that she cannot help Peter to find a job.

The implicature is an implicitly communicated assumption and does not encode or develop the logical form of an utterance, and it merely depends on the context of the utterance.

See the following example:

(3) Mary to Peter: It will get cold.

On the level of explicature, first, we can determine that it refers to a meal, cold to cooled after being cooked, and will to the immediate future; second, utterance (3) can be interpreted as the speaker believing or asserting that the meal will get cold soon. As for implicature, (3) can be interpreted as communicating the following information:

(4) a. Mary wants Peter to come for his meal right away.

b. Mary wants Peter to come for dinner before the meal gets cold.

We cannot determine the speaker's meaning logically, but entrust the interpretation to the hearer or depending on the context.

3. Previous Studies

3.1 Polysemy View on Conjunctions

According to Sweetser (1990), a simple analysis of conjunctions as logical operators will prove far too weak in terms of explaining ambiguities in their usage, but their contribution to sentence semantics must be analyzed in the context of an utterance's polyfunctional status as a bearer of content, as a logical entity, and as the instrument of the speech act.

(5) John came back because he loved her.

(6) John loved her, because he came back.

(7) What are you doing tonight, because there's a good movie on.

In the first example, (5), real-world causality connects the two clauses, that is, his love was the real-world cause of his coming back. And example (6) does not most naturally mean that return caused the love in the real world, it is normally understood as meaning that the speaker's knowledge of John's return causes the conclusion that John loved her. However, example (7) would be totally incomprehensible if the conjunction were understood in the content domain. Rather, the because-clause gives the cause of the speech act embodied by the main clause. The reading is something like "I ask what you are doing tonight, because I want to suggest that we go see this good movie."

3.2 Explicitness of Japanese

Uchida suggests that Japanese is a more explicit language than English:

(8) a. Bill hit Mary. (So) She left.

b. Biru ga Meari o nagutta. Sorede Meari wa deteitta.

Bill SUB Mary OBJ hit so Mary TOP left

In the utterance of English (8a), the connective so is not necessarily to be compensated obligatorily. On the contrary, utterance (8b) in Japanese will become unnatural if sorede is omitted: moreover, it can be appended that SFPs such as no da or da concern higher-level explicatures, as follows:

(9) Biru ga Meari o nagutta. Sorede Meari wa deteitta no da.

Bill SUB Mary OBJ hit so Mary TOP left FP FP

The SFP no da in (9) is a natural expression though not obligatory here, and it is concerned with higher-level explicatures in accordance with Uchida (2001).

4. Analysis on Counterparts of because and so in Japanese and Chinese

I will rephrase utterances that contain connectives because and so into Japanese and Chinese in terms of three domains (e.g. content domain, epistemic domain, and speech act domain) in Sweetser's analysis and observe what we can interpret from the relevance theoretic approach.

4.1 because in Japanese and Chinese

First let me translate the cases (5)-(7) into Japanese and Chinese and demonstrate how the connective because is expressed in those three domains respectively in Japanese and Chinese.

Let us first observe because in the content domain:

(5') a. Jon wa kanojo o aishiteiru kara modotte kita.

John TOP her OBJ love because back came

b. Yuē hàn huí lái le, yīn wéi ài tā.

John back came because love her

While in the content domain, we can rephrase (5) into (5'a) in Japanese and (5' b) in Chinese. We can observe that connective kara occurs after the subordinate clause. Compared to this the phenomenon is opposite in Chinese which is the same as English. Of course in Japanese we also can use diverse connectives such as node, dakara, etc. to express because only while it is utilized in the content domain. Thus, we may consider, the content of the two clauses can be linked and expressed with more connectives in Japanese than in English and Chinese in the case where the real-world causality is stated.

Next let us observe equivalents of the connective because in Japanese and Chinese when it is used in the epistemic domain.

(6') a. Jon wa kanojo o aishiteiru. Toiu no wa kare wa modotte kita kara da.

John TOP her OBJ love RM he TOP back came because FP

b. Yuē hàn ài tā, yīn wéi tā huí lái le.

John love her because he back came

The case in English, (6), can be rephrased into (6' a, b) in Japanese and Chinese. Namely, we can use expressions *toiu no wa...kara da* or connective *dakara* to express the case where because is regarded as being used in the epistemic domain. Comparing to the English case in which the because-clause follows the main clause, the same phenomenon is observed in (6'a) in Japanese, and in (6'b) . But the main difference that can be observed among the three languages here is that SFPs *da* and *no da* are appended in Japanese cases. On the other hand, in Japanese, *kara*, which is similar to the connective because, also appears after the subordinate clause and the SFP *da* is used after it. Here, however, there is another connective *toiu no wa* which occurs at the beginning of the subordinate clause. It seems that *kara* here is not only a connective, but rather a postpositional particle that express causality, and it seems to carry the function of connecting the meaning of the two clauses together with the connective *toiu no wa*.

In (6'a), the main clause *Jon wa kanojo o aishiteiru* is the speaker's conclusion and the subordinate clause *kare wa modotte kita* would be the explanation, and *da* and *no da* should be the explanation markers. Sweetser (1990: 86) suggests, "an epistemic performative is interpreted essentially as an act of thinking out loud, rather than an act of describing one's thought processes subsequently... an epistemic performative reading bears the same kind of relation to the equivalent descriptive reading that a performative speech act bears to its corresponding descriptive reading."

In (6'a, b), at the epistemic level, final particles such as *da* and *no da* appear. As seen in the above sections, Japanese SFPs *da* and *no da* mark interpretive use and concern higher-level explicatures. Therefore, I believe, the cases in (16'a, b) carry higher-level explicatures, as in (10a, b):

- (10) a. The speaker concludes that John loved her because the speaker believes the information that
John came back.
- b. The speaker believes that John loved her, because the speaker believes the relevant data that John came back.

Next let me consider the equivalents of the connective because in Japanese and Chinese when it is involved in the speech act domain as in (7):

(7') a. Anata wa konya nani o suru no, ii eiga ga aru yo.

you TOP tonight what OBJ do Q good movie SUB there is FP

b. Nǐ jīn wǎn dǎ suàn zuò shén me, yǒu jīng cǎi de diàn yǐng shàng ying o.

you tonight going to do what have good GEN movie on FP

We can rephrase the English case (7) into Japanese and Chinese as in (7'a, b). All in English, Japanese and Chinese, the main clause is a wh-interrogative sentence. According to Sweetser, it represents the speech act being performed by the current utterance. On the other hand, there is no connective is used in (7'a, b) in Japanese and Chinese; instead, Japanese sentence final expression yo and Chinese o are added at the end of the utterances respectively.

In (7'a) and (7'b), since yo or o is utilized at the end of the second clause, in each utterance, the connection of the two clauses goes smoothly. Yo or o has the function of emphasizing the cause of the preceding utterance to guide the hearer to achieve the utterance interpretation.

I would also like to point out that in spite of the absence of the connective because, the meaning of utterance (7) is held in that they are in the speech act domain and from the context we can tell that the clause in utterance reveal a higher-level connection between them, such as in (11).

(11) What are you doing tonight, there is a good movie on.

The presence of a connective such as because as in (7) may be an advantage for the hearer when storing relevant information in their mind in that his/her cognition is geared to the optimal relevance of the information. On the other hand, however, in spite of the omission of because, (11) can be uttered by the speaker at the speech act level. From the mutual cognitive context the hearer can extend the subordinate clause as there is a good movie on tonight, and infer that the speaker asked the hearer what he/she will do tonight and told him/her about tonight's good movie is that the speaker suggests that he/she go see the movie. Thus, we can say that Japanese expressions are more explicit than those of English.

4.2 so in Japanese and Chinese

The connective so is like because in that it can also be divided into three domains, that is, the content domain, epistemic domain and speech act domain in accordance with Sweetser (1990). I will also translate English cases (12)-(14) into Japanese and Chinese to further confirm the suggestion concluded in the preceding section.

(12) He heard me calling, so he came.

(13) (You say he's deaf, but) he came, so he heard me calling.

(14) Here we're in Paris, so what would you like to do on our first evening here?

Following Sweetser's view, utterance (12) is interpreted as the hearing caused the coming in the real-world; utterance (13) is interpreted as the knowledge of his arrival causes the conclusion that he heard me calling; and in the utterance of (14), we can make the conclusion that our presence in Paris enables my act of asking you what you would like to do.

First I would like to rephrase (12) into Japanese and Chinese respectively to observe the equivalents of so in Japanese and Chinese in the content domain, as follows:

(12') a. Kare wa watashi no yobigoe ga kikoeta, sorede kita.

he TOP I GEN calling SUB heard so came

b. Tā tīng dào wǒ jào sheng le, suǒ yǐ tā lái le.

he heard I calling -ed so he came

In (12'a, b) connectives sorede or suǒ yǐ occur at the beginning of the main clause. In this respect they are similar to the connective so in English. Schiffrin suggests that so is grammatical signals of main clause, and a complementary marker of main units.

Furthermore, a comma is used between two clauses when sorede or suǒ yǐ comes at the beginning of the main clause, the same as their corresponding English cases. Nevertheless all of them mark the real-world causality of an event in the content domain. Schiffrin also says that when so has pragmatic functions in the structures involved, its grammatical properties are less directly realized.

Next I would like to examine the equivalents of so in Japanese while it is involved in the epistemic domain:

(13') a. (Anata wa kare no mimi ga kikoenai tte, demo) kare wa kita. Toiu no wa

you TOP he GEN ear SUB hear not say but he TOP came RM

kare ni watashi no yobigoe ga kikoeta no da.

him to I GEN calling SUB heard FP

b. (Nǐ shuō tā shì lóng zǐ, dàn) tā lái le, suǒ yǐ, tā tīng dào wǒ jiào shēng le.

you said he is deaf but he came so he heard I calling -ed

In the epistemic domain, the counterparts of so in Japanese can be *toiu no wa...no da* and in Chinese can be *suǒ yǐ*, as in (13'a, b).

Generally, *toiu no wa* is considered as an explicit expression and contributing to higher-level explicatures. I believe that in case (13'a), it might play the role of the reformulation marker, and we can see that there is the SFP *no da* correlating to *toiu no wa* obligatorily. Uchida (2000) also suggests that *no da* indicates the speaker's involvement in the proposition and carries the function of directing the hearer's attention towards it, and communicates procedural information, concerning the recovery of higher-level explicatures. In (13'b), we can use *ye jiu shi shuo*, which is a reformulation marker, to replace *suǒ yǐ*. Thus here, *suǒ yǐ* seems play the role of the reformulation marker, According to Uchida, the reformulation markers represent the speaker's interpretation explicitly.

Furthermore, following Sweetser, in the epistemic domain a causal conjunction will mark the cause of a belief or a conclusion. Therefore, the utterance of (13) and its corresponding ones in (13'a, b) should be interpreted as follows:

(15) a. The speaker knows the relevant data (that he came), so the speaker concludes that he heard the speaker's calling.

b. The speaker has the knowledge that he came, so the speaker believes that he heard the speaker's calling.

Now, I would like to say that case (14), whose connective is so, is involved in the speech act domain and parallel in Japanese and Chinese.

(14') a. Saa, watashitachi wa pari ni tsuita, (de) anata wa watashitachi no koko

int. we TOP Paris LOC arrived so you TOP we GEN here

de no saisho no yoru wa nani o shitai no?

LOC GEN first GEN evening TOP what OBJ want to do FP

b. Wǒ men yǐ jīng dào bā li le, (?suǒ yǐ) zài zhè lǐ de dì yī ge wǎn shàng nǐ xiǎng

we already arrive Paris –ed so here GEN first evening you want

zuò shén me (ne)?

do what

As we can observe in (12'a), in the speech act domain, the equivalent of so in Japanese is de, although it can be omitted in this case. De here is a shortened form of sorede, which has the function of catching the preceding utterance and drawing out the following utterance. I think, dakara is also applicable here. I also consider that Chinese connective suǒ yǐ is not applicable here. But the utterance is a natural one. Both so and de however, connect a declarative sentence and an interrogative sentence, and are used before an interrogative. Namely, both so and de carry the function of guiding the hearer to the question and signify the information he/she wants to get from the hearer. Sperber and Wilson (1995²) analyze interrogatives as interpretations of desirable/relevant thoughts; that is, an interrogative with the propositional content p encodes that p represents a thought which would be relevant if true. In the cases of interrogatives, following them, the hearer has to make some assumption about whom the speaker thinks the thought interpreted would be relevant to, and in making this assumption the hearer is guided by contextual factors and the presumption of optimal relevance. Also, Sperber and Wilson regard interrogatives as expressing higher-level explicatures.

Here, I also believe that on the speech act level as in utterance (14), even though the connective so is omitted the speaker still can communicate his/her meaning to the hearer, and it seems that this might be due to the presence of the sentence initial here in the utterance, as follows:

(16) Here we're in Paris, what would you like to do on our first evening here?

In (16), despite the absence of the connective *so*, the meaning of the utterance can be maintained. That is, the connective *so* is not obligatory in the utterance on the speech act level. On the other hand, utterance (14' a) is natural even if *de* is removed, but if the initial expression *saa* is omitted the utterance will become somewhat odd.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I observed the explicitness or implicitness of connectives in English, Japanese and Chinese. To this point I have rephrased some cases including the connectives *because* and *so* in English into Japanese and Chinese to analyze their equivalents in the three domains. We may arrive at the conclusion that whichever connective is used in Japanese cases, as long as the utterance is involved in the epistemic domain or the speech act domain, there is a SFP appearing at the end of the sentence in Japanese, but this is not seen in its English equivalents, and in Chinese it does not seem obligatory. This can give us further demonstration that Japanese expressions are always conveyed overtly and higher-level explicatures are represented explicitly with the SFPs which correlate obligatorily to the connectives in utterance. And we also consider, in Chinese they can be represented explicitly although not obligatorily.

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. a, e, i, o, u are pinyin in Chinese, named simple vowel sounds.

Acknowledgments

This work is supported by Guangxi University Science and Technology Research Project, project code number: KY2015LX127, "A Cross Linguistic Study: Consideration on the Boundary between Semantics and Pragmatics of the Function Words", project director: Bai Arong

References

- [1] Assimakopoulos, Stavros. "Context and Relevance". *Theoretical & Applied Linguistics*

Postgraduate Conference. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh. 2006.

- [2] Austin, J.. *How To Do Things With Words*. Mass: Harvard University Press. 1962.
- [3] Blakemore, Diane. "Division of Labour: The Analysis of Parentheticals". *Lingua*. 2006. 116: 1670-1687.
- [4] Carston, Robyn. "Relevance Theory: Contextualism or Pragmaticism?" *UCL Working Papers in Linguistics*. 2009. 21: 19-26.
- [5] Fodor, Jerry A. *The Modularity of Mind: An essay on Faculty Psychology*. Cambridge: MIT Press. 1983.
- [6] Feng, Guangwu. "Pragmatic Markers in Chinese". *Journal of Pragmatics*. 2008. 40: 1687-1718.
- [7] Higashimori, Isao and Yoshimura, Akiko. *Kanrenseiriron no Shintenkai—Ninchi to komyunike-shon*. Tokyo: Kenkyuusha. 2003.
- [8] Kosaka, Junichi. *Chugoku gogaku no kiso chishiki*. Tokyo: Kouseikan. 1981.
- [9] Moriya, Hironori. *Yasashiku Kuwashi Chugokugo Bunpo no Kiso*. Tokyo: Kabushiki Kaisha Touhou Shoten. 2010.
- [10] Sweetser, Eve. *From Etymology to Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1990.
- [11] Sperber, Dan & Wilson, Deirdre. *Relevance: Communication & Cognition*. Cambridge: Blackwell. 1995.
- [12] Uchida, Seiji. "Kojihyoi kara mita nichiei hikaku e no shiten". *Annual Reports of Graduate School of Human Culture* 17: 7-18. Nara Women's University. 2001.
- [13] Uchida, Seiji. *Goyoron no Shate:—Go kara Tekusuto e*. Tokyo: Kenkyusha. 2011.[14] Wilson, Deirdre & Sperber, Dan. "Linguistic Form and Relevance". *Lingua*. 1993.90:1-25.