

Case-Marking on Constituents Constructed by Verbal Predicate

The Comparison of Japanese, English, and Indonesian

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Abstract—Discussing Japanese, English, and Indonesian is interesting because of its prominent differences. Among the most noticeable issues is the case-marking for different constituencies. In respect to predicate filled by the verb, the verbal phrase becomes the mother's constituent in the sentence. The complement of the mother's constituents is the "child" constituent. If the predicate is the mother, then consequently the subject, object, and description are all the child's constituents. This paper aims to discuss how a constituent can be a child constituent in the three languages. Paper also aims to explore how to mark case on constituents that is triggered by verbal predicate in the languages in question. Applying the library research, the gained data from documentation are described and analyzed. The results show that the child constituents born by the verb when (1) the subject's constituents are on the intransitive verb, (2) the subject's constituents and the object's constituents are on the monotransitive or bitransitive verbs. The interesting findings are on the works of case-marking in these languages: Japanese is postposition to nouns; English experiences internal change of nouns; whereas Indonesian is not marked noun. In conclusion, understanding characteristics of language system for every language, it is useful for assisting learners to master languages in question.

Keywords—verbal predicate; case-marking; postpositions; internal changes

I. INTRODUCTION

The main discussion of this study is a linguistic unit that is parallel to the one that of subject, predicate, object, and complement. Linguists have various points of view toward these four terms. However, it is found interesting when it comes to the use of different marking for a linguistic unit born by predicative and by non-predicative slots. Addressing linguistic unit markers in Japanese, English, and Indonesian are interesting, since they have prominent differences. The discussion of these languages in Indonesian context is necessary since English is the major foreign language studied in this country. Meanwhile, Indonesian is the second country around the globe whose people learned Japanese, after China. This paper is expected to provide information to language learners and let them "learn various idiosyncratic constructions" to facilitate them in mastering languages [1].

The predicate is the main constituent in a sentence. The predicate is filled with verb, and this verb is then the main

constituent of a sentence. The main or the "mother" constituent is balanced by the secondary or the "child" constituent. If the predicate is the "mother", so the subject, object, and complements are the "child" constituents.

The first question addressed in this paper is how a constituent can be the "child" constituent in these three languages. As these languages have specific case-marking for their constituents; how a case-marking assigned to their "child" constituents born by verbal predicate is the second issue discussed in this paper.

II. METHODS

This paper is in the domain of typological syntax. That is comparing syntax of one language to others, in this respect, comparing syntax of English, Japanese, and Indonesian. Thus, this study employs library research. The data were collected from documents such as books and journals, and other relevant sources. The data were compared and analyzed descriptively to reveal linguistic phenomena so as to obtain generalization on how the syntax of these three languages works seen from case marking.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Syntactic Function, Category, and Role

Concerning to syntax, there are three elements which should be discussed. The first is syntactic function. This refers to well-known terms as subject, predicate, and object. Verhaar emphasizes only on three elements to be positioned as syntactic function [2]. While there is one more important element addressed, that is complement. In English this element is paralleled to complement or *hogo* (補語) in Japanese. *Hogo* in Japanese refers to the two things i.e. a constituent that is parallel to a complement in Indonesian, or a balancing constituent of predicate. Therefore, in Japanese *hogo* includes subject, object, and one element which is called a complement in Indonesian.

The second is syntactic category. This term refers to types of word or word category, such as verb, nominal, adverb, preposition, and many more. The third is syntactic role. This role refers to the syntactic meaning to show the relation between one constituent to other constituents in both internal phrases and mainly in external phrases (between phrases in a clause).

In short, the relation between syntactic function, category, and syntax role can be explained as follows. Syntactic function is the empty space between sentences. The space could be in large or in small matter that is a space inside a larger space. Study the following examples: (1) Indonesian, (2) English, and (3) Japanese. All of the examples represent the same meaning.

- (1). *Saya makan ayam goreng yang dibelikan oleh ibu.*
- (2). *I ate fried chicken that was bought by mom.*
- (3). *Watashi ga haha ga katte kureta karaage o tabeta.*

On those examples, the syntactic function of object has been filled by linguistic unit which is marked with the underline. The linguistic unit consists of large several phrases ayam goreng yang dibelikan oleh ibu (1), fried chicken that was bought by mom (2), and haha ga katte kureta karaage (3). That large space was filled with main smaller spaces which are *ayam goreng*, fried chicken, and *kureta karaage*. This pattern, then, is followed by additional spaces which are *yang dibelikan oleh ibu* that was bought by mom, and *haha ga katte kureta*. Actually, there is another smaller space in this last part which is unfortunately not addressed in this paper.

The spaces of syntactic functions are filled with constituent with a certain syntactic category and also a specific syntactic role. For example in sentence (2), the space of the subject is filled with 'I' that is categorized as noun and its syntactic role is agent. The predicate space is filled with the word 'ate' as a verb category and its syntactic role is active verb. Similarly, the object space is filled with 'fried chicken that was bought by mom' is categorized as noun and its syntactic role is patient. This evidence may suggest that all empty spaces of syntactic function can always be filled with particular syntactic category as well as syntactic role.

B. Main Constituent, General Constituent, Peripheral Constituent

A sentence is constructed with at least one main constituent; that is a predicate [2]. Every language has its own way to fill on the predicate of sentences. The predicate can be filled with either verbal, nominal, adjectival category or others. To shorten, this paper focuses on predicate which is filled with verbal category. This is due to the fact that almost all languages in the world can put verbal category as the predicate [3].

If a verb takes a place as a predicate, it means that the verb changes its syntactic function to be a main constituent. There will be sub constituent to co-work the main constituent. The sub constituent always follows the main verb constituent. Examine the example in (2) which is simplified into (4) below.

- (4a) I ate fried chicken.
- (4b) I eat fried chicken.

The predicate on the example above is 'ate' (4a) from its former 'eat' (4b). The verb 'eat' is identified as the main constituent. The other constructed linguistics units can be identified as the sub or "child" constituent of the sentence. In this example, the "child" constituent is filled with two nouns, the first one is 'I' and its role is agent and the other is noun phrase 'fried chicken' and its role is patient. The semantic feature of the verb 'eat' is an active verb which needs who is the doer of 'eat'

and what is the target of 'eat'. The doer of 'eat' is called agent while the target of 'eat' is called patient. This explains that the agent and patient could not simply be constructed before the verb 'eat' appears. This entails that agent and patient roles do not emerge automatically but they are born by verb 'eat'. Example in (4) shows that the subject is filled with noun 'I' and the object is with noun 'fried chicken'. Even though these nouns are substituted by other nouns as on examples (5) and (6), there will be no differences on the role of each constituent: agent (she, he) and patient (mango, bread). The reason is that the presence of the two roles (agent-patient) is triggered by the verb 'eat'.

- (5) She ate mango.
- (6) He ate bread.

The nouns on the all examples above ('I', 'She', and 'He') are agents, whereas 'fried chicken', 'mango', and 'bread' are patients which are born by verb. How about other nouns? Study this modified example from (4) which is transformed into example (7) below.

- (7) I ate fried chicken at the restaurant yesterday.

Example (7) is extended by adding information of place, 'at restaurant', and time, 'yesterday'. Both of them are "child" constituents in the form of noun category. On the noun of place, 'at restaurant' which is marked as ad-position (meaning: preposition) 'at' [4]. Meanwhile, the adverb of time, 'yesterday', has a zero marker (\emptyset). Yet, these two adverbs of place and time are not emerged or born by the "mother" constituent, verb "eat". This phenomenon is difference from those in examples (2) and (4) in which the patients and agents are born by the verb 'eat'.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that there are two types of verbal members. The first is the main constituent; verbal member whose syntactic role is born by verb which semantic feature sits as predicate. The second is peripheral constituent; verbal member whose syntactic role is not born by verb which semantic feature sits as predicate. The former type could be interpreted as "biological child" because its birth is based on semantic features of its "mother" constituent; that is verbal predicate. The latter type could be interpreted as "foster child" constituent as its presence does not require any birth from the "mother" constituent.

C. Case Marking

As stated on the previous explanation that the verbal predicate 'eat' is followed by its verbal member in noun categories with or without case-marking. From the quantity of its predicates, verbs could be separated into three different types. They are intransitive verb with a single noun, monotransitive verb with two nouns, and bitransitive verb with three nouns [3]. The number and role of the nouns depend on the semantic feature of the verb. In example (2) and (4), the verb 'eat' is monotransitive verb with two nouns: one noun is agent and the other is patient. It is the same example as (8) and (9).

- (8) I eat fried chicken.
- (9) I kiss her.
- (10) *Her kiss I.
- (11) She kisses me.

On the example (9), with subject as agent and object as patient when the nouns are exchanged like example (10)* ‘Her kiss I’, it is transformed into unacceptable sentence. But, with the same meaning, the sentence becomes acceptable in example (11) ‘She kisses me’. This internal change from ‘I’ into ‘me’ and ‘she’ into ‘her’ “can be considered” as one of markers or syntactic role marker. In addition, a constituent that means first person singular, third person-female, and third person-male would be indicated as ‘I’, ‘She’, and ‘He’ as the agent, while they would be ‘me’, ‘her’, and ‘him’ respectively when its position is the patient. This internal change works only on pronoun. However, it does not work like on ‘fried chicken (08) as it does not have any marker. As it is shown in example (12), the noun ‘dogs’ as agent, is unmarked (zero marker). Both roles of agent-patient are mostly determined by the chronological order of the sentence to create sensible meaning. That is why, on monotransitive verb, noun of subject has its role as agent whereas the noun of object has its role as patient.

(12) Dogs eat fried chicken.

Surprisingly, the features above also work on bitransitive and intransitive verbs. Examine an example (13), the verbal predicate of ‘bought’ creates three roles of nouns: agent role ‘I’, benefactive role ‘him’, and patient role ‘a book’. The internal substitution of ‘I’ and ‘him’ cannot be exchanged into ‘me’ and ‘he’. This also occurs on the intransitive verb as predicate (14). The agent role ‘she’ cannot be exchanged into ‘her’. It seems that, internal change only occurs on pronouns. On the other hand, nouns which are not pronoun category are unmarked or zero marker, such as dogs, fried chicken, and a book.

(13) I bought him a book.

(14) She cried.

This English language phenomenon is different from Japanese and Indonesia languages. In Japanese, all nouns following verb which are triggered by semantic feature are marked by ad-position (postposition). Fujiwara called this phenomenon as *kaku joshi* (case particle) [5]. Study these predictive verbs of the intransitive, monotransitive, and bitransitive as follows.

(15) *Kanojo ga naita.*

‘She cried.’

(16) *Watashi ga karaage o tabeta.*

‘I ate fried chicken.’

(17) *Haha ga imouto ni fuku o kiseta.*

‘My mother dressed my sister clothes.’

The subject in (15), *kanojo ga* means ‘she’ in English which plays its role as agent. This agent role is created for the need of verbal predicate *naita* ‘cried’ and realized by postposition *ga*. The verbal predicate of monotransitive *tabeta* for ‘ate’ (16) creates agent role which is realized by postposition *ga* in the construction of *watashi ga* ‘I’ and role patient which is realized by postposition *o* in *karaage o* for ‘fried chicken’. Similarly in (17), the predicate of bitransitive verb of *kiseta* ‘to dress’ triggered agent, benefactive, and patient which are realized with

postposition respectively *ga* in *haha ga* ‘my mother’, *ni* in *imouto ni* ‘my sister’, and also *o* in *fuku o* ‘clothes’.

As the same meaning of example (15), (16), and (17), study the examples in (18), (19), and (20) below in Indonesian case. The role for each noun on these examples is created from the predictive verb without any marker on them (unmarked).

(18) *Dia menangis.*

‘She cried.’

(19) *Saya makan ayam goreng.*

‘I ate fried chicken’

(20) *Ibu memakaikan adik sebuah baju.*

‘My mother dressed my sister clothes.’

On the predicate of intransitive verb of ‘cry’ (18) is followed by noun of ‘she’ which functions as subject and agent role of the sentence. Meanwhile, the predicate of monostrative verb of *makan* ‘eat’ (19), it is preceded by the noun *saya* ‘I’, the role of *saya* remains as a subject and agent of the sentence. Yet, another noun *ayam goreng* ‘fried chicken’ plays its role as object and patient of the sentence. The predicate of bitransitive verb of *memakaikan* ‘to dress’ (20) along with the subject of *ibu* ‘mom’ as subject, *adik* ‘sister’ as the first object, and *sebuah baju* ‘clothes’ as the second object. Each role of them is respectively agent, direct object, and patient. All roles that attach to each noun are not realized into linguistic unit (unmarked).

Firmly, the marking of syntactic roles for nouns of subject and object in particular language is not the only marking strategy for language in question. For example, English language, the marking strategy which is applied internal change is only occurs for pronouns. Other than pronouns, the marking strategy does not work well. Instead, English uses another strategy such as zero marker or unmarked like in ‘fried chicken’. Nouns which are not born by verbal predicate can be found on word yesterday or proposition as in at restaurant, as seen in (21).

(21) I ate fried chicken at restaurant yesterday.

In Indonesian language, surprisingly, the noun following verb which are born from semantic feature of particular verb are all zero marker on its syntactic role. But, the preposition is optional. Pay attention to the preposition *tentang* in the clause *tentang masalah dia* ‘about her problem’ (23) and make comparison to example (22) which is unmarked \emptyset *masalah dia* ‘her problem’. (\emptyset is a space slot where the marker is placed; in front of the noun).

(22) *Saya mengerti masalah dia.*

‘I understand her problem.’

(23) *Saya mengerti tentang masalah dia.*

‘I understand about her problem.’

Comparing to Japanese which has SOV construction, the unmarked linguistic unit in Indonesian language seems natural as this language has SVO construction which is similar to English. The order is quite clear that NP before VP is subject while NP after VP is Object.

In Japanese, the problem often lies between verbal and written communication. In written communication like example in (15) which is repeated in (24), the postposition *ga* as the agent marker appears. However, when it is spoken, the suffix *ga* could be deleted and changed by having long pause (25). This means that the postposition *ga* is optional in spoken mode. Detailed discussion on this issue can be seen in [6]. But, for nouns whose syntactic roles are not born by predicative verb, the marker must not exist in the sentence construction, it is prohibited. Example in (26) *kinoo* ‘yesterday’ is the modification of example from (24) does need case marker.

(24) *Kanojo ga naita.*

‘She cried.’

(25) *Kanojo, ga naita.*

(26) *Kinoo kanojo ga naita.*

‘She cried yesterday.’

By having close attention to features of the existence of syntactic role marker, it could be distinguished into three types: obligatory, optional, and prohibited markers. An obligatory marker prescribes that the marking of syntactic role must be present in a sentence. The optional means that the marking could be either present or absent in a sentence. While the prohibited marking means that the syntactic roles in sentences are still present but they are not marked. The use of syntactic case-marking is different among languages. This depends on the characteristics of the language and also the mode of communication whether it is spoken or written.

IV. CONCLUSION

The discussion of this paper shows the following results. The “child” constituents of noun which is born by semantic features of predicative verb are: (1) nominal constituents as subject of the predicative intransitive verb, (2) nominal constituents as subject

and objects (either first or second object) of predicative monotransitive and bitransitive verbs. The interesting point is found in every language: in Japanese, the marking case is realized by marker on the postposition of noun; the internal change of noun in English; and the unmarked noun in Indonesian.

Yet, there are still many new-coming unsolved problems found in this study. First, this study is only limited on predicate which is filled with verb. What is the explanation to non-verbal predicate? Second, the examples provided in this study are only filled with nouns for each subject and the object. Do the three languages use only nouns for subject and object position? How if the language could apply non-noun as its subject and object? Third, most of examples of noun as subject and object are in pronouns. It needs an exclusive study to reveal more accurate result on the case rather than pronouns. Finally, it is expected that this paper gives readers better understanding for the three languages: English, Indonesian, and Japanese languages.

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