

A Cognitive Pragmatic Approach on Mongolian Parentheses*

BAI Arong

College of Foreign Studies, Guilin University of Technology, Jiangan Road No. 12, Guilin, China

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 hehelcehu ber*, *Өgere 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 burildegen*, or parentheses such as *olan nu hehelcehu ber*, *unen degen*, *Өgere ber helebel*, *eim 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.

* This work is Supported by Foundation of Guilin University of Technology, project code number: GUTQDJJ2012029, "A Cross Linguistic Research: Pragmatic View on Truth-Conditions of Connectives", project director: BAI Arong.
BAI Arong, Doctor of Literature, College of Foreign Studies, Guilin University of Technology.

(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 explicature 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 explicatures 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 explicatures 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 explicatures. 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

in short lady SUB wish OBJ come true make witch was and
watashi ni wa negai goto ga atta *no da*.

I to TOP wish SUB had FP FP

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

thus code model and inferential model GEN either too language
dentatsu kenkyu ni koken suru koto ga dekiru *no de aru*.

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 ~~unudar~~ borogan du norugdagsan ~~ugei~~.

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~~ ~~zab~~ burugu hoyar tala ece

we problem 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 бол 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 ~~unadur~~ borogan du norugdagsan ~~ugei~~ *yum*.

fortunately we today rain by soaked not FP

(Fortunately, we had not gotten soaked in the rain.)

c. Bide asagudal i ~~æzehæ~~ degen *yariyan* ~~ugei~~ ~~zæb~~ burugu hoyar tala ece

we problem OBJ see when of course right wrong two side from

ocizu nigtalan ~~æzehæ~~ 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. ?*Øgere ber helebel*, Øber 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 *Өgere 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 *Өber 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 *Өgere 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.

References

- Bayantai. (1989). *Өбөсөн Surho Yapun Hele*. Huhhot: Үбэр Mongol un Surgan Һэмэзил un Heblel un Horiya.
- Blakemore, D. (1996). Are Apposition Markers Discourse Markers? *J. Linguistics*, 32, 325-347.
- Carston, R. (2002). *Thoughts and utterances: the pragmatics of explicit communication*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Haserdeni, G., Songrob, S., Dawadagba, T., & Naranbatu. (1996). *Orcin Cag un Mongol Hele*. Huhhot: Үбэр Mongol un Surgan Һэмэзил un Heblel un Horiya.
- Itani, R. (1993). The Japanese sentence-final particle *Ka*: A relevance-theoretic approach. *Lingua*, 90, 129-147.
- Recanati, F. (1987). *Truth-conditional pragmatics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Sasamoto, R. (2008). Japanese discourse connectives *Dakara* and *Sorede*: A re-assessment of procedural meaning. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 40, 127-154.
- Uchida, S. (2000). Iwayuru Danwahyoshiki o Megutte—Constraints on implicature or explicatures?. *Eigo Goho Bunpo Kenkyu*, 7, 19-33.
- Uchida, S. (2001). Kojihyoi kara mita nichiei hikaku e no shiten. *Annual Reports of Graduate School of Human Culture*, 17, 7-18. Nara Women's University.
- Wilson, D., & Sperber, D. (1993). Linguistic form and relevance. *Lingua*, 90, 1-25.