

The Continuity of Head Nouns: The Difference in Relativizability between Korean and Chinese¹

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Abstract: The Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy cannot explain the difference in relativizability between Chinese and Korean in authentic discourse. Korean exhibits a higher preference for relativization compared to Chinese and this article aims to account for this difference from the perspective of topic continuity. Specifically, the continuity of head nouns within relative clauses is stronger in Korean than in Chinese. By analyzing the parameters of referential distance and potential interference, this study finds that the head nouns in Korean relative clauses display a broader range on the continuum of continuity compared to those in Chinese relative clauses. Furthermore, the difference in the strength of continuity of head nouns between Chinese and Korean relative clauses is attributed to the typological distinction between the Component-Integral Languages and Component-Metonymic Languages postulated within the framework of the Event-Domain Cognitive Model.

Keywords: relative clauses, head nouns, topics, continuity, component-Integral languages, component-metonymic languages

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A relative clause is a subordinate clause that modifies a noun phrase, which is a common argument shared by the relative clause and the main clause. The operation by which a noun phrase is extracted to become a common argument modified by a relative clause is usually termed relativization. Constraints on the ability to relativize a noun phrase is a well-discussed topic (Keenan 155–159; Comrie 155–162; Andrew 226–231; Dixon 320–326). Keenan and Comrie's highly influential work in language universals introduced the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy (NPAH), an implicational scale for the relativizability of different grammatical roles:

SUBJECTS > DIRECT OBJECTS > INDIRECT OBJECTS > OBLIQUES > GENITIVES
> OCOMPS (66)

According to the NPAH, grammatical roles on the left of the scale are easier to relativize than the grammatical roles on the right of the scale. That is, subjects are easier to relativize than direct objects, and direct objects are easier to relativize than indirect objects, and so on down the hierarchy.

It is claimed that all languages should adhere to the NPAH as a universal implication, including Korean and Chinese, which happen to be among the languages in Keenan and Comrie's data source used to formulate the NPAH (93). Indeed, it has been attested that both Chinese and Korean largely conform to the NPAH (Liu, "A Discussion," 18–19; Xu 651–654; Kim 136; Yeon 425–429):

- (1a) Chulsoo=ka Younghee=rur saraŋha-n-ta.
Chulsoo=NOM Younghee=ACC love-PRES-INDIC
Chulsoo loves Younghee.

- (1b) Younghee=rur saraŋha-n Chulsoo.²
Younghee=ACC love-RM(relative marker) Chulsoo
Chulsoo, the one who loves Younghee.

- (1c) nɛ=ka Chulsoo=wi satʰon=eke sənmur=ur ʈʉ-as'-ta.
I=NOM Chulsoo=POSS cousin=OBL present=ACC give-ANT-INDIC
I gave a present to Chulsoo's cousin.

- (1d) *nɛ=ka satʰon=eke sənmur=ur ʈʉ-n Chulsoo.
I=NOM cousin=OBL present=ACC give-RM Chulsoo
Chulsoo, whose cousin I gave a present to.

- (2a) Laoshi jiao xuesheng.
teacher teach student
The teacher teaches the students.

- (2b) Jiao xuesheng=de laoshi.
teach student=RM teacher
The teacher who teaches the students

- (2c) Lisi jie=le Zhangsan=de che.
Lisi borrow=ASP Zhangsan=POSS car

Lisi borrowed Zhangsan's car.

- (2d) *Lisi jie=le che=de nage ren
 Lisi borrow=ASP car=RM that person
 The person whose car Lisi borrowed

In Korean, the subject *Chulsoo* in (1a) is easier to relativize than the genitive *Chulsoo* in (1c) which lies on the right of the subject, resulting in (1b) being grammatical, but (1d) being ungrammatical. Chinese is similar to Korean in this respect, as shown in (2b) and (2d).

This article does not attempt to challenge the NPAH, which has been proven to be a valid universal implication cross-linguistically. Instead, by focusing on the relativizability that the NPAH concerns, what is interesting—and requires further explanation—is that Korean NPs prefer to be relativized more than Chinese NPs in discourses, even though neither language violates the NPAH.

- (3a) tari=rur umtfiki-tfi moshe panan=e=man is'-nurako
 leg=ACC move-CONV cannot room=in=PART stay-CAUS
 t'urŋt'urhetfi-n tʃəmʃʰon aʃuməni=nun
 get fat-RM tʃəmʃʰon lady=TOP
 kw ihu=ro kw apʰu-n tari=ro sə-sə ur-mjənsə
 then since=OBL that painful-RM leg=OBL stand-CONV cry-CONV
 ʃurnəmki=rur ha-si-n-ta-nun kəs-i-əs'-ta.
 jumping rope=ACC do-HON-PRES-QUOT-CONV defective noun-COP-ANT-INDIC
 (*The Place Where the Wind Chime Used to Be* by Jungsook Sim)

- (3b) ?Shuangtui buneng dongtan, zhineng dai zai wuli,
 two legs cannot move only stay in room
 biande yue lai yue pang=de Diancun dashen,
 become more and more fat=RM diancun lady
 houlai jiu jingchang tuo=zhe shangtui,
 since then just often drag=Asp injured leg
 bian ku bian tiaosheng=le.
 while cry while jumping rope=MOD

- (3c) Diancun dashen Shuangtui buneng dongtan, zhineng dai zai wuli,
 Diancun lady two legs cannot move only stay in room
 biande yue lai yue pang,
 become more and more fat

houlai jiu jingchang tuo=zhe shangtui,
 since then just often drag=ASP injured leg
 bian ku bian tiaosheng=le.
 while cry while jumping rope=MOD

The Jeomchon lady, who got fat because she couldn't move her legs and stayed in her room, has since been standing on those painful legs, crying, and jumping rope.
 (translated by Lihong Xu)

The authentic discourse, as shown in (3), illustrates that relative clauses are more acceptable in Korean than in Chinese. This difference cannot be attributed to the accessibility of NPs as predicted by the NPAH, given that both Korean and Chinese can relativize the subject. So, why are relative clauses preferred in Korean over Chinese? This article aims to offer a straightforward answer to this question based on the continuity of head nouns within relative clauses. It is the strength of continuity that explains the difference in the acceptability of relative clauses between Korean and Chinese. Specifically, the continuity of head nouns within relative clauses is stronger in Korean than in Chinese. Section 1 will argue that head nouns of Chinese and Korean relative clauses can be considered topics; section 2 will conduct a quantitative investigation into the differences between Chinese and Korean regarding the degree of continuity of head nouns within relative clauses from the perspective of topic continuity; and section 3 will provide a cognitive explanation for the difference in the strength of continuity based on the Event-Domain Cognitive Model.

1. Head Nouns as Topics

The structure of relative clauses itself can be seen as a topic-comment structure. Kuno initially noted the resemblance between the relative clause structure and topic-comment structure based on Japanese data. He argued that if a head noun can undergo relativization, it implies that the content articulated in the relative clause can establish relevance with the head noun, suggesting that the head noun must serve as the topic of the relative clause (419–420). There are two empirical pieces of evidence proving that head nouns in Chinese and Korean relative clauses can also be considered topics.

Firstly, it is sometimes difficult to trace back the head noun in Chinese and Korean to a specific grammatical role within the relative clause.

- (4a) Ta bang=zhe wawa duo=de funv bu yifu.
 she help=ASP children many=RM women mend clothes
 She helps women with many children mend their clothes.

(4b) Naxie funv=de wawa duo.

those women=POSS children many

The children of those women are many.

(4c) Naxie funv wawa duo.

those women children many

Those women have many children.

(5a) Puman gancao=de danshen sushe.

cover straw=RM bachelor dormitory

A bachelor's dormitory with straw on the floor.

(5b) Danshen sushe=li puman gancao.

bachelor dorm=OBL cover straw

There is much straw in the bachelor's dormitory.

(5c) Danshen sushi puman gancao.

bachelor dormitory cover straw

The bachelor's dormitory is filled with straw.

(6a) nonsa=ka manh-un tɕip.

Farming=NOM many-RM house

A household with a lot of farming.

(6b) ku tɕip=ui nonsa=ka manh-ta.

that house=POSS farming=NOM many-INDIC

There is a lot of farming done at the house.

(6c) ku tɕip=un nonsa=ka manh-ta.

that house=TOP farming=NOM many-INDIC

The household does a lot of farming.

(7a) ɛntɕena təu-n mur=ur s'r su is'-nuun jəksir.

always hot-RM water=ACC use defective noun have-RM bathroom

A bathroom where you can always use hot water. (*The Yellow House* by Wanseo Park)

(7b) ku jəksir=esə ɛntɕena təu-n mur=ur s'r su is'ta.

that bathroom=OBL always hot-RM water=ACC use defective noun have-INDIC

You can always use hot water in the bathroom.

- (7c) kw jəksir=wn ənʈəna təu-n mur=wr s'r su is'ta.
 that bathroom=OBL always hot-RM water=ACC use defective noun have-INDIC
 The bathroom always has hot water available.

The head nouns in the above examples present challenges when being recovered to specific grammatical roles within the relative clauses. In examples (4) and (6), the head nouns can function as possessors or subjects within the relative clauses; likewise, in examples (5) and (7), the head nouns can act as oblique elements or subjects within the relative clauses. However, recognizing the head nouns in Chinese and Korean as topics resolves these challenges. The ability of head nouns in Chinese and Korean to be relativized depends on their capacity to establish a topic-comment relationship with relative clauses. The reason the aforementioned relative clause structures can be established lies in the ability of their head nouns and relative clauses to establish a topic-comment relationship. Regardless of whether these head nouns should be recovered to subjects, objects, oblique elements, or genitive elements at the syntactic level, they can all be understood as topics at the pragmatic level. According to our analysis of 173 Chinese and 189 Korean relative clause structures in authentic discourses, including subjects, objects, oblique elements, and possessors at the syntactic level, all can be transformed into topic-comment structures at the pragmatic level.

Secondly, the presence of complex gaps in relative clauses can be adequately accounted for by considering the topic-comment structure.

- (8a) ʈʰirsip njən tonan si-rə narw-ko=to aʈʰik=to ʈəŋʈəŋha-ke
 seventy years during load-CONV carry-CONV=PART still=PART straight-CONV
 nɛ=ka ka-ko sip-wŋ te terjətaʈʰu-ko
 I=NOM go-CONV want-RM place take (to)-CONV
 maʈʰi namu=wi p'uri=ʈʰərəm
 as if tree-POSS root=PART
 t'arŋ=kwa na=rwr jəŋkjərsikʰjəʈʰu-nwŋ tari
 ground=PART I=ACC connect-RM legs
 My legs, which have been carrying me for seventy years and still take me to where I want to go, and which connect me to the land like the roots of a tree. (*The Yellow House* by Wanseo Park)

- (8b) tari=nwŋ ʈʰirsip njən tonan si-rə narw-ko=to
 legs=TOP seventy years during load-CONV carry-CONV=PART
 aʈʰik=to ʈəŋʈəŋha-ke nɛ=ka ka-ko sip-wŋ te terjətaʈʰu-ko
 still=PART straight-CONV I=NOM go-CONV want-RM place take (to)-CONV
 maʈʰi namu=wi p'uri=ʈʰərəm
 as if tree-POSS root=PART
 t'arŋ=kwa na=rwr jəŋkjərsikʰjəʈʰu-n-ta.

ground=PART I=ACC connect-PRES-INDIC

Even after carrying me for seventy years, my legs still healthily take me to where I want to go and connect me to the ground like the roots of a tree.

- (9a) Zhege ruci pinqiong, ruci cuyue, ruci luohou, fangfu bei shijie suoyiwang,
this so poor so crude so backward as if PASS world forget
bei wenming suopaoqi, wei renhe baozhi shukan
PASS civilization abandon PASS any newspaper magazine
dou buxieyu guachi=de huangcun
all scorn mention=RM desolate village

This village, so poor, so crude, so backward, as if forgotten by the world, abandoned by civilization, and scorned by any newspaper or magazine, is a desolate place.

- (9b) Zhege huangcun, ruci pinqiong, ruci cuyue, ruci luohou,
this desolate village so poor so crude so backward
fangfu bei shijie suo yiwang, bei wenming suo paoqi,
as if PASS world forget PASS civilization abandon
wei renhe baozhi shukan dou buxieyu guachi.
PASS any newspaper magazine all scorn mention

This desolate village, so poor, so crude, and so backward, seems forgotten by the world, abandoned by civilization, and not even worth mentioning in any newspaper or publication.

The above relative clause structures are able to be established not because of the syntactic operation of head noun extraction, but due to the ability of the head noun and the relative clause to establish a topic-comment relationship, thus allowing the head noun to maintain topic continuity within the relative clause. This is in line with the principle of economy: there are many logical gaps within (8) and (9), and from the perspective of language processing, authors or speakers cannot calculate the syntactic positions of the head noun at each gap. Therefore, the gaps are not generated by syntactic extraction, and the head noun does not need to be recovered to a syntactic position. As long as the head noun and the entire relative clause can construct a topic-comment relationship according to the current context, enabling the head noun to maintain continuity within the relative clause, relativization can be established.

Furthermore, from a methodological perspective, grammatical roles such as subjects and objects fail to explain why Korean exhibits a greater preference for relative clauses compared to Chinese. This is because these grammatical roles represent specific syntactic positions within individual languages and lack cross-linguistic validity. When focusing on cross-linguistic verification of implicational universals, it can be argued that although the syntactic positions of subjects, objects, oblique elements, and genitive elements in Chinese and Korean are not

equivalent in terms of their grammatical categories and may even lack comparability, they each follow the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy within their respective languages. However, when considering a horizontal comparison between Chinese and Korean, it would be premature to claim that oblique elements in Korean are more easily relativized than in Chinese. This is because the identification of “oblique” as a grammatical role relies on the specific formal criteria within individual languages and lacks cross-linguistic equivalence, thus it cannot serve as the basis for comparative analysis.

2. The Continuity of Head Nouns in Relative Clauses

Based on the topical nature of head nouns in Chinese and Korean relative clauses, the difference in the difficulty of relativization can be explained from a discourse pragmatic perspective rather than a syntactic one. Dik suggests two parallel levels of explanation regarding the difficulty of relativization: one is at the syntactic level, where the difficulty of relativization depends on the syntactic position of the head noun within the relative clause (i.e. NPAH); the other is at the pragmatic level, where the difficulty of relativization depends on the ease of establishing a topic-comment relationship (i.e. an aboutness relationship) between the head noun and the relative clause (365). And the correlation between topic and comment can be quantified by a standard known as continuity. Furthermore, Givón argues that continuity is a crucial nature of topics, ensuring relevance between topics and comments as well as the coherence and cohesion of discourse, and it can be understood to some extent as the topicality, presuppositionality, backgroundiness, or predictability of noun phrases as topics (6–7).

From the perspective of continuity, the difficulty of relativization in Chinese and Korean can be quantitatively assessed. Givón points out that referential distance and potential interference are two important indicators for measuring the level of topic continuity (13–14, 30). In the context of relative clauses: referential distance is the number of clauses within the nominal phrase that separate the head noun from its corresponding gap; potential interference refers to gaps within the nominal phrase that are not co-indexed with the head noun.

The relationship between referential distance and continuity is as follows: the fewer the number of clauses between the head noun and the gap it can fill within the relative clause, the shorter the referential distance of the head noun, and thus the higher the continuity of the head noun in the relative clause; conversely, the greater the number of clauses between the head noun and the gap it can fill, the longer the referential distance of the head noun, and thus the lower the continuity of the head noun in the relative clause. The relationship between potential interference and continuity is as follows: the fewer the gaps within the relative clause that are not co-indexed with the head noun, the smaller the potential interference for the head noun, and thus the higher the continuity of the head noun in the relative clause; conversely, the more gaps within the relative clause that are not co-indexed with the head noun, the greater the potential interference for the

head noun, and thus the lower the continuity of the head noun in the relative clause.

(10a) [e_i] zhuangli=de diqiu_i
magnificent=RM Earth
the magnificent Earth

(10b) yige [e_i] wenxun ganlai=de guniang_i
one hear come=RM girl
a girl who came after hearing the news

(10c) sanxianmian_j chi [e_j] chulai [e_i]=de mantou hanshui he manzui biti
Samseon noodles eat come out=RM head sweat and mouth snot
The sweat from his head and the snot from his nose that came out after eating Samseon noodles.

(11a) [e_i] s'ahi-nun mənʈʰi_i (*Whale* by Myungkwan, Cheon)
accumulate dust
the dust that builds up

(11b) hant'ε [e_i] juŋsəŋhes'-wna [e_i] morrakha-ko ma-n kotətosi_i
once flourish-CONV fall-CONV final-RM ancient city
an ancient city that once flourished but fell

(11c) [e_j] ʈʰakau-n mur_j sok=e [e_i] ʈʰamki-ə is'-nun toroŋnjoŋ ar_i
Cold water inside=OBL submerg-CONV be-RM salamanderegg
salamander eggs submerged in cold water

For instance, the head nouns in sentences (10a) and (11a) are only separated from their respective fillers by one clause, while in sentences (10b) and (11b) the head nouns are separated from their fillers by two clauses, thereby elongating the referential distance. Additionally, sentences (10c) and (11c) exhibit gaps referring to entities different from the head nouns, potentially causing interference with the consistency of the head nouns in the relative clauses. Therefore, based on referential distance and potential interference, the continuity of the head nouns in the relative clauses is higher in (10a) and (11a) compared to (10b), (11b), (10c), and (11c), where the continuity is comparatively lower.

Based on quantitative statistics of referential distance and potential interference in authentic discourse,³ the continuity of head nouns in relative clauses in Chinese and Korean can be compared and analyzed as follows.

Table 1. Referential Distance and Potential Interference in Chinese and Korean Relative Clauses

	Relative Clauses	Referential Distance / Average Value	Potential Interference / Average Value
Chinese	173	195 / 1.12	3 / 0.02
Korean	189	249 / 1.32	32 / 0.17

Among the 173 relative clauses in Chinese, the number of clauses between the head noun and the gap it could fill is 195, with an average referential distance of 1.12 clauses per relative clause; the number of other gaps besides the co-indexed gap is 3, with an average potential interference of 0.02 per relative clause. Among the 189 relative clauses in Korean, the number of clauses between the head noun and the gap it could fill is 249, with an average referential distance of 1.32 clauses per relative clause; the number of other gaps besides the co-indexed gap is 32, with an average potential interference of 0.17 per relative clause.

The differences in the average values above indicate that head nouns in Korean relative clauses have longer referential distances and encounter more potential interference than those in Chinese relative clauses. However, one should not conclude that Chinese head nouns have high continuity while Korean head nouns have low continuity based solely on the average values. When focusing on the distribution patterns of referential distance and potential interference within the internal structures of relative clauses in Chinese and Korean, this study finds the following.

Table 2. Distribution of Referential Distances within Chinese and Korean Relative Clauses

	1 clause	2 clauses	3 clauses	3 clauses
Chinese	155 (89.6%)	14 (8.1%)	4 (2.3%)	0
Korean	148 (78.3%)	29 (15.3%)	10 (5.3%)	2 (1.1%)

Table 3. Distribution of Potential Interference within Chinese and Korean Relative Clauses

	0	1 gap	2 gaps	3 or more gaps
Chinese	171 (98.8%)	2 (1.2%)	0	0
Korean	166 (87.8%)	17 (9%)	4 (2.1%)	2 (1.1%)

The distribution patterns reflected in Table 2 and Table 3 illustrate the following facts. First, the head nouns of relative clauses in both Chinese and Korean tend to have short referential distances and lack of interference. Second, in terms of referential distance, Chinese has a higher proportion of one-clause referential distances than Korean, while Korean has a higher proportion of referential distances that exceed one clause compared to Chinese, and the maximum referential distance in Korean is longer than that in Chinese. Third, in terms of potential interference, although Korean relative clauses overall tend to have no interference, there are cases with one interfering gap, two interfering gaps, and even three or more interfering gaps. In contrast, in Chinese, there is at most one interfering gap, and the proportion of such cases is very small, with no instances of more than one interfering gap occurring.

In terms of differences in continuity, two important points should be noted (Givón 16–17): firstly, high and low continuity are not discrete but rather form a continuum; secondly, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the form and function of continuity. This means that one syntactic encoding does not correspond to just one point on the continuum of continuity but covers a range. Thus, considering the continuous nature of continuity and the asymmetry between form and function, this study will make the following statement regarding the similarity and difference in the continuity of head nouns in Chinese and Korean relative clauses based on the statistical data provided: head nouns in both Chinese and Korean relative clauses tend to have a strong preference for high continuity, which is also an inherent requirement of the Topic-Comment relationship for the establishment of relative clause constructions. However, the size of the range covered by the continuity of head nouns differs. The range of continuity covered by Korean head nouns from high to low is greater than that covered by Chinese head nouns. That is, on the continuum of continuity, the high continuity end of head nouns in both Chinese and Korean is identical, yet Korean head nouns are positioned closer to the low end compared to Chinese head nouns. This explains why Korean tends to exhibit a higher preference for relativization in authentic discourse compared to Chinese. This phenomenon arises because head nouns of Korean relative clauses display a broader range on the continuum of continuity, being capable of both high and low continuity, while Chinese head nouns are less suitable for low continuity.

3. The Cognitive Motivation for the Difference in Continuity between Chinese and Korean

This study suggests that the difference in the cognitive approach to events between Chinese and Korean can account for the difference in the continuity of head nouns in relative clauses in these languages. With regard to the cognitive approach to events, this study proposes a typological distinction based on the Cognitive Model theory: Chinese is a Component-Integral Language, tending to express the integrity of event components, whereas Korean is a Component-Metonymic Language, tending to metonymize the whole with its parts—that is, by using event components to metonymize the whole event.

The assumption outlined above is derived from reflections on the typology of nouns and verbs. Nouns and verbs are fundamental categories that distinguish each other, with distinct cognitive foundations (Langacker Chap. 5, Chap. 7) and discourse bases (Hopper and Thompson 703). Therefore, many scholars have attempted to differentiate languages typologically based on the associated features of nouns, verbs, and their syntactic, cognitive, and discourse properties, thus suggesting that some languages are noun-prominent while others are verb-prominent. However, it is worth noting that such typological distinctions based on noun-verb preference are highly constrained and may lead to contradictory conclusions once detached from specific features. For

example, focusing on long sentence translation in English and Chinese discourse, Lin argues that Chinese prioritizes verbs while English prioritizes nouns (402–403). Conversely, emphasizing the importance of phrases, Guo suggests that Chinese prioritizes nouns while English prioritizes verbs (331–332). Considering the functional differences between nouns and verbs, Liu posits that Chinese is a verb-oriented language while English is a noun-oriented language (“Chinese” 3). However, in contrast, focusing on the oppositional or inclusive relationship between nouns and verbs, Shen argues that Chinese emphasizes nouns (4).

To avoid the contradictory opposition between nouns and verbs under different parameters, this study proposes distinguishing the typological differences between Chinese and Korean based on events constructed by both nouns and verbs, rather than solely on nouns and verbs themselves. The Cognitive Model theory offers a framework for constructing this typological distinction. Lakoff suggests that cognitive models structure thought, serving as patterns for organizing and representing knowledge, constituting mental structures formed by humans in perceiving and understanding the world (xv, 13). Building upon discussions of cognitive models such as the Billiard-Ball Model, Stage Model, and the Force-Dynamic Model, Wang introduces the Event-Domain Cognitive Model (ECM), as depicted in the following figure (Figure 1):

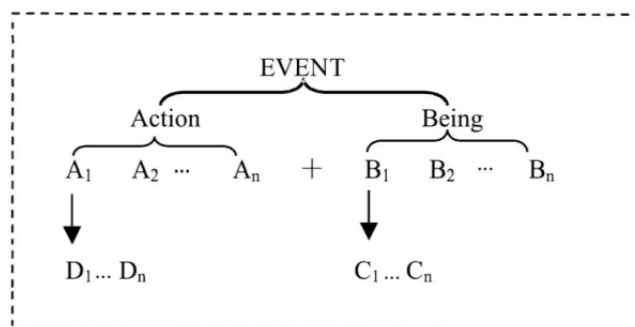


Figure 1. The Event-Domain Cognitive Model (Wang, Chap. 7)

The model above illustrates the event and its component elements: at the first level, a basic event domain (EVENT) primarily comprises action elements (Action) and entity elements (Being); at the second level, these action and entity elements further consist of their respective sub-elements, namely, sub-actions ($A_1, A_2 \dots A_n$) and sub-entities ($B_1, B_2 \dots B_n$); and at the third level, each sub-element encompasses various typical information, such as features (D), classifications (C), and so forth.

Based on the Event-Domain Cognitive Model, this study delineates the regions representing the expression of events in Chinese as a Component-Integral Language and Korean as a Component-Metonymic Language.

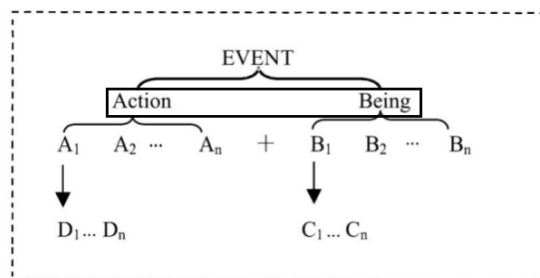


Figure 2a. The Component-Integral Language

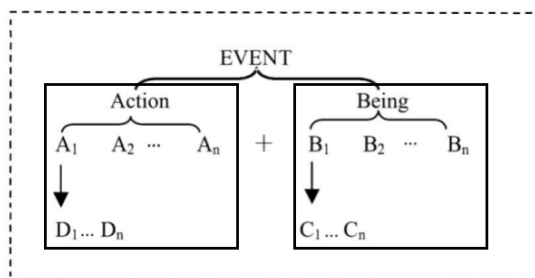


Figure 2b. The Component-Metonymic Language

Chinese is a Component-Integral Language that emphasizes the completeness of components in events at the first level in the Event-Domain Cognitive Model. The term “Integral” refers to the explicit expression of both the action and entity, the two basic elements constituting an event, rather than just one of them when expressing an event. Korean, on the other hand, is a Component-Metonymic Language that emphasizes either the action or the entity in the Event-Domain Cognitive Model at the second and third levels. The term “Metonymic” refers to the tendency in Korean to use parts to represent the whole, substituting individual components of an event for the whole event, focusing on the richness of information in individual components rather than the completeness of the basic components (action and entity) at the first level. There is abundant empirical evidence to demonstrate the cognitive differences in the Event-Domain Cognitive Model between Chinese and Korean.

(12a) Jiandao nin hen gaoxing.
meet you very glad
Nice to meet you.

(12b) *Jiandao hen gaoxing.
See very glad

(13a) manna-sə pankap-swəpnita.
Meet-CONV glad-HON.INDIC
Nice to meet you.

(13b) *taŋsin=ur manna-sə pankap-swəpnita.
you=ACC meet-CONV glad-HON.INDIC

(14a) Kaishi shang ke!
begin attend class
Let's start the class!

(14b) *Kaishi ke.

begin class

(15a) suəp=ur itʃakha-psita!

class=ACC begin-IMP

Let's start the class!

(15b) *suəp=ur ha-ki=rur itʃakha-psita!

class=ACC do-NOMIN=ACC begin-IMP

(16a) Qing bang wo zuo zuoye.

please help me do homework.

Please help me with my homework.

(16b) *Qing bang zuoye.

please help homework

(17a) *tʃə=rur suktʃe=rur ha-ki=rur top-a tʃu-sejo.

me=ACC homework=ACC do-NOMIN=ACC help-CONV give-IMP

(17b) suktʃe=rur top-a tʃu-sejo.

homework=ACC help-CONV give-IMP

Please help me with my homework.

As shown in the examples, in Chinese, the action element *jian dao* (meet) is followed by the obligatory entity element *nin* (you); even if there is no misunderstanding about the object entity in face-to-face communication, the *nin* must be explicitly expressed syntactically. In contrast, in the Korean example, with OV as the basic word order, the entity element *tajsin* (you) cannot appear before the action element *mannata* (meet). It should be noted that Korean verbs do not inflect for the person category, so the object involved in the action is not explicitly expressed through verb inflection. Korean uses a single action element *mannata* (meet) to imply the entire event of meeting you. Similarly, in the Chinese examples, the entity element *ke* (class) cannot alone express the entire event of attending class, while Korean uses the single entity element *suəp* (class) to imply the entire event of attending class, without fully expressing both the action element *hata* (do) and the entity element *suəp* (class). Furthermore, as shown in example (17), in Korean, the action element *topta* (help) implies the entire event of helping me, and the entity element *suktʃe* (homework) implies the entire event of doing homework, but the corresponding Chinese examples must explicitly express both the action and the entity.

In addition, the different nature of grammatical units in the respective grammatical systems

of Chinese and Korean provide evidence of the difference in event domains between the two languages. In the grammatical units of Chinese, the phrase is the basic unit for clause construction (Huang and Liao 4, 52); however, in the grammatical units of Korean, the basic unit for clause construction is not the phrase, but the *eojeol* (어절), which is a noun or verb attached to particles or endings (Go and Gu 272). Therefore, in the case of Chinese, phrases containing action elements and entity elements, such as subject-predicate and verb-object structures, are fixed models of event expression. But in the case of Korean, it is the nouns and their attached grammatical markers, as well as the verbs and their attached grammatical markers that are fixed models of event expression. Thus, from the perspective of the cognitive approach to the event domain, Chinese is a Component-Integral Language with phrases as the most important grammatical unit for clause construction, while Korean is a Component-Metonymic Language with *eojeol* (어절) as the most important grammatical unit for clause construction.

Based on the distinction between Component-Integral and Component-Metonymic languages in the Event-Domain Cognitive Model, the difference in the continuity strength of head nouns within relative clauses between Chinese and Korean can be explained as follows: Chinese is a Component-Integral language that emphasizes the completeness of action and entity elements as a typical model of expressing events, without considering the enrichment of information within each action or entity. In contrast, Korean is a Component-Metonymic language that prioritizes the enrichment of information within the single component of action or entity rather than their completeness. The continuity of head nouns in relative clauses within noun phrases reflects the abundance of sub-elements and their related information under the entity component of the event domain. Considering the typological difference in the Event-Domain Cognitive Model between Chinese and Korean, the Component-Metonymic nature of Korean determines its preference for information richness within individual components. Therefore, the coverage range of Korean head nouns from high to low on the continuity continuum is greater than that of Chinese head nouns from high to low.

4. Conclusion

This article finds that the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy cannot adequately explain the difference in relativization constraints between Chinese and Korean in authentic discourse, namely, that Korean exhibits a higher preference for relativization compared to Chinese. Therefore, this article proposes that this difference can be accounted for by examining the strength of the continuity of topics.

Firstly, considering the recoverability of head nouns within relative clauses, the complexity of gaps within relative clauses, and the cross-linguistic non-equivalence of grammatical roles, the head nouns of relative clauses in both Chinese and Korean can be regarded as topics at the pragmatic level.

Secondly, by quantifying the continuity of topics using referential distance and potential interference as parameters, the results show that head nouns of Korean relative clauses display a broader range on the continuum of continuity, being capable of both high and low continuity, while head nouns of Chinese relative clauses are less suitable for low continuity.

Finally, based on the Event-Domain Cognitive Model, this article proposes a distinction between Component-Integral and Component-Metonymic Languages to elucidate the cognitive motivation for the difference in the continuity of head nouns in Chinese and Korean relative clauses. Chinese is a Component-Integral Language that emphasizes the completeness of components (both action and entity), while Korean is a Component-Metonymic Language that focuses on the richness of information in individual components rather than the completeness of the basic components. Thus, the Component-Metonymic nature of Korean determines its preference for relativization, which provides an abundance of sub-elements and their related information under the entity component of the event domain.

Notes

1. Grant: Social Science Funds of Hunan Province “A Contrastive Study of Attributive Clauses between Chinese and Korean from the Perspective of Linguistic Typology” (No. 22YBA053).
2. In both Chinese and Korean, the morpho-syntactic encoding of restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses is identical. Therefore, the aforementioned works do not differentiate between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses when examining whether Chinese and Korean adhere to the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy.
3. The Korean discourse data is sourced from the Korean novel *The Whale* by Myeong-kwan Cheon, while the Chinese discourse data is sourced from the Chinese novel *Brothers* by Hua Yu.

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