

## An Argument for Argument Ellipsis from *-sika* NPIs

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**Synopsis:** Since Otani & Whitman's (1991) work, it is well-known that sentences with null objects in Korean and Japanese allow the sloppy-identity reading (cf. Sag 1976, Williams 1977), as exemplified by the Japanese example in (1a), on a par with English VP-ellipsis examples like (1b) (throughout this paper, we will omit the strict-identity reading, which is always available). Then, Otani & Whitman propose, essentially following Huang (1987), that sentences like (1a) are in fact instances of VP-ellipsis, which targets the VP whose head, i.e. V, has been evacuated from it via V-raising. That is, the second conjunct of (1a) is claimed to have a structure like (2a). This nicely accounts for the similarity between (1a) and (1b). There have been proposed two alternatives to Otani & Whitman's VP-ellipsis analysis, however. Oku (1998) and Kim (1999) independently propose that languages like Japanese and Korean have an ellipsis process Argument Ellipsis, which directly elides an argument. Thus, under the Argument Ellipsis approach, the second conjunct of (1a) has a structure like (2b), where the full-fledged NP is elided via Argument Ellipsis. On the other hand, Hoji (1998) argues that there exist phonologically null indefinite nouns in these languages, so that the relevant part of (1a) should have a structure like (2c), where *ec<sub>indef</sub>* stands for the null indefinite noun. Under this analysis, the sloppy reading obtains because the situation which the sloppy reading describes is compatible with the situation described by (3), where the object in the second conjunct overtly realized as an indefinite noun without *zibun* 'self' (indicated by boldface).

The aim of this paper is to provide a support for the Argument Ellipsis approach, based on the novel observation regarding the behavior of the Negative Polarity Items with the suffix *-sika* 'only' (henceforth *-sika* NPIs) in Japanese. Specifically, we argue i) that Kim's (1999) argument against the VP-ellipsis analysis is strengthened by the fact that if a *-sika* NPI is construed as an adjunct modifying another NP (cf. Aoyagi & Ishii 1994), it cannot be missing, in spite of the relatively free word order between *-sika* NPIs and modified NPs, and ii) that the Argument Ellipsis approach is superior to the null indefinite nouns approach since *-sika* NPIs can be null if they can be construed as genuine arguments, although *-sika* NPIs cannot be replaced by any indefinite nouns.

**Observations:** In Japanese, various constituents can be turned into an NPI if the suffix *-sika* is attached to them. For instance, the object *ringo* in (4a) is turned into a *-sika* NPI in (4b), and as an NPI, negation is required (henceforth *-sika* NPIs are underlined). Note that both (4a) and (4b) entails that Taroo ate an apple. In this respect, they are different from (4c), where only negation appears. Aoyagi & Ishii (1994) observe that a *-sika* NPI may co-occur with another NP which is modified by the *-sika* NPI, as in (5a) (modified NPs are put in boxes). As shown in (5b-d), their relative word order is relatively free. We will call sentences like (4b) *argumental -sika NPI constructions*, in which only argument *-sika* NPIs appear, and sentences like (5a-d), where modified NPs appear along with *-sika* NPIs, *adverbial -sika NPI constructions*, for ease of reference. Then, let us compare (6a) and (6b). (6a) involves the argumental *-sika* NPI constructions, and (6b) is a case of the adverbial *-sika* NPI constructions. Crucially, there is a significant contrast between (6a) and (6b). Furthermore, (6a) allows the sloppy reading, on a par with (1a). Note that the ungrammaticality of (6b) cannot be remedied if the second conjunct is changed so as to avoid awkwardness of repetition, as in (7).

**Discussion:** First, we argue that the contrast in (6) strengthens Kim's (1999) argument against the VP-ellipsis analysis. One of his strong arguments comes from the part-whole construction in Korean (cf. Yoon 1989) in (8), where *James-lul* is a whole-NP and *tali-lul* 'leg' is a part-NP. Kim observes that when the whole-NP is missing, as shown in (9b), the sloppy reading obtains. If the null object in (9b) is derived via VP-ellipsis, (9b) should have the structure in (10a), where both the part-NP and the V have been evacuated from the ellipsis site, i.e. VP. However, since the part-NP cannot be moved out of VP and precede the whole-NP, as in (11), the VP-ellipsis approach fails to capture the fact that (9b) has the sloppy reading. Then, Kim proposes that in languages like Korean and Japanese an argument NP can be directly elided via Argument Ellipsis, as in (10b). With this in mind, let us turn to the Japanese cases. As we have seen in (5), the relative order between a *-sika* NPI and a modified NP is relatively free. In particular, the fact that the *-sika* NPI can follow the modified NP, as in (5b), suggests that *-sika* NPIs can stay with in VP. Thus, the VP-ellipsis analysis predicts that *-sika* NPIs can be elided even in the adverbial *-sika* NPI constructions, since the structure like (12) should be available. This prediction, however, is not borne out, as we have seen in (6b) and (7). Moreover, the grammaticality of (6a) suggests that ellipsis of a *-sika* NPI is in principle possible. Hence, the VP-ellipsis approach fails to capture the ungrammaticality of (6b) and (7). Note that this argument is a contraposition to Kim's argument: In the case of the part-whole constructions in Korean, ellipsis is possible despite of the restricted word order, while in the case of the adverbial *-sika* NPI constructions in Japanese, ellipsis is *not* possible despite of the *non*-restricted word order. Hence, it completes Kim's argument.

Let us turn to the second point. The fact that a *-sika* NPI can be missing as in (6a) if it can be construed as an argument is unexpected under the null indefinite noun approach, because if the gap in the second conjunct of (6a) (repeated as (13a)) is replaced by an overt indefinite noun, the sentence degrades, as shown in (13b). In order to make the sentence perfect, *-sika* must be attached to the indefinite noun, as in (13c). However, if we extend the possible interpretations of null elements so as to include that of *-sika* NPI, it becomes impossible to capture the difference between (14a) and (14b). On the other hand, the Argument Ellipsis approach can explain the contrast found in (6a-b) without further complication. Observing that pure adjuncts cannot be subject to Argument Ellipsis, Oku (1998) proposes that Argument Ellipsis targets only arguments (see also Saito 2008 for further evidence). Then, it naturally follows that a *-sika* NPI can be elided if it is construed as an argument. Moreover, it also follows that the null element in (14b) cannot have the interpretation of a *-sika* NPI because there is no appropriate antecedent for licensing Argument Ellipsis.

To sum up, based on the observation regarding the behavior of *-sika* NPIs we have provided a support for the

general line of research against the VP-ellipsis analysis of the null argument phenomena, and in particular, argued that there is a case where the Argument Ellipsis approach is superior to the null indefinite noun approach.

- (1) a. Taroo-wa [zibun-no tegami-o] sute-ta-si, Hanako-mo [e] sute-ta  
 Taroo-Top self-Gen letter-Acc discard-Past-and Hanako-also discard-Past  
 '(lit.) Taroo discarded his (= Taroo's) letter, and Hanako also discarded [e] (= Hanako's letter)'  
 b. Taroo discarded his letter, and Hanako did [e], too ([e] = discard Hanako's letter)
- (2) a. [TP Hanako [<sub>VP</sub> self's letter <sub>VP</sub>] V+T] b. [TP Hanako [<sub>VP</sub> self's letter] V] T] c. [TP Hanako [<sub>VP</sub> e<sub>C</sub>indef V] T]
- (3) Taroo-wa [zibun-no tegami-o] sute-ta-si, Hanako-mo **tegami-o** sute-ta  
 Taroo-Top self-Gen letter-Acc discard-Past-and Hanako-also letter-Acc discard-Past  
 'Taroo discarded his letter, and Hanako also discarded **a letter**'
- (4) a. Taroo-ga ringo-o tabe-ta b. Taroo-ga ringo-sika \*tabe-ta<sup>ok</sup> tabe-nak-atta  
 Taroo-Nom apple-Acc eat-Past Taroo-Nom apple-only eat-Past/eat-Neg-Past  
 'Taroo ate an apple' 'Taroo ate only an apple'  
 c. Taroo-ga ringo-o tabe-nak-atta  
 Taroo-Nom apple-Acc eat-Neg-Past 'Taroo didn't eat an apple'
- (5) a. Taroo-ga ringo-sika kudamono-o tabe-nak-atta  
 Taroo-Nom apple-only fruits-Acc eat-Neg-Past '(lit.) Among fruits, Taroo ate only apples'  
 b. Taroo-ga kudamono-o ringo-sika tabe-nak-atta  
 c. Kudamono-o Taroo-ga ringo-sika tabe-nak-atta  
 d. Ringo-sika Taroo-ga kudamono-o tabe-nak-atta
- (6) a. Taroo-wa zibun-no ringo-sika tabe-nak-atta-si, Hanako-mo [e] tabe-nak-atta  
 Taroo-Top self-Gen apple-only eat-Neg-Past-and Hanako-also eat-Neg-Past  
 '(lit.) Taroo ate only his (= Taroo's) apple, and Hanako also ate [e] (= only Hanako's apple)'  
 b. \*Taroo-wa zibun-no ringo-sika kudamono-o tabe-nak-atta-si,  
 Taroo-Top self-Gen apple-only fruits-Acc eat-Neg-Past-and  
 Hanako-mo [e] kudamono-o tabe-nak-atta  
 Hanako-also fruits-Acc eat-Neg-Past  
 '(intended) Among fruits, Taroo ate only his apples; among fruits, Hanako also ate only her apples'
- (7) \*Taroo-wa ringo-sika hana-o ura-nak-atta-si, Hanako-mo [e] tane-o kaw-anak-atta  
 Taroo-Top apple-only flower-Acc sell-Neg-Past-and Hanako-also seed-Acc buy-Neg-Past  
 '(intended) Among flowers, Taroo sold only apples, and among seeds, Hanako bought only apples'
- (8) Mike-nun James-lul tali-lul ketecha-ss-ta  
 Mike-Top James-Acc leg-Acc kick-Past-Ind 'Mike kicked James on the leg'
- (9) a. Jerry-nun [caki-uy ai]-lul phal-ul ttayli-ess-ta  
 Jerry-Top self-Gen child-Acc arm-Acc hit-Past-Ind 'Jerry hit his child on the arm'  
 b. Kulena Sally-num [e] tali-ul ttayli-ess-ta  
 but Sally-Top arm-Acc hit-Past-Ind '(lit.) But Sally hit [e] (= Sally's child) on the leg'
- (10) a. [TP Subj part-NP<sub>i</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> whole NP<sub>i</sub> <sub>VP</sub>] V+T] b. [TP Subj [<sub>VP</sub> whole NP] part-NP V] T]
- (11) \*Sally-num tali-uli [caki-uy ai]-lul ttayli-ess-ta  
 Sally-Top leg-Acc self-Gen child-Acc hit-Past-Ind 'Sally hit her child on the leg'
- (12) [TP Subj Obj<sub>i</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> sika NPI<sub>i</sub> <sub>VP</sub>] V+T+Neg]
- (13) a. Taroo-wa zibun-no ringo-sika tabe-nak-atta-si, Hanako-mo [e] tabe-nak-atta  
 Taroo-Top self-Gen apple-only eat-Neg-Past-and Hanako-also eat-Neg-Past  
 '(lit.) Taroo ate only his (= Taroo's) apple, and Hanako also ate [e] (= only Hanako's apple)'  
 b. ?\*Taroo-wa zibun-no ringo-sika tabe-nak-atta-si, Hanako-mo **ringo-o** tabe-nak-atta  
 Taroo-Top self-Gen apple-only eat-Neg-Past-and Hanako-also apple-Acc eat-Neg-Past  
 '(lit.) Taroo ate only his apple, and Hanako also didn't eat an apple'  
 c. Taroo-wa zibun-no ringo-sika tabe-nak-atta-si, Hanako-mo ringo-sika tabe-nak-atta  
 Taroo-Top self-Gen apple-only eat-Neg-Past-and Hanako-also apple-only eat-Neg-Past  
 '(lit.) Taroo ate only his apple, and Hanako also ate only an apple'
- (14) a. Taroo-wa sore/ringo-sika tabe-nak-atta b. Taroo-wa [e] tabe-nak-atta  
 Taroo-Top it.apple-only eat-Neg-Past Taroo-Top eat-Neg-Past  
 'Taroo ate only it/an apple' '(lit.) Taroo didn't eat [e] (= it)'

**Selected References:** Aoyagi, H. & T. Ishii (1994) On NPI Licensing in Japanese, *Japanese/Korean Linguistics* 4, 295-311. | Hoji, H. (1998) Null Objects and Sloppy Identity in Japanese, *LI* 29, 127-152. | Kim, S.-W. (1999) Sloppy/strict Identity, Empty Objects, and NP Ellipsis, *JEAL* 8, 255-284. | Oku, S. (1998) *A Theory of Selection and Reconstruction in the Minimalist Program*, Ph.D. dissertation., University of Connecticut. | Otani, K. & J. Whitman (1991) V-raising and VP-ellipsis, *LI* 22, 345-358.