

5. CONCLUSIONS

The first half of this dissertation focuses on earlier approaches to grammar and some of the key concepts that are commonly used to this day. From traditional grammar originate the terms *transitivity*, *subject* and *object* that are used to account for verb classification and to describe a variety of grammatical phenomena including discourse considerations. These basic concepts, although defined differently, are employed also in structuralist and Chomskyan frameworks. A fundamental problem, however, is that this inventory of concepts is biased towards Indo-European languages. A comparison of English, Korean, and Chinese showed that the notions do not appear to be equally significant in the three languages. Another difficulty was how to define these key concepts in the first place. In each language they also seem to vary greatly in their significance.

Chapter 3 demonstrates that transitivity, no matter how it is defined, does not constitute an adequate basis for verb classification in either Korean or Chinese. Transitivity does not explain case marking phenomena, it is not related to grammatical processes like the passive, and does not coincide with a major distinction in verbal behavior. A more fundamental distinction in Korean and Chinese is the one between ordinary verbs and adjectival verbs. But even the two classifications combined do not suffice to answer questions concerning verbal behaviour.

The grammatical relations subject and object are problematic in both of the East-Asian languages. In Korean, there is no straightforward correlation between case marking and grammatical relations. The nominative case is used also for other purposes than marking subjects. Similarly, the accusative case can be attached to NPs that do not seem to be objects. Moreover, there can be simultaneously more than one nominative or accusative NP in the clause. Grammatical tests, like passivization, fail to sort out the marking phenomena. In Chinese, which does not use case marking, it is difficult to find *any* kind of syntactic criteria for defining what constitutes the subject of a clause. Objects are equally difficult to pin down. Compared to English, Chinese exhibits a stronger tendency to treat a range of complements in a way that resembles subjects and direct objects. One of the difficulties, therefore, when applying traditional Western grammatical relations to East-Asian languages is the lack of criteria: How can one discover what constitutes the notions of subject and object in these languages? Another problem is that grammat-

ical relations alone cannot account for sentence structure. A distinct notion of topic is needed to describe the so-called double-subject (topic-comment) sentences. These cannot be easily accommodated in any of the approaches discussed in Chapter 3.

A further problem in earlier approaches is that they do not recognize that structures and marking phenomena simultaneously play more than one role. On the one hand, they serve to indicate relationships between elements within clauses; on the other, they are signals that help to anticipate the overall structure of the whole text as it unfolds clause by clause, sentence by sentence. In general, the models discussed in Chapter 3 do not address questions like: What is the monitored concept in discourse and what are the mechanisms for clarifying participant reference? In English the traditional concept of subject can handle this fairly well as tracing back in discourse goes from subject to subject. In Korean this concept fails to explain the mechanism for antecedent identification. In Chinese topic rather than subject seems to be the crucial notion.

Besides formal models, Chapter 3 also discusses case grammar, that is, a semantic theory of verbs and their arguments. Compared to traditional and early Chomskyan approaches, case grammar can better capture various senses of a given verb. It also contains a simple system of derivation that provides an understanding of some of the crucial meaning components that account for differences in verbal behavior. Yet case grammar does not penetrate deep enough into predicate semantics and, hence, can only make a part of the relevant distinctions. Another problem is that the criteria are not clear enough and leave room for arbitrary decisions. As case grammar is not a full grammar, discourse-level considerations are out of its scope.

In short, earlier approaches to grammar seem to account fairly well for grammatical phenomena in English, but fail to do so in Korean and in Chinese. To solve the kinds of problems raised in the first half, the second half of the dissertation is devoted to Role and Reference Grammar. The model is chosen because it is functional, comprehensive, data-oriented, and has been developed with the explicit goal of providing a framework field linguists could use to write grammars. Predicate classification, grammatical relations, and participant reference in discourse in Korean and in Chinese are studied from the RRG perspective.

The analysis is based on texts simulating the type of situation a field linguist faces when studying a perhaps little known language. One of the first tasks, therefore, is to break sentences into clauses and to chart them. An important aid is a tape recording of the texts. Helpful in Korean, the role of phonology is crucial in Chinese, a language that seems to rely on it heavily both for discourse structuring as well as for sentence- and clause-internal structuring.

Making clause breaks proved to be problematic both in Korean and in Chinese. The main reasons are the frequent use of zero pronouns and the tendency to verb chaining. In Korean the analyst needs to decide whether a clause-final verb chain without NPs is a complex predicate or an instance of minimal clauses. In Chinese the lack of conjunctions or other explicit markers raises the question of the relationship between the conjoined parts. The RRG theory of juncture helps to sort out these problems. Clause breaks are made where there is a clausal juncture, whereas core or nuclear junctures do not warrant a clause break.

The RRG system of predicate classification is based on semantic decomposition. This provides a basis for fine-graded distinctions in predicate meaning. The Aktionsart classification gives an understanding of the verb's syntactic behavior and combinatory properties. The basic classes are states, activities, achievements, and accomplishments (two different types). Each of these classes can have a causative counterpart. The logical structures account for further differences within one and the same group. It is, for example, possible to distinguish between different types of states, such as locative states, attributive states, or states expressing emotions. In Korean, the logical structures can account for the difference between the so-called descriptive verbs and action verbs. In Chinese, it turned out that there seem to be two types of achievements. Besides accomplishments that go back to either a state or an activity, achievements in Chinese appear to have these two options too. The predicates in question are so-called resultative compounds where the second verb is punctual (achievement). As verb compounds and punctual verbs seem to be common in the East-Asian languages, the two types of achievements might be present also in other languages in the same language area.

For a field worker who is not a native speaker of the target language, one of the benefits of RRG are the criteria for predicate classification. There is a set of tests that, conducted with a mother-tongue speaker, reveal the Aktionsart of a particular verb. This is important as languages may differ in what are the meaning components entailed by a given verb. A number of verbs which are durative in English, are punctual in Korean or in Chinese. Consequently, also the combinatory properties of these "equivalent" verbs are different in the languages. A problem with the tests, however, was that only half of the predicates yielded completely straightforward results. One reason could be that the tests need further language-specific adaptations. In Korean, there were problems with the tests aimed at revealing static and dynamic predicates. In Chinese, accomplishments are known as a group that does not yield the expected answers. The problem was attested in my data too.

The theory of grammatical relations in RRG is rather different in from earlier approaches. The semantic characteristics of subject and object are handled with the concepts of core argument and the two macroroles, actor and undergoer. The

surface marking of them is accounted for by the distinction between direct and oblique core arguments. This solves many of the marking-related problems discussed in the first half of the study, such as accusatively marked NPs in Korean which are not semantic undergoers, or sentence-initial NPs in Chinese which are not subjects. The approach also settles the issue of transitivity which can be defined in terms of the number of macroroles a verb takes.

The theory provides criteria for distinguishing between semantic, grammatical, and pragmatic relations. The Korean data illustrates a language where some constructions are semantically constrained whereas others are syntactically constrained. Chinese, in contrast, seems to rely on pragmatic relations. As the theory does not assume that every language necessarily has grammatical relations, it gives a better starting point for studying the crucial in a given language.

The RRG theory also contains a characterization of basic reference tracking mechanisms that are commonly found in the world's languages. One language can employ more than one of the systems. Korean was found to use, at least partially, a switch-reference type of system. It also appears to monitor the semantic macroroles. An additional device is honorific agreement. In Chinese, tracing back in discourse seems to go back to topics and, outside the theme line, to a focal NP.

A discussion on topics is based on the RRG theory of the layered structure of the clause. The clause consists of a core and a periphery. A language may also have extra core slots. The precore slot is outside the core but within the clause, while the left-detached position is outside the clause but within the sentence. Both Korean and Chinese are found to have these extra core slots. My treatment of the extra core slots, however, differs somewhat from previous RRG analyses. I do not assume that an NP is moved to the left-detached position simply by virtue of being the topic. This is because such an analysis runs into problems when a topic has one or more elements on its left side. The syntactic charts did not give evidence that a topic necessarily moves anywhere from its normal position. Nor, in most cases, did the phonological analysis indicate a break between the topic and the rest of the clause. In topic-comment structures, where the core argument positions are all filled, the topic is assumed to be in the precore slot unless there is clear evidence that it has moved to the left-detached position. This analysis accounts for the data and is in harmony with syntactic and phonological evidence. In contrast, assuming that topics move by default leads to a number of complications.

The examination of RRG as applied to East-Asian languages is concluded with notes on Japanese. The section gives a brief comparison of Korean and Japanese and the applicability of the approach in Japanese. More evidence was found for an analysis of the precore slot and the left-detached position in terms that are somewhat different from previous RRG accounts on Japanese and Korean.

In conclusion, Role and Reference Grammar could account for most of the kinds of problems raised in the first half of the dissertation. It also provides means for organizing one's ongoing research into a language. There were, however, problems in some areas, especially in adapting the tests or conducting the tests in practice. More work is therefore called for in the area of further developing methods for using it in fieldwork.

