

# Undirected/Directed-Utterance Sequences in Japanese, Korean, and English: A Contrastive Analysis

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## 1 Introduction

This study casts light on intriguing diversities in Japanese, Korean, and English, with special reference to consecutive utterances where a monologic (undirected or self-directed) utterance is immediately followed by a directed (other-directed) utterance. Korean exhibits greater morphosyntactic similarities to Japanese than to English. However, in sequential utterances shifting from monologic to other-directed, Korean displays behavior more analogous to English than to Japanese.

We examine ‘undirected’, ‘other-directed’, and ‘self-directed’ utterances in the three languages and argue that the differences observed between the three languages reflect the distinct speech modes employed by each language. Undirected utterances do not necessarily presuppose a speaker in absolute solitude; they are not intended to be imparted to anyone, regardless of the presence of overhearers. On the other hand, directed speech is either addressed to someone else or to the

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speaker themselves. The former type is characterized as ‘other-directed’, while the latter type is characterized as ‘self-directed’.

## 2 Different Manifestation

This section examines monologic (undirected or self-directed) and other-directed utterances in succession in English, Korean, and Japanese. As an example, suppose that after having practiced shooting arrows at a faraway target, an archer began hitting closer to the target. The archer may utter, as in (1a), without directing his utterance to anyone else (monologic). Then, wanting to share his pleasure with his coach nearby, he may subsequently direct his next utterance to the coach, as in (1b) (other-directed). English allows him to simply repeat the same form *I’m starting to get the hang of it*, with or without an interjection.

### (1) MONOLOGIC (UNDIRECTED/SELF-DIRECTED)

a. (Hah/Wow/Yes,) I’m starting to get the hang of it.

#### OTHER-DIRECTED

b. (You know/Look/Hey,) I’m starting to get the hang of it.

In contrast, Korean and Japanese both often make a formal distinction between monologic (undirected/self-directed) and other-directed speech, as illustrated in (2) and (3), respectively. In Korean, undirected/self-directed utterance (2a), unlike other-directed utterance (2b), begins with an interjection that expresses a spontaneous reaction. Furthermore, other-directed utterance (2b) differs from the preceding undirected/self-directed utterance of (2a) in the choice of sentence ender: *-eyo[supnita]/-eoyo[seubnida]*.<sup>1</sup>

### (2) MONOLOGIC (UNDIRECTED/SELF-DIRECTED)

a. *A, incey com alkeyss-ta.*

*A, inje jom algess-da.*

INTJ now a.bit know-LEAST.POLITE

‘I’m starting to get the hang of it.’

#### OTHER-DIRECTED

b. *Incey com alkeyss-eyo[supnita].*

*Inje jom algess-eoyo[seubnida].*

now a.bit know-POLITE[POLITEST]

‘I’m starting to get the hang of it.’

Likewise, Japanese undirected utterance (3a), which is also initiated with an interjection indicating a spontaneous reaction, differs from the following other-directed utterance (3b). The second utterance of (3b) also features the additional morphosyntactic component *-mitai-desu* in its predicate.

<sup>1</sup> In this paper, Korean examples are romanized in two ways: the Yale system (so as to maintain consistency with the conventions of this volume), and an alternative system employed for the purpose of facilitating articulation and holistically dynamic glossing. The abbreviations used in the glosses are as follows: ADN = adnominal; EVD = evidential, FP = final particle; INTJ = interjection; NOM = nominative; PROG = progressive; Q = question; and TOP = topic.

(3) **MONOLOGIC (UNDIRECTED)**

- a. *A, dandan wakatte-kita.*  
 INTJ gradually understand:and-came  
 ‘I’m starting to get the hang of it.’

**OTHER-DIRECTED**

- b. (*Watasi*) *dandan (kotu-ga) wakatte-kita-mitai-desu.*  
 (I) gradually (hang-NOM) understand:and-came-EVD-be.POLITE  
 ‘I’m starting to get the hang of it.’

However, Korean manifests a striking contrast to Japanese in allowing for the repetition of the same form, as observed in (5). Imagine that a professor has been painstakingly marking a vast number of entrance exam papers with intense focus for hours. She may unintentionally voice her fatigue, as in (4a), and then, in turn, may indicate her desire for a break to a nearby colleague or one of her close friends, as in (4b). In this context, Korean, as well as English, allows for a simple repetition of the same utterance, as in (5).<sup>2</sup>

(4) **MONOLOGIC (UNDIRECTED/SELF-DIRECTED)**

- a. Ah, I’m tired!

**OTHER-DIRECTED**

- b. Ah, I’m tired!

(5) **MONOLOGIC (UNDIRECTED/SELF-DIRECTED)**

- a. *Com phikonha-ney.*  
*Jom pigonha-ne.*  
 a.bit be.tired-FP  
 ‘I feel a little tired!’

**OTHER-DIRECTED**

- b. *Com phikonha-ney.*  
*Jom pigonha-ne.*  
 a.bit be.tired-FP  
 ‘I feel a little tired!’

In contrast, in Japanese, simply repeating (6a) in the same sequence of utterances ends up as infelicitous or, at least, abrupt directed speech. Japanese allows neither (6a) to appear as the second utterance (directed) nor (6b) to occur as the first utterance (undirected).

(6) **MONOLOGIC (UNDIRECTED)**

- a. *Tyotto tukareta-na.*  
 a.little was.tired-FP  
 ‘I feel a little tired!’

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<sup>2</sup> Some first language speakers of Korean might find it more reasonable to regard (5a) as self-directed, and the comparable utterance *Haa, pigonhada* as undirected.

**OTHER-DIRECTED**

- b. *Tyotto tukareta-yo[mitai].*  
 a. little was.tired-FP[EVD]  
 ‘I feel a little tired!’

In summary, Japanese and Korean are grouped together, apart from English, in that the two languages conventionally employ some distinct prepatterned or prefabricated expressions (Barlow 2000) for utterances directed to a coach (i.e. (1)–(3)).<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Japanese contrasts with both Korean and English in that it adopts distinct prepatterned or prefabricated expressions for monologic utterances and utterances directed to a close friend (i.e. (4)–(6)), disallowing the simple repetition of the first utterance.

This suggests that the formal distinction observed between (3a) and (3b) in Japanese is somewhat different from the apparently comparable distinction between (2a) and (2b) in Korean. The distinction observed between (3a) and (3b), as well as (6a) and (6b), in Japanese pertains to the distinction between undirected and directed speech. It is worth noting that Hasegawa (2006: 145) insightfully points out that ‘the soliloquy mode of discourse has been grammaticized in Japanese, but not in English’. On the other hand, the formal difference between (2a) and (2b) in Korean should be viewed as reflecting the status distinction of the speech participants involved (i.e. honorific system). Korean displays a formal distinction when the person being addressed is not equal in status to the speaker, adopting sentence enders that convey appropriate honorific implications. However, it does not necessarily exhibit a formal distinction when the person being addressed is very familiar or close to the speaker.

We have observed that Japanese substantially differs from English and Korean in that it consistently distinguishes between undirected and directed speech. This view is compatible with a comparative observation of second-person self-reference in self-directed speech across the three languages.

### 3 Pronominal Manifestations of a Speaker in Self-Directed Speech

This section examines pronominal manifestations of a monologic speaker in English, Korean, and Japanese. Japanese exhibits a sharp contrast with English and Korean in terms of pronominal referencing in self-directed monologic speech (Koguma et al. 2020). In English and Korean, second-person self-reference is commonly available in two types of self-directed monologic speech: self-blame and self-encouragement. In contrast, Japanese hardly allows second-person pronouns to refer to the speaker themselves.

In self-blame utterances, when a speaker does something wrong and feels embarrassed, English speakers may say (7b) with the second-person subject *you*, as well as (7a) with the first-person subject *I*. Similarly, Korean speakers can utter not only (8a) with the first-person subject *na* ‘I’ but also (8b) with the second-person subject *ne/neo* ‘you’. In contrast, Japanese disallows or disfavors

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<sup>3</sup> The relevant distinction is encoded by some prepatterned or prefabricated expressions (Barlow 2000): utterance forms such as Japanese ‘interjections’, ‘adverbs’, ‘aspect/evidentiality’ markers, and ‘final particles’, in Shibatani’s (1990) and Teramura’s (1984) terms, and Korean ‘interjections’, ‘adverbs’, and six speech levels of ‘sentence enders’ expressing various degrees of (un)friendliness and (im)politeness, in Sohn’s (1999) terms.

such a second-person self-reference. (9b) with the second-person subject *omae* ‘you’ is unacceptable or infelicitous when referring to the monologic speaker.<sup>4</sup>

(7) SELF-BLAME (SELF-DIRECTED)

- a. What the heck am **I** doing?
- b. What the heck are **you** doing? (Koguma et al. 2020: 169)

(8) SELF-BLAME (SELF-DIRECTED)

- a. *Na mwe ha-nun ke-ci?*  
*Na mweo ha-neun geo-ji?*  
 I what do-ADN thing-Q  
 ‘What the heck am **I** doing?’
- b. *Ne mwe ha-nun ke-ni?*  
*Neo mweo ha-neun geo-ni?*  
 You what do-ADN thing-Q  
 ‘What the heck are **you** doing?’ (adapted from Koguma et al. 2020: 169)

(9) SELF-BLAME (SELF-DIRECTED)

- a. *Ore nani yattendaroo?*  
 I<sub>masc</sub> what do:PROG:EVD:will  
 ‘What the heck am **I** doing?’
- b. ??*Omae nani yattenda-yo?*  
 You what do:PROG:EVD-FP  
 ‘What the heck are **you** doing?’ (Koguma et al. 2020: 169)

In self-encouragement utterances, English and Korean both allow for second-person self-reference in addition to first-person self-reference, as in (10) and (11). In contrast, Japanese hardly allows for second-person self-reference, exhibiting a persistent adherence to first-person self-reference. Substituting the second-person subject *omae* ‘you’ for the first-person subject *ore* ‘I’ renders the utterance infelicitous as self-talk, as illustrated in (12).

(10) SELF-ENCOURAGEMENT (SELF-DIRECTED)

- a. **I** can do it!
- b. **You** can do it! (Koguma et al. 2020: 170)

(11) SELF-ENCOURAGEMENT (SELF-DIRECTED)

- a. *Na-(nu)n ha-lswuisse!*  
*Na-(neu)n ha-lsuisseo!*  
 I-TOP do-can  
 ‘I can do it!’

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<sup>4</sup> The inappropriateness observed in (9b) cannot be attributed to the potential for an offensive connotation associated with Japanese second-person pronouns (cf. Takubo 1997). The second-person pronoun *omae* ‘you’ is commonly employed when speakers blame or encourage another individual, their addressee.

- b. *Ne-(nu)n ha-lswuisse!*  
*Neo-(neu)n ha-lsuisseo!*  
 You-TOP do-can  
 ‘You can do it!’ (ibid.)

## (12) SELF-ENCOURAGEMENT (SELF-DIRECTED)

- a. *Ore-nara dekiru!*  
 I<sub>masc</sub> be.if can(.do.it)  
 ‘I can do it!’
- b. *??Omae-nara dekiru!*  
 You-be.if can(.do.it)  
 ‘You can do it!’ (ibid.)

Table 1 summarizes the relevant behaviors observed between the three languages. Regarding other-directed speech, Korean allows for simple repetition of the relevant consecutive utterances when addressing a peer, as observed in (5). In light of this, Japanese contrasts sharply with both Korean and English in that it does not permit such simple repetition, as shown in (3) and (6). Therefore, it is reasonable to characterize Japanese as inherently distinguishing between other-directed and monologic speech, and adopting some appropriate prepatterned or prefabricated expressions accordingly.

	Other-directed		Self-directed	
	to a coach	to a friend	BLAME	Encouragement
	Simple repetition	Simple repetition	Second-person self-reference	Second-person self-reference
English	possible (1)	possible (4)	possible (7b)	possible (10b)
Korean	impossible (2)	possible (5)	possible (8b)	possible (11b)
Japanese	impossible (3)	impossible (6)	difficult (9b)	difficult (12b)

Table 1: Observed Differences Among English, Korean, and Japanese

With respect to second-person self-reference, Japanese exhibits a stark contrast to the other two languages in its persistent adherence to first-person self-reference in both self-blame and self-encouragement, as in (9b) and (12b), respectively. Japanese prevents or deters second-person pronouns from referring to the monologic speaker, because Japanese speakers are least likely to regard themselves as addressees in monologic speech for one reason or another.

## 4 Conclusion

This paper has explored diverse morphosyntactic manifestations of monologic speech in Japanese, Korean, and English, with a particular focus on the transition from monologic utterances to other-directed utterances. It has revealed that, unlike English and Korean, Japanese consistently encodes monologic speech in some prepatterned or prefabricated expressions distinct from the corresponding interactional speech. As Koguma et al. (2020) have shown, Japanese exhibits another notable difference from the two other languages with respect to pronominal self-reference in two types of monologic speech: self-blame and self-encouragement. Second-person self-reference is not readily

available in Japanese. We pointed out that Japanese could be best characterized as inherently distinguishing between other-directed speech and monologic speech (i.e. undirected and self-directed speech) and requiring speakers to employ particular morphosyntactic prepatterned or prefabricated expressions accordingly. This is quite compatible with Hasegawa's (2006) view that, unlike English, Japanese has grammaticalized the soliloquy mode of discourse. We further argued that monologic speakers both in Korean and English can regard themselves as addressees, while those in Japanese are conventionally reluctant to exploit such a speech event construal for reasons that need to be clarified in further studies.

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