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A Morphologic Contrast on Korean and Chinese Third-Person Pronouns

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to contrast the morphologic characteristics of Korean and Chinese third-person pronouns, and then to consider the similarities and differentiae of them through the perspectives of contrastive linguistics. Before the contrast, we made the analysis of preceding researches, and made them can be the contrasted objects by systemizing the analysis of preceding researches. After that, we analyzed their morphologic features through analyzing many example sentences. In addition, the contrastive analysis of them was made to identify the similarities and differentiae of their usages. From the morphologic viewpoints, whether the modification occurs or not was the point; from the syntactic viewpoints, the components of sentence and the grammatical usages were the main points. When the meaning of respecting turns up, Korean third-person pronouns have modifications, and Chinese third-person pronouns can achieve it through the change of syntactic structure.

Keywords: Contrastive study; third-person pronouns; morphologic change; honorific forms;

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to contrast the morphologic features of Korean and Chinese third-person pronouns, and then to consider the similarities and differentiae of them through the perspectives of contrastive linguistics. Based on this result that we got can provide much help of the learning and using of these third-person pronouns for Korean-studying Chinese students and Chinese-studying Korean students. Pronoun is an important grammar element in both Korean and Chinese; and the usages of it in these two languages are different. As we know that Korean and Chinese are belonging to the different language families. Korean is an agglutinative language; and Chinese is an isolating language. That's the reason these two languages have many dissimilar features.

Generally speaking, the third-person pronouns are using very frequently in English, not just in the daily life, but also in the written language. How about the situation in Korean and Chinese? In Korean, they are not that using frequently, actually they are using very rarely in the daily life. We only can find them in the novels, poetries or songs at most time. In Chinese, they are using very frequently in the daily life and the written language. Therefore, for Korean-studying Chinese students, it's extremely difficult to master how to use Korean third-person pronouns correctly.

2. The review of previous studies

The studies about Korean third-person pronouns were not great many. Strictly speaking, the studies about the Korean pronouns were numerous, but about the third-person pronouns were small in quantity. The reason can be summed up as that the classification of pronouns is mightily distinct from different scholars and the definition of third-pronouns is highly dissimilar as well. In other words, we only can obtain a relatively universally accepted definition and classification about Korean third-person pronouns, but not completely accepted one. It means that the first step of this study should be reorganizing Korean third-person pronouns under the contrastive linguistics. Only in this way can the Korean and Chinese third-person pronouns be contrasted with each other under the same grammatical background.

Let's reorganize the Korean third-person pronouns first. We reorganize it in two aspects. One is the definition, and the other is the classification. For reorganizing the definition of Korean third-person pronouns and their classification, we will contemplate two kinds of standpoint, namely from the traditional grammatical standpoint and the western linguistic standpoint. The representative scholar of traditional grammatical standpoint is Choi, (1937/1961); and the representative scholars of western linguistic are Lee & Lim, (1983), Nam & Ko, (1985/1993), Lee & Lee, (1994), Kim, (1995/1997) and Seo, (1996). These researches will be considered in this paragraph. In Choi, (1937/1961), the definition of Korean pronoun was made first, and the classification of Korean pronouns was built. According to his book, the Korean pronouns were divided into 4 sub-classifications as first-person, second-person, third-person and extensively indicating. The definition of third-person pronouns could be reorganized as "pointing to the person, object, thing, place, or direction in the speech". In Choi's view, not only the person, but also the other things like inanimate objects like thing, place or direction etc. are belonging to the third-person pronouns. Then Choi believes that the third-person pronouns can be classified as 2 kinds, namely definitely indicating and indefinitely indicating. How to distinguish these two kinds? It's on the basis of the necessary of pointing out the object. If the object is indicating directly, and it's the definitely indicating; otherwise, it's indefinitely indicating. As coming to modern time, the western linguistic theories has been spreading to the across the world. Of course, it has been spreading to the linguistic of Korean, and it's spreading now. To be sure, a great deal of Korean scholars is influenced by them.

About Chinese pronoun and third-person pronoun, it's similar with Korean, which can be analyzed with traditional grammar and western linguistics. On the contrary, the views of Chinese third-person

pronoun are varied, but it still can be reorganized. Let's look at the Table 2. which it's reorganized about 2 typical viewpoints.

To sum up the previous reorganization and take account of contrast, the conclusion here is as Table 3. below. This paper claims that Korean third-person pronouns undertake Kim, (1995, 1997), and Chinese third-person pronouns undertake Liu, Pan & Gu, (2001).

Table 1. Choi's system of Korean third-person pronouns.

Third-person pronoun	Indicant	The necessary of pointing out the object
	Person	Definitely indicating
	Object Thing Place	Indefinitely indicating
	Direction	

Table 2. The reorganization of Chinese third-person pronouns.

Scholars	Linguistic theories	Definition	Classification	Words
Li, Thompson, (1981)	& Traditional grammar & western linguistic	Refers to an entity whose identity is already established before	Person and object	ta(他), ta(它)
Liu, Pan & Gu, (2004)	Traditional grammar & western linguistic	Refers to the person or object beyond the both sides of discourse	Person and object	ta(他), ta(它) and etc.

Table 3. The research objects.

Korean third-person pronouns	Chinese third-person pronouns	English third-person pronouns
geu	ta	he
geunyeo	ta	she
igeot, geugeot, jeogeot/l, geu, jeo	ta	It
geu/geunyeo etc+ deul	ta+men	they
	Other expressions: bieren, renjia	

3. The morphologic contrast of KOR & CHN third-person pronouns

For contrasting Korean and Chinese third-person pronouns under morphologic perspectives, we should observe from the Korean morphologic characteristics and then find the morphologic features of Korean third-person pronouns.

3.1. Morphologic change

As we know, the usages of postpositions are very developed in Korean, and the postpositions are combined with substantives in sentences. Indeed, pronoun is one of the substantive. That's to say, the third-person pronouns are combined with postpositions in the same way. Sometimes the morphologic change of third-person pronoun and postposition is not occurred. However, they are occurred in some specific situations. Let's see the concrete examples.

(1) 동석은 그녀의 이름을 불렀다.

Dongseok-eun geunyeo-ui ireum-eul bulreossda.
Dongseok-PR she-GC name-ACC call-PST-DECL
Dongseok called her name.

(2) 그 애가 내 친구의 동생이다.

geuae-ga nae chingu-ui dongsaengida.
That person-NOM my friend-GC sister/brother-PM-DECL
That person is my friend's sister/brother.

The example (1) shows the non-morphologic change, and the (2) shows that *geuae* can change to other forms like *geu i*, *geu saram* etc. *geunyeo* is just like 'she' in English, and its form is extremely constant; and the forms of third-person pronouns like *geuae* which is the combination of demonstrative determiner and dependent noun are easily changed to other similar form. In addition, the abbreviation of it can be found in spoken Korean as '*gyae*(가이)'. Basically in Chinese, there is no morphologic change. However, there is a special case like 'de(的)' which is structural word in Chinese. When third-person combines de to show the meaning of 'his', the usage is the same as Korean third-person.

(3) his-- geu ui(그의)

ta de(他的)

In (3), both *geu* and *ta* are third-person pronouns, and *ui* and *de* are the semantic mark showing the meaning of possession. In this point, Korean and Chinese third-person pronouns are highly similar. Furthermore, the plural forms of third-person pronouns are similar.

(4) Korean mark of plural form: 'deul(들)'

Chinese mark of plural form: 'men(们)'

As (4), the plural form of these two language is that the third-person pronouns are combining respective the marks of plural forms. By all accounts, we can make a contrast form of morphologic characteristics.

Table 4. The morphologic contrast of third-person pronouns.

Third-person pronouns (Kor – Chn)	Morphologic change(Korean)	Morphologic change(Chinese)
geu - ta	X	X
geunyeo - ta	X	X
igeot, geugeot, jeogeot/l, geu, jeo - ta	O	X
Plural-deul - men	O	O
X - other expressions	-	X

3.2. The honorific forms

In oriental culture, the honorific forms are used very frequently when people mention the senior citizen, superiors or the elders. Both in Korean and Chinese, it hardly uses the third-person pronouns to show the respect. The proper nouns like name, job title, words that can show somebody's social status can be utilized in these circumstances. In this regard, Korean and Chinese third-person pronouns are analogous. On the other hand, we also can observe the differences. To take a case in this point, let's see the examples below.

(5) 爷爷的手艺很好, 大家都喜欢爷爷做的面包.

yeyede shouyi hen hao, dajia dou xihuan yeye zuode mianbao.
grandpa-GC skill very good, everybody all like grandpa make-PST bread
Grandpa is very good at baking, and everybody likes his bread.

(6) 할아버지께서 요리솜씨가 좋으시고 다들 할아버지가 만드신 빵을 좋아한다.

halahbeojikkaeseo yorisomssika joeusiko dadeul halahbeojika mandeusin bbangeul joahanda.
grandpa-HON cooking skill-NOM good-HON-PROG everybody grandpa-NOM make-HON-PST bread-ACC
like-PRES-DECL
Grandpa is very good at baking, and everybody likes his bread.

The example (5) and (6) has the same meaning. Both in (5) and (6), no third-person pronouns are used, but the address form "grandpa". In (5), it should be 'his' in English; however, it's "grandpa make-PST" in Chinese, which emphasizes the bread that is made by grandpa is likeable. "grandpa make-PST" as an honorific form here shows the respect to the grandpa. In (6), we can see that not only the word grandpa, but also the complete honorific system. We can see the honorific marker *kkaeseo* after the word grandpa, the honorific pre-final ending *si*, which is after the word stem to show the respect.

As a result, both Korean and Chinese third-pronouns are not using for showing the respect. In Chinese the address form of word is using to express the respect mildly and roundaboutly. It's a simple syntactic form. By contrast, in Korean not just the address form, we also can consider the honorific marker *kkaeseo* and the honorific pre-final ending *si*, which means that it's a complete morphologic and syntactic form.

4. Conclusion

This paper contrasted Korean and Chinese third-person pronouns and considered the similarities and differences drawing on the contrast of morphologic perspectives. By analyzing the similarities and differences of these two third-person pronouns, it makes an attempt to show that as two languages from the oriental culture area, their third-person pronouns share many morphologic and pragmatic characteristics, nevertheless, the usages of them are mightily different. They have many differences on morphologic characteristics. For showing the honorific form, it's unlikely that both the two third-person pronouns are used; and the specific usages have their certain characteristics.

Additionally, this paper hardly takes a critical view of the third-person pronouns, but focuses on the contrast of them. It can be thought as a limitation. Therefore, for the proper criticalness and the higher reliability and objectivity, it's hoped that observing and analyzing the third-person pronouns with corpus, especially the parallel corpus like Korean-Chinese or Chinese-Korean in the future work.

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