



# A Study of Chinese-Japanese Translation of Cleft Sentences: Examining Cleft Sentences and "noda" Sentences in the Translated Text

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## Abstract

In the same context, Japanese and Chinese may choose different sentence forms in the process of mutual translation. This study analyzes the translation preferences of cleft sentences, non-cleft sentences and "noda" sentences in translations by using the Chinese-Japanese Parallel Corpus. In addition to the Japanese "nowa...da" sentence, the Chinese "...De Shi..." cleft sentence can also be translated into Japanese as the "noda" sentence, which is often used at the end of the text. Japanese cleft sentences and "noda" sentences are related semantically and functionally.

## Keywords

Cleft sentences, Japanese, Translation, Chinese

## 1. Introduction

Cleft sentences are used to establish the focus of information by putting an element into a specific sentence to formalize it and make the focus of information clearer (Dong, 2003; Liu, 2006). Such cleft sentences, which are used to emphasize, can be found in Japanese and Chinese. For example, the structure of Japanese sentence "kinoukita no waLisan da." and the Chinese sentence "Zuo Tian Lai De Shi Xiao Li" is the same, and they each use the noun "De" and "no" to highlight "Xiao Li" as the focal point, but in Japanese, there is another way to highlight by using the sentence "KinouLisan ga kitanoda.", which is a "noda" sentence. Using data from the Chinese-Japanese Parallel Corpus, this study analyzes the translation tendency of cleft sentences, non-cleft sentences and "noda" sentences in the same context, where the Chinese "...De Shi..." cleft sentence and the Japanese "...nowa ...da" cleft sentence both are grammatically valid in the same scene.

## 2. Corpus Data and Analysis

Yang and Horie (2016) extracted cleft sentences from 11 works of the Chinese-Japanese Parallel Corpus, including the Chinese "...De Shi..." sentences and the Japanese "... nowa...da" sentences, and investigated whether the respective translations also used cleft sentences. From the results of the survey, 106 out of 225 sentences in Chinese "...De Shi..." could be translated into Japanese as "...nowa ...da" in the corpus, however they are not translated into cleft sentences but as other forms, with a proportion of 47.1%, which accounts for nearly half of the cases of "being untranslated into cleft sentences". However, there are 339 cleft sentences in Japanese, and among them, only 61 out of 302 sentences can be translated into Chinese as "...De Shi..." sentences. ", which accounts for 18% of the cases of " being untranslated into cleft sentences". During the process of collection in this corpus, the study focuses on the focal part of cleft sentences in both languages, from which we can see that the focal part is the subject of the sentence in Japanese "...nowa...da" sen-

tence accounts for the majority of cases, and in this case, its translation in Chinese is not translated as a cleft sentence, but as a non-cleft sentence. Examples are given below.

(1) a. Genkan ni de-ta no wa ,Ciniandearu.Ukemochi no kyoushi no raihouwaCinian no kaoiro wo kae-ta. Shikashi, kyoushi no raihou wo wasyounitukenai wake niwayukanai<sup>[1]</sup>.

b. Ci Nian Chu Lai Jie Dai, Kan Dao Zi Ji De Jiao Shi Lai Fang, Ci Nian De Lian Se Ma Shang Bian Le. Dan Shi, Lao Shi Lai Fang De Shi You Bu Neng Bu Bao Gao Shi Fu. (*Yan Si*)

(2) a. Shui Rang Ni Yong De Shi Yuan Kuai Zi? Yao Yong Fang Kuai Zi, Ye Jie Zhu La. (*Dan Feng Yan*)

b. Marui ohashi wo tukau kara dame nano yo, shikakuiohashidattaratyantontandakedo.

In sentence (1), the focus in the Japanese "...nowa...da" cleft sentence is the subject, and that is the person "Ci Nian". Although the underlined part in the sentence a can be translated as "...De Shi..." sentence, it is not translated as such in the corpus, but as the non-cleft sentence b. In the case of sentence (2), where the original Chinese text uses the cleft sentence "...De Shi...", the focal part is mostly the object, which is quite different from the Japanese. Here, the Japanese translation is translated as a non-cleft sentence instead of the "...nowa...da" cleft sentence. In contrast to the Japanese, the Chinese "...De Shi..." cleft sentence is mostly used for the focalization of the object, and the following 3b and 4b are translations of Japanese from the corpus, although both can be grammatically translated into Japanese. Sunakawa (2005: 164) argues that cleft sentences are not considered ungrammatical because they have developed a fixed syntax, such as "nowa...da" or "noga ...da", so cleft sentences can be grammatically converted into sentences of object postposition, and they also satisfy the basic pragmatic requirement of "focalization". The basic order of Chinese is SVO, and the order of V and O does not change in the cleft sentence of "...De Shi..." in Chinese. If the cleft sentence in the original Chinese context is converted into a non-cleft sentence, the following is shown.

(3) a. "Ji Shan Tang" De Hai Zi Chuan De Shi Pao Zi. Ma Gua, Hou Nao Shao Liu Zhe Xiao Bian, Dai ZheJin Yin ChuanChuan De Bo Suo; Zhe Ge Hai Zi ChuanZhe Yi Shen Bai, (omissions) (*JinGuang Da Dao*)

b. "sekizendou" no segarewa, awase no nagaginunimijikaiuwagi wo kikomi (omissions)

(3) a. The cleft sentence: Chuan De Shi PaoZi

b. The Non-cleft sentence: ChuanZhePaoZi

(4) a. Sui Ran Ta Dai Lai De Shi Bu Hao De Xiao Xi, Ran Er Jue Hui Que Hen Xin Wei, Ta Jue De Xian Zai You You Yi Ge Mu Qin Le. (*Jia*)

b. Kanojyowafuonnashirase wo tsutaeteitta no da keredo, (omissions)

(4) a. The cleft sentence: TaDaiLai De Shi BuHaoDeXiaoXi

b. The non-cleft sentence: TaDaiLai Le BuHaoDeXiaoXi

It can be said that the emphasis of the Chinese "...De Shi..." cleft sentence is also diluted due to the maintenance of such an order of speech. Moreover, it appears that the topic does not continue to be developed and ends directly. Ohori & Endo (2012) argue that cleft sentences have the function of first conveying the speaker's emotional evaluation and then setting the frame for what should be said.

### 3. Cleft sentences and "noda" sentences

The next step is to analyze the relationship between the cleft sentence and the Japanese "noda" sentence through the actual example sentences in the corpus. The grammar of "...De Shi..." in the corpus is shown in the sentence (5) and (6), and when translated into Japanese, they can be translated as "nowa...da" sentences, but they are usually translated as "noda" sentences in translations. Horie and Prashant (2009:170) point out that in Japanese, in addition to the "speaker", the attention and care for the "listener (reader)" is also reflected in grammatical phenomena, and therefore, the "noda" is often used at the end of a sentence to express empathy. This is related to the basic order of Japanese SOV. Not only does it express the subjectivity of the speaker who focuses on the part he or she wants to emphasize, but it also expresses the effect of questioning and demonstrating to the listener. In this case, sentences that coexist with rhetorical questions or exclamatory adverbs such as "could it be" are used, or expressions that clearly ask the other person. Therefore, when translating into Japanese, there is a tendency to use "noda" sentences that are subjective in nature. Grammars that exhibit similar semantic and functional properties to the "noda" sentences are found in languages all over the world (Otake, 2009). For example, the Chinese "...De Shi..." sentence is another cleft sentence that the author is interested in. Similar to the "noda" sentence, the "...De Shi..." sentence in Chinese also has the functions of "narrating facts and explaining reasons".

(5) a. Nan Dao Ta Jiang De Shi Yi Ge Si De Shi Jie? Ta Men Dao Di Yao Shen Me Ne? (*Huo Dong Bian Ren Xing*)

<sup>[1]</sup>The following examples are from the "Chinese-Japanese Parallel Corpus (1st edition of the Center for Japanese Studies)", and are expressed in Japanese Roman characters and Hanyu Pinyin, where a is the original text and b is the translation. The titles of the works are in parentheses after the sentences.

b. Shi no sekai he mayoikonda no darou ka. Onna tachi waittainani wo takurandeirunoda.

(6) a. Ren He Yi Ju Hua Wu Fa Biao Da Wo Ci Ke De Xin Qing. NiuNiu A, Ni Men Zen Me Hui Zhi Dao Wo Yao Shuo De Shi Shen Me Ne? (*Lun Yi Shang De Meng*)

b. Donna kotobamokannjyo no maedewairoaseru. Ima no watashi no kanjyo wo arawasukotoba ga arudarouka? Dou hanashitarawatashi no kimochi wo wakattemoraerunoka?

#### 4. Conclusion

This study analyzes the preferred tendency of cleft sentence translation methods in both languages by investigating examples of cleft sentences and their translations in the corpus. The results of the analysis show that, while both languages can use cleft sentences in the same scene, there are differences in the frequency of use and the elements of focalization between them. The Japanese "nowa...da" sentence is based on the focalization of the subject, and the function of continuing and expanding the subsequent topic works better than the Chinese "...De Shi..." cleft sentence. In contrast, the Chinese "...De Shi..." sentence is mostly used for the focalization of the object, and there is no special change in the order of the SVO, so the function of conveying the speaker's own opinion and feelings can be seen in addition to the function of continuing and expanding the topic. The function of expressing the speaker's own opinions and feelings can be seen. Additionally, in scenes where the speaker's subjectivity is expressed, the Chinese cleft sentence is translated into Japanese as a "nowa...da" sentence, and can be translated as the "noda" sentence at the end of the text as well. Here, the sentence serves as a question to the listener, so it is clear that the cleft sentence and the "noda" sentence can be linked semantically and functionally.

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