Semantic specification and syntactic distribution of ideophones in Japanese and Korean
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1. Introduction
This paper investigates the relationship between syntactic-grammatical distribution and semantic features in Japanese and Korean ideophones. In both languages, ideophones typically function as adverbs (Hamano 1998; Chae 1993), although they can also function as verbs and adjectives. However, in both Japanese and Korean some ideophones can function only as adverbs. Regarding the possibility of verbalization, this has been discussed with regard to iconicity (Akita 2009) and frequency of use (Dingemanse 2011). However, previous studies do not cover ‘only-adverbial’ usage (e.g., Sora-ni kumo-ga pukapuka {ukan-de/si-te/it-te} i-ru. (J) ‘Clouds are floating in the sky.’), and ‘deideophonisation’ (e.g., Pi-ey humppek cyece-essta. (K) ‘[I] got wet through in the rain.’). This paper proposes an approach to the possibility of ideophone verbalization with SEMANTIC SPECIFICITY (a further specified version of verb frame; Akita 2012, 2013). Furthermore, we suggest a mapping model of syntactic-grammatical distribution and semantic properties in Japanese and Korean ideophones (Croft 2002; Haspelmath 2003).

2. Data & analysis I investigated the object of 687 Japanese ideophones (Atoda & Hoshino 1993), and 4,849 Korean ideophones (Standard Korean Dictionary, National Institute of Korean Language), then classified the data into three categories: [-verbalization], [+verbalization] {'only-adverbial’, ‘deideophonisation’}]. Analysis was based on the range of verbalization in Japanese and Korean (Park 2017), and strength of collocation (t-score) [ideophone-host verb] construction in corpora data.

3. Proposals As shown in figure 1, in both languages both high and low semantic specificity classes cannot construct predicative forms. In verbalization, Korean ideophones show a wider range of coverage (93%; 4,521/4,849) than Japanese ideophones (65%; 449/687).

(1) [-Verbalization] ‘only-adverbial’: High semantic specificity prevents verbalization. For instance, it indicates the specific manner of walking (8 items), speaking (25 items) in Japanese and a movement (12 items) in Korean. Moreover, I found idiomatic expressions in relation to cognitive states and in conventionalized expressions in Korean. It shows strong collocative relationships with a host verb, revealing a significant t-score in corpora data (e.g., sutasuta ‘briskly’ x aruku ‘walk’ = 6.55 (J)). It leads them to form inheritance relationships with certain verbs, and they are consequently used as adverbs that modify of host verbs.

(2) [+Verbalization] From the perspective of semantic specificity, compared to (1), ideophones which describe the whole event can construct predicative forms. However, Japanese and Korean show different distribution of their verbalization patterns and range in the context of dummy verbs and verbalizer suffixes. Japanese ideophones combine with a quotative verb iu ‘say’, a dummy verb suru ‘do’ and copula ‘da’. Korean ideophones combine with verbalizer suffixes hata ‘do/be’, kelita/tayta/ita ‘keep doing’.

(3) [-Verbalization] ‘deideophonisation’: The class with low semantic specificity also cannot be verbalized. They indicate a degree (J: 63 items, K: 48 items) and a frequency (J: 4 items, K: 2 items). Adverbs of degree indicate the intensity and depth of an action, Adverbs of frequency indicate how often an event happens (Nita 2002; Seo 2005). In this way, they collocate with various verbs, they are undergoing a process called ‘deideophonisation’.

4. Implications This paper shows that semantic specification may be applied to the explanation of systematic-integration (Dingemanse 2017) which could facilitate extensive, inclusive explanation of syntactic-grammatical distribution in Japanese and Korean ideophones.
Selected references