The Russian Counterpart to English

Do-Support: A Sentence-Initial Marker

Choo Sukhoon*

목차

Ⅰ. Introduction
Ⅱ. Do-Support in English
Ⅲ. Fronting in Russian Yes/No Questions
Ⅳ. State of the Complementizer Position in Russian Clauses
Ⅴ. Association of Intonation with Clause Type
Ⅵ. Clause Type Specification
Ⅶ. Conclusion

국문요약


* Associate Professor, Department of Russian, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies.
I. Introduction

The dominant theoretical paradigm in modern syntax is Chomskyan theory, which began with Chomsky 1957 and Chomsky 1975 (which was originally written in 1955–56, though published only much later). Chomsky developed his theory on material from English, and many of his earliest analytical triumphs derived phenomena that appeared to be rather unique to English (such as his early rule of Affix Hopping, which depended on the language-specific ordering properties of multiple auxiliary verbs in English). In subsequent years his theories have evolved and have been extended to many other languages with radically different structural properties, and one index of the theory’s power has been the flexibility to be twisted and turned in this way, while adhering sufficiently to its underlying principles that it still seems to offer a number of analytical answers to important questions.

One way in which Chomskyan theory has been extended is by exploiting the pivotal concept of Universal Grammar. Universal Grammar is a set of inherent properties of the human language faculty which are shared by all human languages. Thus, if language A exhibits a particular property and language B of different typological structure appears to lack that property, then it may still be possible to identify some traces of that property which function covertly or secondarily in language B. It often happens that a linguist who brings a good analytical understanding of language B to his work on language A will find that processes which are prominent in language B can also be identified in language A. An example from Chomsky’s own evolving theory has been the category of case. English has little or no trace of morphological case (only some remnants in the pronominal system), and Chomsky’s early work paid no attention to case. But as his theory was extended to case-marking languages, where case appears explicitly in the grammatical structure, he developed a theory of Case which applied to English as well. Instead of being expressed by morphological marking, Case in English was an abstract feature ascribed to NPs. A similar thread runs through the linguistic publications of Olga T. Yokoyama (see especially her early work: Yokoyama 1980, Yokoyama and Klenin 1976). Her work identified pragmatic-semantic categories to grammatical phenomena in Russian; for example, Yokoyama and Klenin 1976 demonstrates that the apparently syntactic phenomenon of controlling reflexive pronouns (which became binding theory in Chomskyan terms) is sensitive to the subjective notion of “empathy” in Russian. Clearly this insight derived at least in part from her near-native knowledge of Japanese, in which such pragmatic-semantic categories play a much greater overt role in the grammar.

This article continues this technique of identifying a covert category in language A which is overt in language B. Specifically, it takes the early Chomskyan process of do-support in English (an overt process which introduces an auxiliary in order to support a tense marker under certain syntactic conditions) and finds a covert counterpart in Russian, where the language-specific rule of do-support does not exist, but certain related phenomena do in fact occur. It is then argued that by positing an abstract process related