English Linguistic Society of Japan 2016

[Symposium]

“Polarity-Sensitive Items: Their Forms, Meanings, and Functions”

In this symposium, we will investigate the forms, meanings, and functions of polarity-sensitive items. In particular, we will focus on the phenomenon of negative polarity items, positive polarity items, scalar particles (e.g. *even*), and expressives (e.g. negative *totemo* ‘very’), and will consider the following questions: (i) In what environments can these expressions appear?; (ii) How can we analyze the variation in the meanings and distribution patterns of polarity items?; and (iii) What role do polarity-sensitive items play in discourse?

Many important theories have been proposed for the syntax, semantics, and pragmatics of polarity items (e.g. Fauconnier 1975; Horn 1972; Ladusaw 1980; Linebarger 1980; Progovac 1994; Krifka 1995; Giannakidou 1998; Chierchia 2013). In this symposium, we will reevaluate the theories of polarity items from new perspectives and try to provide a new direction for the study of polarity in natural language.

Organizer: Osamu Sawada (Mie University)
Speakers: Hideki Kishimoto (Kobe University)
Ikumi Imani (Nagoya Gakuin University)
Kimiko Nakanishi (Ochanomizu University)
Osamu Sawada (Mie University)

[Time schedule]

November 13, 2016

13:05-13:10 [5 minutes]
Introduction (Osamu Sawada）

13:10-13:45 [30 minutes, 5 minutes discussion]
Hideki Kishimoto: Structural Aspects of NPI Licensing in Japanese

13: 45-14:20 [30 minutes, 5 minutes discussion]
Ikumi Imani: Semantic and Pragmatic Analysis of *Wh-ka* in Japanese

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14:20-14:25
Break (5 minutes)

14:25-15:00 [30 minutes, 5 minutes discussion]
Kimiko Nakanishi: Scalar Particles and Polarity Sensitivity

15:00-15:35 [30 minutes, 5 minutes discussion]
Osamu Sawada: Expressives and Polarity Sensitivity

15:35-15:50 [15 minutes]
Entire discussion

“Structural Aspects of NPI Licensing in Japanese”

Hideki Kishimoto
(Kobe University)

In this paper, I will take a close look at negative polarity items (NPIs) in Japanese. I argue that NPIs in Japanese fall into two types — one is an argument type, which is licensed with reference to its surface-position (i.e. this type of NPI is licensed in a position in which it appears after A-movement, if it applies) and the other is a floating modifier type, which can be licensed in its underlying theta-marking position (the position before A-movement takes place). The syntactic behavior of these two types of NPIs allows us to assess the structural organization of clauses in Japanese. In particular, this paper shows that the EPP requirement obtains when tense participates in Case valuation, and that subjects are A-moved into Spec-TP when the clause contains a nominative argument licensed by T.

[1] Kishimoto, H. (2014) Another look at negative polarity items in Japanese. *J/K Linguistics* 23. [2] Kishimoto, H. (to appear) Negative polarity, A-movement, and clause architecture in Japanese. *JEAL*.

“Semantic and Pragmatic Analysis of *Wh-ka* in Japanese”

Ikumi Imani
(Nagoya Gakuin University)

In this presentation, we will examine why there are cases where *wh-ka* in an adverbial position behaves differently from *wh-ka* in an argument position, as indicated in (1) and (2): (1) Nani-ka nomi-tai (“I want to drink something”), (2) #Nani-ka-wo nomi-tai (ibid.). Sudo [1] offers a new analysis of *wh-ka* based on the concept of similar alternatives, but he does not differentiate *wh-ka* in (1) from *wh-ka* in (2). We claim that the difference between (1) and (2) corresponds to two types of disjunction, that is, to whether a logical space is partitioned or not. We will also demonstrate that our analysis can explain why “Nani-ka-ga kinoo-site inai (“Something is not working”)” is OK, while “Nani-ka-ga okasiku-nai” (“Something is not wrong”)” usually sounds odd. This is part of a joint-research project with S.Kaufmann and M.Kaufmann.

[1] Sudo, Y. (2010) Wh-ka indefinites in Japanese. Handout from the Workshop on Epistemic Indefinites held at University of Gõttingen.

“Scalar Particles and Polarity Sensitivity”

Kimiko Nakanishi
(Ochanomizu University)

It has been claimed that there is a close connection between scalarity and polarity ([1], among others): cross-linguistically, it is common to find a polarity item that consists of a scalar particle (like *even, -mo*) and a predicate expressing minimality (as in *hito-ri-mo* ‘(lit.) one-CL-even’). In this presentation, I show that the scope of scalar particles accounts for the distribution of polarity items. More specifically, following [2], I argue that the semantic conflict between a scalar presupposition and the meaning of minimality explains the limited distribution of polarity items. The proposed analysis would predict that other focus particles that introduce a scalar presupposition should be able to serve as a polarity item when combined with a predicate of minimality. However, it is not the case (e.g., **hito-ri-sae*). I address this issue by examining independent properties of various scalar particles.

[1] Chierchia, G. (2013) *Logic in Grammar: Polarity, Free Choice, and Intervention*. Oxford. [2] Lahiri, U. (1998) Focus and negative polarity in Hindi. *NLS* 6.

“Expressives and Polarity Sensitivity”

Osamu Sawada
(Mie University)

This talk investigates the property of expressive negative polarity items (NPIs), with special reference to the Japanese negative use of *totemo* ‘lit. very.’ The negative *totemo* is similar to typical/strict NPIs (e.g., minimizer NPIs, wh-*mo* ‘wh-even’ in Japanese) in that it can only appear in a negative environment. However, unlike typical NPIs, its meaning is not part of “what is said.” I argue that the negative *totemo* is not a logical NPI which is licensed by negation or downward entailing/non-veridical operators ([1], [2]). Rather, it is a conventional implicature-triggering expression/expressive ([3]), which intensifies the unlikelihood/impossibility of a given proposition and refuses to update the common ground with the proposition. This paper claims that there is a new class of NPIs—expressive NPIs (more specifically, oppositive NPIs)—whose polarity sensitive behavior is lexically constrained by its pragmatic/not-at-issue meaning.

[1] Ladusaw, W. A. (1980). *Polarity Sensitivity as Inherent Scope Relations*. New York & London. [2] Giannakidou, A. (1998). *Polarity Sensitivity as (Non)veridical Dependency*. Benjamins. [3] Potts, C. (2005). *The Logic of Conventional Implicatures*. Oxford.