"Discourse Expressions and Information Structure"

Osamu Sawada

(Mie University)

In this symposium, we will investigate the meaning and use of expressions that are relevant to information structure and discourse context. More specifically, we will look at various discourse-pragmatic phenomena related to discourse particles, politeness, context-shift, information update, expressives, conventional implicature, and presupposition, and consider the following questions: (i) How can we analyze the meaning/use of discourse-oriented expressions in a formal/theoretical way? (ii) What role do the discourse expressions play in a speaker-hearer interaction or soliloquy? (iii) How is the information of an utterance updated? (iv) How can we analyze the cross-linguistic/language-internal variation in the meaning of discourse expressions? (v) What do the discourse expressions suggest for interface theories (i.e., the interfaces among morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, or phonology)?

Organizer: Osamu Sawada (Mie University)

Speakers: Christopher Davis (University of the Ryukyus)

Eric McCready (Aoyama Gakuin University)

David Y. Oshima (Nagoya University)

Osamu Sawada (Mie University)

<Time schedule>

November 8th (Saturday), 15:15-18:00

15:15-15:20

Introduction (Osamu Sawada)

15:20-15:55 [25 minutes, 10 minutes discussion]

Christopher Davis: "Contextual relations and pragmatic constraints"

15: 55-16:30 [25 minutes, 10 minutes discussion]

David Y. Oshima: "Shared knowledge, soliloquy, and the functions of the discourse particles (*yo*)*ne* and (*yo*)*na*"

16:30-16:35

Break (5 minutes)

16:35-17:10 [25 minutes, 10 minutes discussion]

Osamu Sawada "Comparison and goal-shifting"

17:10-17:45 [25 minutes, 10 minutes discussion]

Eric McCready "Politeness and expressivity"

17:45-18:00

Entire discussion

"Contextual Relations and Pragmatic Constraints"

Christopher Davis

(University of the Ryukyus)

Dynamic semantics models the meaning of a sentence in terms of its context change potential (CCP), typically modeled as a function from contexts to contexts, so that a sentence determines one unique output context for a given input context. I argue that CCP meanings should instead be modeled as relations between contexts, in which for a given input context there will generally be more than one possible output context. This gives a non-deterministic dynamic theory, in which a CCP constrains the range of output contexts compatible with the update semantics of a sentence, but does not uniquely determine a single output context. I then propose that the resulting non-deterministic input-output relation is filtered by a set of pragmatic constraints that serve to rank the set of possible output contexts, using tools familiar from constraint-based theories in phonology.

"Shared Knowledge, Soliloquy, and the Functions of the Discourse Particles (*Yo*)*ne* and (*Yo*)*na*"

David Y. Oshima

(Nagoya University)

Japanese has several expressions that are characteristic to soliloquy; a paradigmatic example is the discourse particle *na*, as in "Onaka suita-na (I'm hungry)". Such expressions are also used in so-called "pseudo-soliloquy (*giji dokuwa*)" – a type of speech that constitutes part of dialogue and yet is presented as if it were part of monologue. "Onaka suita-na", for example, can be an utterance by which the speaker informs the hearer about his feeling in a self-effacing way ("I'm hungry – not that I'm asking you to do anything about it"). I will (i) discuss the typology and raisons d'être of soliloquy/pseudo-soliloquy, and (ii) argue that the particles (*yo*)*ne* and (*yo*)*na* have a function to indicate a markedness of the utterance, i.e., that either (i) it is part of soliloquy, or (ii) it presupposes that the hearer already knows the propositional content.

"Comparison and Goal-shifting"

Osamu Sawada

(Mie University)

This talk investigates the pragmatic use of the Japanese expression *sore-yori* 'lit. than it.' The pragmatic use of *sore-yori* is different from its semantic use in that it functions as a topic-changing indicator (Kawabata 2002). I argue that the topic changing *sore-yori* conventionally implicates that the goal related to an at-issue utterance is more preferable than the goal related to a previous utterance. However, I will also observe that *sore-yori* can compare utterances that pertain to the same goal. I argue that whether *sore-yori* serves to shift a goal or not is determined by the extent to which the two compared utterances are relevant. This paper shows that the pragmatic *sore-yori* is multifunctional and it not only enables a speaker to signal a better move toward a goal, but also enables him or her to signal a better goal.

[1] Kawabata, M. (2002) Ridatu kara tenkan e (*Sore-yori* as a topic-changing function). *Kokugogaku* 53.

"Politeness and Expressivity"

Eric McCready

(Aoyama Gakuin University)

Honorific expressions are common in the world's languages, but have received relatively little attention in formal semantics and pragmatics. A theory of the meaning of honorifics must address their denotations, how those denotations figure in semantic composition, and how the resulting meanings behave in pragmatic terms. This talk focuses on the second and third of these questions. It is widely accepted that the denotations of honorifics are expressive in nature, but there is little consensus on exactly what sort of meanings they actually express. I propose an expressive theory of honorific meanings in which honorifics are taken simultaneously to check and modify a contextually specified range of appropriately formal speech derived from several parameters associated with the process of honorific choice. The final part of the talk briefly explores how the resulting theory interacts with game-theoretic notions of rational communication.