The Ambiguity of Tense in the Japanese Mirative Sentence with *Nante/Towa*⋆

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Abstract. This paper investigates the ambiguity of tense in the Japanese mirative sentence with *nante/towa*. Unlike an English sentence exclamative (e.g., *(Wow), John won the race!*), a Japanese sentence with *nante/towa* has a property of ambiguity with regard to tense. When *nante* or *towa* is combined with a proposition that contains the so-called non-past form *ru*, the sentence can be ambiguous between a non-past (future/present) reading and a past reading. This fact is surprising because the non-past form *ru* can never be used for describing a past event. We argue that the ambiguous interpretation of *nante/towa* comes from the conventional implicature of *nante/towa*. Unlike an English sentence exclamation (Rett 2011), the Japanese *nante/towa* takes a "tenseless" proposition *p* (i.e., *ru* does not specify a tense) and conventionally implies that (i) *p* is settled (i.e., *p* is/was true or predicted to be true) and (ii) the speaker had not expected that *p*. We will also consider the case where *p* + *nante/towa* is embedded under a surprising predicate and claim that both the embedded and non-embedded *nante/towa* can be analyzed in a uniform way, suggesting that the embedded *nante/towa* clause is an instance of a main clause phenomenon (rather than a relative tense phenomenon).

Keywords: mirativity, exclamativity, (embedded) *nante/towa*, tense, ambiguity, main clause phenomenon

1 Introduction

This paper investigates the interpretation of the Japanese mirative expressions *nante/towa* with special reference to tense specification. In English there is a sentence exclamative like (1):

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(1) (Wow,) John won the race!   (Rett 2011: 430)

Rett (2011) claims that in English sentences, exclamations like that in (1) express that a particular proposition has violated the speaker's expectation and proposes an illocutionary force operator for an exclamation that is a function from propositions to expressive speech acts, as in (2b) (s_C stands for the speaker, w_C and t_C stand for the world and a time of utterance):

(2) a. $p = \lambda w : \text{won}_w(\text{john}, \iota x\ [\text{race}_w\ (x)])$

   b. E-FORCE (p), uttered by the s_C, is appropriate in a context C if p is salient and true in the w_C. When appropriate, E-FORCE(p) counts as an expression when the s_C had not expected that p.

(Rett 2011: 430)

In (1) E-FORCE takes the proposition "John won the race" and expresses that the speaker had not expected John to win the race. Japanese also has a sentence exclamative:

(3) John-ga   kat-ta!
    John-NOM win-PST

   'John won!'

In this paper we will focus on another kind of Japanese mirative expressions *nante /towa* that also trigger an exclamative meaning. An interesting point of *nante/towa* is that they have a property of ambiguity with regard to tense. When *nante* or *towa* is combined with a proposition that contains a non-past tense form *ru*, the sentence can be ambiguous between a non-past (future/present) reading and a past reading (NON.PST=non-past, MIR= mirative):

(4) Taro-ga   paatii-ni ku-ru-{nante/towa}.
    Taro-NOM party-to come-NON.PST-MIR/MIR

   a. Future reading: Taro is going to come to the party!
   b. Past reading: Taro came to the party!

In the future reading, the speaker is surprised about the scheduled plan that Taro will come to the party; whereas in the past reading, the speaker is surprised that Taro came to the party. The fact that there is a past reading in (4) is surprising because the *ru*-form is usually considered a non-past tense form that represents the present (when it attaches with a stative verb) or the future (when it attaches with a non-stative verb). If we delete *nante/towa* in (4), the sentence has only a future reading:

(5) Taro-ga   paatii-ni ku-ru.
    Taro-NOM party-to come-NON.PST

   Future reading: Taro is going to come to the party.

The contrast between (4) and (5) becomes clearer if we add temporal adverbs *kinou* 'yesterday' and *ashita* 'tomorrow'. *Kinou* 'yesterday' cannot co-occur in the simple *ru*-form sentence, but it can occur within the *ru*-form sentence if *nante/towa* is added:

(6) {Ashita /*kinou} Taro-ga paatii-ni ku-ru.
Tomorrow /yesterday Taro-NOM party-to come-NON.PST

'Taro will come to the party tomorrow/*yesterday.'

(7) {Ashita / kinou} Taro-ga paatii-ni ku-ru-{nante/towa}.
Tomorrow / yesterday Taro-NOM party-to come-NON.PST-MIR/MIR

a. Future reading: Taro is going to come to the party tomorrow!
b. Past reading: Taro came to the party yesterday!

What is the meaning of the mirative *nante/towa*? Why is it that the sentence with *nante/towa* can be ambiguous in terms of tense? What is the difference between the English sentence exclamatives and the Japanese mirative *nante/towa*?

In this paper we will argue that *nante/towa* are an illocutionary force operator that takes a "tenseless" proposition *p* and conventionally implies that (i) the at-issue proposition *p* is "settled" (i.e., *p* is/was true or predicted to be true) and (ii) the speaker had not expected that *p*. We then claim that the information of tense in the at-issue proposition is specified via the adjustment to the conventional implicature (CI) of *nante/towa*. If *p* is interpreted as true at the CI, then the event described by *p* is interpreted as a past (or a present) event; if *p* is predicted to be true in the CI, then the event described by *p* is a future event.

Interesting point is that *nante/towa* can be embedded under a "surprising predicate" and has the same property of ambiguity with regard to tense:

(8) Taro-ga paatii-ni ku-ru-{nante/towa} odoroki-da.
Taro-NOM party-to come-NON.PST-MIR/MIR surprising-PRED

Future reading: It is surprising that Taro is going to come to the party!
Past reading: It is surprising that Taro came to the party!

We will argue that the analysis of non-embedded *nante/towa* and the embedded *nante/towa* can be analyzed in a uniform way. Namely, the embedded *nante/towa* clause is an instance of a main clause phenomenon.

The phenomenon of *nante/towa* suggests there is a rich interaction between at-issue meaning and CI (pragmatics). The pragmatic (CI) intrusion into "what is said" occurs in the phenomenon *nante/towa*. This paper provides a new perspective for the semantics-pragmatics interface.

2 Some Empirical Facts about the Japanese *Nante/Towa*

2.1 Tense System of Japanese

This section introduces the basic properties of the Japanese tense system and clarifies the difference between the basic Japanese tense system and the tense interpretation of the sentence with *nante/towa*. It is standardly assumed in the literature that Japanese has two basic forms for tense, the *ru*-form (non-past form) and the *ta*-form (past form).

Let us first consider the interpretation of *ru*-form. When the *ru*-form is used with a stative verb, it has a present interpretation; however, if the *ru*-form is used with a non-stative predicate, it usually has a future interpretation:

(9)   *ru*-form (non-past form)

        with a stative verb (A):   with a non-stative verb (B):
        a present tense interpretation   a future interpretation
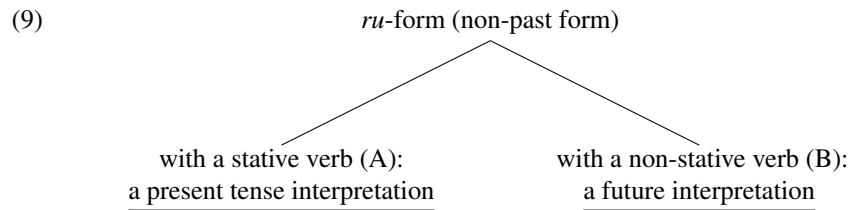
    (10) is the example of the *ru*-form with a stative verb and (11) is the example of the *ru*-form with a non-stative verb:

(10)   (Present, with a stative verb)(=A)

       Konnnani ryouri-ga   a-ru.
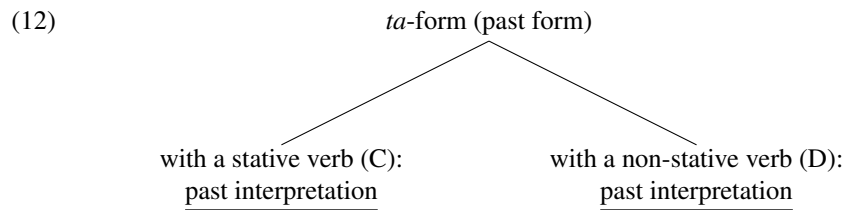   This much cuisine-NOM exist-NON.PST

       'There are so many dishes.'

(11)   (Future, with a non-stative verb)(=B)

       Ashita   Taro-ga   paatii-ni ku-ru.
       Tomorrow Taro-NOM party-to come-NON.PST

       'Taro will come to the party tomorrow.'

    Next, let us consider the *ta*-form. Basically, *ta* is consistently interpreted as past with both stative and non-stative verbs.[3]

(12)   *ta*-form (past form)

        with a stative verb (C):   with a non-stative verb (D):
        past interpretation   past interpretation

    The following are examples of *ta*-sentences (type C and D):

(13)   (Past, with a stative verb) (=C)

       Annnani ryouri-ga   at-ta.
       That much cuisine-NOM exist-PST

       'There were so many dishes.'

(14)   (Past, with a non-stative verb)(=D)

       Kinou   Taro-ga   paatii-ni ki-ta.
       Yesterday Taro-NOM party-to come-PST

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[3] There are also what is called a present perfect use of *ta*, in addition to a regular past use; however, we will not go into detail in this paper regarding the present perfect use.

'Taro came to the party yesterday.'

Now let us consider the interpretation of *nante/towa*. When a stative verb + *ru* is combined with *nante/towa*, there can be both a present interpretation and a past interpretation:

(15)   (Stative verb + *ru*, with *nante/towa*)

     a. Konnani   ryouri-ga   a-ru-{nante/towa}.
         This much cuisine-NOM exist-NON.PST-MIR/MIR

         'There are so many dishes!' (present reading)

     b. Annnani   ryouri-ga   a-ru-{nante/towa}.
         That much cuisine-NOM exist-NON.PST-MIR/MIR

         'There were so many dishes!' (past reading)

The sentences above are not ambiguous because of the meaning of the degree modifiers. *Annna* 'that much' is recognitional (retrospective), and the degree is anchored to the past, while *konna* 'this much' is deictic (spatial) and the degree is anchored to the current time.

When a non-stative verb + *ru* is combined with *nante/towa*, the sentence can have both future and past interpretations:

(16)   (Non-stative verb + *ru*, with *nante/towa*)

     a. Ashita   asa   6-ji-ni   Taro-ga   koko-ni
         Tomorrow morning 6-o'clock-to Taro-NOM here-to
         ku-ru-{nante/towa}.
         come-NON.PST-MIR/MIR

         'Taro will come here at 6 a.m. tomorrow!' (future reading)

     b. Kinou   asa   6-ji-ni   Taro-ga   koko-ni
         Yesterday morning 6-o'clock-to Taro-NOM here-to
         ku-ru-{nante/towa}.
         come-NON.PST-MIR/MIR

         'Taro came here at 6 a.m. yesterday!' (past reading)

As shown in (15b) and (16b) if *nante/towa* is added, "a stative verb/non-stative verb + *ru*" can have a past interpretation. This suggests that the interpretation of tense with *nante/towa* is quite different from the interpretation of tense without *nante/towa*. How can we explain these facts?

2.2 The Mirative Property of *Nante/Towa*

Based on the above empirical facts, this section considers the meaning of *nante/towa*. Similar to English exclamative sentence like (1), *nante/towa* expresses a meaning of mirativity. According to DeLancey (1997: 369-370), mirativity refers to "the linguistic marking of an utterance as conveying information which is new or unexpected to the

speaker." Further, according to Aikhenvald (2012: 437), across languages, the "mirative" encompasses the following values, each of which can be defined with respect to the speaker, the audience (or addressee), or the main character: (i) sudden discovery, sudden revelation, or realization; (ii) surprise; (iii) unprepared mind; (iv) counterexpectation; (v) new information.

The following contrast supports that the sentence with *nante/towa* conveys a mirative meaning (surprise/counterexpectation):

(17) (Federer is a world-class tennis player)

    a. Roger Federer-ga   make-ru-{towa/nante}.
      Roger Federer-NOM lose-NON.PST-MIR/MIR

      'Roger Federer lost!'

    b. # Roger Federer-ga   kat-su-{towa/nante}.
       Roger Federer-NOM win-NON.PST-MIR/MIR

      'Roger Federer won!'

Pragmatically, it would be surprising for Roger Federer to lose, while it is not surprising for Federer to win.

Descriptively, we propose that the mirative *nante/towa* has a following pragmatic function:

(18) The pragmatic function of the mirative *nante/towa* (Descriptive): The Japanese *nante/towa* takes a "non-tensed" proposition p and conventionally implies that (i) p was true/is true or predicted to be true and (ii) the speaker had not expected that p.

Strictly speaking, there seems to be a slight difference between *nante* and *towa* in meaning. Namely, *nante* is more emotional than *towa* in that *nante* additionally implies that it is hard for the speaker to accept p (although it is/was true or expected to be true). In this paper we will set aside this subtle difference. The meaning of *nante/towa* is a conventional implicature (CI) and independent of "what is said" (Grice 1975; Potts 2005; McCready 2010; Gutzmann 2012; Sawada 2010, 2018). This idea is supported by the fact that a denial cannot target the speaker's attitude of surprise.

Note, however, that since the at-issue proposition in the *nante/towa* sentence (with the *ru*-form) can be ambiguous between future and past readings, the denial alone is not enough for signaling in what sense the listener is objecting to the speaker's utterance:

(19) A: John-ga   paatii-ni ku-ru-{nantet/towa}.
      John-NOM party-to come-NON.PST-MIR/MIR

     'John is going to come to the party!/John came to the party!'
     (CI: The speaker has not expected that John is going to come/came to the party.)

    B: Iya sore-wa nani-ka-no   machigai-da.
      No, that-TOP what-KA-GEN mistake-PRED.

     'No, that's some kind of mistake.'

It is possible that A is talking about a future event, but B is objecting to a past event. [4] To convey B's intention of denial, it is necessary to add information after a denial:

(20) (Future reading)

A: John-ga   paatii-ni ku-ru-{nante/towa}.
     John-NOM party-to come-NON.PST-MIR/MIR

     'John is going to come to the party!'

B: Iya sore-wa nani-ka-no   machigai-da. John-wa ko-nai-yo.
     No that-TOP what-KA-GEN mistake-PRED John-TOP come-NEG-Prt

     'No, that's some kind of mistake. John will not come to the party.'

(21) (Past reading)

A: John-ga   paatii-ni ku-ru-{nante/towa}.
     John-NOM party-to come-NON.PST-MIR/MIR

     'John came to the party!'

B: Iya sore-wa nani-ka-no   machigai-da.   Kare-wa
     No, that-TOP what-KA-GEN mistake-PRED. He-TOP
     ko-nakat-ta-yo.
     come-NEG-PST-Prt

     'No, that's some kind of mistake. He didn't come to the party.'

3   The Semantics of *Nante/Towa* (Non-Embedded)

Now let us analyze the meaning of *nante/towa* in a formal way based on the following example:

(22) Taro-ga   paatii-ni ku-ru-{nante/towa}.
     Taro-NOM party-to come-NON.PST-MIR/MIR

     a. Future reading: Taro is going to come to the party!
     b. Past reading: Taro came to the party!

In the previous section we claimed that the Japanese *nante/towa* takes a "non-tensed" proposition p and conventionally implies that p was true/is true or predicted to be true and the speaker had not expected that p. We consider that this can be formalized based on the notion of "settledness" (Superscript a stands for an at-issue type, and superscript c stands for a CI type):

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[4] This kind of ambiguity never arises in the English sentence exclamation. As the following example shows, the use of a simple denial is enough to deny A's assertion:

(i) A: (Wow,) John won the race!

     B: No, that's not true.

The utterance of an English sentence exclamation can count as an assertion of the denoted proposition p in addition to having an illocutionary force of exclamation (Rett 2011) and the tense of the assertion is fixed.
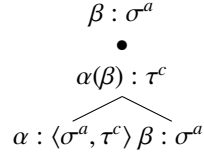
(23)   a. $p = \lambda t \lambda w$. Taro-come-to-the-party at t in w

        b. [[nante/towa]]: $\langle\langle i^a, \langle s^a, t^a\rangle\rangle, t^c\rangle = \lambda p.p$ is SETTLED in w_C and s_C had not expected that p

Here we define the notion of SETTLED as follows:

(24) p is SETTLED iff

        a. p is true sometime before t_0 or,

        b. p is true at t_0 or,

        c. p is predicated to be true sometime after t_0

Compositionally, *nante/towa* is combined with the "non-tensed" proposition via Potts' (2005) CI application in (25), as shown in (26):

(25)   CI application (Potts 2005: 65)

$$\beta : \sigma^a$$
$$\bullet$$
$$\alpha(\beta) : \tau^c$$
$$\alpha : \langle \sigma^a, \tau^c\rangle \quad \beta : \sigma^a$$

(26) $\lambda t \lambda w$. Taro-come-to-the-party at t in w:
$$\langle i^a, \langle s^a, t^a\rangle\rangle$$
$$\bullet$$

nante/towa ($\lambda t \lambda w$. Taro-come-to-the-party at t in w): t^c

$\lambda t \lambda w$. Taro-come-to-the-party at t in w: C

$\langle i^a, \langle s^a, t^a\rangle\rangle$ nante/towa: $\langle\langle i^a, \langle s^a, t^a\rangle\rangle, t^c\rangle$
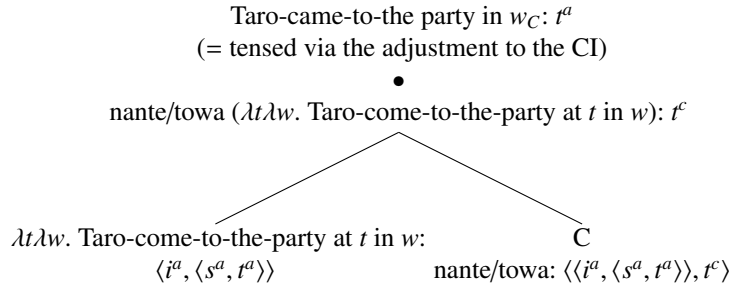
Note that here the "non-tensed" proposition is an argument of *nante/towa*, but at the same time, the non-tensed proposition is passed up to the higher level as an at-issue meaning (above •).

How is the tense information specified in the at-issue dimension? Syntactically, *nante/towa* is a speech act operator placed at C (i.e., above TP). We claim that the information of tense in the at-issue proposition is specified via the adjustment to the CI. If it is interpreted that p was true sometime before the utterance time in the CI level, then the event described by p is interpreted as a past event in the at-issue dimension, and if it is interpreted that p is expected to be true in the CI, then the event described by p is a future event in the at-issue dimension.

For example, (27) is the situation where the at-issue proposition was interpreted to be true in the past in the CI dimension:

(27)   (Logical structure of (22), past interpretation)

Taro-came-to-the party in w_C: t^a
(= tensed via the adjustment to the CI)

•

nante/towa ($\lambda t \lambda w$. Taro-come-to-the-party at t in w): t^c

$\lambda t \lambda w$. Taro-come-to-the-party at t in w: C
$\langle i^a, \langle s^a, t^a \rangle \rangle$ nante/towa: $\langle \langle i^a, \langle s^a, t^a \rangle \rangle, t^c \rangle$

We consider that this can be viewed as a new kind of pragmatic intrusion into "what is said" (CI-intrusion into "what is said").

4 The Embedded *Nante/Towa*

4.1 The Interpretation of Embedded *Ru* with *Nante/Towa*

Interestingly, a *nante/towa* clause can be embedded under certain kinds of predicates such as *odoroki-da* 'is surprising' and *shiji-rare-nai* 'can't believe':[5]

(28)   a. (Watashi-ni-wa) [Taro-ga   paatii-ni
            I-to-TOP   Taro-NOM party-to
            ku-ru-{nante/towa}]   odoroki-da.
            come-NON.PST-COMP.MIR/COMP.MIR surprising-PRED

            Future reading: It is surprising for me that Taro is going to come to the party!
            Past reading: It is surprising for me that Taro came to the party!

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[5] The fact that *nante/towa* clause in (28) is syntactically embedded is supported by the fact that unlike the non-embedded *nante* like (i), the sentence final particle *yo* cannot be added after *nante/towa*, as in (ii):

(i) (Non-embedded)

     Taro-ga   paatii-ni ku-ru-{nante/towa}-yo.
     Taro-NOM party-to come-NON.PST-MIR/MIR-Prt

     Future reading: Taro is going to come to the party!
     Past reading: Taro came to the party!

(ii) (Embedded)

     Watashi-ni-wa [Taro-ga   paatii-ni ku-ru-{nante/towa}-(*yo)]
     I-to-TOP   Taro-NOM party-to come-NON.PST-COMP.MIR/COMP.MIR-Prt
     odoroki-da.
     surprising-PRED

     Future reading: It is surprising to me that Taro is going to come to the party!
     Past reading: It is surprising to me that Taro came to the party!

b. (Watashi-wa) [Taro-ga   paatii-ni
   I-to-TOP   Taro-NOM party-to
   ku-ru-nante/towa]   shinji-rare-nai.
   come-NON.PST-COMP.MIR/COMP.MIR believe-can-NEG
   Future reading: I can't believe that Taro is going to come to the party!
   Past reading: I can't believe that Taro came to the party!

In this case the mirative *nante/towa* syntactically functions as a complementizer. Interestingly, similarly to the non-embedded *nante/towa*, the embedded *nante/towa* has both a future reading and a past reading (relative to the utterance time).[6]

The phenomenon that the meaning of the embedded *nante/towa* clause can be ambiguous between a future reading and a past reading is surprising when the system of embedded tense in Japanese is considered. It is well known that in Japanese, the *ru*-form (non-past tense form) in a subordinate clause is "relative" (Comrie 1985) in that its tense is determined from the perspective of the time of the matrix clause (e.g., Mihara 1992; Ogihara 1996; Kubota et al. 2009) (Or, we can say that *ru* can be "bound" by the tense in the matrix clause (Kusumoto 1999, 2005)). For example, in (29), the embedded event is interpreted as a future event in the past and in (30), the embedded event is interpreted as a past event that occurred at the same time as the event described by the main clause (= simultaneous interpretation):

(29) (Regular embedded *ru*-form, with a non-stative verb)

      Mary-wa [Taro-ga   paatii-ni ku-ru-to]   it-ta.
      Mary-TOP Taro-NOM party-to come-NON.PST-that say-PST

      'Mary said that Taro would come to the party.' (relative future reading)

(30) (Regular embedded *ru*-form, with a stative verb)

      John-wa [Mary-ga   i-ru-to]   it-ta.
      John-TOP Mary-NOM BE-NON.PST-that say-PST

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[6] The existence of ambiguity can be confirmed by the test of denial:

(i)   A: Taro-ga   paatii-ni ku-ru-{nante/towa}   shinji-rare-nai.
          Taro-NOM party-to come-NON.PST-COMP.MIR/COMP.MIR believe-can-NEG
          Future reading: I can't believe that Taro is going to come to the party!

      B: Iya sore-wa nani-ka-no   machigai-da. Kare-wa ko-nai-yo.
          No that-TOP what-KA-GEN mistake-PRED He-TOP come-NEG-Prt
          'No, that's some kind of mistake. He will not come to the party.'

(ii) A: Taro-ga   paatii-ni ku-ru-{nante/towa}   shinji-rare-nai.
          Taro-NOM party-to come-NON.PST-COMP.MIR/COMP.MIR believe-can-NEG
          Past reading: I can't believe that Taro came to the party!

      B: Iya sore-wa nani-ka-no   machigai-da. Kare-wa ko-nakat-ta-yo.
          No, that-TOP what-KA-GEN mistake-PRED. He-TOP come-NEG-PAST-Prt
          'No, that's some kind of mistake. He didn't come to the party.'

'John said that Mary was there.' (simultaneous reading only)

The fact that (29) is not interpreted as future relative to the utterance time is corroborated by the fact that it is possible to say "but, actually she didn't come" after the sentence.[7]

How can we analyze the difference between the usual embedded tense of Japanese and the embedded *nante/towa*? We claim that the embedded *nante/towa* clause can be analyzed in the same way as the non-embedded *nante/towa*. The embedded *nante/towa* clause can be analyzed as an embedded speech act (i.e., a main clause phenomenon), and the *ru*-form (non-past tense form) in the embedded clause is independently interpreted from the main clause. This means that we can use the same lexical item for *nante/towa* for the embedded case as well:

(31)   a. $p = \lambda t \lambda w$. Taro-come-to-the-party at t in w

      b.   [[nante/towa]]: $\langle \langle i^a, \langle s^a, t^a \rangle \rangle, t^c \rangle = \lambda p.p$ is SETTLED in w_C and s_C had not expected that p

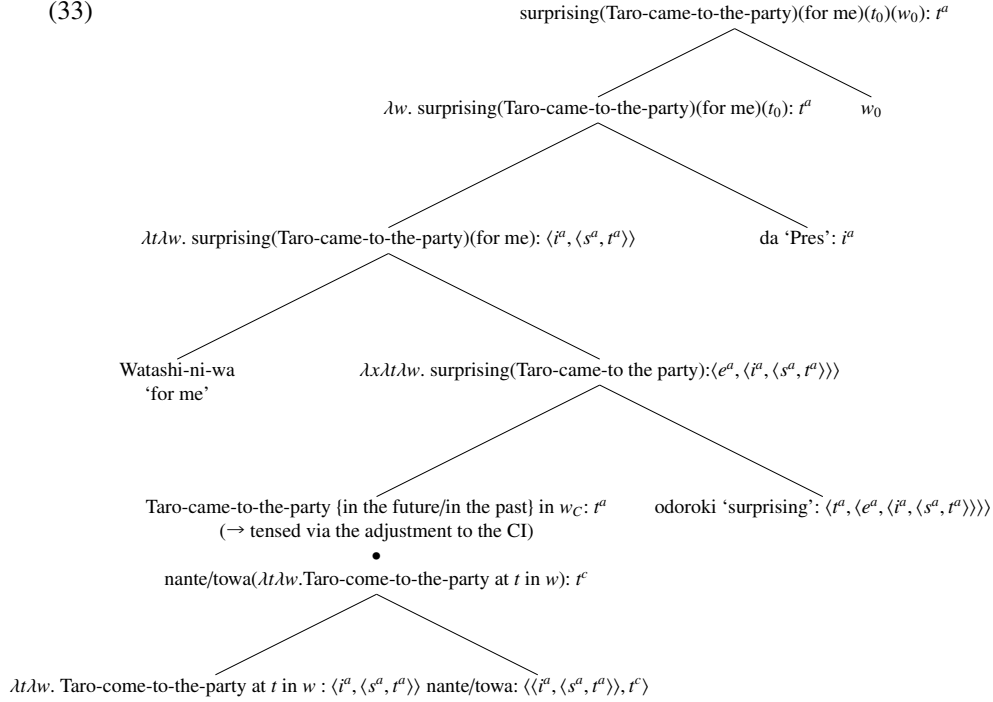Recall that we define the notion of SETTLED as follows:

(32) p is SETTLED iff

      a. p is true sometime before t_0 or,

      b. p is true at t_0 or,

      c. p is predicated to be true sometime after t_0

Compositionally, just like the non-embedded *nante/towa*, the embedded *nante/towa* is combined with a non-tensed proposition via Potts' CI application. Namely, the tense information of the proposition in the at-issue dimension (above ●) is adjusted to the interpretation of the CI meaning (a past reading or a future reading). The tense-adjusted proposition is then combined with *shira-nakat-ta* 'didn't know' or *odoroki-da* 'surprising' that has a factive presupposition.

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[7] However, in (29) it seems that there is also a reading where the embedded *ru* is interpreted relative to the utterance time. We will put this issue aside.

(33)

$$\text{surprising(Taro-came-to-the-party)(for me)}(t_0)(w_0): t^a$$

$$\lambda w. \text{ surprising(Taro-came-to-the-party)(for me)}(t_0): t^a \qquad w_0$$

$$\lambda t \lambda w. \text{ surprising(Taro-came-to-the-party)(for me)}: \langle i^a, \langle s^a, t^a \rangle \rangle \qquad \text{da 'Pres'}: i^a$$

Watashi-ni-wa
'for me'

$$\lambda x \lambda t \lambda w. \text{ surprising(Taro-came-to the party)}: \langle e^a, \langle i^a, \langle s^a, t^a \rangle \rangle \rangle$$

Taro-came-to-the-party {in the future/in the past} in w_C: t^a
($\rightarrow$ tensed via the adjustment to the CI)

•

nante/towa($\lambda t \lambda w$.Taro-come-to-the-party at t in w): t^c

odoroki 'surprising': $\langle t^a, \langle e^a, \langle i^a, \langle s^a, t^a \rangle \rangle \rangle \rangle$

$$\lambda t \lambda w. \text{ Taro-come-to-the-party at } t \text{ in } w : \langle i^a, \langle s^a, t^a \rangle \rangle \qquad \text{nante/towa}: \langle \langle i^a, \langle s^a, t^a \rangle \rangle, t^c \rangle$$

5 *Nante/Towa* with a Tensed Proposition

In this paper we have solely focused on examples where *nante/towa* co-occurs with a proposition with the *ru*-form (non-past form). However, actually, *nante/towa* can also combine with a tensed proposition that has the *ta*-form (past tense form), as well:

(34) Taro-ga   paatii-ni ki-ta-{nante/towa}.
      Taro-NOM party-to come-PST-MIR/MIR

      Past reading: Taro came to the party!

Semantically, the above sentence is similar to the past reading in the *nante/towa* sentence with the *ru*-form:

(35) Taro-ga   paatii-ni ku-ru-{nante/towa}.
      Taro-NOM party-to come-NON.PST-MIR/MIR

      Past reading: Taro came to the party!

However, it is important to point out that there is a slight difference between the two patterns. *Nante/towa* with the *ta*-form sounds more indirect than *nante/towa* with the *ru*-form. Intuitively, the *ta*-form is used with *nante/towa* in a situation in which the speaker heard indirectly that Taro came to the party or in which s/he is recalling the past event of Taro having come to the party. By contrast, *nante/towa* with *ru* is neutral regarding the indirectness of information. It can be used in the situation in which a speaker directly

experienced the event, but it can also be used in the situation in which the speaker heard indirectly that Taro came to the party or in which s/he is recalling the past event. We consider that *nante/towa* with the *ta*-form is more marked than *towa/nante* with the *ru*-form in that the past event is construed as an indirect remote event and cannot predicate about the utterance situation. It seems possible to explain this based on Horn's (1984) division of pragmatic labor: Unmarked expressions are generally used to convey unmarked messages. Compositionally, the fact that mirative *nante/towa* can take a tensed proposition (a proposition having a past tense) suggests that we need to posit another lexical entry for *nante* and *towa*.

6 Note on the Deontic Use of the Mirative *Nante/Towa*

Finally, let us consider the examples of the mirative *nante/towa* that have a deontic flavor. The mirative *nante/towa* can be used in a deontic context (to convey "should not *p*"):[8]

(36) a. (Non-deontic reading)

Shushoo-ga   jinin-suru-{nante/towa}.
Prime minister-NOM resignation-do-MIR/MIR

'The prime minister resigned/is going to resign!'

b. (Deontic reading)

Shushoo-ga   anna hatsugen-o   suru-{nante/towa}.
Prime minister-NOM such statement-ACC do-MIR/MIR

'The prime minister made such a statement!' (The prime minister should not say something like that.)

(37) a. (Non-deontic reading)

Shushoo-ga   jinin-suru-{nante/towa}   shinji-rare-nai.
Prime minister-NOM resignation-do-MIR/MIR believe-can-NEG

'I can't believe that the prime minister resigned/is going to resign!'

b. (Deontic reading)

Shushoo-ga   anna hatsugen-o   suru-{nante/towa}
Prime minister-NOM such statement-ACC do-MIR/MIR
shinji-rare-nai.
believe-can-NEG

'I can't believe that the prime minister made such a statement!'

Unlike the (a) sentences, the (b) sentences have a deontic meaning. For example, in (36b), we can glean the deontic meaning that the prime minister should not say something like that. Should we consider that the deontic reading arises from a different semantic mechanism? We consider that both the (a) sentences (=non-deontic) and the (b) sentences have the same mirative meaning/CI (i.e. *p* is unexpected), and the deontic

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[8] We thank Naoya Fujikawa for the valuable comments and discussion.

meaning is pragmatically derived via context. The deontic interpretation arises because there is an expectation that the prime minister should make a good remark. One piece of supporting evidence for the idea that the deontic meaning is pragmatic comes from the fact that the deontic meaning does not arise if we posit a different context. For example, if we replace *shushoo* 'prime mister' with Taro, then a deontic reading does not arise:

(38) (Context: We know that Taro is not good at presenting his own ideas, but today he made an excellent remark in the meeting.)

a. (Non-deontic reading)

Taro-ga anna hatsugen-o suru-{nante/towa}.
Taro-NOM such statement-ACC do-MIR/MIR

'Taro made such a statement!'

b. (Non-deontic reading)

Taro-ga anna hatsugen-o suru-{nante/towa} shinji-rare-nai.
Taro-NOM such statement-ACC do-MIR/MIR believe-can-NEG

'I can't believe that Taro made such a statement!'

7 Conclusion

This paper investigated the meaning and use of the Japanese mirative expressions *nante/towa*. We observed that when *nante* or *towa* is combined with a proposition that contains the so-called non-past form *ru*, the sentence can be ambiguous between a future/present reading and a past reading. We explained the ambiguous interpretation of *nante/towa* based on the implicature of *nante/towa*. Namely, the Japanese *nante/towa* takes a "tenseless" proposition *p* (i.e., *ru* does not specify a tense) and conventionally implies that (i) *p* is settled (i.e., *p* is/was true or predicted to be true) and (ii) the speaker had not expected that *p*. In this paper we also looked at the case where *p* + *nante/towa* is embedded under a surprising predicate and showed that we can analyze both the embedded and non-embedded *nante/towa* in a uniform way, suggesting that the embedded *nante/towa* clause is an instance of a main clause phenomenon.

The phenomenon of *nante/towa* is theoretically important in that the phenomenon strongly shows that there is a rich interaction between at-issue meaning and CI (pragmatics). In the literature, CI and at-issue meanings are logically and compositionally independent of each other. An at-issue proposition is part of "what is said" in the sense of Grice (1975), while CI is not part of "what is said." However, in the phenomenon of *nante/towa*, the tense of at-issue proposition is influenced by the CI triggering expression *nante/towa*. This can be viewed as a new kind of pragmatic intrusion into "what is said" (CI-intrusion into "what is said").

Finally, let us consider the following fundamental question: Why is it that *nante/towa* takes a tenseless proposition (and allows multiple interpretations with regard to tense)? We suggest that the ambiguous property of mirative *nante/towa* regarding tense can be explained naturally by assuming that *nante/towa* was developed from a complementizer. As discussed in the paper, Japanese is a relative tense language in that the *ru*-form (non-past tense form) in a subordinate clause is "relative" (or tenseless), meaning that

its tense is determined from the perspective of the time of the matrix clause (e.g., Mihara 1992; Ogihara 1996; Kubota et al. 2009) or *ru* is 'bound' by the tense in the matrix clause (Kusumoto 1999, 2005):

(39) (The regular embedded tense, with the *ru* form)

    Anotoki, Taro-wa [Jiro-ga ku-ru-to-wa] iwa-nakat-ta.
    That time Taro-TOP Jiro-NOM come-Non.PST-that-TOP say-NEG-PST

    'At that time, Taro didn't say that Jiro would come to the party.' (But actually, he came.)

Both the regular embedded *ru*-form and the *ru*-form in the mirative *nante/towa* clause do not specify tense. It seems reasonable to consider that the mirative *nante/towa* retains the property of relative tense (non-tensed property). In future research, we would like to consider other relative tense languages, such as Korean, and check whether a similar mirative phenomenon can be observed in these languages.

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