

## The degree of the speaker's negative attitude in a goal-shifting comparison

Osamu Sawada\*

Mie University

sawadao@human.mie-u.ac.jp

### Abstract

The Japanese comparative expression *sore-yori* 'than it' can be used for shifting the goal of a conversation. What is interesting about goal-shifting via *sore-yori* is that, unlike ordinary goal-shifting with expressions like *tokorode* 'by the way,' using *sore-yori* often signals the speaker's negative attitude toward the addressee. In this paper, I will investigate the meaning and use of goal-shifting comparison and consider the mechanism by which the speaker's emotion is expressed. I will claim that the meaning of the pragmatic *sore-yori* conventionally implicates that the at-issue utterance is preferable to the previous utterance (cf. metalinguistic comparison (e.g. (Giannakidou & Yoon 2011))) and that the meaning of goal-shifting is derived if the goal associated with the at-issue utterance is considered irrelevant to the goal associated with the previous utterance. Moreover, I will argue that the speaker's negative attitude is shown by the competition between the speaker's goal and the hearer's goal, and a strong negativity emerges if the goals are assumed to be not shared. I will also compare *sore-yori* to *sonna koto-yori* 'than such a thing' and show that *sonna koto-yori* directly expresses a strong negative attitude toward the previous utterance. This paper shows that shifting the goal (without accomplishing the previous goal) is negative/offensive in nature, and a speaker expresses various degrees of negative emotion toward a hearer in different ways, i.e., by indirect evaluation (via contrast) or direct evaluation.

## 1 Introduction

In Japanese, the comparative expression *sore-yori(-mo)* ('it-than-MO') can be used at both the at-issue (semantic) and non-at-issue (pragmatic) levels. In (1), *sore-yori(-mo)* is used at the semantic level (*sore* refers to a contextually determined object):<sup>1</sup>

- (1) Hanako-no keeki-wa sore-yori(-mo) ookii. (*Semantic use*)  
Hanako-GEN cake-TOP it-than-MO big  
'Hanako's cake is bigger than that.'

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<sup>1</sup>The particle *mo* has meanings like 'also' and 'even,' but in the environment of comparison, it is semantically vacuous.

However, *sore-yori-mo* ‘that-than’ can also be used to shift the goal of a conversation at the pragmatic level, as shown by B’s utterance in (2). *Sore-yori-mo* in (2B) is pragmatic (non-at-issue) in that its presence/absence does not affect the truth condition of the given sentence:

- (2) A: Ima-kara tenisu si-yoo.  
Now-from tennis do-let’s  
‘Let’s play tennis from now on.’  
B: Sore-yori-(mo) syukudai-wa owa-tta-no? (*Pragmatic use*)  
It-than-MO homework-TOP finish-PAST-Q  
‘*Sore-yori-mo*, did you finish your homework?’

Kawabata (2002) observes that this version of the expression is “topic-changing.” If we consider this topic-changing function in terms of the discourse structure, it becomes clear that *sore-yori-mo* in (2B) serves to shift the goal of the conversation. What is interesting about the goal-shifting use of *sore-yori* is that, unlike ordinary topic-changing/goal-shifting expressions like *tokorode* ‘by the way,’ *sore-yori* often expresses a speaker’s negative attitude toward the addressee. Speaker B rejects Speaker A’s goal of playing tennis, and we can infer that B has some kind of negative attitude (or complaint) toward the addressee.<sup>2</sup>

However, the goal-shifting *sore-yori* does not always indicate a speaker’s negative attitude. In (3B), the speaker seems not to have a negative attitude toward the addressee (At least, (3B)’s attitude is not as negative as (2B)’s):

- (3) A: Ima-kara tenisu si-yoo.  
Now-from tennis do-let’s  
‘Let’s play tennis from now on.’  
B: Tenisu si-tai-nda-kedo, sore-yori-(mo) ore-tachi ashita tesuto-da-yo.  
Tennis do-want-NODA-but it-than-MO I-PL tomorrow test-PRED  
‘I want to play tennis but *sore-yori-mo* we have an exam tomorrow.’

How can we explain the variation in the strength of negativity? Should we assume that the speaker’s negative attitude is part of the lexical meaning of *sore-yori*, or should we consider that it is purely pragmatic information? What is the relationship between goal-shifting and a speaker’s attitude? In this paper, I will investigate the meaning and use of the expression *sore-yori* and try to answer these questions. First, I will propose that the pragmatic use of *sore-yori*, as in (2) and (3), conventionally implicates that the at-issue utterance that follows is preferable to the previous utterance referred to by *sore*. I will then argue that the meaning of goal-shifting is derived by pragmatic reasoning. Namely, a goal-shifting arises if the goal associated with the at-issue utterance is considered to be irrelevant to the goal associated with a previous utterance (otherwise, there will be no goal-shifting and *sore-yori* instead expresses a comparison between the two utterances based on the same goal).

Regarding the source and variation of negative emotion, I will argue that the speaker’s negative emotion toward an addressee is expressed as a result of comparison/competition

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<sup>2</sup>As we will discuss in detail later in Section 7, ordinary goal-shifting expressions like *tokorode* do not indicate a speaker’s negative emotion and cannot be used in the discourse of goal-shifting comparison like (2).

between the speaker's goal and the hearer's goal. It will be shown that the speaker's negative emotion is strong if the speaker compares his/her personal (i.e., non-shared) goal and the hearer's personal goal, while if the goals can be shared by the speaker and hearer, there is no strong negativity (or maybe no negativity at all). I will also compare *sore-yori* to *sonna koto-yori* and claim that if a speaker uses the marked expression *sonna koto-yori* 'than such a thing,' it always induces a strong negative attitude regardless of the context. An example is shown in (4).

- (4) A: Ima-kara tenisu si-yoo.  
 Now-from tennis do-let's  
 'Let's play tennis from now on.'  
 B: Sonna koto-yori-(mo) syukudai-wa owa-tta-no?  
 Such a thing-than-MO homework-TOP finish-PAST-Q  
 'Sonna koto-yori-mo, did you finish your homework?'

It will be shown that *sore-yori* used for goal-shifting comparison is an indirect expressive, while *sonna koto-yori* is a direct expressive in the sense of Sawada (2014). This paper shows that shifting the goal (without accomplishing the previous goal) is negative/offensive in nature, and the speaker expresses various degrees of negative emotion toward the hearer in different ways, i.e., by indirect evaluation (via contrast) or direct evaluation.

## 2 The semantic use of *sore-yori*

Before starting the discussion on the meaning and pragmatic use of *sore-yori*, let us analyze the semantic use:<sup>3</sup>

- (5) Hanako-no keeki-wa {kore/sore/are}-yori(-mo) ookii.  
 Hanako-GEN cake-TOP this/that/that-than-MO big  
 'Hanako's cake is bigger than this/that one.'

The crucial characteristic of the semantic *sore-yori-mo* is that it combines with an explicit gradable predicate, as in (5). Namely, in establishing a comparative relationship between a target and a standard, it makes use of the measure function dimension of a gradable predicate (here, *ookii* 'big') to express comparison. I assume that the standard marker *yori* encodes a comparative meaning (e.g., Kennedy (2007); Hayashishita (2009); Sawada (2013)), as shown in (6):

- (6)  $[[yori]] = \lambda x \lambda g \lambda y. \max\{d' \mid g(d')(y)\} > \max\{d'' \mid g(d'')(x)\}$

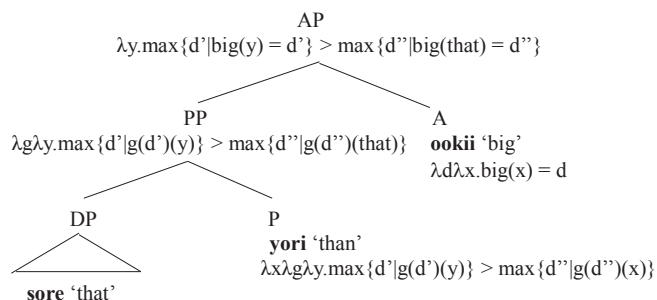
As for the meaning of the gradable predicate, I assume that gradable predicates represent relations between individuals and degrees (e.g., Klein (1991); Kennedy & McNally (2005)), as shown in (7).

- (7)  $[[ookii]] = \lambda d \lambda x. big(x) = d$

<sup>3</sup>Note that as example (5) shows, various kinds of demonstratives can be placed before *yori*, e.g. *kore* 'this', *are* 'that', *sore* 'it/that', etc.

The tree diagram in (8) shows the logical structure of sentence (5):

(8) Logical structure of (5)



The meaning of the semantic use of *sore-yori-mo* is part of the truth condition of the given proposition.

### 3 The pragmatic use of *sore-yori*

The pragmatic use of *sore-yori* is very different from the semantic use in that it does not combine with an explicit adjective. Intuitively, it is posited to be at a higher level than the semantic use of *sore-yori*. Furthermore, unlike the semantic comparison found in (5), the pragmatic comparison which we are going to focus on only allows the pronoun *sore*. In this section, we will examine some core characteristics of the pragmatic *sore-yori*. We will also look at the difference between metalinguistic comparison and the pragmatic *sore-yori*.

#### 3.1 The goal-shifting and goal-internal uses

First, the pragmatic use of *sore-yori* can express two types of comparison: goal-shifting and goal-internal. In (9) and (10), Speaker B's utterance is an example of goal-shifting comparison and goal-internal comparison, respectively (*sore* 'that' in (9B) and (10B) refers to a previous utterance):

(9) (Example of goal-shifting comparison)

A: Tennis-si-yoo-yo.

tennis-do-let's-PRT

'Let's play tennis.'

B: Sore-yori(-mo) syukudai-owa-tta-no?

That-than-MO homework-finish-PAST-Q

'*Sore-yori-mo*, did you finish your homework?'

(10) (Example of goal-internal comparison)

[Context: What kind of person is Hanako?]

A: Hanako-wa kashikoi-desu.

Hanako-TOP smart-PRED.POLITE

'Hanako is smart.'

- B: Iya, sore-yori(-mo) (mazu) Hanako-wa yasashii hito-desu.  
No that-than-MO first Hanako-TOP kind person-PRED.POLITE  
'No, *sore-yori-mo*, first, Hanako is a kind person.'

To understand the difference between goal-internal and goal-shifting comparison, it is necessary to understand the notion of goal. In this paper, I use the term “goal” in the sense of Roberts’s notion of “domain goal” Roberts (1996, 2012). Domain goals are what interlocutors want to accomplish in the world. Note that Roberts’s theory also includes the notion of “discourse goal,” which is the aim to address particular questions in the conversation (i.e., the questions under discussion). In her theory, the domain goal (question under discussion) and discourse goal are interrelated. She considers that “domain goals, in the form of deontic priorities, generally direct the type of inquiry which we conduct in conversation, the way we approach the question of how things are. We are, naturally, most likely to inquire first about those matters that directly concern the achievement of our domain goals (Roberts 1996, 2012: 7).”

Let us consider the relation between domain goal and discourse goal based on the examples in (9) and (10). In (9), Speaker B rejects A’s domain goal (=to play tennis) and introduces his/her own domain goal (=to make A to focus on studying). Since B’s utterance is a question, it also introduces a discourse goal (i.e., question under discussion). (Note that goal-shifting comparison can appear in environments other than a question. We will discuss this in Section 3.2). In (10), the two speakers share the same domain goal. Namely, their utterances are intended to answer to the question “What kind of person is Hanako?”

### 3.2 The meaning of the pragmatic *sore-yori* is a conventional implicature

The meaning of the pragmatic use of *sore-yori* (goal-shifting and goal-internal use) does not contribute to “what is said.” I propose that the pragmatic use of *sore-yori* triggers the following conventional implicature (CI):

- (11) The lexical meaning of the pragmatic *sore-yori*: *sore-yori* conventionally implicates that the at-issue utterance that follows it is preferable to the previous utterance referred to by *sore*.

Let us begin by confirming that the pragmatic *sore-yori* has the properties of CI. In the Gricean theory of meaning, CIs are considered to be part of the meaning of words, yet these meanings are not part of “what is said” (e.g., Grice (1975); Potts (2005, 2007); McCready (2010); Gutzmann (2012); Horn (2013)). Furthermore, it is often assumed that CIs have the semantic property of speaker-orientedness (by default) Potts (2005, 2007). *Sore-yori-mo* satisfies these criteria. First, the pragmatic use of *sore-yori-mo* is invariably speaker-oriented. Second, its meaning is logically and dimensionally independent of what is said. For example, If utterances (9B) (=goal shifting comparison) and (10B) (=goal-internal comparison) are challenged by saying (12), (12) only targets the at-issue part of (8B):

- (12) Iya sore-wa uso-da.  
No that-TOP false-PRED  
'No, that’s false.'

One might consider the possibility that the pragmatic *sore-yori* is a presupposition trigger. However, I assume that the comparative meaning conveyed by the pragmatic *sore-yori* is not a presupposition. It is speaker-oriented, and its meaning is not something that is assumed to be already part of the background between the speaker and hearer.

The crucial point of this analysis is that the goal-shifting and goal-internal types have the same CI meaning. Namely, the information concerning goal-shifting or goal-internal comparison is not part of the meaning of the expression *sore-yori*. In Section 4, I will claim that the difference between goal-shifting and goal-internal comparison can be derived via pragmatic reasoning.

### 3.3 Pragmatic *sore-yori* operates on a speech act

In Section 3.2, I proposed that the pragmatic *sore-yori* compares two utterances, not propositions. This proposal predicts that the at-issue utterance followed by *sore-yori* can be any kind of speech act. It further predicts that the at-issue utterance and the utterance denoted by *sore* can have different illocutionary forces. As (13) to (15) show, these predictions are borne out:

- (13) A: Ima-kara tenisu si-tai. (Declarative)  
Now-from tennis do-want  
'I want to play tennis from now on.'  
B: Sore-yori-(mo) asita tesuto-da-yo. (Declarative)  
It-than-MO tomorrow test-PRED-YO  
'*Sore-yori-mo*, we have an exam tomorrow.'
- (14) A: Ima-kara tenisu si-tai. (Declarative)  
Now-from tennis do-want  
'I want to play tennis from now on.'  
B: Sore-yori-(mo) syukudai-wa owa-tta-no? (Interrogative)  
It-than-MO homework-TOP finish-PAST-Q  
'*Sore-yori-mo*, did you finish your homework?'
- (15) A: Ima-kara tenisu si-tai. (Declarative)  
Now-from tennis do-want  
'I want to play tennis from now on.'  
B: Sore-yori-(mo) syukuidai-o oe-te! (Imperative)  
It-than-MO homework-ACC finish-IMP  
'*Sore-yori-mo*, finish your homework!'

There are other combinations as well, but, due to the limitation of space, we cannot show them all. For example, A's utterance can be an interrogative and B's utterance can be an imperative. The pragmatic *sore-yori* allows cross-speech act comparison.

### 3.4 Difference with metalinguistic comparison

In Section 3.2, I claimed that the pragmatic use of *sore-yori* posits a scale of preference. In this sense, it is similar to a metalinguistic comparison (in terms of attitude). According to Giannakidou & Yoon (2011), a metalinguistic comparison introduces one's point of view regarding a sentence and shows a preference for one sentence over another in a given context, as illustrated in (16):<sup>4</sup>

- (16) a. Your problems are more financial than legal. (Accuracy assessment)  
 b. I would rather die than marry him. (Emphatic preference) (McCawley 1988: 673)

Giannakidou & Yoon (2011) posit the lexical entry in (17) for the emphatic preference type:

- (17) (Emphatic preference type: “Would rather type”)  
 $[[MORE_{ML}]] = \lambda P \lambda Q [P \succ_{Des(\alpha)(c)} Q]$  where  $\succ_{Des(\alpha)(c)}$  is an ordering function such that, for  $P$  and  $Q$  and degrees  $d$  and  $d'$ , the degree  $d$  to which  $\alpha$  desires  $P$  in  $c$  is greater than the degree  $d'$  to which  $\alpha$  desires  $Q$  in  $c$ ;  $\alpha$  is the anchor of comparison;  $P$  and  $Q$  are Potts tuples for sentences  $\langle \Pi; \Sigma; \alpha : t \rangle$ .  
 (Giannakidou & Yoon (2011: 639))

In the typical emphatic preferential case, the propositions expressed by  $P$  and  $Q$  are compared. In an accuracy assessment, a speaker compares  $u$  and  $u'$ , which are quotations from sentences  $P$  and  $Q$ .<sup>5</sup> However, there are several important differences between a metalinguistic comparison and the pragmatic use of *sore-yori*. First, as we discussed in Section 3.3, unlike a metalinguistic comparison, a comparison made with *sore-yori* is made between two utterances, not between two propositions. For example, the pragmatic *sore-yori* can compare a previous assertion and a question, as we observed in (15). Second, while a metalinguistic comparison contributes to what is said, the pragmatic *sore-yori* does not. If we say “No, that’s not true” after (16a) and (16b), the denial can target the metalinguistic comparative meaning. However, as we discussed in Section 3.2, the denial cannot target the meaning triggered by the pragmatic *sore-yori*.

### 3.5 The case without *sore-yori*

Next, we consider the function of the pragmatic use of *sore-yori* through comparison with a situation in which *sore-yori* is not used. Let us compare the dialogues in (18) and (19).

- (18) (With *sore-yori*)

<sup>4</sup>Although many researchers have focused on accuracy assessment as a common kind of metalinguistic comparison (see McCawley (1988); Morzycki (2011)), Giannakidou and Yoon assume emphatic preferences and accuracy assessments to form a natural class that involves a speaker's preferential attitude.

<sup>5</sup>Giannakidou & Yoon (2011) posit the lexical entry in (i) for the meaning of accuracy assessment:

- (i) (Accuracy assessment metalinguistic comparative)  
 $[[MORE_{ML}]] = \lambda u \lambda u' [u \succ_{Des(\alpha)(c)} u']$

- A: Ima-kara tennis si-nai?  
 Now-from tennis do-NEG  
 ‘Can’t we play tennis from now on?’
- B: Sore-yori ore-tachi ashita tesuto-da.  
 It-than-MO I-PL tomorrow test-PRED  
 ‘*Sore-yori*, we have an exam tomorrow.’

(19) (Without *sore-yori*)

- A: Ima-kara tennis si-nai?  
 Now-from tennis do-NEG  
 ‘Can’t we play tennis from now on?’
- B: Ore-tachi ashita tesuto-da.  
 I-PL tomorrow test-PRED  
 ‘We have an exam tomorrow.’ Conversational implicature: I can’t play tennis.

In (18) and (19), the Speaker B utterances convey the same semantic meaning. Also, they both conversationally implicate “I can’t play tennis.” However, B’s utterance in (19) sounds more direct than the one in (18). In (18), B implies that he/she cannot play tennis by changing the topic/goal of the conversation. On the other hand, in (19), B implies that he/she cannot play tennis in reply to Speaker A’s request/proposal. This difference suggests that although *sore-yori-mo* does not contribute to what is said, it nonetheless has a significant effect on the structure of the discourse.

## 4 Formal analysis

### 4.1 The compositional semantics of the pragmatic *sore-yori*

Let us now analyze the meaning of the pragmatic *sore-yori* in a theoretical way. In Section 3, I proposed that *sore-yori* conventionally implicates that the at-issue utterance that follows is preferable to the previous utterance referred to by *sore*. Here, I propose that there is a CI-inducing *yor* ‘than’ that compares utterances based on the desirability function (cf. Giannakidou and Yoon’s analysis of metalinguistic comparison), as in (20) (*a* is the type of speech act; *U* and *U*’ are variables for type *a*; superscript *a* stands for the at-issue type; and superscript *s* stands for the shunting type. I will explain these notions later in this section).

$$(20) \quad [[\text{yor}_{PRAG}]] : \langle a^a, \langle a^a, t^s \rangle \rangle \\
 = \lambda U \lambda U' [U' \succ_{Des(\alpha)(c)} U] \text{ where } \succ_{Des(\alpha)(c)} \text{ is an ordering function such that, for } U \\
 \text{ and } U' \text{ and degrees } d \text{ and } d', \text{ the degree } d \text{ to which } \alpha \text{ desires to utter } U' \text{ in } c \text{ is} \\
 \text{ greater than the degree } d' \text{ to which } \alpha \text{ desires } U \text{ in } c.$$

The pragmatic use of *yor* compares two utterances based on a desirability scale. Recall that here, unlike in the case of metalinguistic comparison, the pragmatic use of *sore-yori* compares speech acts.

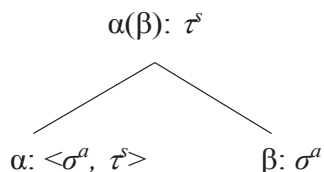
As for the meaning of *sore*, one must assume it refers to a previous utterance, as indicated in (21):



(21)  $[[sore]] : a^a = \text{the previous utterance}$

*Sore* and *yor* are then combined via the shunting operation in (22) (McCready (2010); Gutzmann (2012)), as shown in (23):

(22) The shunting application (McCready 2010)



The superscript  $a$  stands for the at-issue type, and the superscript  $s$  stands for the shunting type. Shunting type  $s$  is utilized for the interpretation of special kind of CI content. The rule in (22) says that an  $\alpha$  of type  $\langle \sigma^a, \tau^s \rangle$  takes  $\beta$  of type  $\sigma^a$  and returns  $\tau^s$ . This rule ensures that there is only a CI meaning at the end of derivation. Note that this rule is specific to certain CI meanings, i.e., resource-sensitive CI. The rule is different from Potts's CI function application, which is resource-insensitive.

(23)  $[[yori]]([[sore]]) : \langle a^a, t^s \rangle = \lambda U' [U' >_{Des(a)(c)} \text{the previous utterance}]$

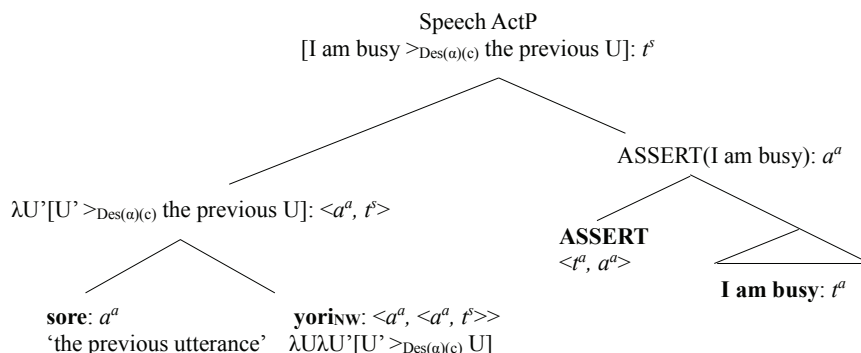
*Sore-yori* then combines with a main utterance. As for the representation of speech act (Stenius (1967); Krifka (2001)), I will assume that it has the type system in (24):

- (24) a. Basic types:  $e$  entities,  $t$  truth values,  $p (=st)$  propositions, a speech acts.
- b. A speech act operator is a function from the type of sentence radical it selects to type  $a$ .
- c. The variables for type  $a = \{U, U', U'', \dots\}$

The figure in (26) shows the logical structure of (25):

(25) *Sore-yori-(mo) watashi-wa ima isogasii.*  
 That-than-MO I-TOP now busy  
 ‘*Sore-yori-mo*, I am busy now.’

(26)



One potential problem with this analysis is that the at-issue speech act (assertion) itself is not represented at the root level even though it is performed. In order to avoid this problem, drawing on the concept of a parse tree in Potts (2005) and McCready (2010), I posit the general rule in (27) for the interpretation of an (embedded) speech act:

- (27) Let  $T$  be a semantic parse tree with the CI term  $\alpha : \sigma^s$  on its root node and distinct terms  $\beta_1 : a^a, \dots, \beta_n : a^a$  on nodes in it. Then, the interpretation of  $T$  is  $\langle [[\alpha : \sigma^s]], \{[[\beta_1 : a^a]], \dots, [[\beta_n : a^a]]\} \rangle$ .

With this rule, we can ensure that the final interpretation includes both the CI meaning of type  $t_s$  and the embedded speech act of type  $a^a$ .

#### 4.2 Deriving goal-internal and goal-shifting comparison via a single lexical item

The question is how to distinguish between goal-shifting and goal-internal comparison.

- (28) (Goal-shifting comparison)

A: *Tenisu-yara-nai?*

Tennis-do-NEG

‘Can’t we play tennis?’

B: *Sore-yori-(mo) syukudai-owa-tta-no?*

That-than-MO homework-finish-PAST-Q

‘*Sore-yori-mo*, did you finish your homework?’

- (29) (Goal-internal comparison)

(Context: What are the good points of this sports gym?)

A: *Kono jimū-wa sisetu-ga subarasii-desu.*

This gym-TOP equipment-NOM great-PRED.POLITE

‘As for this gym, the equipment is great.’

B: *Iya sore-yori-(mo) mazu insutorakutaa-ga yasashii-desu.*

No that-than-MO first instructor-NOM kind-PRED.POLITE

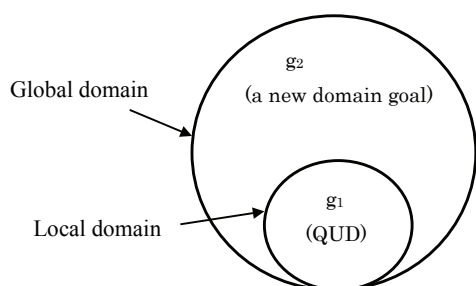
‘No, *Sore-yori-mo*, first of all, the instructors are kind.’

I would like to propose that the two types of comparison are distinguished by the pragmatic reasoning in (30):

- (30) a. Goal-shifting comparison: If the domain goal behind the speaker’s utterance is completely irrelevant to the domain goal behind the previous utterance, it is reasonable to assume that the speaker is trying to shift the goal of conversation (discourse goal).
- b. Goal-internal comparison: If the domain goal behind the speaker’s utterance is relevant to the domain goal behind the previous utterance, it is reasonable to assume that the speaker shares the same goal as the hearer.

The underlying assumption behind this analysis is that, usually, an utterance promotes the achievement of an accepted discourse goal (QUD) (Roberts (2012)). If B's domain goal is relevant to the domain goal of A's previous utterance, there is no problem with regard to the discourse move. However, if B's domain goal is not relevant to A's domain goal, it is natural to consider that B is trying to reject A's domain goal and make his/her own domain goal the center of the conversation. Recall that one's domain goal (speaker's wish) generally directly promotes the type of inquiry (question under discussion) that we conduct in conversation. This means that by using the goal-shifting *sore-yori*, the speaker tries to shift a discourse goal that is in the local domain to another goal that is in the global domain, illustrated in Figure (31):

(31)



### 4.3 Some notes on the analysis

Before concluding this section, I will add some notes on the above analysis. First, the relevance-based analysis is concerned with the relevance between domain goals, not between utterances themselves. Since *sore-yori* suggests that the at-issue utterance is preferable to a previous utterance, the two utterances are actually relevant at the utterance level. As (32) shows, if the two utterances are completely irrelevant, it is hard to compare them on the scale of preference:

(32) A: Kyoo-wa atui-ne.

Today-TOP hot-NE

'It is hot today, isn't it?'

B: # Sore-yori-(mo) 3 kakukei-no kakudo-no souwa-wa 180-do-da.

That-than-MO triangle-GEN angle-GEN sum-TOP 180-degree-PRED

'*Sore-yori-mo*, the sum of 3 angles of a triangle is 180 degrees.'

(32B) is odd because there seems to be no reason for the speaker to compare the previous utterance on climate and his/her own utterance concerning the sum of the angles of a triangle.<sup>6</sup>

Another point to note regarding the analysis is that in some cases, the goal related to a previous utterance and the goal related to the at-issue utterance can be understood under a precondition relationship. For example, in the conversation in (33), we can understand that the goal of playing tennis can be accomplished only after A completes his/her homework:

<sup>6</sup>Notice, however, that if we posit a context where B is teaching math to A, (32B) is perfectly natural.

- (33) A: Ima-kara tenisu si-yoo.  
Now-from tennis do-let's  
'Let's play tennis from now on.'  
B: Sore-yori-(mo) syukudai-wa owa-tta-no?  
It-than-MO homework-TOP finish-PAST-Q  
'*Sore-yori-mo*, did you finish your homework?'

However, there are also cases where no precondition relationship between the two domain goals is established. Observe the dialogue in (34):

- (34) A: Kyo-wa atui-desu-ne.  
Today-TOP hot-PRED.POLITE-NE  
'It is hot today, isn't it?'  
B: Sore-yori kinoo-no kaigi-wa doo-da-tta?  
It-than yesterday-GEN meeting-TOP how-PRED-PAST  
'*Sore-yori*, how was yesterday's meeting?'

Here, we do not assume that talking about yesterday's meeting is the precondition of talking about weather.

## 5 The speaker's negative attitude in goal-shifting comparison

In Section 4, we analyzed the meaning of the pragmatic use of *sore-yori*. Let us now turn our attention to the negative attitudinal characteristic of goal-shifting comparison. As we observed in the Introduction, sentences with the pragmatic *sore-yori* often indicate the speaker's negative feeling toward the addressee:

- (35) (Context: A mother and her son are talking.)  
A: Ima-kara tenisu si-yoo.  
Now-from tennis do-let's  
'Let's play tennis from now on.'  
B: Sore-yori-(mo) syukudai-wa owa-tta-no?  
It-than-MO homework-TOP finish-PAST-Q  
At-issue: Did you finish your homework?  
CI: The goal related to my utterance is preferable to the goal related to your utterance. Implicature: I have a negative feeling toward your goal.

By signaling that the speaker's goal is preferable to the addressee's goal, the speaker implies his/her negative attitude toward the addressee's goal. However, as we observed in the Introduction, the pragmatic *sore-yori* does not always indicate a negative attitude:

- (36) (Context: Two friends are talking with each other.)  
A: Tenisu si-nai?  
Tennis do-NEG  
'Can't we play tennis?'

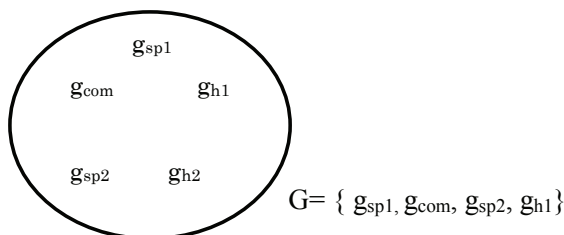
B: Ore-mo tennisu si-tai-kedo, sore-yori-(mo), syukudai-wa owa-tta?  
 I-also tennis do-want-but it-than-mo, homework-TOP finish-PAST  
 ‘I also want to play tennis but, *sore-yori-mo* did you finish homework?’

In B’s utterance in (36), there seems to be no strong negativity attitude toward A. The negativity is very weak even if it exists.

How can we explain the defeasibility and various degrees of negative inference? In this section, I will argue that we can explain the various degrees of speaker’s emotion and the context in which negativity arises by the competition/comparison between goals. Further, I will argue that the degree of negativity can change depending on whether the goals associated with a previous utterance and an at-issue utterance can be shared between the speaker and hearer.

The key point for my analysis is that a speaker and a hearer can have different goals. Regarding the notion of a domain goal ( $g$ ), building on the notion of goals in Roberts (1996, 2012), I assume two types: the speaker’s goal ( $g_{sp}$ ) and hearer’s goal ( $g_h$ ). If a goal is shared by the speaker and hearer, then it is a common goal ( $g_{com}$ ).

(37)



Based on the notions of goals, I propose that there can be five patterns of goal-shifting comparison, listed in (38).

(38) The types of goal-shifting comparison

	The goal of the speaker’s utterance (= target)	The goal of the previous utterance (= standard)	Negativity toward the hearer (via pragmatic inference)
Type A	$g_{sp}$	$g_h$	Strong
Type B	$g_{com}$	$g_h$	Weak
Type C	$g_{sp}$	$g_{com}$	Weak/none
Type D	$g_{com}$	$g_{com}$	Very weak
Type E	$g_{sp}$	$g_{sp}$	None

In Type A, the domain goal associated with the previous utterance is the hearer’s personal goal, and the goal of the speaker’s utterance is the speaker’s personal goal. In this situation, there is a strong negativity by the speaker toward the addressee. A typical example of this type is shown in (39):

(39) A: Ima-kara tennisu si-yoo.  
 Now-from tennis do-let’s  
 ‘Let’s play tennis from now on.’

B: Sore-yori-(mo) watashi-wa ima isogasii.  
That-than-MO I-TOP now busy  
'Sore-yori-mo, I am busy now.'

Speaker B rejects A's goal and says his/her own goal (i.e., to focus on his/her own agenda). B will likely feel offended by A's utterance.

In Type B, the goal of the previous utterance is the hearer's personal goal, but the goal associated with the speaker's utterance can be considered a shared goal. In this situation, the negativity toward the addressee is weak:

- (40) A: Ima-kara tennis si-yoo.  
Now-from tennis do-let's  
'Let's play tennis from now on.'
- B: Sore-yori-(mo) ore-tati ashita tesuto-da.  
It-than-MO I-PL tomorrow test-PRED  
'Sore-yori-mo, we have an exam tomorrow.'

Notice that in (40), Speaker B uses the first person plural *ore* (which is a casual form used only by male speakers). Clearly, by using the plural form, B intends that his domain goal ("to prepare for an exam") is relevant to A's goal. Since B at least thinks that his domain goal can be shared between A and B, his attitude appears softer than in Type A.

In Type C, the goal associated with the previous utterance is a common goal, but the goal associated with the speaker's utterance is the speaker's personal goal. This type does not indicate a strong negative attitude toward the addressee:

- (41) A: Tennis si-nai?  
Tennis do-NEG  
'Can't we play tennis?'
- B: Tennis si-tai-kedo, sore-yori-(mo), report-o owarase-naito.ikenai.  
Tennis do-want-but it-than-mo, report-ACC finish-have.to  
'I also want to play tennis but, *sore-yori-mo* I have to finish writing a report.'

In (41), Speaker B prioritizes his/her own goal ("to finish writing a report") over A's goal ("to play tennis") and rejects A's goal; however, B at least acknowledges A's goal. Since B acknowledges the existence of A's goal, the rejection is mild. Therefore, compared to the situation in Type A, B's negative attitude is mild.

In Type D, both the goal associated with the previous utterance and the goal associated with the speaker's utterance are considered to be a common goal. In this type, the degree of negativity is very low:

- (42) A: Tennis si-nai?  
Tennis do-NEG  
'Can't we play tennis?'
- B: Tennis si-tai-kedo, sore-yori-(mo), ore-tati asita  
Tennis do-want-but it-than-mo I-PL tomorrow  
tesuto-da-yo-ne.  
test-PRED-YO-confirm.Q

‘I also want to play tennis but, *sore-yori-mo* we have an exam tomorrow.’

In this dialogue, B acknowledges A’s goal and proposes/confirms another common goal. Since both goals are common goals, there is no personal discrepancy between the speaker’s goal and the hearer’s goal. Thus, there is only a very low degree of negativity behind B’s utterance (or maybe no negativity at all).

Type E is a monologue in which the speaker compares his/her own goals:

- (43) A: *Tenisu si-yoo-kana.*  
Tennis do-want-PRT  
‘Maybe I will play tennis.’  
A: *Sore-yori-(mo) asita-wa tesuto-da-tta.*  
That-than-MO tomorrow-TOP exam-PRED-PAST  
‘*Sore-yori-mo*, I have an exam tomorrow.’

Since (43) is a monologue, there is no negative attitude toward a hearer.

The above discussions strongly suggest that the degree of the speaker’s negative emotion is context-dependent. The speaker’s negative emotion is strong if he/she compares his/her personal (i.e., non-shared) goal and the hearer’s personal goal, while if the goals can be shared by the speaker and hearer, there is no strong negativity (or maybe no negativity at all).

## 6 Lexically derived negative attitude: *sonna-koto-yori* ‘such.a.thing-than’

With the expression *sonna koto-yori* (rather than *sore-yori*), the speaker’s negative attitude becomes more salient:

- (44) {*Sore-yori-(mo)/ sonna koto-yori-(mo)*} *kinoo-no shiken-wa*  
*that-than-MO/ such thing-than-MO yesterday-GEN exam-TOP*  
*doo-da-tta?*  
*how-PRED-PAST*  
‘*Sore-yori-mo/sonna koto-yori-mo*, how was yesterday’s exam?’

*Sonna koto* ‘such a thing’ is marked (compared to *sore* ‘it’) and has a negative meaning. Suzuki (2005) claims that *sonna* N is used when the speaker regards the situation as subjectively negative, such as meaningless, worthless, unexpected, or unrealistic. *Sonna koto* can refer to various things. For example, in (45a), it refers to an act that was previously mentioned in the discourse.

- (45) a. *Sonna koto-wa si-taku-nai.* (*sonna koto* = act)  
Such thing-TOP do-want-NEG  
‘I don’t want to do such a thing.’  
b. *Sonna koto-wa atarimae-da.* (*sonna koto* = event/fact)  
Such thing-TOP a.matter.of.course-PRED  
‘Such a thing is not surprising.’

In the case of goal-shifting comparison, we can say that *sonna koto* refers to an utterance itself and evaluates it as meaningless. I propose that *sonna koto* is mixed content (e.g., McCready (2010); Gutzmann (2011)), which semantically refers to an utterance, an act, or a situation and simultaneously denotes a CI meaning that a speaker construes them negatively. For instance, we can define *sonna koto* in goal-shifting comparison as in (46):<sup>7</sup>

- (46) [[*sonna koto*]] :  $\langle a^a, t^s \rangle =$  a previous utterance  $\blacklozenge$  I consider the utterance negatively (meaningless)

The negative evaluative indicated by *sonna-koto* is conventional and not defeasible. This is supported by the fact that it cannot be used in a situation where the speaker has a positive evaluation toward the previous utterance, as illustrated in (47):

- (47) A: Ima-kara tenisu si-yoo.  
Now-from tennis do-let's  
'Let's play tennis from now on.'  
B: # Tenisu si-tai-nda-kedo sonna koto-yori-(mo) syukudai-wa  
Tennis do-want-NODA-but such a.thing-than-MO homework-TOP  
owa-tta-no?  
finish-PAST-Q  
'Sonna koto-yori-mo, did you finish your homework?'

These discussions suggest that in, a goal-shifting comparison, there are two ways to convey a speaker's negative attitude toward the addressee, i.e., using a specific lexical item (*sonna koto*) or pragmatic inference.

## 7 Difference with the other goal-shifting marker *tokorode* 'by the way'

Finally, let us briefly compare goal-shifting comparison using *sore-yori* and the typical goal-shifting marker *tokorode* 'by the way', which is shown in (48).

- (48) Tokorode siken-wa doo-da-tta?  
By.the.way exam-TOP how-PRED-PAST  
'By the way, how was the exam?'

The natural context in which *tokorode* is used is one in which the speaker assumes that the conversation has reached a goal (at least for one speaker). The interesting point about *tokorode* is that it cannot be used in a context where the goal-shifting *sore-yori* is used, as shown in (49)(see also Kawabata (2002)):

<sup>7</sup> The adnominal demonstrative *sonna* 'such a' can also combine with various kinds of common nouns, as in (i) and (ii):

- (i) *sonna* {mono/hito}  
such.a thing/person  
'such a thing/person'

These examples also convey the speaker's negative attitude, i.e., toward the modified noun.



- (49) A: *Tenisu-si-nai?*  
Tennis-do-NEG  
'Can't we play tennis?'  
B: {*Sore-ori-(mo)/??tokorode*} *syukudai owa-tta-no?*  
That-than-MO/by.the.way homework finish-PAST-Q  
'*Sore-ori-mo/??tokorode*, did you finish your homework?'

Intuitively, it is odd to use *tokorode* in (49B) because clearly, A and B have not finished talking about tennis. I consider that the expression *tokorode* includes the presupposition in (50):

- (50) [[*tokorode*]] =  $\lambda U$ : There was a discourse goal in the past, and the speaker and hearer have just reached the goal. *U*

On the other hand, the goal-shifting *sore-ori* does not have this kind of presupposition. Actually, it is very odd to use the goal-shifting *sore-ori* in a context where the speaker and hearer have just reached a prior discourse goal.

- (51) A: *Ashita tenisu si-nai?*  
Tomorrow tennis do-NEG  
'Can't we play tennis tomorrow?'  
B: *Un iiyo. Itumo-no basyo-de yar-oo.*  
Yes OK always-GEN place-LOC do-let's  
'Yes, OK. Let's play at the usual place.'  
B: {*Tokorode/??sore-ori*} *syukudai-wa owa-tta?*  
By.the.way/it-than homework-TOP finish-PAST  
'By the way/??*sore-ori*, did you finish your homework?'

It does not make sense to compare the prior discourse goal with B's new goal because the prior discourse goal has already been reached. The prior discourse goal is no longer active in the discourse.

## 8 Conclusion and theoretical implications

This paper investigated the meaning and pragmatic use of *sore-ori* in Japanese and considered the speaker's negative attitude behind the use of goal-shifting comparison.

As for the meaning of the pragmatic use of *sore-ori*, we observed that it can express a goal-shifting or goal-internal comparison. We argued that goal-internal and goal-shifting comparison have the same CI (i.e., the at-issue utterance is preferable to the previous utterance), and the difference between the two is derived as a result of pragmatic reasoning: if the goal associated with the previous utterance and the goal associated with the at-issue utterance are relevant, the comparison is goal-internal; otherwise, it is goal-shifting.

We then looked at the relationship between goal-shifting comparison and the speaker's negative attitude and showed that goal-shifting comparison can trigger various degrees of

negativity toward an addressee. We explained that the degree of negativity can change depending on whether the goals of utterances can be shared between the speaker and hearer.

We also compared *sore-yori* to the more marked expression *sonna koto-yori* ‘than such a thing’ and showed that the goal-shifting *sonna koto* is a mixed expressive: it semantically denotes a previous utterance, and at the same time, it conventionally implicates a strong negative attitude toward the previous utterance (thus, toward the addressee).

The theoretical implication of this paper is that shifting the goal without accomplishing the previous goal is highly attitudinal, and speakers can express degrees of negative emotion in various ways. This point is important for the theories of expressives. Especially, the phenomenon of goal-shifting comparison provides deeper insight into the relationship between direct and indirect expressives and the varieties of indirect expressives in natural language. Sawada (2014) proposes that in natural language, there are two types of expressives, direct and indirect:

- (52) a. Direct expressives: In direct expressives, the speaker directly expresses his/her attitude/construal toward the target.
- b. Indirect expressives: In indirect expressives, the speaker expresses his/her attitude or construal toward the target through comparison/contrast with its alternative.

(Sawada 2014: 241)

For example, Sawada (2014) considers expressives like *bastard* in (53a) and *man* in (53b) are direct expressives:

- (53) a. That bastard Kresge is famous. (target = Kresge) (Potts 2007: 168)
- b. Man, I got an A on my calculus test!! (target = proposition) (McCready 2009: 675)

Here, *bastard* conventionally implicates that the speaker has a negative attitude toward *Kresge*, and *man* in (53b) expresses a heightened positive emotion toward the proposition that the speaker got an A on the calculus test.

On the other hand, Sawada (2014) assumes that the negative use of the Japanese comparative intensifier *motto* is an indirect expressive:

- (54) Kono mise-no keeki-wa motto ooki-katta. (Negative reading)

this store-GEN cake-TOP MOTTO big-PAST

At-issue: This store’s cake was big.

CI: The previous size of this store’s cake is much bigger than the current size.

Conversational implicature via CI: This store’s cake is small now.

Sawada (2014) analyzes that *motto* in (54) conventionally implicates that there is a large gap between the current degree and an expected degree (the degree in the past) with regard to the size of the store’s cake. He then argues that the speaker’s negative evaluation of the utterance situation, that the store’s cake is small now, comes from the large gap between the expected degree and the current degree.

If we consider the difference between *sore-yori* and *sonna koto-yori*, we can say that *sonna koto-yori* is a direct expressive, while *sore-yori* is an indirect expressive. The goal-shifting *sore-yori* can be regarded as an indirect expressive because the speaker expresses a negative attitude toward the addressee's goal only through comparison/competition with its alternative (i.e., the speaker's own goal). On the other hand, *sonna koto-yori* can be regarded as a direct expressive because the speaker directly expresses a (strong) negative evaluation of the previous utterance. In this paper, I have sought to clarify the expressives involved in the choice of a goal. In a future study, I would like to consider the relation between goal-shifting and politeness. An interesting point regarding the negative attitudinal meaning indicated by *sore-yori* is that it does not disappear even if politeness expressions are used in the same sentence:

- (55) A: Kore-kara yuusyoku-ni iki-mas-yoo.  
This-from dinner-to go-PRED.POLITE-let's  
'Let's go to dinner.'  
B: Sore-yori-(mo) repooto-wa owari-masi-ta-ka?  
That-than-MO report-TOP finish-PRED.POLITE-PAST-Q  
'*Sore-yori-mo*, did you finish your project?'

In (55), Speaker B uses the performative honorific *desu*, which signals a speaker's respect toward an addressee (see Harada (1976); Potts & Kawahara (2004)). However, we can still see a strong negative attitude expressed in (55B). Why is it that politeness markers do not cancel a negative attitude? One explanation is that shifting a goal occurs at a higher level than talking to an addressee in a polite way. I leave this question for future research.

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