

EXPRESSIVES AND ALTERNATIVES

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Overview

- Anti-honorifics are expressive operators targeting the referent of some element of the sentence.
- Wh-words denote sets of *alternative entities*, introducing alternative possible referents.
- So when expressives occur in a wh-question, which alternative(s) do they target?

Key Observation

- Expressives **within** the WH-phrase (tend to) apply to **all** alternatives
- Expressives **outside** the WH-phrase (tend to) apply only to **true** alternatives.

The teacher is understood to be angry at or disrespectful to **all students present**.

The teacher is understood to be angry at or disrespectful to **whichever student drank the beer**.

Anti-Honorifics in Japanese

Two means of expressing antihonorification of the subject in Japanese:

1. Subject pronoun like *koitsu*, lexically specified for antihonorification of the referent.
2. Verb suffix *yagar*, which expresses antihonorification of the sentential subject (cf. Potts and Kawahara 2004).

- (1) $\{kare / koitsu\}\text{-}ga$ $saigo\text{-}no$ $biiru\text{-}o$ $\{non\text{-}da/nomi\text{-}yagat\text{-}ta\}$
{he he.ANTIHON}-NOM last-GEN beer-ACC {drink-PST/drink-ANTIHON-PST}
'He drank the last beer.' (+ speaker has a negative attitude toward the subject)

- (2) $[[koitsu_i]]^g = \{ANIM(g(i)) \wedge MASC(g(i))\}.g(i) \blacklozenge ANTIHON(g(i))$

→ *Mixed expressive content* (McCready, 2010)

- In the at-issue dimension, it denotes a variable, valued by the assignment function g , the value of which is presupposed to be masculine and animate.
- In the expressive dimension, indicates antihonorification toward that entity.

- (3) $[[yagar]] = \lambda P\lambda x.P(x) \blacklozenge \lambda P\lambda x.ANTIHON(x) \wedge bad_s(P(x)) : \langle\langle e, t \rangle, \langle e, t \rangle\rangle^a \times \langle\langle e, t \rangle, \langle e, \varepsilon \rangle\rangle$

→ *Function from at-issue to mixed type predicates* (improving on Potts and Kawahara 2004)

- Combines with a predicate meaning of type $\langle e, t \rangle$ and yields an object of mixed type $\langle e, t \rangle \blacklozenge \langle e, \varepsilon \rangle$.
- The resulting verbal predicate applies to the subject argument to return a predicate expressing antihonorification of the subject and an emotive attitude of the speaker with respect to the proposition denoted by the sentence.

Either or both of the two antihonorific strategies can be used in (1) with similar effects; we model this here with the primitive (expressive) relation ANTIHON (cf. Potts and Kawahara 2004; Sells and Kim 2007; McCready 2010, 2015); further details given in the paper.

Questions and Anti-Honorifics

- (4) Context: A teacher is at a restaurant with his students. Returning from the bathroom, he finds his beer glass, and all the remaining beer bottles, empty.
- a. $doitsu\text{-}ga$ $saigo\text{-}no$ $biiru\text{-}o$ $non\text{-}da$ (nda)
who.ANTIHON-NOM last-GEN beer-ACC drink-PST (PRT)
'Which jerk drank the last beer?'
- b. $dare\text{-}ga$ $saigo\text{-}no$ $biiru\text{-}o$ $nomi\text{-}yagat\text{-}ta$ (nda)
who-NOM last-GEN beer-ACC drink-ANTIHON-PST (PRT)
'Who friggin drank the last beer?'

Proposal

Key Idea

- Hamblin-style alternatives with pointwise function application is the mode of composition within WH-phrases, but
- Composition outside WH-phrases yields Karttunen-style denotations by use of restriction to the true answer.

Start with a Hamblin (1973) alternative semantics of WH-phrases, following the approach developed by Kratzer and Shimoyama (2002).

- (5) a. $[[dare]] = \{x \mid human(x) \wedge x \in C\}$
b. $[[doitsu]] = \{x \blacklozenge ANTIHON(x) \mid human(x) \wedge x \in C\}$

- Note that the predication of humanity serves to restrict the set, whereas the anti-honorific targets whatever entities are in the set.
- We view this as a fundamental difference in how presuppositional and expressive content function in the generation of alternatives.
- WH-phrase alternatives are closed off by a Q particle denoting a choice function variable (Hagstrom 1998 and Cable 2008, 2010).
- This choice function variable is then bound by a higher question operator.
- The WH-phrase combines with the matrix question operator to derive not the set of all *possible* answers, but the set of all *true* answers (Karttunen 1977).

See the handout for further details. The effect is that expressive content appearing *outside* the WH-phrase will apply only to *true* alternatives.

Cross-Linguistic Support: Cantonese

Cantonese *gwai2* 'ghost' can appear either inside the wh-word itself (6a) or within the predicate (6b) (data courtesy Regine Lai and Grégoire Winterstein):

- (6) a. $bin1\text{-}gwai2\text{-}go3$ $jam2zo2$ $ngo5$ $ge3$ $be1zau2?$
Who.GHOST drink-PFV my/me LP beer
b. $bin1\text{-}go3$ $jam2\text{-}gwai2\text{-}zo2$ $ngo5$ $ge3$ $be1zau2?$
Who drink-GHOST-PFV my/me LP beer
'Who drank my beer?'

- (6a) targets everyone, whether they drank the beer or not.
- (6b) targets whoever actually drank the beer.

Complex Wh-Phrases

- (7) $dono$ $oozeina$ $gakusei\text{-}ni$ $goukacusase\text{-}(yagat)\text{-}ta$
which many students-DAT pass-ANTIHON-PST
 $sensei\text{-}ga$ $okane\text{-}o$ $youkyuusi\text{-}(yagat)\text{-}ta$ (nda)
teacher-NOM money-ACC demand-ANTIHON-PST (PRT)
'[Which teacher that passed many students] demanded money?'

- WH-phrase-internal *yagar* denigrates *all* teachers that passed many students (ie. all teachers the WH-phrase ranges over).
- *yagar* in the matrix predicate only denigrates whichever teachers make the entire proposition true.

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