Deaccenting, Maximize Presupposition and Evidential Scale

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Introduction

Project Theme: *Characterizing the formal semantics of deaccentuation.*

Data: *Two intonation patterns of Japanese biased questions.*

Claim: *Deaccentuation in biased question has a lexicalized meaning, Givenness.*

Theoretical Consequence: *To shed new light on the semantics of Givenness and the discussion of what determines the prosodic patterns of sentences: Accenting or Deaccenting.*

Biased Questions

- A Japanese negative sentence uttered with a rising intonation expresses a biased question.
- It has a function similar to English tag questions or negative bias questions (Romero and Han 2004, Nilsenova 2002, Reese 2007).

(1) a. Where is Mary?
     b. heya ni i nai?
         room in exist NEG
         'She is in her room, isn't she?'/'Isn't she in her room?'
         (Bias: I think she is in her room.)
     c. #heya ni iru?
         room in exist
         #'She is in her room?'

Two Accent Patterns

- When the predicate of the construction is an adjective, there are two intonational patterns used by the young speakers of the Tokyo dialect.

  Rise with Accents used by all speakers of the Tokyo dialect.
  Rise with Deaccentuation used by young speakers.

(2) ano u'mi aoku nai?
     that sea blue NEG
     'That sea is blue, isn't it?/Isn't that sea blue?'

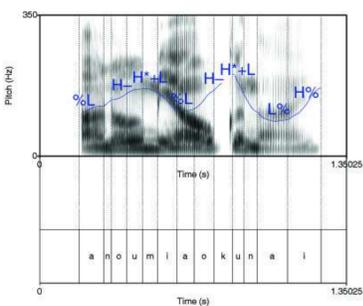a. ano u'mi a'oku nai?
        L%H*+L L%H%

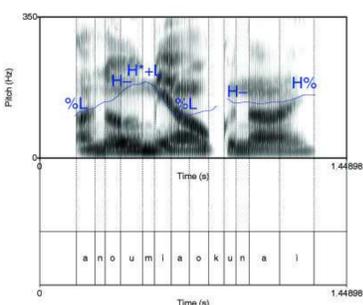Figure 1: Rise with Accents

b. ano u'mi aoku nai?
        %LH- H%

Figure 2: Rise with Deaccentuation

%LH- = AP-initial rise, H*+L=accentual fall,
L%H%=(incredulity rise)

Observations

- Negation has to be present for deaccentuation to occur.

(3) koko samui?
     here cold
     a. ✓ koko samu'i? (Rise with Accents)
     b. *koko samui? (Rise with Deaccentuation)

- Rise with Deaccentuation often (but not always) tones up emotive content.

(4) Ano umi aoku nai?
     that sea blue NEG
     'That sea is blue, isn't it?'
     (Surprise: 'and it's amazing how blue it is')

(5) Context: both interlocutors are in a cold room
     koko samuku nai?
     'It's cold here, isn't it?'/'Isn't it cold here?'
     a. ✓ sa'muku nai↑ (Rise with Accents)
     b. ✓ samuku nai↑ (Rise with Deaccentuation)
         (Complaint: 'It's too bad that it's cold here')

- The asymmetry of distribution:

  Rise with Accents can be used as long as the speaker is biased toward the positive answer.

  Rise with Deaccentuation requires the context where (direct) evidence is available for both of the interlocutors. (Compare (5) and (6))

(6) Context: B has just won a lottery.
     A has never won a lottery in her life.
     A: takarakuji atat tara ureshiku nai?
         lottery won COMP happy NEG
         'Aren't you happy, since you won a lottery?'
     (i) ✓ureshi'ku nai↑ (Rise with Accents)
     (ii) #ureshiku nai↑ (Rise with Deaccentuation)

Specific Research Questions

1. Why does **Rise with Deaccentuation** express emotive content?
2. Why does **Rise with Accents** have a wider distribution than **Rise with Deaccentuation**?
   I.e., why does RwD require evidence to be available, while a mere bias is sufficient for RwA?

Proposals

Proposal 1 Define Givenness in terms of Publicity.

Givenness in Information Structure ● The given material (discussed in Schwarzschild 1999, Ishihara 2003 among others) corresponds to the issue that is (or assumed to be) publicly committed.
- Both the speaker and the addressee are committed to the issue, 'Who came to the party?'

(7) a. Who came to the party?
     b. [Focus JOHN] [Given came to the party]

Givenness in Biased Question ● p is justifiable from the publicly available evidence (c.f. Barker ms., Gunlogson 2001).
- "I know that evidence is publicly available.
  I think that this evidence is clear enough to conclude that 'it is cold', to make it as a public commitment." (see (5))
- I.e. the degree of justification of the evidence for p is higher than the standard.

Proposal 2 Deaccentuation in biased question has a lexicalized meaning, Givenness.

(8) The felicity condition of p-*nai?* with Deaccentuation:
     The speaker assumes that p is already Given.
     (Evidence for p is publicly available.)

(9) Commitment Scale
     Public Commitment ⊂ (Genuine) Commitment
     i.e., if p is public commitment, it is entailed that p is private commitment, but not vice versa.

Emotive Meanings

- Uttering a biased question with RwD → Inquiring something Given (already publicly available)
- Not an information-seeking question→ Eliciting some reaction from the addressee (personal opinions, reminders etc.)
- Cancelable Implicature

Pragmatic Blocking

(10) MAXIMIZE PRESUPPOSITION:
      Use the strongest presupposition that is satisfied.
                  (adapted from Heim 1991 and Sauerland 2006)

- Givenness and Bias form a scale in terms of Commitment, Given (Public Commitment) ⊂ Bias (Genuine Commitment).
- By defining the lexical specification for deaccenting, we account for the asymmetry of the distribution:
  RwD Given
  RwA Bias (including Given)

Evidential Data

Rise with Deaccentuation is not compatible with inference derived from indirect evidence, nor from hearsay evidence. RwD is licit only when the speaker has direct (sensory) evidence. (See (4) and (5))

Rise with Accents can be used in all contexts as long as the speaker is expressing his/her bias.

(11) a. Indirect Evidence Context:
          Yao Ming is a huge guy. I've never seen his son, but, guessing from Yao Ming's height,...
      b. Yao-Ming-no musuko tte **ookiku nai**
          Yao.Ming-GEN son TOP big NEG
          'Yao Ming's son is big, isn't he?'
          (i) ✓ ooki'ku nai↑ (RwA)
          (ii) #ookiku nai↑ (RwD)

(12) a. Hearsay Evidence Context:
          The speaker has never been to Canada, but she heard that it's cold over there.
      b. kanada tte **samuku nai**
          Canada TOP cold NEG
          'Canada is cold, isn't it?'
          (i) ✓samu'ku nai↑ (RwA)
          (ii) #samuku nai↑ (RwD)

Evidential Hierachy

- As for p-*nai?* with deaccentuation, the scale proposed above specifies a stronger implicature (i.e., higher on the scale), resulting in direct evidentiality.
- Indeed, in the literature of evidentiality (Willett 1988, Faller 2002), direct evidence is placed higher on the scale than indirect evidence and hearsay evidence.

(13) a. Direct Evidence ⊂ (generic) Evidence.
      b. Direct Evidence > Indirect, Hearsay Evidence
          (Adapted from Willett 1988, Faller 2002)

Conclusions

- We have documented and analyzed two intonational patterns in Japanese.
  1. Rise with Accents: Bias, (Genuine) Evidence
  2. Rise with Deaccentuation: Given, Direct Evidence
- Giveness can be defined uniformly in terms of publicity.
  - Givenness in Information Structure: Publicly committed issue
  - Givenness in Biased Questions: Publicly available evidence (c.f. Barker ms., Gunlogson 2001)
- Deaccentuation in a biased question is grammaticalized.