

Pragmatic Effect of Tautological Reduplication

Takuro Tanaka

1. Introduction

In this paper I will provide an analysis for the interpretation of Japanese negative attitude expression: [noun - nominative morpheme - noun] sequence. Japanese has two kinds of nominative morpheme, *-ga* and *-wa*. It has been said that *-ga* represents that the subject is a focus of a sentence and introduces a presupposition that there should be an individual who will do the action which the VP describes. On the other hand, *-wa* plays a similar role as topic which introduces a new information (Mikami (1960), Shibatani (1990), Noda (1996), and among others).

- (1) A: Dare-ga tsugi-no jugyou-de happyou-suru no?
 who-(Nom) next-of class-in presentation-do (Q)
 B: {Boku-ga / *Boku-wa} yarimasu.
 I-(Nom) will do.
 A: “Who will make a presentation in the next class?”
 B: “I’ll do that”

(2) A: Dare-ga tsugi-no jugyou-de happyou-suru no?
 Who-(Nom) next-of class-in make a presentation (Q)

B: Sah. {*Boku-ga / Boku-wa} shira-nai yo.

Humm. I-(Nom) know-(Neg) (colloquial marker)

A: “Who will make a presentation in the next class?”

B: “I don’t know (who will be the next).”

In Japanese there are expressions with a sequence where two identical NPs are repeated and a nominative morpheme is in between. Henceforce, I will describe this configuration as [N-nom-N]. This fixed pattern of configuration shows up in four kinds of environment.

(3) Subordinated clause of matrix negative sentence

[Minna ga minna] imiron-wo sukina wakedewa nai
 everyone (Nom) everyone semantics-(Acc) like (weakness) Neg
 “It is not the case that everyone likes semantics”

(4) *Because-of* clause

[[Ziki ga ziki] dakara], yameta hou-ga iiyo
 timing (Nom) timing because of stop(Past) option-(Nom) better
 “I think it is better for you to stop because timing is not good”

(5) Complement of copula

Kare-wa [[gakusei wa gakusei] da]
 he-(Nom) student (Nom) student be
 “(He does not look like student, but actually) he is a student”

(6) Tautological copula sentence

[Kodomo wa kodomo] da

children (Nom) children be

“Children are children”, which implies that “Children are not adult and children are ill-mannered generally, so it is no use to expect that they behave themselves”

(3) and (4) contain a nominative morpheme *-ga*, and (5) and (6) do *-wa*. These four kinds of expression share the same type of configuration; [N-nom-N]. In the following part of this paper, I will show that this template of expression has a conversational force of negative attitude, and provide an analysis for its interpretation.

2. Data

2.1. Subordinated clause of matrix negative sentence (Aihara, 2000)

Aihara (2000) provides data which show that the [N-nom-N] sequence is a kind of negative polarity items (NPI, henceforth). In this case, each N is a generalized quantifier or an indeterminate pronoun with universal reading, as shown in (7). It has been pointed out that some indeterminate pronouns have universal reading (Kratzer and Shimoyama 2002).

(7) Universal Generalized Quantifiers and indeterminate pronouns in Japanese

zenbu (“all things”), *zenin* (“all people”), *minna* (“all people”),

subete (“everything”), *daremo* (whoever), *itsumo* (“whenever”),

doremo (“whichever”)

The licensing conditions for [N-nom-N] as NPI are the following: (i) [N-nom-N] is an external argument of an embedded clause, and (ii) the matrix clause contains negation. (8) shows the distributions.

- (8) a. * [s [Subj N ga N] ... VP ...]
 b. * [s [Subj N ga N] ... VP-Neg ...]
 c. ✓ [s' ... Neg ... [s [Subj N ga N] ... VP-(Neg) ...]]

If [N-nom-N] sequence appears in the matrix clause, a sentence is ruled out in both cases where the matrix clause is negated and not negated ((8a,b)). If [N-nom-N] shows up in subject position of embedded clause of which the matrix clause has negation, however, the whole sentence is totally fine ((8c)). Typical expressions for matrix clause in this construction are phrases with wide scope negation in (9).

Wide Scope Negation: Neg > ∀

- (9) ... (to iu) wake dewa nai “it is not the case that ...”
 ... to wa kagira-nai “it is not necessary that ...”
 ... to wa ie-nai “you can not say that ...”
 ... to wa shinzi rare-nai “it is unbelievable that ...”
 ... to wa omoe-nai “I do not think that ...”

(Aihara, 2000)

Now let us look at data. Sentences in (10) are examples for (8a), (11) for (8b), and (12) for (8c), respectively.

- (10) a. * [Minna ga minna] daigaku-e nyugaku-suru
 everyone (Nom) everyone universiy-to enter-do

“Everyone enters an university”

- b. * Gengogakka-no gakusei-wa [Minna ga minna]
 Ling.Dep.-(Gen) students-(Nom) everyone (Nom) everyone
 daigakuin-e shingaku-suru
 graduate course-to enter-do

“Every student in Linguistics Department enters a graduate course”

(ibid.)

- (11) a. * [Minna ga minna] daigaku-e nyugaku-shinai
 everyone (Nom) everyone university-to enter-do (Neg)

(koto)

(the thing that)

“(The thing that) it is not the case that for every student x, x enters an University”

- b. * [Minna ga minna] cyushoku-wo tabenai
 everyone (Nom) everyone lunch-(Acc) eat (Neg)

(koto)

(the thing that)

“(The thing that) it is not the case that for every student x, x eats a lunch”

(ibid.)

- (12) a. [s [Zenin ga zenin] sono jugyou-ni syusseki-shita]
 all people (Nom) all people that class-(Dat) attend-did

wakedewa nai

be the case (Neg)

“It is not the case that for every x, x attended the class” implies that
 “Almost all people came, but few people did not come to the class.”

- b. [s [Zenin ga zenin] sono jugyou-ni
 all people (Nom) all people that class-(Dat)
 syusseki-shi-nakatta] wakedewa nai
 attend-do-not(Past) be the case (Neg)

“It is not the case that nobody attended the class” implies that “Almost all people did not come, but few people attended the class.”

(ibid)

Important thing here is that sentences with this configuration sound that the speaker has a negative attitude for the event or state that the sentence describes. Look at (13). The sentence is totally fine following the appropriate configuration in (8c).

- (13) [Minna ga minna] sono jugyo-ni kita wakedeha-nai
 everyone (Nom) everyone that class-(Dat) came it is the case-Neg
 “It is not the case that for every x, x came to the class”

Let us suppose that the total number of student of a class is 30. (13) means that it is not the case that all 30 students attended the class, and actually a couple of students did not show up there. Besides, this sentence has an implicature; the state which the sentence describes is not preferable for the speakers. A speaker of (13) hopes that everyone comes to the class. Even when this sentences is embedded in “John believes that,” this implicature for a speaker survives. (14) does not have negative attitude of John, but of the speaker.

- (14) John-wa [CP [minna ga minna] sono jugyo-ni kita
 (Nom) everyoue (Nom) everyone that class-(Dat) came

wakedeha-nai to] sinziteiru
 it-is-not-the-case-Neg (C) believe(Prog)

“John believes that it is not the case that for every x, x came to the class”

2.1. *Because-of clause*

The [N-nom-N] sequence appear in *because-of* clause, as can be seen in (15).

- (15) a. [[Ziki ga ziki] dakara], yameta hou-ga iiyo
 timing (Nom) timing because of stop option-(Nom) better
 “I think it is better for you to stop because timing is not good”
- b. [[Basyho ga basyho] dakara], dare mo konai
 place (Nom) place because of who too come(Neg)
 kamosirenai
 may
 “I’m afraid nobody will come here because this place is pretty bad /
 inconvenient.”
- c. [[Aite ga aite] dakara], makeru kamoshirenai
 opponent (Nom) opponent because of, lose may
 “I’m afraid I will lose the game because my opponent is too strong”
- d. [[Mondai ga mondai] dakara], karugarushiku atsuka-e-nai
 problem (Nom) problem because of without-care treat-can-Neg
 “This problem is so serious as I cannot treat it roughly”

In (15) there is negative nuance for each sentence. These sentences imply that speakers of these sentences have negative or unfavorable attitude for an event in future. NPs in [N-nom-N] are the reasons for such attitude. If statements of matrix clause are preferable ones, the whole sentences do not make sense.

- (16) a. # [[Ziki ga ziki] dakara], yatta hou-ga iiyo
 timing (Nom) timing because of challenge option-(Nom) better
 “I think it is better for you to challenge because of the timing”
- b. # [[Basyho ga basyho] dakara], minna kuru to
 place (Nom) place because of everybody come (Comp)
 omouyo
 think
 “I think everybody will come here because of this place.”
- c. # [[Aite ga aite] dakara], kat-eru kamoshirenai
 opponent (Nom) opponent because of, win-can may
 “It is possible for me to win the game because of my opponent”
- d. # [[Mondai ga mondai] dakara], tekitouni yattekou
 problem (Nom) problem because of without-care will-treat
 “I will treat this problem so easily because of (importance of) the
 problem”

2.3. Predicate of copula sentences

The third type of example where [N-nom-N] appears is predicate of copula sentences. (17a) is an ordinal copula construction in Japanese. A structure of [N-nom-N] can be the complement of *da* “be” as shown in (17b). In this case, NP-Nom “student-(Nom)” in [N-nom-N] is not subject of *da* “be.”

- (17) a. John-wa gakusei da
 (Nom) student be
 “John is a student”
- b. John-wa [[gakusei wa gakusei] da]
 (Nom) student (Nom) student be
 “(John does not look like student, but actually) John is a student”

In this construction, the whole sentence with [N-nom-N] means that an individual given in subject has some property which is described by the complement of “be”, but likelihood of the property is less than usual cases. In (17b), for example, John is actually a student, but the likelihood of John to be a student is less than familiar standard of students. In short, John does not look like a student because of some bad reason (his poor appearance, his laziness, and so on). The same kinds of examples are shown in (18). In both sentences in (18), an individual denoted by subject NP does not reach a common-sense standard of property described in complement of “be.”

- (18) a. Annani toshi-wo totte-iru ga, John-wa [[gakusei wa
 such age-(Acc) take-(Prog) but John-(Nom) student (Nom)
 gakusei] da]
 student be

“Even though he is so old guy, but he is actually students in spite of his old age”

- b. Furuku-te yoku kosyou suru ga, kono kuruma-wa
 old-and often breakdown do but this car-(Nom)
 [[Toyota wa Toyota] da]
 (Nom) be

“This car is very old and often gets breakdown, but it is actually Toyota.”

If likelihood of an individual of subject NP deviates from some usual standard for good reason, the whole sentence sounds awkward.

- (19) a. # Annnani subarashii ronbun-wo kaku ga, John-wa
 such brilliant paper-(Acc) write but John-(Nom)

[[gakusei wa gakusei] da]

student (Nom) student be

“He writes very brilliant papers, but he is still a student.”

b. # Totemo koukyuuni mieru ga, kono kuruma-wa [[Toyota

very expensive look like but this car-(Nom)

wa Toyota] da]

(Nom) be

“This car looks very expensive, but it is actually just a Toyota”

2.4. Tautological copula sentence (Kagimura, 1998)

Kagimura (1998) provides data which show that the [N-nom-N] configuration appears in the remnant part of *da* “be.” This construction is a kind of tautology, but it does contain a conversational force. English also has the same construction as can be seen in (21).

(20) a. [Kodomo wa kodomo] da

children (Nom) children be

“Children are children”

b. [Kisoku wa kisoku] da

rule (Nom) rule be

“Rules are rules”

(21) Mother: Did the children ever clean up their rooms?

Father: Well, *boys will be boys*.

(Gibbs, 1994)

This is quite similar to the third examples which we saw in the previous subsection, but the difference is that N-nom in [N-nom-N] is the subject of

the whole sentence in (20a,b), while the configuration of [N-nom-N] is just a part of complement of “be” in (17b) and (18).

Sentences in (20) share a negative nuance of speaker. The meaning of the whole sentence sounds like tautological statement and vacuous, but actually these sentences have particular intents in a speech act. In (20a) there is some presupposition with bad nuance as common sense, saying that children are noisy and ill mannered generally. The intent of a speaker of (20a) is, for example, saying that “children are not adult and children are ill-mannered generally, so it is no use to expect that they behave themselves.” As for (20b), let us suppose a following situation; John made a parking violation, and an officer found out his car parked illegally. When officer gave a violation ticket to John, he asked the officer to let him go by. But unfortunately for John, the officer was a very serious guy, shaking his head and saying (20b), which means “actually there is a rule and I must follow it, so I cannot miss your parking violation.” Both (20a) and (20b) are some unpleasant statements. If [N-nom-N] appears in some statements with positive attitudes, such sentences sound odd.

(22) a. # [Kyouju wa kyouju] da

professor (Nom) professor be

“Professors are professors” (in a context where a speaker respects a professor)

b. # [Abenjaazu wa abenjaazu] da

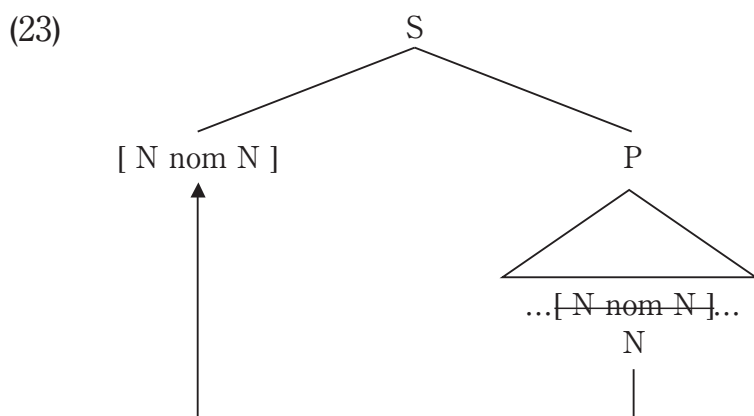
(Nom) be

“Avengers are Avengers” (in a situation where a speaker is amazed at the great performance of the avengers in a movie)

3. Analyses

Basic idea is the following; interpretation of a sentence with [N nom N] configuration has a presupposition with respect to speaker's negative attitude for event or state which the relevant sentence describes. [N nom N] makes a unit as a trigger of such a negative nuance. Following this assumption I suggest that [N nom N] moves up to the root of a sentence, and it takes the rest of the sentence as its argument. (23) is the LF of the construction. P is the original proposition from which [N nom N] goes out to the top of the tree. As for the proposition P, the trace of [N nom N] is interpreted as an N, which is just a noun without any negative nuance any more.

For example, in an interpretation of a sentence (24) (= (17b)), *gakusei wa gakusei*, which is the part of [N nom N] sequence, moves up to the root of the sentences during the derivation as can be seen in (25), and it takes the rest of the sentence P as its argument. After the movement of [N nom N], its trace of the unit is interpreted as just N, which is *gakusei* instead of *gakusei wa gakusei*.



(24) [P John-wa [[gakusei wa gakusei] da]]

(Nom) student (Nom) student be

“(John does not look like student, but actually) John is a student” (= (17)b)

(25) [Gakusei wa gakusei] [P John-wa [[~~gakusei wa gakusei~~] da]]



(26) [Gakusei wa gakusei] [P John-wa [[gakusei] da]]

The interpretation of [N nom N] is on the same way as adversative predicates “sorry” (cf. von Stechow, 1999, pp.121-127).

(27) [[(N nom N)]]^{f, g} (P)(α')(w) is defined only if

(i) $f_i(\alpha', w) = \text{DOX}(\alpha, w)$

(ii) $f_i(\alpha', w) \cap p \neq \emptyset$

(iii) $f_i(\alpha', w) - p \neq \emptyset$

if defined, [[(N nom N)]]^{f, g} (P)(α')(w) = 1 iff

$\forall w' \in \max_{g_i(\alpha', w)}(F_i(\alpha', w)): w' \in p$, where;

P: the whole proposition with N instead of [N nom N].

f: the modal base function from pairs of an individual and a world to a set of worlds.

g: the ordering source which maps pairs of an individual and a world to a set of propositions with respect to the subject's preferences

α' : a speaker

w: a possible world where α' utters the relevant sentence

$\text{DOX}(\alpha, w)$: the set of worlds compatible with everything α' in w believes (doxastically accessible worlds)

p: a set of worlds where P is true

The denotation of a sentence with [N nom N] can be defined if the following three presuppositions are satisfied. For one thing, $f_i(\alpha', w) = \text{DOX}(\alpha, w)$, which means that the modal base should be a speaker's belief in the interpretation of adversative expression. What is more, $f_i(\alpha', w) \cap p \neq \emptyset$, which intuitively means that $[[N \text{ nom } N]](P)$ presupposed that “the speaker does not believe that not P”. More precisely, the intersection between the set of a speaker's belief and the set of worlds where John is a student should not be null set. One final point is $f_i(\alpha', w) - p \neq \emptyset$, which requires that the truth of $[[N \text{ nom } N]](P)$ presupposes that “ α does not believe that p.” This means that the intersection between $f_i(\alpha', w)$ and the complementary set of p should not be null. In the interpretation of (24), for example, the sentence is defined only if (i) in a speaker's belief in w, (ii) a speaker does not believe that John is a student, (iii) and a speaker does not believe that John is not a student.

If defined, the denotation of a sentence with [N nom N] is true iff for all P-best worlds for a speaker with respect to the ordering relation g, these worlds are not the elements of the set of worlds where P is true. In other words, it is true iff in the best of all relevant worlds to speaker, P is not true. This interpretation follows the basic intuition that the sentence with [N nom N] have a flavor that a speaker does not like a situation P is true, and hopes P is not true. (28) is an implementation of the interpretation of (24) based on the way of interpretation in (27)

(28) If (24) is defined,

$$[[(24)]]^g = 1 \text{ iff } \forall w'$$

$$\begin{aligned} &\in \max_{g(\text{speaker}, w)}(\{w: w \text{ is compatible with speaker's belief}\}): \\ &w' \notin \{w: \text{John is a student in } w\} \end{aligned}$$

4. Further Direction

As we have seen earlier, the structure of [N-nom-N] appears in some undesirable statements, but this explanation does not cover all of the data with the structure of [N-nom-N]. For example, the fourth kind of examples in 2.4., the interpretation in (27) does not work because P would not be a proposition in this case. In data in 2.1., there is an issue to be addressed; if [N nom N] is a kind NPI, why is the configuration in (8b) prohibited? The reason why it is not allowed may be in the syntax, not in semantics or pragmatics.

Then, we need to investigate the interpretation for each four kinds of example one by one, not trying to explain the whole range of data all at once. After formalizing the interpretation for each example, we will try to generalize the four kind of analysis with respect to “negative statement.”

References:

- Aihara, Masahiko. (2000) Nitchieigono Hiteikoubunno Kenkyu (“The Comparative Study of Negative Constructions in Japanese and English”), ms. Kanda University of International Studies.
- Gibbs, Raymond W. (1994) *The Poetics of Mind: Figurative Thought, Language and Understanding*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kagimura, Kazuko. (1998) The Figures of Pragmatics, Ph.D Dissertation. Kaisai University of International Studies.
- Kratzer, Angelika and Shimoyama, Junko. (2002) Indeterminate Phrases: the View from Japanese. In *The Proceedings of the Third Tokyo Conference on Psycholinguistics*, ed. Yokio Otsu, 1-25. Tokyo: Hitsuzi Syobo.
- Mikami, Akira. (1960) *Zou-wa Hana-ga Nagai* (“An Elephant has a long nose”). Tokyo: Kuroshio.
- Noda, Hisashi. (1996) *wa to ga* (“-wa and -ga”). Tokyo: Kuroshio.
- Shibatani, Masayoshi. (1990) Joshi-no Imi-to Kino-ni Tsuite; wa to ga wo cyuushinni (“The meaning and function of particles; the case of -wa and -ga”). In *Bunpou-to Imi-no Aida* (“Between the Grammar and Meaning”), ed. The committee of papers

in honor of Tetsuya Kunihiro. Tokyo: Kuroshio Syobo.
von Fintel, Kai. (1999) NPI-licensing, Strawson-Entailment, and context dependency.
Journal of Semantics 16: 97-148.