Root Alternations for Discourse Effects in Japanese: A Challenge for Locality?

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Background: recent debates on roots in DM have asked whether roots are suppletive (Haugen & Siddiqi 2013) or not (Marantz 1997), or the addresses the idea of locality in suppletive morphology, arguing for local relations defined as structural adjacency (Embick 2010), or for relative locality in an extended domain like INFL (Merchant 2015).

Data: Japanese has roots with alternants that *seem* to depend on some idea of formality, as in (1).

(1)   a. **tabe**-ru 'eat' (casual)   b. **meshiagari**-masu 'eat' (honorific)

Issue: are these two roots different, or is (1) a case of suppletion on a par with English *go ~ went*? (i) By hypothesis root VIs are idioms and need an encyclopedic entry. The simple implementation of the difference hypothesis is to have two roots for 'eat' akin to √CHEW and √MASTICATE in English. (ii) There is only one root and we have a supplietive pattern like *go ~ went*. If we have different the roots, then by implication the roots themselves have pragmatic effects. Namely, *chew* is acceptable in both casual and formal settings but *masticate* is decidedly odd in casual settings; the same cannot be said of Japanese. Consider (2).

(2)   a. **tabe**-masu (formal)   b. **meshiaga**-ru (casual-honorific)   (2b, Norio Ota p.c.)

***Tabe*-** can be used casually and formally but crucially ***meshiag*-** root can be used in casual contexts. Since a similar pragmatic effect is not observed in Japanese, as in English, the utility of having separate roots to capture this difference is lost.

Proposal: Given C's pragmatic import (Speas & Tenny 2003), and C's utility in addressing pragmatics in Japanese (Miyagawa 2011), the trigger for suppletion is non-local by either definition of locality. However, if T inherits features from C (Chomsky 2008), then we can adopt the relative notion of locality, as T is in the extended domain v (i.e. √-v-T). Miyagawa (2010) argues that a discourse feature δ-feature resides in T in Japanese. We propose δ, which can be of a polite type, represents a speech event with valued uninterpretable person features.

(3)   a. √EAT ↔ *meshiaga*- / __T δ[uϕ: 2]   b. √EAT ↔ *tabe*- / __T δ

Under this analysis the valued uninterpretable person feature ensures the discourse feature is addressee oriented, as honorifics cannot be used with speaker orientation; In the derivation any 2nd person DP sitting in Spec, TP can act as a probe checking the 2nd person feature on T. Formality has no implications for politeness as informal or formal second person pronouns (e.g. a T-V contrast) would be able to probe T; if there is no suitable 2nd person pronoun the derivation will crash. For contrasts in formality we follow Miayagawa (2011). He argues that formality, represent by the exponent -*masu*, is ϕ-AGR in C in Japanese due to a main clause restriction. Since -*masu* is directed to an addressee, it constitutes legitimate 2nd person AGR. Having sperate notions of foamily and politeness helps us to resolve situations like the following. (i) You have known you boss for twenty plus years it feels odd to be overly formal, but you still want to be polite (= casual-honorific). (ii) You are new at a company and think it is necessary to be formal and polite (= honorific). While both formality and politeness are hearer addressed, they are concerned with different but related things. Brown & Levinson (1987), note that formality can be considered social distance, whereas what we are calling politeness is a strategy of negative politeness which is oriented towards the hearer's negative face and emphasize avoidance of imposition on them.

Implications: Though politeness and formality seem to get bundled in the grammar in Linguistic analyses, Japanese shows that the notions should be held as distinct. Moreover, Japanese shows that roots can be suppletive and that suppletion in this context requires relative locality contributing to this more general debate by expanding the empirical coverage.

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