

1. Abstract (292 words):

Japanese *ka*-marked clause expanded from polar interrogatives to *wh*-interrogatives around the Muromachi to the Edo Period (Takamiya 2005:17; Kinuhata and Iwata 2010:11). Before and after the change, the *syntactic* role of the *wh*-feature did not change. By analyzing this change as a semantic reanalysis in the set-creation process (*i.e.*, a *single proposition* became reanalyzed as a *singleton set* of propositions), this paper, as a case-study of *diachronic formal semantics* (Eckardt 2006; Deo 2015), answers the question as to how the *semantic change* shows similar/different properties to the typical *syntactic change* discussed in *diachronic syntax* (Lightfoot 1979, 2006; Roberts 2007).

First, this change is involved with a *domino-effect* frequently observed in the syntactic change. Right before the advent of the *ka*-marked *wh*-interrogative, it is reported that the *ka*-marked clause started being used as an *embedded* polar interrogative and a *disjunct* construction. This study proposes that these preceding changes are responsible for the reanalysis of a set-creation process, triggering a *domino-effect* (Lightfoot 1979; Roberts 2007).

Second, this change is *not* a *parametric change* (Roberts 2007). This is just a construction specific change; *i.e.*, one cannot assume a particular parameter in a language as to whether that language can exploit the *wh*-interrogative. The change is, rather, considered to be an *abduction* from a proposition to a singleton set of propositions (*cf.* the alternative/partition semantics, Hamblin 1973; Groenendijk and Stokhof 1984), because of the strong ambiguity of polar interrogatives (Roberts 2007:133). This fits well with the recent view of Lightfoot (2016) in that a change is hypothesized to appear in a new generation when they discover/accept a pattern as long as the pattern is coherent to the language system that they have. The study suggests that the basic syntactic/semantic learning mechanism/changes are driven by similar principles.

2. Presentation summary (45 words):

This is a case-study of *diachronic formal semantics* (Eckardt 2006; Deo 2015). By examining a semantic change of the *ka*-marked clause in Japanese, this study answers the question as to how the *semantic change* shows similar/different properties to the typical *syntactic change* discussed in previous studies of *diachronic syntax*.

3. References

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