Japanese gapless relativization: The syntax–prosody interface to semantics
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1. Prosody to syntax: Introducing REL(ative)

No relativizer in Japanese — how does it mark relativization?

- Pitch assimilation
  - Pitch assimilation in Tokyo Japanese: the preceding modifier’s pitch spreads to the modified noun, as in Table 1 and Figure 1 (Yueno et al., 1980; Jun and Koike, 2003)
  - Pitch accent of Tokyo Japanese: each mora has a high or low tone
  - Pitch without assimilation sounds unnatural (Table 1)
  - Following Jun (2003), these prosodic words (PW) form a unit as an accentual phrase (AP).

Form | Unit | Pitch | Translation
--- | --- | --- | ---
toraeta PW /tò.rá.è.tà./ “caught”
oto PW /ò.tò/ “sound”

Table 1. Pitch assimilation.

Japanese relativization is marked by prosody forming AP:
- Introduces an abstract argument REL
  - Provides an f-description (↑ AFG REL) = (↑ PRED) (shared value) in the lexical entry of the head noun

2. REL in syntax

Mapping from the prosody to the c-/f-structures

- Pitch assimilation gives the f-description defining the REL argument (see Figure 2a)
  - The f-structure shows the shared value (see Figure 2b)
  - In gapped RCs, the REL further shares its value with the gap (SUBJ, OBJ, etc.)

3. REL(ative) as a semantic role

Rather than using an undefined predicate \( P \), assume a weak thematic relation representing the relatedness to the event

- Same semantic derivation as other semantic roles (shown below)
- Weak semantic roles have already been proposed: content for noun complement clauses (Moulton, 2015) and participial for tough constructions (Gluckman, 2021)

The REL arguments give \( \text{ANCH} \cdot \text{REL}(e) = e \) to be conjoined with the event predicate

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{Japan} \quad \text{German} \\
\text{REL} = \text{REFL} \quad \text{REL} = \text{PERSON}
\end{array}
\]

Table 2. Lesion.

Conclusion

This study:
- Provided an alternative analysis for Japanese GR with LFG
- Identified the source of Japanese relativizer: syntax–prosody interface
- Demonstrated the mapping from syntax to semantics

Discussions:
- Do we really need the abstract REL? Can’t we just stick with ADF?
- How about languages with GR but without pitch accent (e.g., Seoul Korean)?

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References
