Japanese If-Adversatives*

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1 Introduction

Among if-exclamatives–bare if-clauses used as exclamations–, if-adversatives like German (2) have received much less attention than if-optatives like (1).[1]

(1) If-optative
If only I were taller!

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[1] It would be better to have an English example for (2) to make the data parallel between if-optatives and if-adversatives. However, English does not seem to have if-adversatives (Grosz 2012:93).

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(2) If-adversative

Mein	*Gott!*	*Der*	*Olaf!*	*Wenn*	*ich*	*den*	*schon*	*sehe!*
my	god	the	Olaf	if	I	him	already	see

lit. 'My God! Olaf! If I just see him!' (It makes me sick if I see Olaf!)
(Grosz 2012:46)

The goal of this study is to identify novel data of if-adversatives in Japanese and argue that Japanese if-adversatives have silent main clauses, in deviation from optatives in languages like German (Grosz 2012). In Japanese, it is the silent matrix clause that determines whether a given if-clause turns out to be an if-optative or if-adversative.

2 Previous Studies

If-optatives like (1) describe the speaker's desire. The question is how the desire semantics is made possible without having any overt desire predicate (e.g. *wish*). Grosz (2012) argues that the desire semantics of if-optatives is brought about by a silent exclamative operator EX, which comes with a contextually determined preference-scale S as shown in (3). EX can be described as an expressive presupposition trigger; its lexical entry is given in (4).

(3) [EX S] [if only I were taller]
(4) EX (S)(*p*) presupposes *p* to exceed a contextually salient threshold on S

As for if-adversatives like (2), Grosz argues that the negative interpretation comes from an inverse preference scale S (i.e. a scale of speaker-dispreference). This division of labor between EX and S makes it possible to keep the single lexical entry for EX in (4) while dealing with both if-optatives and if-adversatives.

Grosz further argues that if-optatives do not come with silent main clauses that contribute a positive evaluation of the antecedent proposition. Evidence is obtained from (5), where a 'because'-clause fails to take scope over a silent main clause indicated in parentheses in (5).

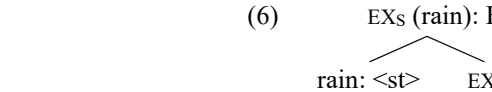
(5)

#*Wenn*	*Hans*	*doch*	*nur*	*gekommen*	*wäre,*
if	Hans	DOCH	only	come	were

weil	*er*	*immer*	*guten*	*Wein*	*mitbringt*.
because	he	always	good	wine	brings

#'If only Hans had come because he always brings good wine.'
*because he always brings good wine > (it would be good)

Given below is an example of an if-optative and its structure from Grosz (2012). The silent exclamative operator EX combines with a proposition of type <s,t> and yields an *expressive* meaning of type *E*, a *felicity-conditional* utterance. This utterance is *expressive* in nature.

(6) 

(Grosz 2012:118)

(7) *Felicity conditions*:
(6) is felicitous iff $\exists q[[q \neq$ [It rains] & $q \in g(C)]$ & [It rains] $>_{\text{speaker-preference}} q]$
"The speaker expresses the emotion that [It rains] is higher on a speaker-related preference scale than some contextually relevant alternative *q*."[2]

Oda and Wimmer (2021) propose that Japanese *naa* is an overt version of Grosz's EX-operator. Nevertheless, they argue that Japanese if-optatives, unlike German ones, come with silent main clauses. In the Japanese equivalent of (5) given in (8), the wide scope reading of the relevant because-clause is easily obtained, which indicates that the because-clause modifies a silent matrix clause, i.e. '(it would be) good'. In fact, the if-clause followed by *naa* in (8) intuitively has the same meaning as (9) with the overt positive predicate *ii* 'good' as the matrix 'clause', indicated by (MC) in the translation.

(8) [*Taro-wa* *itumo* *ii* *wain-o* *mottekuru* *kara*],
Taro-TOP always good wine-ACC bring because
Taro-ga {*ku-reba* / *ki-tara* / *kuru-nara*} *naa!*
Taro- NOM come-COND NAA$_{EX}$
'If (only) Taro came [because he always brings good wine].'
✓because he always brings good wine > (It would be good)

(9) *Taro-ga* {*ku-reba* / *ki-tara* / *kuru-nara*} (*ii*) *naa!*
Taro-NOM come-COND (good) NAA$_{EX}$
'(MC It would be good) if Taro came!' ≈ If only Taro came!

[2] C is a contextual variable, interpreted by the contextual assignment function g familiar from Heim and Kratzer (1998). g(C) returns a set of contextually salient propositions, including the 'prejacent' proposition *p* that EX combines with.

3 Data

3.1 *To*-Adversatives

Among the well-known conditional markers in Japanese (*reba*, *tara*, *nara*, *to*), *to* behaves differently from others. The example in (10) with *to* only induces an adversative reading. Its intuitive interpretation is paraphrased as 'It will be problematic if Taro comes'.

(10) [*Taro-ga* *kuru-to*] *naa!*
Taro-NOM come-COND NAA_{EX}
lit. 'If Taro comes!' (It will be problematic if Taro comes.)

3.2 *Anmari* 'much' in *To*-Adversatives

The adversative interpretation of bare *to*-clauses is confirmed by the following contrast. Such clauses are compatible with *anmari* 'much',[3] a negative polarity item (NPI) that comes with a negative evaluation as shown in (11). Other conditional markers are not compatible with *anmari*, as shown in (12).

(11) *Taro-ga* *anmari* *bennkyoosuru-to* *naa!*
Taro-NOM $much_{NPI}$ study-COND NAA_{EX}
lit. 'If Taro studies too much!' (It will be problematic if Taro studies too much.)

(12) **Taro-ga* *anmari* *bennkyoo*{*su-reba*/*si-tara*/*suru-nara*} *naa!*
Taro-NOM $much_{NPI}$ study-COND NAA_{EX}
lit. 'If Taro studies much!'

3.3 *Sae* 'even' in *To*-Adversatives

The dichotomy of *to*-adversatives vs. *reba*/*tara*/*nara*-optatives is further observed in the following contrast involving the scalar particle *sae* 'even'. The example in (13) is a little degraded when uttered out of the blue, but *sae* means 'even' here. However, it has been observed that *sae* generally turns out to mean something different when it occurs in if-clauses (Hasegawa 2020). In fact, *sae* in the *reba*/*tara*/*nara*-clause in (14) means 'only2' (at least) in the sense of Grosz (2012).

[3] *Amari*, a phonetic variation of *anmari*, can be used as well.

(13) (?)*Taro-sae*$_{\text{even}}$ *kuru-to* *naa!* (if-adversative)
Taro-SAE come-COND NAA$_{\text{EX}}$
lit. 'If even Taro comes!' (It will be problematic if even Taro comes.)

(14) *Taro-sae*$_{\text{only2}}$ {*kuru-reba*/*ki-tara*/(?)*kuru-nara*} *naa!*[4] (if-optative)
Taro-SAE come- COND NAA$_{\text{EX}}$
'(MC It would be good) if only(at least) Taro comes!'

'Only2(at least)' is one of two ONLY-variants assumed by Grosz (2012) as shown in (15b). Both only1 and only2 share an implication of scalar lowness (LOW) and are phonetically realized as *only* ('PF' is for 'phonetic form'). But while only1 is exclusive/exhaustive (EXH), only2 is nonexclusive.

(15) a. only1:{ LOW, EXH } $\Rightarrow_{\text{PF}}$ *only*
b. only2:{ LOW } $\Rightarrow_{\text{PF}}$ *only* (Grosz 2012:228)

3.4 *To*-Clauses Can Be Followed by Positive Main Clauses

So far, the dichotomy between *to*-clauses vs. *reba*/*tara*/*nara*-clauses looks very simple: the former are used for adversatives, and the latter for optatives. However, the picture is not that simple. As shown in (16), *to*-clauses can be easily followed by positive predicates such as *ii* 'good' and turn out to be an optative sentence.

(16) [[*Taro-ga* *kuru-to*] *ii*] *naa!*
Taro-NOM come-COND good NAA$_{\text{EX}}$
'It will be good if Taro comes.'

In other words, there is a tension in interpretation between constructions of the form in (17a) vs. (17b). GOOD in (17b) stands for any positively evaluative predicate.

(17) a. [p-*to*]-*naa* ~> adversative reading, cf. (10)
b. [p-*to* GOOD]-*naa* ~> optative reading, cf. (16)

Thus, we cannot attribute the adversative meaning of (10) entirely to the lexical property of *to*. We rather need an analysis that is flexible enough to accommodate (16).

[4] The relevant example with *nara* is degraded compared to the ones with *reba* and *tara*.

4 Proposal

We first propose that Oda and Wimmer's (2021) analysis of Japanese if-optatives, which involves silent main clauses, carries over to Japanese *to*-adversatives, again in crosslinguistic deviation from the English/German optatives at the center of Grosz's (2012) investigation. The LFs of Japanese optatives and adversatives both come with a silent evaluative predicate, GOOD and BAD, respectively. In the optative case, GOOD describes a positive (desirable) state of affairs, and roughly amounts to the proposition 'it [=the situation under consideration] is good'. In the adversative case, reserved for the conditional marker *to*, a silent BAD in the main clause (MC) describes a negative (undesirable) state of affairs, and roughly amounts to 'it is problematic'.

(18) Proposal: *to*-adversatives in Japanese
p-to ($_{MC}$ BAD) *naa*!

In what follows we will present four pieces of evidence.

4.1 Overt Main Clause

Evidence for (18) is obtained from (19) with an overt negative main clause *komaru* 'problematic', which intuitively means the same as (10).

(19) [*Taro-ga* *kuru-to*] *komaru* *naa* *!*
Taro-NOM come-COND problematic NAA_{EX}
'It will be problematic if Taro comes.'

4.2 Scopal Diagnostic

The silent main clause involved in *to*-adversatives can be confirmed by Grosz's (2012) scopal diagnostic with 'because'. In the *to*-adversative with a 'because'-clause given in (20), the 'because'-clause easily takes scope over a hidden matrix clause 'it is problematic'.

(20) [$_{because\text{-}cl.}$ *Asu-wa* *pikunikku-ga* *aru* *kara*]
tomorrow-TOP picnic-NOM have because
[*ame-ga* *furu-to*] *naa!*
rain-NOM fall-COND NAA_{EX}
'Because we go on a picnic tomorrow, ($_{MC}$ it will be problematic) if it rains.' ✓because we go on a picnic tomorrow > (it is problematic)

4.3 NPI Licensing

The compatibility with *anmari*$_{\text{NPI}}$ in (11) is expected under the assumption that there is a silent negative main clause. In fact, the overt negative main clause *komaru* 'problematic' in (21) licenses *anmari*$_{\text{NPI}}$, which is expected insofar as they both come with a negative evaluation. In contrast, positive main clauses such as *ii* 'good' cannot license *anmari*$_{\text{NPI}}$, as shown in (22), which we ascribe to an evaluative mismatch between *anmari*$_{\text{NPI}}$ and *ii*.

(21) ((11) with an overt negative matrix clause)
Taro-ga anmari bennkyoosuru-to komaru naa!
Taro-NOM much$_{\text{NPI}}$ study-COND problematic NAA$_{\text{EX}}$
'It will be problematic if Taro studies too much.'

(22) **Taro-ga anmari bennkyoosuru-to ii naa!*
Taro-NOM much$_{\text{NPI}}$ study-COND good NAA$_{\text{EX}}$
'It will be good if Taro studies much.'

4.4 *Sae* Taking Scope Over Matrix Clauses

Our proposal of a silent *q* captures the different readings of *sae* between *to*-adversatives vs. *reba*/*tara*/*nara*-optatives. *Sae* as 'even' in *to*-adversatives is explained if we assume *sae* takes low scope just inside an if-clause. On the other hand, *sae* as 'only2(at least)' takes high scope over the entire conditional construction, in line with scopal approaches to weak NPI *even* (Wilkinson 1996, Guerzoni 2003). In other words, it is essential for *reba*/*tara*/*nara*-optatives to be actual conditionals involving a downward-entailing operator, which confirms Oda and Wimmer's (2021) claim. Then it will be natural to assume that *to*-adversatives are also implicit conditionals, as we claim here.

(23) a. *sae* as 'even' in *to*-adversatives
[p-*sae to* q$_{\text{BAD}}$]
b. *sae* as 'only2(at least)' in *reba*/*tara*/*nara*-optatives
[p-*reba*/*tara*/*nara* q$_{\text{GOOD}}$]-*sae*

(24) $[\![sae_C]\!] = \lambda p$: p is the strongest alternative in C. p
(Karttunen and Peters 1979)

Let us consider how the intuitive interpretations are captured. In (23a), the focus particle *sae* is attached to *p*, the constituent denoting the proposition *Taro comes*. Thus, among the focus alternatives of [Taro$_{\text{F}}$ comes], [Taro comes] is the strongest alternative in C. This makes Taro the least likely person to come, which captures the intuitive interpretation. For (23b), on the

other hand, among the focus alternatives of [It will be good if Taro$_F$ comes] in C, [It will be good if Taro comes] is the strongest (least likely) alternative among {[It will be good if Taro comes], [It will be good if Jiro comes], …}. This means that Taro is the least likely person to bring about good circumstances. Put differently, Taro's coming ranks lowest on a scale of desirability.[5]

5 Analysis

5.1 Felicity Conditions of *To*-Adversatives

Given the proposal, the felicity conditions of *to*-conditionals are calculated in the following manner. The operator *naa* is of type <st, E> and yields an *expressive* meaning of type *E*.[6]

(25) $naa_{EX,S}$([p-COND (q)]): E

[p-COND (q)]: <st> $naa_{EX,S}$: <st,E>

(26) *felicity conditions* for (10) '($_{MC}$ It is bad) if Taro comes':
(10) is felicitous iff $\exists q$[[$q \neq$ [It is bad if Taro comes] & $q \in$ g(C)] & [It is bad if Taro comes] $<_{\text{speaker-preference}}$ q]
"The speaker expresses the emotion that [It is bad if Taro comes] is lower on a speaker-related preference scale than some contextually relevant alternative *q*."

5.2 Why Is *q* Negatively Biased?

Now we are left with a puzzle: Why is an implicit *q* always understood as BAD for *to*-clauses? Given the fact that *to*-clauses can be followed by overt GOOD in the main clause, the negative interpretation of the implicit *q* is more likely to be a "bias" rather than something that stems from the lexical meaning of *to*. Thus a possible solution lies in non-truth conditional semantics.

For one thing, we assume that if-exclamatives are optatives by default and an adversative interpretation is chosen when given a *cue*. In case of Japanese if-exclamatives, *to* serves as such a cue. This makes it possible for us

[5] Some native speakers claim that the relevant example of *sae* given in (14) has another reading, namely Taro is the most desired person. This reading seems to stem from *sae* taking lower scope over *p*. If so, (14) is scopally ambiguous between a low and a high reading for *sae*.

[6] Note that the conditions given in (25) may sound redundant though it may not be harmful. A parallel observation is made in Oda and Wimmer (2021) for optative *naa*.

to capture the fact that the relevant if-clause constructions in Japanese are mostly optatives, and *to*-adversatives are the only exceptional cases.[7]

The idea of *to* as a cue is adopted from Grosz (2014), who argues that small particles like *doch* are cues to interpret if-clauses as if-exclamatives rather than if-conditionals. A core idea is that if a globally infrequent reading can be supported by a certain element, the element counts as a cue (Grosz 2014:113).[8] Grosz further attempts to formally capture the notion of a cue in a game-theoretic framework based on Lewis (1969), Franke (2009) and others. A similar formal analysis is likely to capture the behavior of *to* as a cue as well. However, we do not discuss details in this paper due to space limitations.

Support for *to* as a cue comes from a production experiment reported by Maeda (2020), where native speakers of Japanese produced conditional sentences by filling out the main clause of the format in (27). The result is striking. Among the 65 sentences with a negative *q* produced by the speakers, 42 cases (65%) are ones with *to*.[9] In other words, native speakers judge that *to*-clauses are more suitable to be followed by a negative *q* than *reba/tara/nara*-clauses. This can give *to* a special role as a cue for adversatives, and this cue is overridden when a positive clause is provided overtly.

(27) *Dizunii lando-ni* {*i-keba*/*i-ttara*/*iku-nara*/*iku-to*}, _____.
Disney Land-to go-COND
'If (you) go to Disney Land, _____.'
(Translated and edited from Maeda 2020:42)

However, we are still left with the question of why *to*-clauses are followed by a negative *q* more often than other if-clauses. The answer will be obtained by analyzing the semantics of *to*-conditionals. We will leave a detailed analysis for further research.

6 Conclusion

This study discussed how the semantics of if-adversatives (*to*-adversatives) arises in Japanese. It is a silent negatively evaluative main clause *q* that

[7] Having optatives as a default may capture the case of English, which does not seem to have if-adversatives (see footnote 1). English may lack cues like *to* that would induce adversative readings, see the conclusion below.

[8] Another aspect about cues mentioned by Grosz is that cues do not have to be used when a context sufficiently supports the infrequent reading that is intended. A similar argument applies to *to*. *To* does not have to be used to create an adversative when it is followed by an overt *q*.

[9] For other examples with negative main clauses, there are 15 cases with *tara*, 8 case with *ba*, and 0 case with *nara* (Maeda 2020:45).

triggers the adversative meaning of *to*-adversatives. The semantics of *to* per se is not responsible for the adversative meaning of *to*-adversatives. *To* rather serves as a cue for an implicit negative *q*. This allows *to* to be part of *to*-optatives in the overt presence of a positively evaluative *q*.

This line of analysis supports Grosz's (2012) division of labor between EX and S. The meaning of if-adversatives comes from a speaker-related inverse preference scale S. We also follow Grosz in assuming S to be contextually determined. Thus, there is just one (scalarly underspecified) EX whose definition is adopted for Japanese NAA_{EX}.

The difference between German and Japanese if-optatives/adversatives is that the latter always come with a silent *q* under the view argued for by Oda and Wimmer (2021). Data involving 'because' clauses, the NPI *anmari* 'much' and *sae* 'even/only2(at least)' support such an analysis. In other words, if-optatives/adversatives are implicit conditionals, unlike their English or German counterparts.

There are two issues left. One is to capture *to* as a cue in a formal manner, probably in a game-theoretic framework. The other is to explain in detail why *to*-conditionals host a negatively evaluative *q* more often than other if-conditionals in Japanese.

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