

Notes on Information Territory Theory

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1. Introduction

What is crucial in Information Territory Theory (Akio Kamio's theory of territory of information) is the speaker's assumption about the relationship between him/her, the hearer, and a given piece of information. The relative location of a given piece of information with regard to the speaker and the hearer determines the sentence form. Kamio (1990, 1994, 1995, 1998) proposes the four general conditions and three meta-conditions which determine the location of information on the speaker's or hearer's scale, as follows:

(1) General Conditions:

- A. information obtained through the speaker's/hearer's direct experience
- B. information embodying detailed knowledge which falls into the speaker's/hearer's professional or other expertise
- C. information obtained through the speaker's/hearer's external direct Experience
- D. information about persons, objects, events and facts close to the speaker or hearer including information about the speaker/hearer him/herself (Kamio 1995:237)

(2) Meta-Conditions:

- A. information subject to conditions 1B to 1D is considered less close if the speaker does not have an adequate basis for asserting it
- B. new information conveyed to the speaker is generally considered less close to him/her until considerable processing has taken place
- C. information private to someone other than the speaker is considered less close to the speaker if the speaker is not close to that person (Kamio 1995:237-238)

In this paper we will restrict our consideration to General Condition A and Meta-Condition B. The target language is Japanese.

2. General Condition A

According to Kamio (1995:237), "internal direct experience" in (1A) means so-called

internal feelings such as pain, emotions, and beliefs. Let us consider the following typical examples which express psychological state.

(3) a. Watashi wa sabisii.

I TM¹ lonely

'I feel lonely.'

b.*Anata wa sabisii.

you TM lonely

Lit. 'You feel lonely.'

c.*Aitu wa sabisii.

he TM lonely

Lit. 'He feels lonely.' (Kamio 1995:251)

One can directly experience one's own internal feeling, but cannot directly experience the internal feelings of others. Therefore, among the three utterances, which are all direct forms, only 3a is acceptable. What is important here is that Kamio excludes the possibility of the application of Meta-Condition A to General Condition A. This means that he regards General Condition A as absolute, that is, he claims that we can always know our internal feelings through our direct experience, and that the forms used to express this should be direct.

We can, however, express our internal feelings with an indirect form as in (4a).

(4) a. Watasi wa kanasii noka uresii noka yoku wakaranai ga, doumo

I TM sad or happy whether well know but rather than
kanasii-yoo da

sad look is

'I'm not sure whether I am sad or happy, but I seem sad rather than happy.'

b. Anata wa kanasii-yoo da.

you TM sad look is

'You seem sad.'

c. Aitu wa kanasii-yoo da.

he TM sad look is

'He seems sad.'

Now let us consider the asymmetry between (3) and (4). Utterance (3a) with the first person subject is acceptable, but (3b) with the second person subject and (3c) with the third person subject are unacceptable. Utterances (4a, b, c) with the respective first, second, and third

person subjects are all acceptable. As is well known, the subject is restricted to the first person in direct forms which express internal feeling. (Kamio, 1995:251)

Before we give deeper consideration to this problem, let us look at some non-psychological utterances, as in (5).

- (5) a. Boku wa dokoka de kanozyo ni atta.
 I TM somewhere in her with met
 'I met her somewhere.'
- b. Boku wa dokoka de kanozyo ni atta-yoo da.
 I TM somewhere in her with met look is
 'I seem to have met her somewhere.'
- c. Kimi wa dokoka de kanozyo ni atta yo.
 you TM somewhere in her with met SF
 'You met her somewhere.'
- d. Kimi wa dokoka de kanozyo ni atta-yoo da.
 you TM somewhere in her with met look is
 'You seem to have met her somewhere.'
- e. Taro wa dokoka de kanozyo ni atta yo.
 Taro TM somewhere in her with met SF
 'Tara met her somewhere.'
- f. Taro wa dokoka de kanozyo ni atta-yoo da.
 Taro TM somewhere in her with met look is
 'Taro seems to have met her somewhere.'

All utterances in (5) are acceptable. Usually the difference between direct forms (5a,c,e) and indirect forms (5b,d,f) is whether the speaker has reliable evidence for asserting the event or not. When he/she has the evidence, the utterances (5a,c,e) are used. When he/she does not, the utterances (5b,d,f) are used. What we should note here is that direct forms (5a,c,e) can be used even without reliable evidence. Utterance (5e), for example, is acceptable even when the speaker heard from Taro by phone that he met her, and he/she believes it. Speaking generally, the direct forms can be used even without reliable evidence when the speaker believes that the content of the utterance is true, which contradicts Meta-Condition A. On the other hand, if he/she gets the same quantity of information from the same source as in (5e), but does not believe that it is perfectly true, he/she will use an indirect form such as (5f). This

means that the speaker's epistemological difference affects the choice of utterance form. Thus, it seems that the speaker's recognition has precedence over the location of the information.

To return to the first problem, we can apply the above idea to internal feeling. We can experience our internal feelings directly as Kamio claims, but this does not mean that we always have a complete understanding of our psychological state. When we do not understand our internal feelings completely, we can use an indirect form even with regard to ourselves as in (4a), repeated below for convenience:

- (4) a. Watasi wa kanasii noka uresii noka yoku wakaranai ga, doumo
 I TM sad or happy whether well know but rather than
 kanasii-yoo da
 sad look is
 'I'm not sure whether I am sad or happy, but I seem more sad rather
 than happy.'

So we should not exclude (1A) from the description of Meta-Condition A.

By comparing (3a) with (4a) we find that these two utterances are quite different in their function. Utterance (3a) expresses the speaker's internal feeling directly, as Kamio states. Utterance (4a), on the other hand, states the internal feeling objectively as if through the speaker's recognition. It seems as if there were another speaker who observes the speaker him/herself. Thus, utterances with the first person subject differ in their functions according to their form, direct or indirect.

3. Meta-Condition B

Let us consider Kamio's Meta-Condition B, repeated below.

- (2) B. new information conveyed to the speaker is generally considered less close to him/her until considerable processing has taken place (Kamio 1995:238)

Kamio (1995) writes about 'considerable processing' as follows:

- (5) ... information conveyed to a speaker through communication from others is generally treated as falling outside his/her territory until that information has been 'digested' in his/her mind and absorbed into his/her body of knowledge.

(Kamio 1995:238, footnote 2)

ment. Here we will pay attention to the difference between *nara* and *no nara*.

(9) a. Asu ame ga furu nara, yakyuu wa chuushi da.

tomorrow rain SUBJ fall if baseball TM call off is

'If it rains tomorrow, the baseball will be called off.'

b. Asu ame ga furu no nara, yakyuu wa chuushi da.

tomorrow rain SUBJ fall that if baseball TM call off is

'If it rains tomorrow, as you say, the baseball will be called off.'

There is a crucial difference between (9a) and (9b). Utterance (9a) can begin a conversation, but (9b) cannot, unless the speaker assumes that the hearer has the information represented by S_1 . Such an assumption is possible when the information represented by S_1 exists in the preceding context as in (10). If the speaker's assumption is not correct, a confirmative response such as (11A) will follow.⁴

(10) A: Tenki yohou de wa, asu ame ga furu yo.

weather forecast by TM tomorrow rain SUBJ fall SF

'According to the weather forecast, it will rain tomorrow.'

B: Asu ame ga furu no nara, yakyuu wa cyuushi da.

tomorrow rain SUBJ fall that if baseball TM call off is

'If it rains tomorrow, the baseball will be called off.'

(11) B: Asu ame ga furu no nara, yakyuu wa cyuushi da.

tomorrow rain SUBJ fall that if baseball TM call off is

'If it rains tomorrow, the baseball will be called off.'

A: Eh, asu ame na no.

INTERJ tomorrow rain is SF

'Who said it's going to rain?'

B: Un, tenki yohou de wa sou rasio.

yes weather forecast by TM so HM

'The weather forecast said it's going to.'

Thus, *no nara* in (8) is acceptable if either of the above conditions is satisfied. On the basis of the above observations, let us consider the following dialogue.

(12) Speaker of (7B) to his friend:

Takeda san wa LSA ni iku yo.

Takeda Mr. TM LSA to go SF

'Mr. Takeda is going to LSA.'

Kare ga iku {kara/ no nara⁵} boku mo iku yo.

he SUBJ go {because/that if} I too go SF

'I'm going, too, {*if/because} Mr. Takeda is going.'

Both *kara* and *no nara* in (12) are possible, and they differ in the speaker's attitude to the proposition represented by S_1 . If the speaker believes what Mr. Takeda says, he will use *kara*, and if he does not believe it fully, he will use *no nara*, even after the information is 'digested in his/her mind and absorbed into his/her body of knowledge'. Thus, in part, the choice between *kara* and *no nara* depends on the speaker's belief, as in the choice between direct and indirect forms in section 2.

We also have to investigate why *kara* in (7B) is unacceptable. Kamio's Meta-Condition B (2B) predicts that *kara* in (7B) will be acceptable after the information is 'digested in the speaker's mind and absorbed into his/her body of knowledge'. Let us reconsider the utterances in (7), repeated below:

(7) A: Boku, huyu no LSA ni iku koto ni sita yo.

I winter POSS LSA to go that on decided SF

'I decided to go to LSA in winter.'

B: Kimi ga iku {no nara/*kara}, boku mo iku yo.

you SUBJ go that if because I too go SF

'If you go to LSA, I will go, too.'

Let us give some consideration to the cases in which the hearer B responds to A as in (14), and in which the topic is not the speaker but a third party as in (15):

(13) B: Boku wa doo siyoo ka na. Sibaraku kangaete miru yo.

I TM how do IM⁶ SF a while think try SF

'I wonder if I should go or not. Let me think for a while'

(Interval)

(14) A: Doo suru koto ni sita.

how do thing on decide

'Have you decided to go or not?'

B: Kimi ga iku {no nara/kara}, boku mo iku koto ni suru yo.

you SUBJ go that if because I too go that on decide SF

'If you go, I'll go, too.'

(15) A: Tanaka san wa huyu no LSA ni iku yo.

Tanaka Mr. TM winter POSS LSA to go SF

'Mr. Tanaka is going to LSA this winter.'

B1: Boku wa doo siyoo ka na. Sibaraku kangaete miru yo.

I TM how do IM SF a while think try SF

'I wonder if I should go or not. Let me think for a while'

(Interval)

B2: Kare ga iku {no nara/kara}, boku mo iku koto ni suru yo.

he SUBJ go that if because I too go thing on decide SF

'I'm going to LSA because he is going.'

B can use either *no nara* or *kara* as in (14B, 15B2), depending on B's recognition of the event. There seems, however, to be a pragmatic difference between *no nara* and *kara* in (14B). *No nara* seems to be more polite and natural than *kara*. Such a difference cannot be seen in (15B2). This seems to be due to the fact that the agent in S₁ of (14B) is the hearer and that the agent of (15B2) is a third party. To explain this phenomenon, we could set up a principle like one of Grice's co-operative principles, as follows:

(16) Do not be assertive about anything in which the hearer participates actively.

A more explicit explanation of this phenomenon must await further research.

4. Conclusion

In section 2, we looked at General Condition A in the light of the speaker's recognition and suggested that this condition should be included in the application of the Meta-Condition A. In the case of psychological utterances, true internal feelings are an adequate basis for Meta-Condition A. We have also pointed out that the speaker's recognition seems to have precedence over the location of information in regard to determining utterance forms. In section 3 we considered Meta-Condition B, which concerns newly learned information. In this case the speaker's recognition seems to perform a determinative function. Both cases need more detailed research to elaborate Information Territory Theory.⁷

Notes

*I would like to thank my colleague, Martin Gore, who corrected stylistic as well as grammatical errors. All remaining inadequacies are my own.

1:We follow Kamio(1995)'s notation for the presentation of examples. TM = Topic Marker; SF = Sentence-final Particle; HM=Hearsay Marker.

2:In this example we use the notation of Akatsuka 1985. POSS=Possessive; SUBJ=Subject.

3:S₁ represents the sentence part before *no nara*.

4:Akatsuka (1985:628) states that S₁ of S₁ *no nara* S₂ always expresses new information that has just entered the consciousness of the speaker at the discourse site. The term 'new information' in this context is misleading. S₁ does not express new information in its usual sense as we can see from the dialogues in (10) and (11).

5:Akatsuka (1985:630) judges *no nara* in Japanese and *if* in English to be unacceptable. Though *nara* instead of *no nara* is also acceptable in my judgement, we will not consider *nara* in the following argument.

6:The symbol IM is the abbreviation of Interrogative Marker.

7:The examples in this paper rely on the intuition of the author as a native Japanese speaker. Further corpus-based research is in preparation.

References

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