

A pragmatic resolution of a semantic conflict

Introduction: The technical term ‘Double Accessibility Reading’ (Abusch 1997) well represents the peculiar reading of English *present under past* in “John said that Mary is pregnant,” such that the event of *Mary’s being pregnant* holds at two time intervals, the time of *John’s saying* and the Speech Time (Comrie 1985, Smith 1978), yielding a so-called Double Accessibility Reading (DAR hereafter). In the cross-linguistic consideration, Ogihara(1996) claims that a DAR is obligatory in English type languages while it is optional in Japanese type ones because unlike English Japanese present tense is not inherently deictic. In this paper, however, it is shown that the seeming optional DAR in Japanese and Korean is mistaken for a primary reading accompanying a pragmatic inference. It is claimed that the double accessibility effect is obtained by the pragmatic accommodation on the meaning of temporal indexicals which is forced when there is a semantic conflict in the interpretation of an embedded tense and temporal indexicals.

Previous Study and problems: Along the same line of Abusch (1997), Ogihara (1996) entertain the idea that English present tense, a temporal *de re*, has to move out of intensional contexts. Going further, he claims the embedded present tense in the Japanese sentence (1) optionally moves out because Japanese present tense is not inherently deictic and it does not always trigger the tense movement.

(1) Taroo-wa konoo Hanako-ga ima Tookyoo-ni **i-ru** to **it-ta-yo**.

Taroo-TOP yesterday Hanako-NOM now Tokyo-at **be-PRES** that **say-PAST** ending

Reading #1: ‘Yesterday Taroo said, “Hanako is now in Tokyo” ‘

Reading #2: ‘Yesterday Taroo said that Hanako was in Tokyo and (the speaker assumes) she is still in Tokyo *now*(at the utterance time).’

However, there are two things to make us cast serious doubt about the true identity of the optional DAR.

(i) First of all, the DAR in Reading #2 is very hard to get with no help of the temporal indexical adverb ‘*ima* (now) inside the embedded clause.’ When we remove it from (1), we will get the exactly same meaning found in the English sentence (2):

(2) Yesterday John said that Mary was in LA at that time.

Reading #1: ‘Yesterday John said that Mary was in LA at that time.’

Possibility: (i) The event of Mary’s being in LA yesterday might have been going on up to the utterance time,

(ii) Or, it might have terminated before the utterance time and Mary is no longer in LA.

In (2), one could make certain inferences based on the two possibilities (i) and (ii) above about the event of Mary’s being in LA in connection to the utterance time, a speaker’s *now*. And, when the reading #1 is accompanied with the inferences, one might say that (2) has a DAR. However, (2) is not regarded as having a double access reading because those inferences are not a part of a semantic meaning of (2). They are pragmatic inferences that a speaker would make based on the semantic meaning of (2). The exactly same pattern is found in Japanese and Korean. The so-called optional DAR of (1), when there is no temporal indexical such as ‘*ima*(Jap.)/*cikum*(Kor.)/*now*(Eng.)’ in an embedded clause, is exactly the DAR-ish meaning found in the English sentence (2). Hence, the claimed optional DAR of (1) comes from the confusion between a semantic meaning and added pragmatic inference. The following Korean example shows that (3) has a DAR-ish meaning like Japanese.

(3) John-un Mary-ka cikum LA-ey **iss-ta-ko** **malhay-ss-ta**

John-Top Mary-Nom now LA-in **be-Prs**-that **say-Pst-Dcl**.

Reading #1: ‘John said, “Mary is in LA now.” ’ = ‘John said that Mary was in LA at that time.’

Reading #2: ‘John said that *Mary was coming to LA* at that time and (*the speaker assumes*) *she is still in LA at the utterance time*.’

(ii) Secondly, when a temporal indexical appears in the embedded clause, the optional double access reading of (1) seems to require a focal emphasis on the temporal indexical ‘*ima*(now)’ based on a specific context. Without such emphasis, Reading #1 is a natural primary reading and Reading #2 is hardly obtained. The focal emphasis brought by the temporal indexical ‘*ima*(Jap.)/*cikum*(Kor.)/*now*(Eng.)’ has something to do with the speaker’s assumption/belief about May’s current location. The fact that a certain

emphasis, a focal or topical one should be involved with the optional DAR reading indicates that the Japanese DAR is different from the English.

(iii) Finally, Ogihara(1996)'s optional movement theory runs into a problem in dealing with the following sentences where the relative present tense is embedded inside a intensional context, that is, indirect speech.

(4) a. John said that **this guy who is now sitting in front of you** killed the woman at the bar.

b. John-un ney ap-ey anca-iss-nun i namca-ka sulcip-eyse
John-Top you in front of sit-Prg-Rel ending this guy-Nom bar-at
ku yeca-lul cuki-ess-ta-ko malhay-ss-ta.
that woman kill-Pst-Dcl-Comp say-Pst-Dcl.

'John said, "this guy who is now sitting in front of you killed the woman at the bar."'

'John said that **this guy who is now sitting in front of you** killed the woman at the bar.'

The embedded relative present tense in (4a) and (4b) should move out of the intensional domain of a 'saying' verb, but no DAR is associated with (4a) and (4b). It shows that tense movement does not necessarily involve with a DAR. Not only Abusch(1997) but also Ogihara(1996) cannot explain why the tense movement in (4a) and (4b) does not result in a DAR.

Proposed Analysis: Correcting the confusion found in Ogihara(1996), we propose that in Japanese and Korean there is no true Double Accessibility phenomenon in a semantic sense, and that the DAR-ish meaning under consideration is obtained by general pragmatic inferences. Yet, for the DAR-ish meaning that is associated with temporal indexicals as in (3), a more story needs to be provided because when a temporal indexical appears, a DAR-ish meaning is rather forced or strengthened. We account for the strong DAR-ish meaning in Korean by the pragmatic accommodation resolving a semantic conflict. The semantic conflict found in (3) comes from the interpretation failure of the mismatching two temporal entities inside the embedded clause, an anaphoric tense and a deictic temporal indexical '*cikum*.' The embedded temporal adverb '*cikum*' should be interpreted deictically, referring to the utterance time. But, the embedded present tense is not deictic but anaphoric to the matrix tense. Therefore, '*cikum*' the deictic *now* cannot modify the anaphoric embedded tense in indirect speech, causing a problem in interpretation. In the proposed analysis, a pragmatic accommodation is exploited to get rid of the semantic conflict. It is claimed that when the speaker has a strong belief or a certain reason to assume that the said event is still going on at the utterance time on the basis of pragmatic inferences, a pragmatic resolution is attempted to accommodate the mismatching meaning of '*cikum*,' indicated by some focal emphasis. There would be two ways in such accommodation. One is to make a change on the meaning of the embedded tense and the other a change on the meaning of a temporal adverb '*cikum*.' In this paper, we take the second way. So, a pragmatic accommodation works on the meaning of '*cikum*' so that it extends the meaning of '*cikum*' from referring to the utterance time up to the point overlapping with the past time of saying(John in (3)). By the extension, '*cikum*' comes to be able to modify the embedded present tense, not causing any interpretation problem in the indirect speech in (3). Yet, such accommodation is a pragmatic one as a temporary stretch of '*cikum*,' induced by the speaker's focal emphasis under a rich context, which can be cancelled or nullified. In other words, it does not permanently change the extension of '*cikum*,' the semantic meaning of it. It is the fundamental difference of the proposed analysis from Ogihara(1996) or Abusch(1997)'s movement accounts positing a permanent change in the embedded tense associated with a DAR.

Selected References:

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