

Even, only, and Negative Polarity in Japanese

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1. The Presuppositions of *Even*

Karttunen and Peters (1979) claim that the focus particle *even* is truth-conditionally vacuous, but have a semantic contribution at the level of presupposition.¹ In particular, assuming that *even* is a sentential operator, it triggers a scalar presupposition (ScalarP, henceforth) in (1) that the relevant proposition is the least likely among a certain set of alternative propositions ($[]_F$ marks the element with intonational focus that is associated with *even*).² The LF of the sentence (2a) is given in (2b), where *even* combines with C (a silent restrictor variable) and the proposition ‘that John read Book A’. Following Rooth (1985, 1992), a set of alternative propositions in (2a) is obtained by replacing Book A with elements of the same type, and C denotes a subset of such a set that only includes the propositions relevant to the context (e.g., $C = \{\text{that John read Book A, that John read Book B, that John read Book C}\}$). The ScalarP that *even* triggers is given in (2c); ‘that John read Book A’ is the least likely among the alternatives.

- (1) $[[\textit{even}]]^w(C)(p)$ is defined only if $\forall q \in C [q \neq p \rightarrow q >_{\text{likely}} p]$
- (2) a. John *even* read $[\text{Book A}]_F$.
b. LF: $[\textit{even} C [\text{John read } [\text{Book A}]_F]]$
c. $[[\textit{even}]]^w(C)(\lambda w.\text{read}(j,a,w))$, where $C \subseteq \{q: \exists x[q = \lambda w.\text{read}(j,x,w)]\}$
ScalarP: $\forall q \in C [q \neq \lambda w.\text{read}(j,a,w) \rightarrow q >_{\text{likely}} \lambda w.\text{read}(j,a,w)]$

In a downward-entailing (DE) context, *even* introduces a different presupposition. In (3a), *even* is in the complement of the adversative predicate *surprise*, which is considered to be a DE operator (Kadmon and Landman 1993). In this case, we obtain not only the least-likely reading observed in (2a), but also the most-likely reading that Book A is the most likely book to be read by John. In the negative sentence (3b), *even* gives rise to the most-likely reading only.

- (3) a. I was surprised that John *even* read $[\text{Book A}]_F$.

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¹Karttunen and Peters (1979) use the term *conventional implicature* rather than *presupposition*. However, they consistently use the former term to refer to implications that we usually call presuppositions, and so I use the term *presupposition* in this paper.

²There have been disagreements as to whether the relevant proposition is ‘less’ likely or the ‘least’ likely (Kay 1990, Rullmann 1997, Guerzoni 2003). In this paper, I simply take the latter view. Moreover, besides a ScalarP, *even* may trigger an existential presupposition. This presupposition of *even* is ignored here, since it does not affect the main content of the paper (cf. Section 2.3).

