Diachronic shifts of Korean \textit{pyello} and Japanese \textit{amari} from PPI to NPI

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This is a corpus-based diachronic analysis of the degree adverbs of Korean \textit{pyello} and Japanese \textit{amari}. The purposes of this study are 1) to delineate the diachronic development of \textit{pyello} and \textit{amari} from positive polarity item (PPI) to negative polarity item (NPI), and 2) to offer an explanatory account as to their polarity shifts, incorporating two concepts: counter-expectation and structural reanalysis of scope.

The primary meaning of the two words above is ‘not very, not much’ as NPI in present-day Korean and Japanese as below:

(1K) \textit{na koki pyello an-meke}  
I meat much NEG-eat  
(I do not eat meat much.)

(1J) \textit{watashi niku amari tabe-nai}  
I meat much eat-NEG  
(I do not eat meat much.)

However, the original meanings of \textit{pyello} ‘especially, distinctly’ and \textit{amari} ‘excessively, extremely’ as PPIs were prevalent through mid-19th century in Korean and 20th century in Japanese (Kawase 2008) as shown below:

(2K) \textit{sisyen uy cip-i pyello i usyue nas ti mos hAl kes-i-ni}  
Taoist.hermit GEN house-NOM distinctly this than better not NOMZ-be-since  
‘Since it is not the case that a Taoist hermit’s house will distinctly be better than this,…’

\textit{[Kuunmong, 18\textsuperscript{th} C (collection of Seoul National University)]}

(2J) \textit{amari ookii no ireru kara}  
extremely big NOMZ put.in since  
‘Since you put in something too big,…’

A shared feature of distinction as in the sense of an outstanding degree which exceeds the general norm framed in a negated sentence played an important role as a bridge context in its diachronic development from PPI (first glosses below) to NPI (second glosses). Pragmatically, a negated sentence is uttered when the speaker finds the situation not what s/he had expected (i.e., counted to expectation).

(3K) \textit{syangso mal-ul syangkohA-mye syangko-thi ani-mi pyello kwankin-thi anihA-ni}  
appeal words-ACC review-and review- NEG -NOMZ distinctly/so.much important-not-since  
‘As for reviewing the words of appeal, {since it is not the case that it is extremely important to review it or not (counter to general expectation) / it is not so important to review it or not}, (so don’t worry…).’

\textit{[Coyakimwun, 19\textsuperscript{th} C (collection of The Academy of Korean Studies)]}

(3J) \textit{Kono mise no keeki wa amari amaku-nai.}  
this bakery GEN cake TOP extremely/so.much sweet-NEG  
‘It is not the case that cakes at this bakery are extremely sweet (counter to general / my expectation)/Cakes at this bakery are not so sweet (on a scale of sweetness).’

\textit{[Shinzato 2018: 68]}

For instance, in (3J), the starting point in the PPI interpretation is that people generally expect that cakes are very sweet. However, when the situation is just the opposite, that is, counter to the expectation, it triggers the negation of the entire sentence as it is not the case-. In the NPI interpretation, no such counter-expectation exists; speaker simply tastes the cake and concludes it is not sweet.

As shown above, counter-expectation yields an ambivalent bridge context, which is then followed by the structural reanalysis of scope as below. The structural reanalysis further leads to the polarity shift from PPI to NPI of \textit{pyello} and \textit{amari}:
In the first stage, *pyello* and *amari* have a scope over a positive predicate. The intermediate stage is transitional allowing both PPI-like and NPI-like interpretations. In the last stage, *pyello* and *amari* are in agreement within the same sentence and thus categorized as NPI.

Putting (4K) and (4J) together, the following changes can be formulated:

It is NOT the case that the distinct/extreme feature exists (PPI) ➞ NOT that the distinct/extreme feature exists (PPI) / NOT TOO MUCH distinct/extreme feature exists (NPI) ➞ The distinct/extreme feature does NOT exist SO MUCH (NPI)

It is generally said that high degree words cannot be negated as in *unmatch* or *unmany* (Hoekstra 2011: 35), but when counter-expectation comes into play, high degree words could become negated as in not too distinct, not too extreme, to one’s expectation. When the counter-expectation fades out, what is left is a simple negation of the degree as so much.

Here is the quantitative analysis of diachronic developments of *pyello* and *amari*:

(5K) Diachronic development of *pyello*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>17th C</th>
<th>18th C</th>
<th>~mid 19th C</th>
<th>1889-1899</th>
<th>early 20th C</th>
<th>Early 21st C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPI</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>98.7%</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPI</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
<td>87.3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(5J) Diachronic development of *amari*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>12th C</th>
<th>17th C</th>
<th>18th C~19th C</th>
<th>1895-1925</th>
<th>1970’s</th>
<th>1990’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Konjaku Monogatari</td>
<td>Toraakira-bon Kyogen</td>
<td>Share-bon Ninjō-bon</td>
<td>Tiyō Corpus</td>
<td>Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese</td>
<td>Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPI</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPI</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
<td>87.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Polarity studies have been mainly focused on synchronic semantic studies and have seldom been discussed in diachronic contexts. It is hoped that this study will fill in such a gap.

Note: The abbreviations used in this article are ACC (Accusative), GEN (Genitive), NEG (Negative) NOM (Nominative), NOMZ (Nominalizer), TOP (Topic).

Selected references


