

# Territory Feature and a Distributed-Morphology Approach to Clause Periphery

SHIORI IKAWA  
*Rutgers University*

AKITAKA YAMADA  
*Osaka University*

## 1 Introduction

Recent studies on the syntax-discourse interface have argued that the discourse information is syntacticized in the clause periphery (Speas and Tenny, 2003; Haegeman and Hill, 2013). Allocutive markings have been examined to analyze the structure of such speech act projections (Miyagawa, 2017; Portner et al., 2019; Yamada, 2019). However, the exact features represented syntactically in the left periphery have not yet been fully revealed. Investigating a hitherto understudied honorific allocutive marker (the *addressee-honorific upgrader* or AHU), we propose that a feature encoding the information about the territory of the addressee (*territory feature*) is also syntactically represented in the clause periphery in addition to a feature for the addressee honorification. They condition the use of AHUs via node-sprouting, as proposed and developed in the recent literature of Distributed Morphology (Choi and Harley 2019; Ikawa and Yamada to appear, a.o.).

*Japanese/Korean Linguistics 29.*  
Edited by Kaoru Horie, Kimi Akita, Yusuke Kubota, David Y. Oshima, and Akira Utsugi.  
Copyright © 2022, CSLI Publications.

## 2 Data

Japanese is well-known to be equipped with *addressee-honorific* (AH) *markers*, which encode the speaker's respect for the addressee (Miyagawa, 2017; Yamada, 2019). A sentence without an AH marker is called a plain form, as in (1)a. On the other hand, the one with an AH marking (e.g., *mas(i)*) is called the polite form, as illustrated in (1)b.

- (1) a. *watasi-wa soo it-ta.*                      b. *watasi-wa soo ii-masi-ta.*  
       1sg-TOP so say-PST                      1sg-TOP so say-AH-PST  
       'I said so'

AHUs, our main concern, are different from — but are related to — AH markings. They are linguistic elements that occur contingently on an AH marker and enhance the level of politeness already encoded by an AH (e.g., *moos* 'say.AHU', or 'be/ASP.AHU', *mair* 'come/ASP.AHU'; Kikuchi 1994; Yamada 2019; Oshima 2018). Observe the sentence in (2)b.

- (2) a. \**watasi-wa soo moosi-ta*    b. *watasi-wa soo moosi-masi-ta.*  
       1sg-TOP so say-PST            1sg-TOP so say-AH-PST  
       'I said so (intended)'        'I said so'

The verb *iw* 'say' (*ii* and *it* are its allomorphs) in (1)b is upgraded to *moosi* in (2)b, its AHU counterpart. The at-issue semantic content remains the same, but the politeness level of (2)b is now enhanced (Property 1: ENHANCEMENT). For example, it is rather strange for a student to use (2)b when talking to their senior, whereas (1)b is appropriate when talking to a president. An AH must also be used within the same sentence when an AHU is present. In (2)a, *moosi* is therefore illicit because *mas* does not exist within the same sentence (Property 2: CONTINGENCY).<sup>1</sup>

These two properties both concern honorificity toward the addressee. This seems to suggest that an AHU is an instance of honorific allocutivity. Interestingly, however, AHUs also show similarity with subject-honorific (SH) markers. In this regard, they can be considered as hybrid expressions that combine an utterance-honorific property with argument-honorific characteristics.

First, AHU restricts the subject (Property 3: SUBJECT RESTRICTION). It displays a function opposite an SH marking. Observe the sentence in (3)b.

<sup>1</sup> Some may wonder if *moosi* and *mas* are fused to form a new word or morpheme. However, an AHU is licensed even when they are not adjacent.

- (i) *watasi-wa soo moosi-te i\*(-masi)-ta.*  
       1SG-TOP so say.AH-te PRG-AH-PST  
       'I was saying so.'

Unlike the non-AHU sentence in (3)a, the use of *moosi* makes the 2P subject unacceptable.

- (3) a. {*watasi/kare/anata*}-*wa ii-masi-ta*.  
 1sg/3sg/2sg-TOP say-AH-PST  
 b. {*watasi/kare/#anata*}-*wa moosi-masi-ta*  
 1sg/3sg/2sg-TOP say.AHU-AH-PST  
 ‘{I/you/he} said.’

This restriction looks like a person restriction, but purely morphosyntactic features do not regulate it. As shown in (4), the sentence is illicit even when the entire subject phrase refers to a 3P individual, if the 2P pronoun modifies it.<sup>2</sup>

- (4) [{*watasi/#anata*}-*no sidookyookan-wa*] *soo moosi-masi-ta*  
 1sg/2sg-GEN advisor-TOP so say-AH-PST  
 ‘My / #Your advisor said so’

Furthermore, as indicated by (5), if the subject refers to someone close to the addressee, the sentence sounds unacceptable, even though the subject phrase does not contain any overt 2P expressions. In contrast, the sentence is acceptable when the subject referent is not an acquaintance of the addressee, as in (6) — which also contains a 3P subject.

- (5) # *yamada-san-ga moosi-masi-ta*.  
 Yamada-Mx.-NOM say.AHU-AH-PST  
 ‘Mx. Yamada said (Context: Mx. Yamada is someone close to the addressee).’  
 (6) *puraton-ga moosi-masu-ni-wa. . .*  
 Plato-NOM say-AH-as-TOP  
 ‘As Plato says. . .’ (Kikuchi, 1994, 273)

The fact that an AHU *cannot* be used when the subject refers to either (i) the addressee or (ii) someone close to the addressee can be unified, as shown in (7):<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>For some speakers, *my advisor* does not sound perfectly acceptable, either; we thank David Y. Oshima for pointing this out. Even for such speakers, however, the observation still holds that the sentence is worse with *anata* than with *watasi*.

<sup>3</sup>Previous studies such as that of Kikuchi (1994) and Oshima (2018) classify AHUs into the cases where the subject is the 1P pronoun or someone close to the speaker, and the cases where the subject is the 3P expression whose referent is not close to the speaker. They claim that the subject is dishonored in the former case to relatively raise the status of the addressee. Given the availability of AHU in (4) with *watasi*, where the subject referent is close to the 1P and still cannot be supposed to be dishonored, we consider the subject lowering effect to be illusory and hence propose a unified analysis for the cases with a 1P subject (or subject referring to someone close

- (7) An AHU cannot be used when the referent of the syntactic subject is in the territory of the addressee.

Although the exact territory of the addressee depends on the speaker's construal and is thus a semantic or pragmatic notion, the target of the restriction is fixed to the referent of the syntactic subject. For example, as given in (8), the passive construction confirms that it is not the agent but the syntactic subject that matters when using an AHU. As shown in (9), a dative-subject construction also demonstrates that an AHU is sensitive to the subjechood, not the morphological case (whether it is marked with a *-ga*).

- (8) {*watasi/kare/#anata*}-*wa sensei-gata-ni*  
 1sg/3sg/2sg-TOP professor-PL-by  
*sikar-arete-mairi-masi-ta*  
 scold-PASS-ASP.AHU-AH-PAST  
 'I/he/#you have been scolded by the professors'
- (9) {*watasi/kare/#anata*}-*ni-mo sidaini eigo-ga*  
 1sg/3sg/2sg-DAT-too gradually English-NOM  
*yom-ete-mairi-masi-ta*  
 read-can-ASP.AHU-AH-PAST  
 'I/he/#you too came to be able to read English'

Second, an AHU can be optionally present multiple times within a single sentence in a verb and an aspectual head, as demonstrated in (10) (Property 4: MULTIPLICITY).

- (10) *sensei-ga* {*it-tei/moosi-tei/it-temairi/moosi-temairi*}  
 teacher-NOM say-PRG/say.AHU-PRG/say-PRG.AHU/say.AHU-PRG  
*masi-ta.*  
 AH-PRS  
 'The teacher was saying.'

Multiple markings are also obtained with SHs, as exemplified in (11) (Kishimoto, 2012; Yamada, 2019; Ikawa and Yamada, to appear). This property is, therefore, another critical similarity to the SH construction.

- (11) *sensei-wa* {*it-teir/ossyat-teir/it-teirassyar/ossyat-teirassyar*}-*u.*  
 teacher-TOP say-PRG/say.SH-PRG/say-PRG.SH/say.SH-PRG-PRS  
 'The teacher is saying.'

---

to the speaker) and cases with a 3P subject, as shown in (7). However, at least some speakers disfavor (4) even with *watasi* as mentioned in fn.2. For those speakers, there might have to be further distinctions between the 1P uses and 3P uses of AHUs.

### 3 Analysis

In the discussion so far, we have introduced four essential characteristics of AHUs. This section accounts for them by using (i) discourse-related features in the left periphery, which can enter an Agree-relationship with the subject, and (ii) the node-sprouting operation triggered by those features. The former was built on the analysis of AH by Portner et al. (2019) and Yamada (2019), while the latter was built on the analysis of SH by Ikawa and Yamada (to appear), which allows us to capture the similarity of AHUs to both AH and SH.

#### 3.1 Discourse-related Features

By developing the view that cP is equipped with features capturing the relation among discourse participants (Portner et al., 2019), we propose that two distinct features are relevant for AHU morphology — (i) addressee-honorific (AH) feature and (ii) territory feature.

The first feature — the AH feature — is designed to express the politeness relationship between the speaker and the addressee, which takes the form [AH: Sp, +/-, Add] and is present on c.<sup>4</sup> It consists of three slots: (i) the Sp, (ii) the Add, and (iii) the value. Based on these slots, this feature specifies whether the speaker has a positive or negative politeness attitude toward the addressee, as represented in (12).

$$(12) \quad \llbracket [\text{AH: Sp, +, Add}] \rrbracket = \lambda p. p \bullet \text{Sp respects Add.}$$

If c is borne with the feature [AH: Sp, +, Add], the AH-marker *mas* is used in the clause (Yamada, 2019). Recall that, although this is a necessary condition for the use of AHU morphology, it is not a sufficient condition: AHU further requires that the syntactic subject be outside of the territory of the addressee.

The second feature — the TERRITORY FEATURE (TR) — is used to capture this secondary condition. This feature also consists of three slots: (i) an *evaluatee*, (ii) a *territory holder*, and (iii) the value (+/-), which specifies whether the evaluatee is inside or outside the territory of the territory holder. In the current case, the territory holder is the addressee, and the evaluatee is the referent of the syntactic subject. Since the sentence with an AHU is illicit unless the syntactic subject is outside the territory of the addressee, we propose that c must be born with a negatively-charged territory feature to license the AHU marking, as represented in (13).

---

<sup>4</sup>Portner et al. (2019) propose a similar feature [status: S≤A] for the politeness information and define it as having a function of performatively updating the social hierarchy between the speaker and the addressee. Yet the social hierarchy is not the only factor playing a role in the Japanese addressee-honorific system, at least (McCready, 2019; Yamada, 2019; Yamada and Donatelli, 2020). For this reason, we do not use the status feature in this paper. As far as the morphosyntax is concerned, this change does not cause any significant differences in the subsequent discussion.

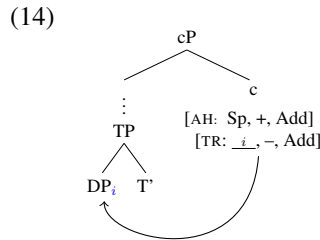
- (13)  $\llbracket[\text{TR: Subj}, -, \text{Add}]\rrbracket = \lambda p. p \bullet$  the subject referent is outside the territory of add. (to be revised)

In the following sections, we show how the AHU morphology with the four properties reviewed in Section 2 refers to these features.

### 3.2 Step 1: Agreement between the Subject and Clause Periphery

Suppose  $c$  is born with a territory feature in a specific clause. For this feature to be interpreted properly, the territory holder and the evaluatee in that clause must be decided. For the territory holder, we can assume that the territory feature on  $c$  is born with the territory holder filled, as it is fixed to the addressee in the context. The question is more pressing for the evaluatee. Given that the evaluatee is the syntactic subject in the clause, the territory feature must refer to the syntactic structure to determine the evaluatee.

To capture this, we propose that the evaluatee slot starts as unspecified, and becomes specified during the syntactic derivation. More specifically, the head  $c$  has a probing index feature and probes down for a DP. Given that the closest DP that it  $c$ -commands is the structural subject of the clause,  $c$  establishes an Agree relationship with it and is valued by the index features on the probe, as shown in the structure in (14).



Following Ikawa (to appear), we claim that this creates “co-bound” relationship between the subject and the evaluatee in the territory feature.<sup>5</sup> The revised semantics of the territory feature in (15) illustrate this point. When the subject has index  $i$ , the evaluatee of the territory feature is also indexed as  $i$ . As a result, the territory feature is interpreted such that the referent of the subject is outside of the territory of the addressee.

- (15)  $\llbracket[\text{TR: } i, -, \text{Add}]\rrbracket = \lambda p. p \bullet \llbracket[\text{DP}_i]\rrbracket$  is outside the territory of Add.

Thus,  $c$  born with the feature in (15) is compatible only with the sentence where the syntactic subject is outside the territory of the addressee. We claim that an AHU is possible only when  $c$  is born with this negative territory feature in addition to a positively-charged AH feature (Property 2: Contingency), and

<sup>5</sup> See also McKenzie (2012) for a related idea.

hence appears only when the subject is outside the territory of the addressee (Property 3: Subject Restriction).

The Enhancement Effect (Property 1) can also be attributed to the availability of the territory feature. Indeed, the semantics of the territory feature are concerned only with the addressee's territory and do not directly manipulate the honorific level. However, this feature has a catalytic effect; when it is present, a special pragmatic rule strengthens the intended politeness level. It has been argued that honorificity is an expression of (psychological) 'distancing' (cf., Takiura to appear, a.o.), and it is likely that it has a pragmatic (semantic) interaction with the territorial meaning. However, we leave the detailed analysis of this issue to future research.

### 3.3 Step 2: Node Sprouting

The analysis has so far captured AHU's orientation to allocutivity. However, AHU markings can occur in multiple positions simultaneously (Property 4: Multiplicity). How specifically do the features in the left periphery affect the forms of verbs and auxiliaries?

Recall that multiplicity is shared by SHs, as seen in (11). To capture the multiplicity of SHs, we proposed in Ikawa and Yamada (to appear) that the overt SH markers do not realize the syntactic element responsible for SH construction, which we assumed to be a [+HON] feature on a subject DP. Instead, the overt markers are postsyntactically introduced into a structure triggered by a [+HON] feature on the subject via morphological operation *node sprouting*, which inserts a node into a structure after spell-out on the way to PF (Halle and Marantz, 1993; Choi and Harley, 2019, a.o.). More specifically, we claimed that, after spell-out, a node HON is inserted into all the heads c-commanded by a subject with the [+HON] feature. Even though there is only one subject with [+HON], overt marking spreads over multiple heads c-commanded by the subject.

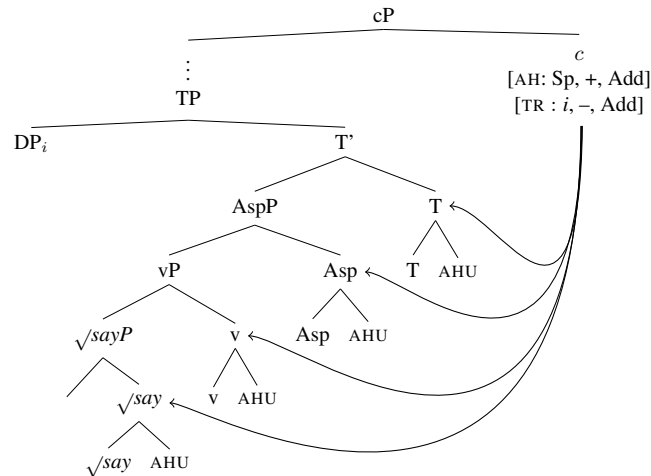
A similar analysis is applicable to AHU morphology. We propose the node-sprouting rule in (16): an AHU node is inserted into a head H if H is c-commanded by the c with a positive AH and a negative territory feature.

- (16) Sprouting rule:  
 $H \rightarrow [H \text{ AHU}] / \_ \text{ is c-commanded by } c_{[AH: Sp, +, Add], [TR: i, -, Add]}$

This rule makes every head that gets c-commanded by  $c_{[AH: Sp, +, Add], [TR: i, -, Add]}$  sprout an AHU node. These inserted AHU nodes condition the allomorphy of the heads it attaches to by the vocabulary insertion (VI) rules, as given in (17)-(18). Keeping this in mind, consider the structure in (19).

- (17) a.  $\sqrt{\text{say}} \rightarrow \text{moos} / \_ [AHU]$       b.  $\sqrt{\text{say}} \rightarrow \text{iw} / \text{elsewhere}$   
(18) a.  $\text{Asp} \rightarrow \text{or} / \_ [AHU]$       b.  $\text{Asp} \rightarrow \text{ir} / \text{elsewhere}$

(19)



The rule in (17) states that  $\sqrt{\text{say}}$  gets realized as *moos*, when its sister is an AHU node and as *iw* otherwise. The same holds for the Asp head, as in (18). We consider that an AHU node is realized as phonologically null, as shown in the rule in (20); it acts as a catalyst. The lack of AHU morphology on *v* and T derives from the lack of VI rules for *v* and T, which are applicable specifically in the presence of an AHU node.

(20) AHU  $\rightarrow \emptyset$

Note that such node-sprouting analysis accounts for the appearance of AHU morphology in low positions and straightforwardly derives the observation in (10) above that AHU morphology appears in multiple positions. Recall that multiple occurrences of AHU marking are optional. This optionality is attributed to the probabilistic application of morphological rules. We assume that a postsyntactic deletion rule makes the features or nodes of AHU inactive or transparent in the VI process, and the application of this rule is optional, as long as at least one of the nodes is realized.<sup>6</sup>

Operation node-sprouting is considered to be phase-bound (Choi and Harley, 2019). Thus, the current account predicts that AHU morphology is possible only when it co-occurs in the same phase as the *c* head, which bears discourse-related features. Previous studies have not agreed on the issue of which clause can include a projection that bears discourse-related information (Miyagawa, 2012; Yamada, 2019; Bhadra, 2017; Alok, 2020, a.o.). However, Yamada (2019) claims that AH morphology is also derived via node-sprouting

<sup>6</sup> Alternatively, one can propose that the AHU-insertion rule is optional. For example, in analyzing Amharic haplology, Kramer (2010, 228) proposes this line of analysis.



triggered by the AH feature on *c*. The current proposal, combined with his analysis, predicts that AHU should occur in the same phase as AH. This prediction is borne out: the sentence in (21) shows that even if there is an AH marker *mas* in the matrix clause, it is not possible to use an AHU element *or* ‘be.AHU’ in the embedded clause unless there is another occurrence of *mas* in the same clause. This supports our claim that the insertion of AHU morphology is triggered by *c* via node-sprouting, which is phase-bound.

- (21) *watasi-wa* [*watasi-no titi-ga soko-ni*  
 1sg-TOP 1sg-GEN father-NOM there-at  
 {*ori-masu/iru<sup>\*</sup>oru*}-koto-o] *sitte-ori/i-masi-ta*  
 be.AHU-AH/be/be.AHU-that-ACC know-ASP.AHU/ASP-AH-PAST  
 ‘I knew my father was there.’

#### 4 Conclusions and Future Studies

This paper has provided a formal account of hitherto understudied AHU morphemes. We proposed a new formal feature, *territory feature*, to account for the peculiar property of AHU. Extending the analysis of addressee honorifics in the literature, we have claimed that a negatively-charged territory feature, together with a positively-charged AHU feature, conditions the insertion of AHU morphology in the heads below.

While this paper only targets AHU, the effect of speech act participants’ territorial information on linguistic expressions has been sporadically reported. For example, demonstratives are known to show sensitivity to the territorial information of the speaker and the addressee (Kamio, 1997). Another potentially relevant case comes from Jingpo: Zu (2015) reports that intimacy between the subject and the speaker, or a *bonding relationship*, affects the  $\phi$ -agreement on the predicate. We leave it for future research to analyze how the proposal in this paper about AHU relates to these other phenomena.

#### Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the JSPS Core-to-Core Program (#JPJSCCA20210001) and by JSPS Grant-in-Aid for Research Activity Start-up (#20K21957).

#### References

- Alok, D. 2020. *Speaker and Addressee in Natural Language: Honorificity, Indexicality and Their Interaction in Magahi*. Ph.D. thesis Rutgers University.
- Bhadra, D. 2017. *Evidentiality and Questions: Bangla at the Interfaces*. Ph.D. thesis Rutgers University.
- Choi, J. and Harley H. 2019. Locality Domains and Morphological Rules. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 37(4): 1319–1365.

- Haegeman, L. and Hill V. 2013. The Syntacticization of Discourse. *Syntax and its Limits*, ed. R. R. Folli et al., 370–390. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Halle, M. and Marantz A. 1993. Distributed Morphology and the Pieces of Inflection. *The View from Building 20*, ed. K. Hale et al. 111–176. Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press.
- Ikawa, S. to appear. Agree Feeds Interpretation: Evidence from Japanese Object Honorifics. *Syntax*.
- Ikawa, S. and Yamada A. to appear. A Hybrid Approach to Honorific Agreement. *Proceedings for CLS 56*.
- Kamio, A. 1997. *Territory of Information*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Kikuchi, Y. 1994. *Keigo (Honorifics)*. Kadokawa Shoten. (reprinted in 1997, Tokyo: Kôdansha).
- Kishimoto, H. 2012. Subject Honorification and the Position of Subjects in Japanese. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics* 21(1): 1–41.
- Kramer, R. 2010. The Amharic Definite Marker and the Syntax-Morphology Interface. *Syntax* 13(3): 196–240.
- McCready, E. 2019. *The Semantics and Pragmatics of Honorification*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McKenzie, A. R. 2012. *The Role of Contextual Restriction in Reference-Tracking*. Ph.D. thesis University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
- Miyagawa, S. 2012. Agreements that Occur Mainly in the Main Clause. *Main Clause Phenomena: New Horizons*, ed. L. Aelbrecht et al. 79–112. John Benjamins Publishing.
- Miyagawa, S. 2017. *Agreement beyond Phi*. Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press.
- Oshima, D. Y. 2018. The Logical Principles of Honorification and Dishonorification in Japanese. *JSAI International Symposium on Artificial Intelligence*, 325–340.
- Portner, P., Pak M., and Zanuttini R. 2019. The Speaker-Addressee Relation at the Syntax-Semantics Interface. *Language* 95(1): 1–36.
- Speas, P. and Tenny C. 2003. Configurational Properties of Point of View Roles. *Asymmetry in Grammar*, ed. A. M. D. Schiullo, 315–345. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Takiura, M. to appear. Intersection of Traditional Japanese Honorific Theories and Western Politeness Theories. *Handbook of Japanese Sociolinguistics*, ed. Y. Asahi et al. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Yamada, A. 2019. *The Syntax, Semantics and Pragmatics of Japanese Addressee-Honorific Markers*. Ph.D. thesis Georgetown University.
- Yamada, A. and Donatelli L. 2020. A Persona-Based Analysis of Politeness in Japanese and Spanish. *Proceedings of the Seventeenth International Workshop of Logic and Engineering of Natural Language Semantics* 17: 129–144.
- Zu, V. 2015. A Two-Tiered theory of the Discourse. *Proceedings of the 33rd West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics (WCCFL)*, 151–160.