Bias meaning

- A Japanese negative sentence uttered with a rising intonation expresses a biased question.
- Intuitively, it has a function similar to English tag questions or negative bias questions [Romero, 2005, Nilsenova, 2002].

(1) a. Where is Mary?
   heyaroom ni i nai?
   ‘She is in her room, isn’t she?’/’Isn’t she in her room?’
   (Bias: I think she is in her room.)

b. heyaroom ni i nai?
   room in exist NEG
   ‘She is in her room, isn’t she?’/’Isn’t she in her room?’
   (Bias: I think she is in her room.)

c. #heya ni iru?
   room in exist
   #‘She is in her room?’

- When the predicate of the construction is an adjective, there are two intonational patterns used by the young speakers of the Tokyo dialect.

(2) ano umi aoku nai?
   that sea blue NEG
   ‘That sea is blue, isn’t it?/Isn’t that sea blue?’
   (Bias: I think that sea is blue.)
Two accent patterns

(3) ano u’mi aoku nai?
that sea blue NEG
‘That sea is blue, isn’t it? Isn’t that sea blue?’

a. ano u’mi a’oku nai?
L%H*+L L%H% (Rise with Accents)
b. ano u’mi aoku nai?
%LH- H% (Rise with Deaccentuation) New!

Negation

These two variants are not completely interchangeable.
First, the presence of negation is necessary for deaccentuation to occur.

(4) koko samui?
here cold

a. ✓ koko samui? (Rise with Accents)
b. *koko samui? (Rise with Deaccentuation)

Iterated Negation

“Kon’ya wa Boogie Back” Kenji Ozawa featuring Schadaraparr (1994) sample

(5) a. yoku nai? kore.
good NEG this
‘Isn’t it good? This one.’
b. kore yoku nai?
this good NEG
‘Isn’t this good?’
c. yoku naku naku naku naku naku nai?
good NEG NEG NEG NEG NEG NEG
‘Isn’t this not not not not not good?’
Emotive Content

- Second, the deaccented versions often express a variety of strong emotive meanings compared to the normal rise versions.
- (2) is understood as an exclamation (surprise).
- (3-b) is perceived as a complaint.

(2) Ano umi aoku nai?
that sea blue NEG
‘That sea is blue, isn’t it?’
(‘and it’s amazing how blue it is’) (Rise with Deaccentuation)

(3-b) koko samuku nai?
here cold NEG
‘It’s cold here, isn’t it’/‘Isn’t it cold here?’
(‘It’s too bad that it’s cold here’) (Rise with Deaccentuation)

Digression: Parallel Intuition in English

- The preposed negative question uttered with Falling intonation seem to convey similar emotive effects (originally pointed out by Maribel Romero, p.c.).

(6) a. Don’t you look nice today↓
   b. (Oh dear,) Isn’t it cold here↓

Distributional Difference

- Third, there is an asymmetry in the distribution with respect to context types.
- Both can be used when both the speaker and the addressee are acknowledging the coldness of the room.

(3-b) Context: both interlocutors are in a cold room.
koko samuku nai?
‘It’s cold here, isn’t it’/‘Isn’t it cold here?’
(a. ✓ sa’muku nai↑ (Rise with Accents)
  b. ✓ samuku nai↑ (Rise with Deaccentuation)

Room for Doubt

- Rise with Deaccentuation is infelicitous when the speaker doesn’t have evidence for p,
- I.e., when evidence for p is available for both of the interlocutors.

(7) Context: B has just won a lottery. A has never won a lottery in her life.
   A: takarakuji atat tara ureshiku nai?
      lottery won COMP happy NEG
      ‘Aren’t you happy, since you won a lottery?’
   (i) ✓ ureshi’ku nai↑ (Rise with Accents)
   (ii) #ureshiku nai↑ (Rise with Deaccentuation)
There are two intonational variants for Japanese biased questions:

- **Rise with Accents** used by all speakers of the Tokyo dialect.
- **Rise with Deaccentuation** used by young speakers.

Rise with Deaccentuation often (but not always) tones up emotive content.

The asymmetry of distribution:

- **Rise with Accents** can be used as long as the speaker is biased toward the positive answer.
- **Rise with Deaccentuation** requires the context where evidence is available for both of the interlocutors.

**Research Questions**

1. Why does Rise with Deaccentuation often (but not always) express emotive content?
2. Why does Rise with Accents have a wider distribution than Rise with Deaccentuation?

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**English preposed negation**

A preposed negation question necessarily carries an epistemic implicature that the speaker believed or at least expected that the positive answer is correct.

(8) Isn’t Jane coming?
Positive epistemic implicature: The speaker believes or at least expects that Jane is coming. (Romero and Han, 2004)

**Japanese Biased Questions**

**Assumption**

Regardless of the presence/absence of deaccentuation, a question of the form *p-nai?* gives rise to the Bias implicature [see Aihara, 2007].

(1) a. Where is Mary?
   b. *heya ni i ni nai?*
      room in exist NEG
      ‘She is in her room, isn’t she?’/‘Isn’t she in her room?’ (Bias: I think she is in her room.)
   c. #*heya ni iru?*
      room in exist
      ‘She is in her room?’
In terms of Lewisian subjective probability [Lewis, 1986], the speaker's degree of belief is at least above chance.

a. The implicature of  $p$-naï?:
   - The speaker has a Bias toward $p$.

b. $C_{A,C}(p) > .5$

Many researchers have recognized the importance of deaccenting rules [Ladd, 1980, Brown, 1983, Terken and Hirschberg, 1994, Schwarzchild, 1999].

In particular, in English, given materials in the discourse are deaccented [Brown, 1983, Terken and Hirschberg, 1994].


(10) Naoya-ga nani-o nomiya-de nonda no?
   Naoya-NOM what-ACC bar-LOC drank Q
   'What did Naoya drink at the bar?' [Ishihara, 2002]
Deaccenting marks Givenness in Information Structure.
In biased questions, deaccenting seems to indicate that evidence is available for both the speaker and the addressee.
Can we generalize these two instances of deaccenting?

Deaccenting marks Givenness in Information Structure.
In biased questions, deaccenting seems to indicate that evidence is available for both the speaker and the addressee.
Can we generalize these two instances of deaccenting?

The given material corresponds to the issue that is publicly committed (or assumed to be committed).

(11)  a.  Who came to the party?
    b.  [Focus John] [Given came to the party].

Given: Someone came to the party.
Question under Discussion (QUD): Who came to the party?
Both the speaker and the addressee are committed to the issue, ‘Who came to the party?’

Proposal 1: Givenness as Public Commitment
Define Givenness in terms of Publicity.

Proposal 2
Our Proposal 1

Givenness in Biased Questions
The given material corresponds to the information that has publicly available evidence.

(3-b)  koko samuku nai?
    here cold NEG
    ‘It’s cold here, isn’t it’/’Isn’t it cold here?’

I know that evidence is publicly available.
Don’t you think that this evidence is clear enough to conclude that ‘it is cold’, to make it as a public commitment?
Barker (to appear): Clarity and the grammar of skepticism

(12) It is clear that Abby is a doctor. (Barker, to appear)

Why ever assert clarity? Because doing so reveals information about the epistemic standard of evidence that is operative in a discourse. (Barker, to appear; p18)

Why do we question something Given?

- Deaccentuation in biased questions, i.e., specifying Givenness, gives rise to a meta-linguistic talk about the standard for the justification of evidence.

Interim Summary 3: Givenness as Publicity

- Givenness observed in different constructions can be generalized in terms of Publicity
  - Public commitment to a certain issue. (QUD)
  - Justification from public evidence.

Deaccenting: Lexicalized Givenness

Our Proposal 2

Deaccentuation has gained a grammaticalized meaning, Givenness.

- Deaccenting marks Givenness in the discourse.
- We go one step further:
  (At least in the context of biased questions,) deaccenting is conventionalized to mean Givenness as its lexical specification.

Post-Focus Reduction

Figure: Ishihara 2002, p. 4
Deaccentuation

If \( p \) is Given, the speaker is ready to add \( p \) to the common ground. It follows that the speaker strongly suspects \( p \) \((C_{A,C}=.98)\). We argue that this Givenness implicature and the Bias implicature form a scale.

**Subjective Probability Scale**

**Given \( \subset \) Bias**

i.e., if \( p \) is Given, it is entailed that \( p \) is Biased.

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**Figure:** Rise with Deaccentuation

**Emotive Meanings**

By defining the lexical meaning of deaccentuation, we can account for why Rise with Deaccentuation induces emotive meanings.

\[(3-b)\] koko samuku nai?  
here cold NEG  
‘It’s cold here, isn’t it?’/‘Isn’t it cold here?’  
(Complaint: ‘It’s too bad that it’s cold here’)  
(Rise with Deaccentuation)

**The motivation of superfluous questions**

When the speaker asks a question with deaccentuation, the speaker is inquiring something which is already Given (publicly evident).

The speaker is not seeking for information.

What is communicated is the high reliability of evidence in the common ground.

Question: The speaker is trying to elicit some reaction from the addressee.

The speaker is expressing a personal opinion (emotion) expecting that the addressee will accommodate the opinion into the common ground as well.

See also Egg’s [2007] discussion on rhetorical questions.
The speaker only has a mere bias toward p.
The speaker wonders whether the addressee wants to make p as a joint commitment.
Emotive meanings are less prominent.

Our claim: deaccentuation in biased question has a lexicalized meaning, Givenness.
Uttering a biased question with RwD → Inquiring something Given.
Asking a superfluous question → Expressing emotive implicatures.

Deaccentuation requires p to be already Given (public evidence).
If the context is such that there is still room for doubt in adding p to the common ground, the use of Rise with Deaccentuation is illicit.
Rise with Accents exhibits a broader distribution than Rise with Deaccentuation.

Deaccentuation requires p to be already Given (public evidence).
If the context is such that there is still room for doubt in adding p to the common ground, the use of Rise with Deaccentuation is illicit.
Rise with Accents exhibits a broader distribution than Rise with Deaccentuation.
Interim Summary 4: Asymmetry Explained

- Our claim: Deaccenting grammatically marks Givenness.
- Givenness and Bias form a scale in terms of Subjective Probability, Given ⊂ Bias.
- By defining the lexical specification for deaccenting, we account for the asymmetry of the distribution:
  
  \[ \begin{align*}
  \text{RwD} & \text{ Given} \\
  \text{RwA} & \text{ Bias (including Given)}
  \end{align*} \]

RwD possible only with Direct Evidence

(2)  
  a. Context: Both the speaker and the addressee stand in front of the beautiful sea.
  b. Ano umi aoku nai?  
     \begin{align*}
     \text{that sea blue NEG} \\
     \text{‘That sea is blue, isn’t it?’/‘Isn’t that sea blue?’}
     \end{align*}
     \begin{align*}
     (i) & \checkmark \text{Ano umi aoku nai↑} \text{ (Rise with Accents)} \\
     (ii) & \checkmark \text{Ano umi aoku nai↑} \text{ (Rise with Deaccentuation)}
     \end{align*}

Evidential Effects: Indirect Evidence

(13)  
  a. Indirect Evidence Context: Yao Ming is a huge guy. I've never seen his son, but, guessing from Yao Ming’s height,...
  b. Yao-Ming-no musuko tte ookiku nai  
     \begin{align*}
     \text{Yao-Ming-GEN son \ TOP big NEG} \\
     \text{‘Yao Ming’s son is big, isn’t he?’}
     \end{align*}
     \begin{align*}
     (i) & \checkmark \text{ooki’ku nai↑} \text{ (Rise with Accents)} \\
     (ii) & \checkmark \text{ookiku nai↑} \text{ (Rise with Deaccentuation)}
     \end{align*}

Evidential Effects: Hearsay Evidence

(14)  
  a. Hearsay Evidence Context: The speaker has never been to Canada, but she heard that it's cold over there.
  b. kanada tte samuku nai  
     \begin{align*}
     \text{Canada TOP cold NEG} \\
     \text{‘Canada is cold, isn’t it?’}
     \end{align*}
     \begin{align*}
     (i) & \checkmark \text{samu’ku nai↑} \text{ (Rise with Accents)} \\
     (ii) & \checkmark \text{samuku nai↑} \text{ (Rise with Deaccentuation)}
     \end{align*}
Digression: Parallel Intuition in English again

If the speaker has never been to Canada, a tag question with Falling accent is inappropriate (Chris Potts, p.c.).

(15) a. Canada is cold, isn’t it↑
    b. Canada is cold, isn’t it↓

Summary of the Evidential Data

Rise with Deaccentuation

RwD is licit only when the speaker has direct (sensory) evidence. RwD is not compatible with inference derived from indirect evidence, nor from hearsay evidence.

Rise with Accents

RwA can be used in all contexts as long as the speaker is expressing his/her bias.

Bias–Evidence

(9) The implicature of p-\textit{nai}?:
The speaker has a Bias toward p.

Having a bias toward p implies that the speaker has at least some kind of (possibly weak) evidence for p.

What happens if you deaccent on the biased Q?

With deaccentuation, the scale proposed above specifies a stronger implicature (i.e., higher on the scale), resulting in direct evidentiality.

Indeed, in the literature of evidentiality, direct evidence is placed higher on the scale than indirect evidence and hearsay evidence.

(16) a. Direct Evidence $\subset$ (generic) Evidence.
    b. Direct Evidence $>$ Indirect, Hearsay Evidence [Adapted from Willett, 1988, Faller, 2002]
Conclusion

- We have documented and analyzed two intonational patterns in Japanese.
  - Rise with Accents
  - Rise with Deaccentuation
- Givenness is characterized in terms of Publicity
  - Public commitment to a certain issue
  - Publicly available evidence
- Deaccentuation in a biased question is grammaticalized.

When Givenness is not marked

- Inference from the private knowledge is sufficient to license biased statement.

(7) Context: B has just won a lottery. A has never won a lottery in her life.
   A: takarakuji atataraureshi’ku nai?
      lottery won COMP happy NEG
      ‘Aren’t you happy, since you won a lottery?’(Rise with Accents)

- From what I know, I infer that it’s fun to win a lottery.
- Will you make it as your commitment or not?
- There is no meta-talk concerning justification from the evidence.

Note that this emotive content is not a lexically specified meaning of deaccentuation.

(17) Context: A and B are looking for a smart person to recommend to NASA.
    A: No one here is smart. We cannot recommend anyone to NASA.
    B: e? Hanako-san-tte atama yoku nai?
       Intj Hanako-SUF-TOP head good NEG
       ‘Wait! Isn’t Hanako smart?’ (Rise with Deaccentuation)
References I

Masahiko Aihara. (Un)biased Negative Yes-No Questions in Japanese. a handout from the 38th Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society (NELS 38), October 26-28, University of Ottawa, 2007.


References II


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References IV


