

Inference denial and concessivity: Japanese *karatoitte* ‘just because’¹

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Abstract. This paper focuses on the Japanese concessive conjunction *karatoitte* ‘just because’, which shows an idiosyncratic distribution. It has been reported that Japanese *karatoitte* typically appears with negation and in certain sentences that express negative sentiment. This paper suggests an analysis of Japanese *karatoitte* adopting the theoretical mechanism used in the analysis for the Negative Polarity Items (NPIs). This study is expected to bring a new perspective on the nature of concessive meaning by reconsidering the semantic function of “denial of inference” that *just because* is said to have in terms of the likelihood scalar presupposition used in NPI analysis.

Keywords: concessive conjunction, reason clause, Japanese, inference denial, negative polarity items

1. Introduction

According to Hilpert (2005), the English phrase *just because* has two usages: the CONCESSIVE usage and the CAUSAL usage as exemplified in (1) and (2) respectively.

- (1)
 - a. **Just because** you play guitars it doesn’t mean you’ve got soul. (Hilpert 2005, (1))
 - b. **Just because** the data satisfy expectations does not mean they’re correct. (ibid. (2))
 - c. You cannot leave your parents **just because** you want to. (ibid. (18))
- (2)
 - a. Utopias lead to disappointment **just because** they are utopias. (Hilpert 2005, (4))
 - b. A total of 37 in every 100 women believe that bankers treat them differently **just because** of their sex. (ibid. (2))
 - c. You cannot leave your parents **just because** you are only five years old. (ibid. (19))

The significant difference between the two usages is whether the sentences has a concessive meaning, or “inference denial” (Hirose, 1991). As Hilpert (2005) pointed out, while the CONCESSIVE type in (1) can be paraphrased with *although*, e.g. *Although you play guitars, that doesn’t mean you’ve got soul*, the CAUSAL type in (2) cannot be paraphrased in the same way.

Another difference between the two usages, according to Hilpert (2005), is the scope of negation. As the following pair shows, while the negation in the CONCESSIVE usage takes scope over the entire sentence including the *because* clause, as in (3), the negation in the CAUSAL usage does not include the *because* clause in its scope, as in (4).

- (3) You **cannot** leave your parents **just because** you want to. (That’s not a good reason!)
¬ [You can leave your parents just because you want to] (Hilpert 2005, (18))

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- (4) You **cannot** leave your parents **just because** you are only five years old. (That’s why!)
 ⇨ [You can leave your parents] just because you are only five years old. (ibid. (19))

The above contrast raises the question whether the difference between the two usages of *just because* is merely a difference in the scope of negation. Certain Japanese data provide a suggestion on this point. As shown below, the phrase *karatoitte* in Japanese works just like English *just because* but only in the CONCESSIVE usage, as in (5). As (6) shows, Japanese *karatoitte* does not have the CAUSAL usage.²

- (5) Oyamoto o hanaretai **karatoitte** hanareru koto wa dekinai.
 Parents ACC leave.want.NPST just.because leave.NPST FN TOP can.NEG.NPST
 ‘You cannot leave your parents just because you want to. (That’s not a good reason!)’
- (6) #Mada gosai da **karatoitte** hanareru koto wa dekinai.
 Only five.years.old COP.NPST just.because leave.NPST FN TOP can.NEG.NPST
 Intended: ‘You cannot leave your parents just because you are only five years old. (That’s why!)’

This contrast shows that Japanese *karatoitte* is not ambiguous as English *just because* is. If the difference between the CONCESSIVE and CAUSAL usages can be attributed only to the difference in the scope of negation, then this suggests that Japanese *karatoitte* is sensitive to the scope of negation in some way. For example, there might be a restriction that the *karatoitte* clause must appear within the scope of negation.

Such a restriction may sound peculiar for a clausal conjunction, but it is familiar from certain linguistic phenomena, namely Negative Polarity Items (NPIs), e.g. the indefinite *any*, the adverb *even*, and minimizers such as *budge an inch*. In this paper, I suggest adopting the theoretical mechanism used in the analysis of NPIs like *even* to explain the idiosyncratic distribution of Japanese *karatoitte*. The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents corpus data to confirm the distribution of Japanese *karatoitte*. Section 3 explains the “inference denial” meaning of *karatoitte* in terms of the presupposition that expresses the speaker’s disapproval or doubt of certain reasoning. Section 4 discusses three issues that would be crucial in adopting the idea of EXISTENTIAL PRESUPPOSITION and SCALAR PRESUPPOSITION that are employed in the analysis of *even* (e.g. Karttunen and Peters (1979); Wilkinson (1996); Crnič (2014)). Finally, Section 5 summarizes and concludes the paper.

2. Distribution of *karatoitte*

2.1. Previous observations

Morphologically, Japanese *karatoitte* consists of the conjunction *kara* ‘because’, the quote marker *to* and the verb *itte* ‘to say’. The expression *karatoitte* appears in Japanese language

²Abbreviations: ACC = accusative, COP = copula, DAT = dative, EXCLM = exclamative, FN = formal noun, GEN = genitive, GER = gerund, IMP = imperative, NEG = negative, NOM = nominative, NPFV = nonperfective, NPST = nonpast, PST = past, POL = polite, PRH = prohibitive, QUO = quote marker, SFP = sentence final particle, TOP = topic.

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dictionaries (e.g. *Dejitaru Daijisen*³ available online from Shogakukan) as a single lexical entry, which suggests that it has become a grammaticalized fixed expression. There are other variants, such as the colloquial expression *karatte* and the written expression *karatote*, both of which have the same meaning and usage. This study considers only *karatoitte* as representative of these.

As mentioned in the previous section, *karatoitte* typically co-occurs with negation. However, there are also cases in which no explicit negation is involved in the sentence in which *karatoitte* appears. According to Takahashi (2015), the usage of *karatoitte* can be classified as follows.⁴

- (7) a. With sentential negation, e.g. *wake janai* ‘It doesn’t mean that...’
- b. With lexical negation, e.g. *chigau* ‘to be wrong’, *hikaeru* ‘to refrain from’
- c. Without explicit negation, but when the sentence expresses...
 - (i) disapproval or surprise
 - (ii) doubt or suspicion
 - (iii) an unfavorable outcome
 - (iv) a contradictory statement
 - (v) an opposing statement

It is worth noting that even without explicit (grammatical) negation, sentences with *karatoitte* express negative sentiments such as disapproval and doubt, but how common are these cases without explicit negation? Are they exceptional peripheral phenomena?

Baba (2018), who conducted a quantitative study on *karatoitte* using the Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese (BCCWJ), found 136 sentences out of 200 randomly selected *karatoitte* sentences with explicit negation (which would be classified as (a) in (7)) and 64 sentences without explicit negation. These figures show that although more than half of the *karatoitte* sentences have explicit negation, those without explicit negation are not particularly rare. Below, we confirm the distribution of *karatoitte* with examples from the BCCWJ.

2.2. The NPI-like property of *karatoitte*

As mentioned above, the most typical usage of *karatoitte* is when it occurs under the scope of negation. The following examples show *karatoitte* used with various forms of negation such as *kagirimasen* ‘not necessarily’ in (8), *wake de wa nai* ‘not the case that’ in (9), *ikemasen* ‘should not’ in (10), the negative imperative morpheme *na* in (11) and *NG* ‘not good’ in (12).

- (8) Rentogenshashin ni uturanakatta **karatoitte**, seejoo da to wa
radiograph DAT reflect.NEG.PST just.because normal COP.NPST QUO TOP
kagirimasen. (LBn4_00012)
limit.POL.NEG.NPST
‘Just because it does not show up on radiographs does not mean it is normal.’

³<https://daijisen.jp/digital/>

⁴Takahashi (2015) included cases in which the consequent part (*Y*) of *X karatoitte Y* is omitted under category (c) in (7).

- (9) Shikashi, buaisoo da **karatoitte**, tsumetai wake de wa
 but unsociable COP.NPST just.because cold.NPST reason COP.NPST TOP
 nai. (LBc9_00144)
 NEG.NPST
 ‘But just because someone is unsociable doesn’t mean the person is cold-hearted.’
- (10) Daiettochuu da **karatoitte** gaman bakari o shite wa
 on.a.diet COP.NPST just.because patience only ACC do TOP
 ikemasen.(LBq5_00060)
 allowed.POL.NEG
 ‘Just because you are on a diet you shouldn’t hold back all the time.’
- (11) Chotto kurai yuume da **karatoitte** eraburuna. (LBm9_00217)
 little about popular COP.NPST just.because be.arrogant.PRH
 ‘Just because you are a little popular, don’t be arrogant.’
- (12) Kabaashitai **karatoitte** atsunuri wa NG. (OY07_00958)
 cover.want.NPST just.because thick.coating TOP NG
 ‘Just because you want to cover (the blemish on your skin), it’s not acceptable to thickly apply (the makeup).’

The above set of examples would be infelicitous, as shown below, if the negation is removed. In order to make the sentence felicitous, *kara* ‘because’ should be used instead of *karatoitte*.

- (13) Rentogenshashin ni uturanakatta {#**karatoitte/kara**}, seejoo da.
 radiograph DAT reflect.NEG.PST {just.because/because} normal COP.NPST
 ‘It is normal because it does not show up on radiographs.’
- (14) Buaisoo da {#**karatoitte/kara**}, tsumetai.
 unsocialble COP.NPST {just.because/because} cold.NPST
 ‘He is cold-hearted because he is unsociable.’
- (15) Daiettochuu da {#**karatoitte/kara**} gaman o suru beki da.
 on.a.diet COP {just.because/because} patience ACC do.NPST should COP.NPST
 ‘You should hold back because you are on a diet.’
- (16) Juubun yuume da {#**karatoitte/kara**} jishin o mochinasai.
 enough popular COP.NPST {just.because/because} confidence ACC hold.IMP
 ‘Be confident because you are popular enough.’
- (17) Kabaashitai {#**karatoitte/kara**} atsunuri wa OK.
 cover.want.NPST {just.because/because} thick.coating TOP OK
 ‘It’s OK to thickly apply (the makeup) because we want to cover (the blemish on the skin).’

In addition to the above cases where an explicit (grammatical) negation is present in the sentence, we also find cases without such negation. As pointed out in previous observations (Takahashi, 2015; Baba, 2018), *karatoitte* appears in sentences that express some kinds of negative sentiment. Negative sentiment can be expressed in several ways. For example, negative sentiment may arise from certain lexical items such as *kiken* ‘dangerous’ in (18), *ranboona* ‘rough’ in (19), *sutookaa* ‘stalker’ in (20) and *chinpulkanpun* ‘gibberish’ in (21).

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- (18) Fumiato ga shikkari tsuiteiru **karatoitte** anshinshikitteshimau no
 footprint NOM tightly attach.IPFV.NPST just.because relieved.completely.NPST FN
 wa kiken da. (LB17_00004)
 TOP dangerous COP.NPST
 ‘Just because the footprints are well marked, it’s dangerous to feel at ease.’
- (19) Ikura hitsuyoosee ga aru **karatoitte** zuibun ranboona hanashi
 however necessity NOM exist.NPST just.because very rough story
 desu ne. (PM11_00378)
 COP.NPST SFP
 ‘Just because it was necessary, that’s a pretty rough story.’
- (20) Keetai ga tsunagaranai **karatoitte** kandannaku denwasuru no wa
 Cellphone NOM connect.NEG.NPST just.because continuously call.NPST FN COP
 hotondo sutookaajootai dearu.
 almost stalking COP.NPST
 ‘Just because your call isn’t answered, calling continuously is almost a stalker.’
 (PB13_00200)
- (21) Mochiron, koo kaisetsushita **karatoitte**, ookuno hito ni wa
 of.course like.this explain.PST just.because many person DAT TOP
 chinpuncanpun no mama da to omoimasu.
 gibberish GEN as.it.is COP.NPST QUO think.POL.NPST
 ‘Of course, even though I explained it in this way, I think it will still remain gibberish
 to many people.’ (PN2a_00025)

Again, removing the words that appear to be the source of the negative sentiment leads to unnaturalness, as shown below.

- (22) Fumiato ga shikkari tsuiteiru {#**karatoitte/kara**} anshinshite
 footprint NOM tightly attach.NPTV.NPST {just.because/because} be.relieved.GER
 daijoobu da.
 all.right COP.NPST
 ‘It’s all right to feel relieved because there are clear footprints.’
- (23) Hitsuyoosee ga aru {#**karatoitte/kara**} daijina hanashi desu
 necessity NOM exist.NPST {just.because/because} important story COP.NPST
 ne.
 SFP
 ‘It is an important story because it is necessary.’
- (24) Keetai ga tsunagaranai {#**karatoitte/kara**} kandannaku denwasuru
 cellphone NOM connect.NEG.NPST {just.because/because} continuously call.NPST
 no wa subarashii taioo da.
 FN COP wonderful reaction COP.NPST
 ‘It is a wonderful reaction to call continuously because your call is never answered.’

- (25) Mochiron, koo kaisetsushita {#**karatoitte/kara**}, ookuno hito ni wa
of.course like.this explain.PST {just.because/because} many person DAT TOP
wakariyasuku natta to omoimasu.
easy.to.understand become.PST QUO think.POL.NPST
‘Of course, I think it became understandable to many people because I explained it in
this way.’

Negative sentiment can be also found in exclamatives as in (26).

- (26) Ikura kurisumasu da **karatoitte** byooin o nukedasu nante!
however Christmas COP.NPST just.because hospital ACC escape.NPST EXCLM
(OB3X_00288)

‘Just because it’s Christmas, how (ridiculous, stupid, etc.) it is to escape from the
hospital!’

Note that the above example has only the exclamative marker *nante*, which has no negative
meaning by itself. If this sentence is changed such that it can be forcibly taken as a positive
expression, it becomes unnatural with *karatoitte*.

- (27) Kurisumasu da {#**karatoitte/kara**} minnna ni purezento o kau
Christmas COP {just.because/because} everyone DAT present ACC buy.NPST
nante suteki!
EXCLM wonderful
‘How wonderful it is to buy present for everyone because it is Christmas!’

A rhetorical question, as in (28), is another case in which a negative sentiment (doubt or suspi-
cion) can be found. The following example is not an ordinal information-seeking question, but
is interpreted as a rhetorical question that expresses the speaker’s doubt as to whether there is
any meaning at all.

- (28) Ichinen hayaku daigaku ni nyuugakushita **karatoitte** nan no imi ga
one.year early college DAT enroll.PST just.because what GEN meaning ACC
aru no dearoo ka? (LB10_00006)
have.NPST FN COP Q
‘Just because someone entered a college a year early, is there any meaning?’

When it is frames so that its interpretation must be as a neutral information-seeking question,
as in (29), the question sounds unnatural with *karatoitte*.

- (29) Ichinen hayaku daigaku ni nyuugakushita {#**karatoitte/kara**} shoogakukin
one.year early college DAT enroll.PST {just.because/because} scholarship
o moraeta no desu ka?
ACC can.receive.PST FN COP.NPST Q
‘Did you get the scholarship because you entered a college a year early?’ (Non-
rhetorical)

Finally, there are cases in which the consequent clause is incomplete, as shown below:

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- (30) Ikura jibun no okozukai da **karatoitte** mainichi nomu no
however self GEN pocket.money COP.NPST just.because every.day drink.NPST FN
wa...(OY03_06312)
TOP...
‘Just because you’re using your own pocket money, drinking every day is (no good,
inadvisable, etc.)’

In this case, the sentence is used to express the speaker’s disapproval or objection, so it would be unnatural if followed by a (semantically) positive expression like *kamawanai* ‘does not mind’ as in (31).

- (31) Jibun no okozukai da {#**karatoitte/kara**} mainichi nomu no wa
self GEN pocket.money COP {just.because/because} every.day drink.NPST FN TOP
ikooni kamawanai.
at.all mind.NEG.NPST
‘I don’t mind at all if you drink every day because you are using your own pocket
money.’

Note that in (31), the sentence is grammatically negative, as indicated by the negative morpheme *nai*. Still, the sentence with *karatoitte* is not natural, perhaps because it expresses the speaker’s positive attitude toward drinking every day.

In summary, the Japanese conjunction *karatoitte* ‘just because’ is used only in “negative” sentences. However, “negative” here does not refer to grammatical negation, but rather to the speaker’s negative attitude or sentiment such as denial, disapproval, or doubt. Based on the observations presented above, we now consider how to account for the distribution of Japanese *karatoitte*.

3. Toward an analysis

In this section, I suggest deriving the inference denial meaning that *karatoitte* ‘just because’ has from its presuppositional meaning, and account for the distribution pattern shown in the previous section.

I propose that the basic meaning of *karatoitte* ‘just because’ is what the conjunction *therefore* would mean. That is, *P karatoitte Q* amounts to saying that *P, therefore Q*, implying that *P* is a sufficient basis for asserting *Q*. At the same time, *karatoitte* has the inference denial presupposition, as shown in (32b). This says that, in the speaker’s (or some attitude holder’s) view, *P* is not a sufficiently compelling or appropriate reason for *Q*. This may be because the speaker believes or knows that there are cases in which *P* is true but *Q* is not, or *P* is not true and yet *Q* is true.

- (32) *P karatoitte Q*
a. Assertion: *P* is a sufficient basis for concluding *Q*
b. Presupposition: in the speaker’s (or the attitude holder’s) view, *P* is not a sufficient basis for concluding *Q*.

Below, I present the direction of analysis being aimed for by showing how the usage of *karatoitte* presented in Section 2 can be accounted for.

First, let us take consider the case where an explicit sentential negation such as *kagirimasen* ‘not necessarily’ occurs, repeated below.

- (8) Rentogenshashin ni uturanakatta **karatoitte**, seejoo da to wa
 radiograph DAT reflect.NEG.PST just.because normal COP.NPST QUO TOP
 kagirimasen. (LBn4_00012)
 limit.POL.NEG.NPST
 ‘Just because it does not show up on radiographs does not mean it is normal.’

In the case above, the proposition P is ‘it does not show up on radiographs’ and Q is ‘it is normal’. Therefore, sentence (8) would mean, based on (32), as shown below:

- (33) a. It is not necessarily the case that P (=‘it does not show up on radiographs’) is a sufficient basis for concluding Q (=‘it is normal’).
 b. In the speaker’s (or the attitude holder’s) view, P (=‘it does not show up on radiographs’) is not a sufficient basis for concluding Q (=‘it is normal’).

There is no inconsistency in the above meaning. The speaker thinks that something not showing up on radiographs is not a sufficiently compelling reason to conclude that it is normal, which is compatible with what is actually said in (33a). Perhaps the speaker believes or knows that there are cases in which nothing shows up on radiographs but it is not normal (e.g., a hidden disease).

By contrast, *karatoitte* is not used in (13) because the presuppositional meaning is inconsistent with what is actually said.

- (13) Rentogenshashin ni uturanakatta {#**karatoitte/kara**}, seejoo da.
 radiograph DAT reflect.NEG.PST {just.because/because} normal COP.NPST
 ‘It is normal because it does not show up on radiographs.’

On the one hand, the speaker asserts that P (= ‘it does not show up on radiographs’) is a sufficient basis for concluding Q (= ‘it is normal’). But at the same time, the speaker presupposes that P (= ‘it does not show up on radiographs’) is not a sufficient basis for concluding Q (= ‘it is normal’). In this case, the conjunction *kara* ‘because’, which does not have the inference denial meaning, should be used instead. The other examples in (9)-(12) can be explained in a similar way, where we see explicit negation such as *wake de wa nai* ‘not the case that’, *ikemasen* ‘should not’, the negative imperative morpheme *na*, and *NG* ‘not good’.

We now turn to the cases in which no explicit (grammatical) negation appears. As shown in Section 2, all the examples with *karatoitte* express negative sentiment. One such case is when the source of negative sentiment is apparent. For example, the predicate *kiken* ‘dangerous’ signals that the speaker is giving a warning by uttering this sentence.

- (18) Fumiato ga shikkari tsuiteiru **karatoitte** anshinshikitteshimau no
 footprint NOM tightly attach.IPFV.NPST just.because relieved.completely.NPST FN
 wa kiken da. (LB17_00004)
 TOP dangerous COP.NPST
 ‘Just because the footprints are well marked, it’s dangerous to feel at ease.’

The sentence is consistent because the speaker says that the following reasoning is dangerous: to feel at ease based on the fact that the footprints are well marked. On the other hand, if the predicate *kiken* ‘dangerous’ is changed to *daijoobu* ‘all right’, *karatoitte* is no longer used.

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- (22) Fumiato ga shikkari tsuiteiru {#**karatoitte/kara**} anshinshite
 footprint NOM tightly attach.NPTV.NPST {just.because/because} be.relieved.GER
 daijoobu da.
 all.right COP.NPST
 ‘It’s all right to feel relieved because there are clear footprints.’

This is because the speaker’s implications are inconsistent. While the speaker is saying that it is acceptable to feel at ease based on the fact that there are clear footprints, the speaker is also expressing the inference denial meaning, i.e., the speaker thinks that seeing clear footprints is not a sufficiently convincing reason to feel at ease.

The next case in which we see negative sentiment is exclamative, as repeated below. Although there is no particular lexical item that arouses negative sentiment, the sentence can only be indicating as the speaker’s disapproval. This can be explained in terms of the presuppositional meaning of *karatoitte*; in the speaker’s view, that it is Christmas is not a sufficient reason or excuse to escape from the hospital.

- (26) Ikura kurisumasu da **karatoitte** byooin o nukedasu nante!
 however Christmas COP.NPST just.because hospital ACC escape.NPST EXCLM
 (OB3X_00288)

‘Just because it’s Christmas, how (ridiculous, stupid, etc.) it is to escape from the hospital!’

Therefore, the sentence becomes unnatural if it is forced to express the speaker’s positive attitude by explicitly saying the predicate *suteki* ‘wonderful’.

- (27) Kurisumasu da {#**karatoitte/kara**} minnna ni purezento o kau
 Christmas COP {just.because/because} everyone DAT present ACC buy.NPST
 nante suteki!
 EXCLM wonderful
 ‘How wonderful it is to buy present for everyone because it is Christmas!’

The conjunction *kara* ‘because’, which does not have the presuppositional meaning, should be used instead if the exclamative is meant to express positive sentiment.

Another case is that of questions, but not the regular information-seeking type. Thus, (28), repeated below, is a rhetorical question that does not really ask what the point is of enrolling a year early, but rather expresses that there is no meaning.

- (28) Ichinen hayaku daigaku ni nyuugakushita **karatoitte** nan no imi ga
 one.year early college DAT enroll.PST just.because what GEN meaning ACC
 aru no dearoo ka? (LB10_00006)
 have.NPST FN COP Q
 ‘Just because someone entered college a year early, what does that mean?’

Using *karatoitte* in a non-rhetorical, information-seeking question would be unnatural, as in the examples repeated below. The sentence is not a neutral question, but more of an accusation against the addressee, e.g., ‘Oh, so you got the scholarship just because you entered college a year early... that’s ridiculous. I don’t like it’.

- (29) Ichinen hayaku daigaku ni nyuugakushita {#**karatoitte/kara**} shoogakukin
 one.year early college DAT enroll.PST {just.because/because} scholarship
 o moraeta no desu ka?
 ACC can.receive.PST FN COP.NPST Q
 ‘Did you get the scholarship because you entered college a year early?’ (Non-rhetorical)

A rhetorical question is said to assert the negative counterpart of the question (Han, 2002). In fact, it would be inappropriate (or sound like a joke) to respond to (28) with something like “It means that...”. Thus, a rhetorical question creates a suitable environment for *karatoitte* to be used, because the speaker doubts that entering college a year early is a sufficient basis for concluding that it is meaningful.

Finally, the interpretation of a *karatoitte* sentence whose consequent part is omitted or incomplete can be straightforwardly explained. As repeated below, the speaker is expressing negative attitude toward drinking every day using one’s own pocket money, e.g., ‘no good’, ‘inadvisable’ etc. Thus, explicitly saying the predicate that has positive sentiment, e.g., *kamawanai* ‘do not mind’, makes the sentence unnatural.

- (30) Ikura jibun no okozukai da **karatoitte** mainichi nomu no
 however self GEN pocket.money COP.NPST just.because every.day drink.NPST FN
 wa...(OY03_06312)
 TOP...
 ‘Just because you’re using your own pocket money, drinking every day is (no good, inadvisable, etc.)’
- (31) Jibun no okozukai da {#**karatoitte/kara**} mainichi nomu no wa
 self GEN pocket.money COP {just.because/because} everyday drink.NPST FN TOP
 ikooni kamawanai.
 at.all mind.NEG.NPST
 ‘I don’t mind at all if you drink every day because you are using your own pocket money.’

(31) with *karatoitte* is unnatural, because the presuppositional meaning says that the speaker thinks that using one’s own pocket money is not a sufficient reason for drinking every day, which is inconsistent with what is actually said, i.e., ‘I don’t mind’.

This section presented the direction of this analysis by explaining how the presuppositional meaning of *karatoitte* accounts for its usage. The following section points out what needs to be considered to obtain a full picture of the analysis.

4. Remaining issues

This section discuss three issues with regard to the formal analysis of *karatoitte* ‘just because’.

4.1. Formal analysis of *because*-clauses

In order to establish a formal analysis of Japanese *karatoitte* or equivalent expressions in other languages, we first need a formal analysis of *because*-clauses. According to König and Siemund (2000), the causal expression *because p, q* asserts that both of the propositions *p* and *q* are true, and presupposes a conditional meaning “ $P \rightarrow Q$ ” as well as that *p* is true as shown in (34a).

- (34) *because p, q*
 a. $P \rightarrow Q$; *p* (presupposition)
 b. *p* & *q* (assertion) (from Table 3 in König and Siemund 2000)

The conditional meaning “ $P \rightarrow Q$ ” in (34a) should not be interpreted as material implication of propositional logic, but as “some kind of quantification and generalisation of the specific propositions *p* and *q*” (König and Siemund, 2000: p. 353), which suggests that it should be interpreted as something like ‘*If p, then normally/usually/generally q*’.

However, the usage of English *because* is not as simple as it appears. It has been observed that there are three different usages of *because* (Sweetser, 1990).

- (35) a. John came back because he loved her.
 b. John loved her, because he came back.
 c. What are you doing tonight, because there’s a good movie on. (Sweetser, 1990)

The first usage, in (35a), is said to express the real-world causal relation, i.e., John’s love for Mary made him come back. The second, in (35b), is not interpreted in the same way as in (35a). Rather, it expresses that “the speaker’s *knowledge* of John’s return (as a premise) causes the *conclusion* that John loved her” (Sweetser, 1990: p. 77). The third, in (35c), is speech-act related. That is, the *because* clause expresses the reason for asking the question. Sweetser (1990) then explained that English *because* is three-way ambiguous and can be understood in terms of three different domains: the content domain (35a), the epistemic domain (35b), and the speech-act domain (35c). The first two types are also referred to as “clausal” and “inferential,” respectively (Jespersen, 1949; Hilpert, 2005).

Now, the question is how to derive these three meanings of *because*, i.e., whether it is a case of lexical or structural ambiguity. Either way, we need a formal account to derive the three types of *because*. We also need to specify which of the three types of *because* that is involved in the concessive ‘just because’ constructions.

With regard to the above three interpretations of *because*, the Japanese data more explicitly illustrate the ambiguity.

- (36) John wa Mary o aishiteiru kara modottekita.
 John TOP Mary ACC love.NPFV.NPST because return.PST
 ‘John came back because he loves her.’ CAUSAL
- (37) John wa modottekita kara Mary o aishiteiru *(no da).
 John TOP return.PST because Mary ACC love.NPFV.NPST FN COP.NPST
 ‘John likes Mary, because he cooked for her.’ INFERENCEAL

- (38) **Ii eiga ga yatteiru kara konban nanika yotee aru?*
 good movie NOM do.NPFV.NPST because tonight any plan have.NPST
 Intended: ‘Do you have any plan tonight, because there is a good movie on.’ SPEECH-ACT

As shown above, Japanese *kara* ‘because’ is two-way ambiguous: causal or inferential. However, the inferential one requires certain sentence-final expressions such as the *no da* ending, which consists of the formal noun *no* and the copula *da*. This *no da* ending, or the *no da* construction in Japanese, has been described as an auxiliary of “explanation” and studied extensively in Japanese linguistics (Alfonso (1966); Kuno (1973); Noda (1997); Oshima (2023) and references therein). The function of *no da* is referred to as “explanation” because it typically signals that the speaker is uttering the sentence in order to give further information (reasons, explanations, etc.) about what has been under discussion. The *no da* construction has a wide variety of discourse functions, not all of which can be introduced here, but one of them is “inferential use,” which is precisely the case in (37). It is worth noting that *karatoitte* ‘just because’ may appear in a *no da* sentence, as shown below. Without *no da*, or the form *no de* in (39), this sentence becomes less acceptable.

- (39) John wa modottekita **karatoitte** Mary o {??aishiteinai/aishiteiru
 John TOP return.PST just.because Mary ACC love.NPFV.NEG.NPST/love.NPFV.NPST
 no de wa nai}.
 FN COP.GER TOP NEG.NPST
 ‘Just because John returned doesn’t mean that he loves her.’

If this can be understood as a case of “inferential” *no da*, what the negation doing here is to negate the inference. Then it would make sense that *karatoitte* ‘just because’ is used because that is exactly what *karatoitte* ‘just because’ means, i.e., the denial of inference.

Based on what we have seen so far, how should the *because* clause be formally analyzed? In particular, how should we account for the difference between the causal and inferential uses of *because*? The distinction is crucial because what we need to formally account for *karatoitte* ‘just because’ is the inferential type, as suggested by the Japanese data above.

4.2. Formal analysis of concession

In addition to causal *because*, König and Siemund (2000) also proposed the analysis of concessive constructions as follows.

- (40) *although p, q*
 a. $P \rightarrow \neg Q$; p (presupposition)
 b. p & q (assertion) (from Table 3 in König and Siemund 2000)

What is described in (40) is essentially the same as the causal constructions in (34). The only difference lies in the inference presupposition. While the causal *because* presupposes “if P then usually Q,” the concessive *although* presupposes “if P then usually not Q”.

This idea of concession corresponds to the inferential approaches of *but* (Winterstein, 2012). It has been said that the conjunction *but* has at least three usages; (i) contrast, (ii) concessive, and (iii) corrective (Izutsu, 2008). Among these, the concessive usage of *but* conveys denials of

expectation, which can be “characterized by the fact that their second conjunct contradicts an expectation raised or activated by the first one” (Winterstein, 2012: p. 1866). For example, in the following sentence, what is actually said contradicts the expectation that if Lemmy smokes a lot, he would not be in good health.

(41) Lemmy smokes a lot, but he’s in good health.

Thus, the expectation, which will be denied by what is actually said, corresponds to the pre-suppositional meaning “ $P \rightarrow \neg Q$ ” in (40b) above.

However, this does not mean that we can simply adopt the analysis of concessive *but* to *karatoitte* ‘just because’. While having the common semantic function of concession, *karatoitte* ‘just because’ shows a unique distribution, as seen in Section 2. Furthermore, there are cases in which *karatoitte* ‘just because’ is not interchangeable with *noni* ‘although’ or *kedo* ‘but’. As shown in the following examples, which are constructed based on examples (20-22) in Kogonemaru (1990), *noni* ‘although’ and *kedo* ‘but’ are perfectly natural, whereas *karatoitte* ‘just because’ is not.

(42) Sakka na **noni**, {dokusho wa kirai da/hon o yomanai}.
 writer COP although reading TOP dislike COP.NPST/book ACC read.NEG.NPST
 ‘Although he is a writer, he {hates reading/doesn’t read books}.’

(43) Sakka da **kedo**, {dokusho wa kirai da/hon o yomanai}.
 writer COP.NPST but reading TOP dislike COP.NPST/book ACC read.NEG.NPST
 ‘He is a writer, but he {hates reading/doesn’t read books}.’

(44) Sakka da **karatoitte**, {*dokusho wa kirai da/??hon o yomanai}.
 writer COP just.because reading TOP dislike COP.NPST/book ACC read.NEG.NPST
 Intended: ‘Just because he is a writer doesn’t mean he {likes reading/reads books}.’

As for (42) and (43), we can understand that the underlying inference is that if someone is a writer, he or she likes reading and reads many books. If the same inference arises in (44), why does the sentence not mean what it is intended to mean? Following the analysis proposed in Section 3, what (44) means is that being a writer is a sufficient basis for saying that he hates reading or does not read books. At the same time, it presupposes that in the speaker’s view, being a writer is not a sufficient basis for saying that he hates reading or does not read books, which is contradictory to what it is actually said. (See also (8).)

Now, compare (44) with (45), which is the correct way of saying what (44) was trying to say.

(45) Sakka da **karatoitte**, {dokusho ga suki da/hon o yomu} to
 writer COP just.because reading TOP like COP.NPST/book ACC read.NPST QUO
 wa kagirimasen.
 TOP limit.POL.NEG
 ‘Just because he is a writer doesn’t mean he {likes reading/reads books}.’

The point is that there is a periphrastic sentential negation *to wa kagirimasen* ‘not necessarily the case that’. As pointed out by Kogonemaru (1990), *karatoitte* ‘just because’ typically does not appear with simple negation (i.e., a negative morpheme that is directly attached to the stem of predicates) but with the negative expressions such as *to wa kagirimasen* ‘not necessarily the case that’ and *wake de wa nai* ‘not the case that,’ as already shown in Section 2. What this

suggests is that negation in the *karatoitte* sentences does not just negate the consequent clause but the entire sentence, including the various modal (or modal related) expressions such as *to wa kagirimasen* ‘not necessarily’ (epistemic) in (8), *ikemasen* ‘not allowed’ (deontic) in (10), and *na* ‘do not’ (prohibition) in (11). The key in the analysis of *karatoitte* ‘just because’ is not the negation itself (although that is very much involved), but actually the modal of the main clause.

The formal analysis of concession still seems primitive compared to that of other areas of meaning such as conditionals. For example, one of the well-known theories of conditionals is Kratzer’s restrictor analysis (Kratzer, 1986). The distinctive feature of this theory is that, unlike the classical analysis that treats conditionals as a two-place connective, the antecedent of the conditional is analyzed as a restrictor of the modality in the consequent. That there is a deep connection between conditionals and modality is now the standard view (Portner, 2009). The theory of concession might be another case in which modality plays a crucial role.

4.3. Incorporating theoretical mechanisms of NPI analysis

Finally, I would like to briefly mention the relation between concession and NPIs. As we have seen in Section 4.2, the meaning of concession is described as ‘inference denial’. The general idea of “inference denial” is that what is actually said in a sentence contradicts what is expected or thought likely to occur. This meaning is not only found in the conjunctions of concessions but also in NPIs.

For example, English *even* is one of the best studied NPIs, which clearly illustrates this point. Since the work by Karttunen and Peters (1979), *even* has been analyzed as a focus-sensitive propositional operator that requires its propositional argument to be less likely than all the relevant alternative propositions determined by focus and context (Wilkinson (1996); Guerzoni and Lim (2007); Crnič (2014), and many others). In example (46), where *John* is focus-marked, the asserted meaning is the same as that without *even* (47a). The contribution of *even* is to introduce the existential (or additive) presupposition (47b) and the scalar presupposition (47c).

(46) Even [John]_F likes Mary.

- (47) a. Assertion: John likes Mary.
 b. Existential (or additive) presupposition: Other people besides John like Mary.
 c. Scalar presupposition: Of the people under consideration, John is the least likely to like Mary.

The scalar presupposition (47c) introduces the notion of likelihood. It compares the target proposition ‘John likes Mary’ and all the relevant alternative propositions {Adam likes Mary, Bill likes Mary, Charlie likes Mary,...} in terms of the scale of likelihood, saying that the target proposition is less likely than all the relevant alternatives.

Here, let us remind ourselves the meaning of *karatoitte* ‘just because’ sentences. For example, in (8), what is presupposed is that nothing showing up on a radiograph is not a sufficient basis for asserting that it is normal. In other words, nothing showing up on radiographs is less likely

to be a good reason or basis for claiming that it is normal.

- (8) Rentogenshashin ni uturanakatta **karatoitte**, seejoo da to wa
 radiograph DAT reflect.NEG.PST just.because normal COP.NPST QUO TOP
 kagirimasen. (LBn4_00012)
 limit.POL.NEG.NPST
 ‘Just because it does not show up on radiographs does not mean it is normal.’

But ‘less likely’ compared to what? One way to think of this is that it is less likely than all the other relevant reasons for claiming that it is normal. For example, the speaker knows or believes that there are more appropriate and reliable diagnostic methods than radiographs for determining whether it is normal. Thus, the speaker believes that it is difficult to determine whether a patient is normal based on radiographs alone.

However, the notion of likelihood may not be the only measurement to be used in scalar presupposition. As shown in Section 2, *karatoitte* ‘just because’ appears with various modal expressions besides epistemic ones. For example, (10) has deontic or teleological modality.

- (10) Daiettochuu da **karatoitte** gaman bakari o shite wa
 on.a.diet COP.NPST just.because patience only ACC do TOP
 ikemasen.(LBq5_00060)
 allowed.POL.NEG
 ‘Just because you are on a diet you shouldn’t hold back all the time.’

In cases like this, using the likelihood scale may not be the most appropriate way, since the presupposition will be something like the following: ‘the speaker thinks that being on a diet is less likely to be a reason for holding back all the time’. Instead, it is more natural to think of the scale in terms of desirability or deservingness, rather than merely in terms of probabilistic likelihood of an event.

In fact, as Rullmann (1997) pointed out, it is not uncontroversial to assume that the scales invoked by *even* are always based on likelihood.

- (48) John is a political non-conformist. He even read *Manufacturing Consent* although it has been banned by the censorship committee. (Rullmann, 1997)

In the above example, the scale associated with *even* is not necessarily likelihood, because “*Manufacturing Consent* need not be a particularly unlikely book for John to read. Because of his political views he may be even drawn to controversial or censored books. Rather, the relevant scale on which *Manufacturing Consent* occupies the topmost position could be one that ranks books according to the degree to which they reflect non-conformist thinking or their suitability for banning” (Rullmann, 1997: p. 56).

This suggests that the type of scale introduced by the scalar presupposition of *even* is not always based on likelihood but depends on context. I argue that this is also the case for *karatoitte* ‘just because’.

In this subsection, I compared *karatoitte* ‘just because’ and *even* to show the similarities between the two. I believe that this opens up the possibilities of adopting the analysis of NPIs for concessive conjunctions. To pursue this, however, we need to consider the following two

issues: (i) how to derive the alternative propositions (i.e. the existential or additive presupposition) and (ii) how to determine the relevant scale to be used to compare what is said and the alternative propositions (i.e., the scalar propositions). As for the first issue, one possibility is to adopt the focus alternative semantics (Rooth, 1985), and derive a set of alternative propositions by assuming that the *because*-clause is focus-marked. As for the second issue, it may be possible to determine the relevant scale based on the modality of the matrix clause. In other words, the idea is that the interpretation of *karatoitte* ‘just because’ is context-dependent and determined by the same modal base and ordering source as the modality of the matrix clause.

5. Conclusion

This paper presented the usage of the Japanese concessive conjunction *karatoitte* ‘just because’. Particular attention was paid to its appearance in negative environments in relation to NPIs. Specifically, the semantic function of *karatoitte* ‘just because’ as “inference denial” is explained in terms of the presupposition which expresses the speaker’s disapproval or doubt of certain reasoning. It is argued that this corresponds to the scalar presupposition that NPIs such as *even* are said to have.

However, while this paper has been able to provide an analytical orientation, it has yet to propose a complete formal analysis. To this end, it is necessary to discuss three points: (i) the formal analysis of *because*, (ii) the formal analysis of concession, and (iii) the incorporation of the theoretical mechanisms of NPI analysis. This study is expected to contribute to the development of the semantic analysis of concessions by incorporating the analytical methods proposed in theories of NPIs.

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