5.

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Two types of NPIs in Japanese

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This squib presents data which show that there are two types of Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) in relation to ellipsis in Japanese. One type can appear with a site where VP and NEG are elided, and the other cannot. I argue that a semantic classification regarding the negation feature of NPIs is required to account for the contrast.

1. Data

Some Japanese adverbial expressions such as *zenzen* 'at all', *it-teki-mo* 'a drop', and *amari* 'much', are NPIs when used with verbs, in that they must occur with negation as in (1).

(1)   John-wa   {zenzen/it-teki-mo/amari}   sake-o   {noma-nai / *nomu}.
              -TOP   at all/one-drop-FOC/much   sake-ACC   drink-NEG / *drink
          'John doesn't drink sake {at all/a drop/much}.'

These NPIs, however, behave differently before an ellipsis site followed by the copula *da* as in (2b-i) and (2b-ii), which are preceded by the first conjunct (2a). *Zenzen* can precede an ellipsis site as in (2b-i), while *it-teki-mo* and *amari* cannot as in (2b-ii).

(2)   a.   John-wa   sake-o   nomu   ga,
                  -TOP   sake-ACC   drink   but
            'John drinks sake, but'
      b-i   Mary-wa   zenzen   [*e*]   da.
                  -TOP   at all   COP
            'Mary ~~(doesn't drink sake)~~ at all.'
      b-ii *Bill-wa   {it-teki-mo/amari}   [*e*]   da.
                  -TOP   one-drop-FOC/much   COP
            '[intended reading] Bill ~~(doesn't drink sake)~~ {a drop/much}.'

2. Semantic account for ellipsis licensing of *zenzen*

I propose that [+negation] is encoded in *zenzen*, but not in *it-teki-mo* or *amari*, and that NPI with [+negation] encoded can license ellipsis as in (2b-i). There are two advantages to this account. First, how *zenzen*, which is referred to as an emphatic NPI, makes a negative statement stronger can be explained. Since there are two [+negation], one with *zenzen* and the other with NEG –*nai*, negation is emphasized semantically. Second, why *zenzen* can license ellipsis can be accounted for. Due to the redundancy of [+negation] in a sentence, NEG can be elided along with VP *sake-o nomu* 'drink sake'

as in (2b-i). The reason why the VP also can be elided is that it is identical with its antecedent in (2a).

In contrast, [+negation] is not encoded in *it-teki-mo* or *amari*. There is no redundancy of [+negation], thus, NEG cannot be elided. The VP *sake-o nomu* 'drink sake' in (2b-ii) is identical with its antecedent in (2a). However, the VP cannot be elided leaving NEG stranded, because NEG is bound to verbs in Japanese. Thus, the VP has to stay for NEG: no ellipsis is allowed.

Although *it-teki-mo*, which is referred to as a minimizer, is also an emphatic NPI, the mechanism of emphasizing negation is different from that of *zenzen*. For *it-teki-mo*, the truth is interpreted by scalar inference. If it is stated that somebody does not drink a drop, since a drop is conventionally the minimum amount of liquid, we infer that s/he does not drink at all. By being less informative using the minimizer, the emphasis is pragmatically inferred for *it-teki-mo*. *Amari*, which is attenuating NPI in Israel's (2001) term, makes the negative statement weaker, therefore, we can assume that [+negation] is not encoded.

Reference
Israel, M. (2001) "Minimizers, maximizers and the rhetoric of scalar reasoning." *Journal of Semantics* 18, 297-331.