Japanese is known to have a rich system of ideophones that are a class of referential words, evoking a vivid, sensational feeling, or depictive meanings (Kita, 1997; Hamano, 1998; Tamori & Schourup, 1999; Akita, 2009; Dingemanse, 2011, 2012, 2015; Dingemanse & Akita, 2017; Dingemanse, 2017). Ideophones show parallel properties with subjective predicates such as *tasty*. First, they both have a kind of non-indexical perspective dependence, which is made clear in linguistic disagreement (Kennedy & Willer, 2016, 2017). Hence, the following conversations are not contradictory and faultless in the sense that the assertions they make cannot be wrong or false even if they are dependent on identical evidential bases: (1) A: Kono pai-wa karikari-da. ‘This pie is karikari [crispy].’ B: Iya, karikari-dewa nai. Sakusaku-da. ‘No, this pie is not karikari, but it is sakusaku [crispy].’

Second, an assertion or denial of subjective predicates and ideophones often implies direct experiences by a speaker or an acquaintance inference (Ninan, 2014; Kennedy & Willer, 2016, 2017): (2) Kono pai-wa karikari [crispy] da. #Tabeta koto nai kedo, mitame-de wakaru. ‘This pie is karikari [crispy]. I have never tried it, but I can tell from how it looks.’

Although the acquaintance inference projects over negation, it does not project out of other presupposition holes as is pointed out by Ninan (2014) and Kennedy & Willer (2016, 2017). The following example does not imply that the speaker has tasted the pie: (3) Mosi pai-ga karikari nara, kai masu. ‘If the pie is karikari, I will buy it.’

Finally, subjective predicates and ideophones can be embedded under subjective attitude verbs (SAVs). Japanese has an adverb *tukuduku* ‘utterly, intently’ that makes ordinary doxastic attitude verbs SAVs. The following contrast shows that ideophones are subjective: (4) Kono pai-wa {oisii, karikari da} to tukuduku omou. ‘I (intently) find this pie (tasty, karikari} Kono pai-wa eikokusei da to (??tukuduku) omou. ‘I (intently) find this pie English.’

The purpose of this talk is to analyze the meanings of ideophones from a pragmatic perspective, showing that ideophones are subjective and that their properties are due to a pre-conditioned ample set of alternatives. I claim that several sets of ideophones are sorted out depending on a standard and they express the same meaning at their core, at-issue content. The difference lies in the selection of stances one takes. The analysis is made possible by introducing the counterstance approach to subjective predicates developed by Kennedy & Willer (2016, 2017). Kennedy & Willer (2016, 2017) argue that subjectivity emerges out of language users’ sensitivity to, and awareness of, underdetermination of linguistic practice by what they take to be the facts. Assuming that determining meanings of expressions in a discourse involves decisions about how to fix semantic and pragmatic underdetermination and that language users notice that these decisions are arbitrary and vary depending on various factors, Kennedy and Willer refer to alternative resolutions of underdetermined aspects of meaning and use as counterstances modeled as sets of possible worlds. The definition of counterstance is as follows, where \( s \) is the common ground: \( \kappa_2: \) a (possibly partial) function from a context set (or other information carrier) to a set of its counterstances, where each \( s' \in \kappa_2(s) \) agrees with \( s \) on its factual information but disagrees on contextually salient decisions about linguistic practice.

With this consideration, they define the concept of radical counterstance contingency applied to SAVs such as *find* and predicates of personal taste, where \( \kappa_2^x \) is a function from a set of counterstances to a set of its subsets, such that the members of each subset agree on those resolutions of uncertainty of meaning that support coordination by stipulation. Since the criteria for fixing a meaning of subjective predicates is variable and indeterminate, (1) is faultless. As for the selection of karikari, there are several alternative stances available that designate the state of crispy pie shown in (1c). According to the analysis, the truth of the proposition varies depending on what stances one takes, that is, it can be defined only if there exists a stance that makes the proposition false in the set of all the hypothetical stances.

(1) a. A proposition \( p \) is radically counterstance contingent in context \( c \) iff \( \exists s \in \varphi(W): s \subseteq p \land \forall \pi \in \kappa_2^x(\kappa_2(s)) \exists s' \in \pi: s' \not\subseteq p \)

b. \( [[P(x)]]^{c,w} \) is defined only if \( [[P(x)]]^s \) is radically counterstance contingent in context \( c \). If defined, then \( [[P(x)]]^{c,w} = [[CRISPY(x)]]^{c,w} \)

c. \( P = \) Predicative ideophones (crispiness scales): karikari, sakusaku, paripari etc.
References


