On the Semantics of Distributivity Markers

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This talk investigates the semantic behavior of distributivity markers and presents a compositional semantic account. First, we will discuss the so-called distance-distributivity marker (D-D marker) constructions in (1) including English each, Korean ssik and Japanese zutsu. D-D markers have been a challenge to compositional semantics since the distribution does not occur over an argument they are attached to but over an argument at a distance. Arguing that the D-D markers are Distributive Polarity Items which are licensed within the scope of a Distributivity-Operator (D-Operator), as in (2), I present a compositional analysis which mainly takes a QR approach. In this analysis, events are argued to be present as an explicit argument at the structure and this gives the right result in deriving the possible interpretations of the construction.

Another construction to be considered in this talk is the kakkak- and sorezore-construction in Korean and Japanese respectively, illustrated in (3). We will discuss what semantic properties this construction has and show how the interpretations can be derived compositionally and the properties can be accounted explained. Basically, the kakkak-/sorezore-construction is also accounted for with a D-operator accompanied by QR, but here the distributivity marker itself will work as a D-operator, given in (4). In this framework, therefore, distributive interpretations of the ssik-/zutsu-construction and the kakkak-/sorezore-construction can be captured in a consistent way, based on the interaction between a D-operator and other arguments.

(1) a. The children bought two balloons each. (English)
    b. Namca twu-myeng-i sangca sey-kay-ssik-ul wunpanhayssta (Korean)
       man two-Cl-Nom box three-Cl-Dist-Acc carried
       lit. ‘Two men carried three boxes each’
    c. Otoko huta-ri-ga sutukeisu san-ko-zutsu-o hakonda (Japanese)
       man two-Cl-Nom suitcase three-Cl-Dist-Acc carried
       lit. ‘Two men carried three suitcases each.’ (Gil 1990)
(2a. \[
\text{[D [p \ldots ssik/zutsu \ldots]]}
\]

b. \[
\text{[[D ]]}: \lambda Q_{\langle e,t \rangle} \lambda x:|x|>1. [\forall y [y \in x \rightarrow Q(y)]]
\]

(3) a. Namca twu-myeng-i \textit{kakkak} sangca sey-kay-lul wunpanhayssta (Korean)
man two-Cl-Nom each box three-Cl-Acc carried
lit. ‘Two men carried three boxes each’

b. Shoonen-tati-ga \textit{sorezore} kono piano-o motiage-ta (Japanese)
boy-Pl-Nom each this piano-Acc lift-Past
‘The boys each lifted this piano.’ (Sakaguchi 1998)

(4) \[
\text{[[D}_{\text{\textit{kakkak/sorezore}}]}]: \lambda P_{\langle e,t \rangle} \lambda x:|x|>1. [\forall y_{\langle e \rangle} [y \in x \rightarrow P(y)]]
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References