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## The variation of expressive modifiers: A view from the Japanese modifier *baka* ‘stupid’

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The English expressive modifier *damn* can express not only the negative attitude of the speaker toward an individual, as in (1a), but also the speaker’s negative attitude toward a proposition, as in (1b) (Potts 2005; Gutzmann 2019). Gutzmann (2019) calls the phenomenon in (1b) an ‘argument extension’.

- (1) a. The damn Republicans should be less partisan. (Potts 2005)  
b. The dog peed on the damn couch.  
(= Damn, the dog peed on the couch.) (Gutzmann 2019)

In this paper, I investigate the Japanese expressive modifier *baka* ‘stupid’, as in (2), and argue that it simultaneously conveys a negative attitude toward the individual target with which it combines and toward the entire event within a single reading at the level of conventional implicature (Grice 1975; Potts 2005).

- (2) Taro-no baka-ga mata chikoku shi-ta.  
Taro-GEN idiot-NOM again late do-PST  
‘Stupid Taro was late again.’

The idea that the expressive *baka* evaluates the entire event is supported by the fact that it cannot be used if the entire sentence has a positive evaluative meaning, as shown in (3) (*Baka* is syntactically a noun, but semantically it is a modifier):

- (3) ?? Yamada-no baka-ga fain puree-o shi-ta.  
Yamada-GEN idiot-NOM fine play-ACC do-PST  
‘Stupid Yamada made a fine play.’

Note, however, that, unlike *damn*, *baka* cannot be a purely situation-oriented expressive modifier. The direct translation of the English sentence in (1b) is ill-formed, as in (4). *Sofaa* ‘couch’ is an inanimate noun, and it is odd to modify it with *baka*, which can only combine with an animate individual.

- (4) \* Inu-ga sofaa-no baka-ni oshikko shi-ta.  
dog-NOM couch-GEN idiot-on pee do-PST  
‘The dog peed on the stupid couch.’

I propose that the dual evaluative property of the expressive *baka* developed as a result of *baka* being interpreted as a stage-level predicate representing a temporal property (Carlson 1977). This paper clarifies that there is a new type of expressive modifier, the dual-expressive modifier, in natural language.

**Selected References:** • Carlson, G. (1977). *Reference to Kinds in English*. UMass dissertation • Gutzmann, D. (2019). *The Grammar of Expressivity*. Oxford University Press. • Potts, C. (2005). *The Logic of Conventional Implicatures*. Oxford University Press.