

Preface

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Territory of Information

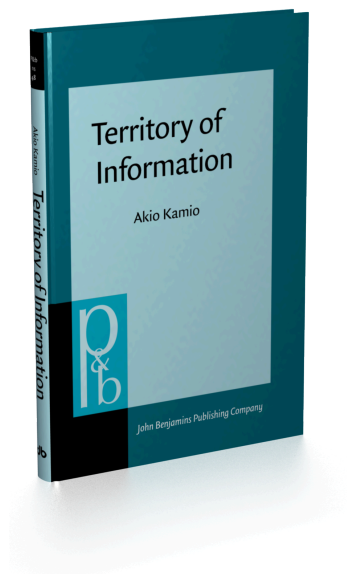
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Preface

I majored in psychology when I was an undergraduate. The psychology I was trained in was mostly American experimental psychology, though some teachers paid attention to the European tradition and sometimes talked about it in classes. One such topic was from ethology, the study of animal behavior in natural environments. Although as an undergraduate I was not strongly attracted to the field, it struck me as a fresh approach and remained in my memory. In particular, the study of territory in animal behavior and, later, in human behavior left a certain impact on me although my understanding then was quite superficial.

Later, when I turned to the study of language and looked at Japanese, my own native language, I felt that the uses of certain expressions can be roughly characterized by the concept of territory applied to the realm of information. For example, the difference between such utterances as “Kyoo wa ame ga huru” (It rains today) and “Kyoo wa ame ga huru-daroo” (It will/may rain today) seemed to me to depend on the fact (so it appeared to me) that while the former falls within the speaker’s territory, the latter does not. Hence, I thought, the former is definite and direct whereas the latter is linguistically indefinite and indirect. This was my entirely intuitive and non-technical analysis of the difference between these two utterances.

This idea, however, gradually took more and more definite shape in my mind. Although I was doing generative syntax then, my mind was beginning to lean toward the potentiality of this idea over the next few years. Thus, eventually I decided to pursue my intuitive conception of territory and to try to develop it into a coherent functional analysis of a part of Japanese. This materialized in Kamio (1979). The technical analysis and its writing proceeded fairly smoothly, but at some points I had a lot of difficulties. Thinking over such points often caused me to work till midnight. I can still remember vividly walking the deserted streets in my neighborhood in Fujieda, where I lived then, late at night, trying to calm down a mind frustrated by some problem.

The publication of Kamio (1979) marks the first stage of the development of the theory of territory of information. I was considerably satisfied with the printed paper, but I didn’t think about a further development. Then, an important turning point in my life came: I was invited to the Harvard-Yenching Institute as a visiting coordinate researcher with Professor Susumu Kuno of the Department of Linguistics of Harvard University in 1983.

Professor Kuno strongly encouraged me to pursue my work on territory of information further. His encouragement made me confident in the potentiality of the theory. Therefore, I restarted my work on it, trying to systematize the idea developed in the 1979 paper and to widen its scope. During my two years’ stay

at Harvard, the almost ideal research environment and Professor Kuno's constant encouragement lead me to write a fairly lengthy manuscript. After returning to Japan, I further developed the manuscript and in the spring of 1987, for the completed manuscript submitted as a dissertation, I was awarded the degree of the Doctor of Literature in linguistics from University of Tsukuba. (In the Japanese academic community, especially in the Humanities, a Ph.D. is not required when one becomes a university teacher, although this trend is changing.). Since University of Tsukuba requires the publication of a doctoral thesis, I published the revised content of my dissertation as Kamio (1990). The theory referred to as the "earlier framework" in this text is the version presented in this book.

A new stage in the development of territory of information was reached when I tried to publish the essence of the revised content in an international journal in English at the suggestion of my colleague, Professor Atsuo Kawashima. Once again, the one who triggered the movement into the new stage of the theory was Professor Susumu Kuno. At his new suggestions, I revised the theory considerably and the results appeared in two separate papers as Kamio (1994, 1995).

This book essentially represents this stage of the development of the theory of territory of information and attempts to cover as wide a range as possible at that stage. The theory will no doubt develop further and its development is being seen even at the time of writing of this preface. Further consequences and significance of the theory will be discussed in a future volume.

As noted in the brief sketch of the process of the development of my theory, I have been indebted to many people, but, as is already clear, Susumu Kuno's contribution is preeminent. Without his encouragement, insights, and even a financial assistance, the research leading to this monograph would not have been possible.

The second foremost contributor is Margaret Thomas of Boston College. Since the days when she was a graduate student at Harvard, she has acted as one of my principal informants on my research on English (the other was Paula Blank, now at the College of William and Mary, to whom I am also grateful), provided me with abundant information about various English expressions, and had a countless number of discussions with me. If it were not for her extremely sensitive and detailed observations, my research on English would have been drastically impoverished.

There are many other people, mainly of course linguists, whose contributions to this monograph cannot be disregarded. I am greatly indebted to Noriko Akatsuka, Karen Courtenay, Yang Da, Hartmut Haberland, Takeshi Ito, Takahiro Iwahata, Yuji Nishiyama, Ken-ichi Takami, and others who cannot be enumerated here, for their contribution to my work in various forms. Some may be apparent from the text of this monograph.

The final version of the manuscript was prepared during my stay at the Department of Linguistics and the Institute of Cognitive Science of the University of Colorado, Boulder. For this extremely pleasant research and writing environment, I am deeply grateful to Lise Menn, Walter Kintsch, and

Martha Polson. The institute provided the necessary equipment for the generation of the final text, for which I am deeply indebted to the latter two psychologists. William Bright kindly helped me with some reference. Zygmunt Frajzyngier and Minglang Zhou (of the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures) kindly made the softwares for Czech and for Chinese phonetic symbols, respectively, available to me. I am also deeply indebted to these three linguists for this. Finally, Dokkyo University generously gave me a year of leave of absence and a research fund, which made the completion of the manuscript possible. I gratefully acknowledge it here.

The final version was prepared with the help of William Raymond, Tara Kerrigan, Yoshiteru Asano, and Makoto Hayashi. The last two unsparingly provided their time and effort in producing the final version. I thank these young people for their great effort.

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Boulder, Colorado

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