2025. Proc Ling Soc Amer 10(1). 5924. https://doi.org/10.3765/plsa.v10i1.5924.

The Japanese expressive modifier *baka* 'stupid': An evaluation of the individual and the situation

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Abstract. The English noun-modifying expressive modifier *damn* can express not only a speaker's negative attitude toward the target expressed in a noun but also the speaker's negative attitude toward an entire proposition (=propositional reading) (e.g., Potts 2005; Gutzmann 2019). In this study, I investigate the Japanese noun-modifying expressive modifier *baka* 'stupid', and argue that unlike the English expressive modifier *damn*, it simultaneously conveys a negative attitude toward an individual expressed in a noun and an entire event within a single reading. This paper shows variations in and proposes a new typology of expressive modifiers.

Keywords. expressive modifiers; negative attitude; dual evaluation; individual; event; stage-level vs. individual-level; conventional implicature; variation

1. Introduction. It has been observed in the literature that the English expressive modifier *damn* has multiple functions. For example, in (1), *damn* expresses the negative attitude of the speaker toward an individual, as in (1):[1]

(1) (Attitude toward individual(s))
   a. The damn Republicans should be less partisan. (Potts 2005:161)
   b. I hate your damn dog! (It's not nearly so friendly as my dog.) (Potts 2005:18)

In addition to its individual use, the expressive modifier *damn* can also express the speaker's negative attitude toward a proposition, as in (2) (Potts 2005; Gutzmann 2019):

(2) (Attitude toward a proposition/event)
   a. Nowhere did the instructions say that the damn machine didn't come with an electric plug! (Potts 2005:166)
   b. The dog peed on the damn couch. (= Damn, the dog peed on the couch.) (Gutzmann 2019:18)
   c. The dog ate the damn cake. (= Damn! The dog ate the cake.) (Gutzmann 2019:95)

Gutzmann (2019) calls the phenomenon in (2) an 'argument extension'. As shown in the examples above, Gutzmann (2019) observes that (3a) can be paraphrased by (3b):

(3) a. The dog peed on the damn couch!
   b. Damn, the dog peed on the couch!
   (Gutzmann 2019:18)

Gutzmann (2019) observes that in (3a), *damn* can have the couch as the target of its expressive

* I am grateful to Ashwini Deo, Thomas Grano, Daniel Gutzmann, Ikumi Imani, Hideki Kishimoto, Kenta Mizutani, Andrés Saab, Harumi Sawada, Jun Sawada, Eri Tanaka, Carla Umbach, and the audience at the LSA 2025 for their valuable comments and discussions. Parts of this paper were also presented at the DGfS 2025 workshop "Expressivity: Variation and Change". I also thank the audience for the valuable comments and suggestions. This paper is based on work supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 22K00554. All errors are, of course, my own. Author: Osamu Sawada, Kobe University (sawadao@lit.kobe-u.ac.jp).

[1] Note that in (1b), although *damn* syntactically modifies dog, it semantically modifies your dog. The speaker does not express a negative attitude toward all dogs but toward "your dog" (Potts 2005).

attitude, but it can also express negative feelings about the fact that the dog peed on the couch without expressing any feelings regarding the couch itself (Gutzmann 2019:18).

Herein, I investigate the Japanese noun-modifying expressive modifier *baka* 'stupid' in the form X-*no baka* 'X-GEN stupid', as illustrated in (4), and argue that the expressive *baka* simultaneously conveys a negative attitude toward not only the individual target with which it combines but also the entire event that is performed by the target within a single reading:

(4) (Attitude toward the individual and the event)

Taro-no baka-ga mata chikoku shi-ta.
Taro-GEN idiot-NOM again late do-PST

'Stupid Taro was late again.'

I suggest that the dual evaluability of the individual and the situation is possible because *baka*, as an expressive modifier, is interpreted as a stage-level predicate. This paper suggests that there is a new dual-evaluative expressive modifier in natural language.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: In Section 2, I investigate the syntactic property of X-*no baka* and suggest that, unlike in ordinary genitive constructions, in X-*no baka*, *baka* is not a head and should be considered semantically as a modifier. Section 3 considers the semantic property of the expressive modifier *baka*, clarifying its dual evaluation, interpretation as a stage-level predicate, and non-at-issue property. Section 4 analyzes the meaning of the expressive modifier based on a multidimensional compositional system (Potts 2005; McCready 2010; Gutzmann 2011). In Section 5, I compare X-*no baka* and the prenominal adjective *bakana* 'stupid' and clarify the semantic differences. Section 6 considers the variation of expressive modifiers by comparing the expressive *baka* with other types of expressive modifiers, such as the Japanese *yaroo* and English *damn*. Finally, Section 7 concludes the paper and discusses future research directions.

2. Structural property of the expressive modifier *baka*. First, on the structural side, X-*no baka* has properties that differ from the typical genitive constructions. In the ordinary genitive form [X-*no* Y], Y is both the syntactic head and part of the propositional content:

(5) [Taro-no ie]-wa ookii.
Taro-GEN house-TOP large
'Taro's house is large.'

Here, *ie* 'house' is the head of a noun phrase, and it contributes to the truth condition of the proposition. Conversely, in the case of the expressive *baka*, *baka* does not seem to be a head:

(6) (X-*no baka*)

[Taro-no baka]-ga mata chikoku shi-ta.
Taro-GEN idiot-NOM again late do-PST

'lit. Stupid Taro was late again.'

Syntactically, "X-*no baka*" forms a constituent, and *baka* is nominal. In this sense, the construction appears similar to the ordinary genitive type. (*Baka* is a noun and X-*no baka* is a noun phrase.) However, semantically, *baka* is not the main part of the entire phrase; thus, it

should not be the head. In this paper, I tentatively consider that in (6), *baka* is a modifier, but a more detailed investigation is necessary.[2]

3. Semantic property of X-*no baka*. Let us now consider the meaning of the expressive *baka* in detail.

3.1. EVALUATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE SITUATION. Regarding the meaning of the expressive *baka*, I argue that *baka* expresses the speaker's negative attitude toward not only the individual but also the situation as a whole.[3]

The idea that *baka* has a negative evaluation of not only individual X but also the entire sentence situation involving X is supported by the fact that, as expressed in the following example, it makes a sentence unnatural if it has a positive meaning:

(7) a. Yamada-no baka-ga mata misu shi-ta.
Yamada-GEN idiot-NOM again mistake do-PST
'lit. Stupid Yamada made a mistake again.'
b. ?? Yamada-no baka-ga fain puree-o shi-ta.
Yamada-GEN idiot-NOM fine play-ACC do-PST
'lit. Stupid Yamada made a fine play.'

The following examples also support the idea that the expressive *baka* cannot be used when the entire proposition has a positive meaning:

(8) a. ?? Taro-no baka-ga shihou shiken-ni ukat-ta.
Taro-GEN idiot-NOM bar exam-to pass-PST
'lit. Stupid Taro passed the bar exam.'
b. ?? Yamada-no baka-ga yuushoo shi-ta.
Yamada-GEN idiot-NOM championship do-PST
'lit. Stupid Yamada won the championship.'

The sentences above sound unnatural because neither Taro's passing of the bar exam nor Yamada's winning of the championship can be seen as an act of foolishness on the part of Taro or Yamada.

Thus, the following question ensues: Can the expressive modifier *baka* be used for a (pure) argument extension? My answer is No. I believe that the expressive *baka* does not function as a pure argument extension. As observed earlier, the English expressive *damn* can be used to indicate a negative attitude toward the entire situation, not toward the individual. However, the Japanese expressive *baka* cannot be used as such. The expressive modifier *baka* has to expresses a speaker's negative attitude toward both the individual and the entire situation. It is not possible to evaluate a situation as a whole without showing a negative attitude toward X.

One evidence comes from the fact that the direct translation of the following English example is ungrammatical:

(9) a. The dog peed on the damn couch.

[2] I thank Andrés Saab for the valuable discussion regarding this point.

[3] In this sense, the expressive *baka* is similar to the English construction "It is {silly/stupid} of X to VP":

(i) It was {silly/stupid} of Taro to be late again.

However, it should be noted that the English "it is {silly/stupid} of X to VP" is not an expressive.

(= Damn, the dog peed on the couch.) (Gutzmann 2019:18)

b. * Inu-ga sofaa-no baka-ni oshikko shi-ta.
dog-NOM couch-GEN idiot-on pee do-PST
'lit. The dog peed on the damn couch.'

Intuitively, *baka* has to target an animate noun, but here, it targets the inanimate noun *sofaa* 'couch'. Thus, the sentence sounds ungrammatical. I suggest that the Japanese *baka* involves a hybrid evaluative system that targets both an individual and an entire proposition.

3.2. THE EXPRESSIVE *baka* BEHAVES AS A STAGE-LEVEL PREDICATE. Let us now consider the meaning of *baka* in more detail. I claim that *baka* in the "X-*no baka*" construction behaves as a stage-level predicate representing a temporal state (Carlson 1977, 1980).

According to Carlson (1977, 1980), individual-level predicates express the permanent property of the entities they are predicated of. Conversely, stage-level predicates express the transitory property of the entities of which they are predicated:

(10) a. Stage-level predicate: sick, tired, hungry, drunk, open, naked, alert, awake
b. Individual-level predicate: big, boring, intelligent, insane, orange, fat, smart
(Carlson 1980:72)

I assume that in Japanese, there are two types of *baka*: those functioning as individual-level predicates and those as stage-level predicates, and that X-*no baka* utilizes the latter:

(11) a. Individual-level predicate *baka*: The stable (more or less permanent) characteristic of being stupid (having low intelligence and being socially illiterate).
b. Stage-level predicate *baka*: Temporary state of being stupid (as a result of doing something stupid).

Regarding the historical development of the expressive *baka*, it seems plausible that the dual-evaluative property of the expressive *baka* developed as a result of the semantic shift of *baka* from an individual-level predicate to a stage-level predicate. This is speculative, and a detailed investigation is necessary.

3.3. NOT-AT-ISSUE/CI PROPERTY OF EXPRESSIVE *baka*. Let us now consider the semantic status of the meaning of the expressive modifier *baka*. In the previous section, I claim that the expressive *baka* not only conveys a negative attitude toward the target it combines with but also expresses the speaker's negative evaluation toward the entire event the target performs. In terms of the status of meaning, we can say that the speaker's dual evaluative meaning in the expressive *baka* is a conventional implicature (CI).

In the literature, expressives are typically analyzed as having CIs (Potts 2005; McCready 2010). In Gricean pragmatics, CIs are considered part of the meaning of words, but they are (logically and compositionally) independent of "what is said" (e.g., Grice 1975; Potts 2005, 2007; Horn 2007; McCready 2010; Sawada 2010, 2017; Gutzmann 2012). In this theory, it is considered that a CI is speaker-oriented by default.

Regarding independence, there are several pieces of evidence to assume that the meaning of *baka* is independent of "what is said". First, its meaning is not in the semantic scope of the past tense. Second, as the following example shows, a denial test cannot target the expressive meaning:

(12) A: Taro-no baka-ga mata chikoku shi-ta.
Taro-GEN idiot-NOM again late do-PST
'Stupid Taro was late again.'
B: Iya sore-wa uso-da. #Taro-wa baka-de-wa-nai. Wazato soo shi-ta-nda.
No that-TOP false-PRED Taro-TOP idiot-PRED-NEG intentionally so do-PST-Prt
'No, that's false. #{Taro/Taro's behavior} is not stupid. He did it on purpose.'

The expressive *baka* is speaker-oriented by default. All the examples of the expressive *baka* we have seen thus far express the speaker's attitude, and the following example of an embedded sentence is also speaker-oriented:

(13) Taro-wa Yamada-no baka-ga mata chikoku-shi-ta-no-o shira-nai.
Taro-TOP Yamada-GEN idiot-NOM again late-do-PST-NMLZ-ACC know-NEG
'Taro does not know that stupid Yamada was late again.'

However, note that the expressive *baka* is not always speaker-oriented. When embedded in the complement of an attitude predicate, it can be subject-oriented:

(14) Taro-wa Yamada-no baka-ga mata chikoku-shi-ta-to omot-tei-ru.
Taro-TOP Yamada-GEN idiot-NOM again late-do-PST-that think-PROG-Non.PST
'Taro thinks that stupid Yamawa was late again.'

This kind of perspective shift is observed in other expressives, such as *friggin*, *damn*, or the Japanese comparative expressive *motto* (see, e.g., Kratzer 1999; Schlenker 2003; Amaral et al. 2007; Potts 2007; Harris & Potts 2009; Sawada 2017). However, in ordinary contexts, the meaning of the expressive *baka* is, by default, speaker-oriented. In this sense, it is different from a presupposition that refers to information taken for granted between a speaker and a listener. The expressive *baka* conveys a speaker's evaluative attitude and introduces new information; it cannot be considered part of the common ground (i.e., information already assumed to be true between a speaker and a listener before the utterance).

4. Formal analysis. Based on the abovementioned empirical facts, this section analyzes the meaning of the expressive modifier *baka*.

4.1. THE FORMAL ANALYSIS OF *damn*. Before analyzing the meaning of the Japanese expressive modifier *baka*, let us first overview Potts's (2005) analysis of the English *damn*:

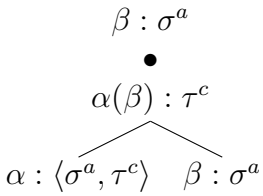
(15) a. (Individual reading)
The damn Republicans are aggressively cutting taxes. (Potts 2005:162)
b. (Sentential reading)
Nowhere did the instructions say that the damn machine didn't come with an electric plug! (Potts 2005:166)

In analyzing the data above, Potts (2005) proposed a novel multidimensional compositional system $\mathcal{L}_{\mathcal{CI}}$. The crucial point in Potts's (2005) theory is that the system assumes that there are two types—an at-issue type and a CI type—in natural language, and that each type is used in different dimensions. The former is used for the at-issue meaning, and the latter is used for the CI meaning. The type system of $\mathcal{L}_{\mathcal{CI}}$ is presented as follows:

(16) The logic $\mathcal{L}_{\mathcal{CI}}$

a. e^a, t^a, s^a are basic at-issue types for $\mathcal{L}_{\mathcal{CI}}$.
b. e^c, t^c, s^c are basic CI types for $\mathcal{L}_{\mathcal{CI}}$.
c. If σ and τ are at-issue types for $\mathcal{L}_{\mathcal{CI}}$, then $\langle \sigma, \tau \rangle$ is an at-issue type for $\mathcal{L}_{\mathcal{CI}}$.
d. If σ is an at-issue type for $\mathcal{L}_{\mathcal{CI}}$ and τ is a CI type for $\mathcal{L}_{\mathcal{CI}}$, then $\langle \sigma, \tau \rangle$ is a CI type for $\mathcal{L}_{\mathcal{CI}}$. (Based on Potts (2005:55))

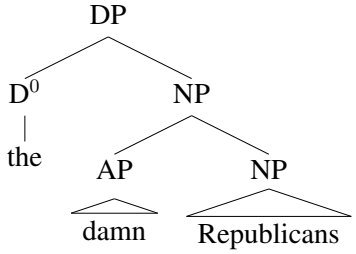
(17) CI application (Potts 2005:65)



This rule is a resource-insensitive application, whereby the argument of a CI-bearing expression can be used twice. An α that is of $\langle \sigma^a, \tau^c \rangle$ takes a β of type σ^a and returns τ^c. Simultaneously, a β is passed on to the mother node. Namely, β is used (consumed) twice. The bullet • is a metalogical device for separating an at-issue and a CI dimension. This rule ensures that the at-issue dimension is insensitive to the presence of adjoined CI operators.

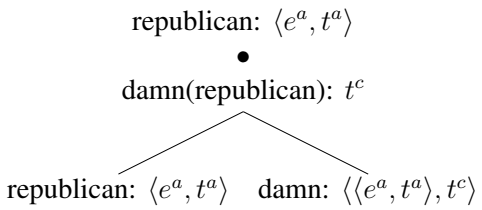
Let us now consider how the CI meanings of *damn* in (15a) and (15b) are computed. Regarding (15a), Potts (2005) proposes that its determiner phrase (DP) domain exhibits a syntactic structure, as represented in (18), and a logical structure, as in (19):

(18)



(Potts 2005:164)

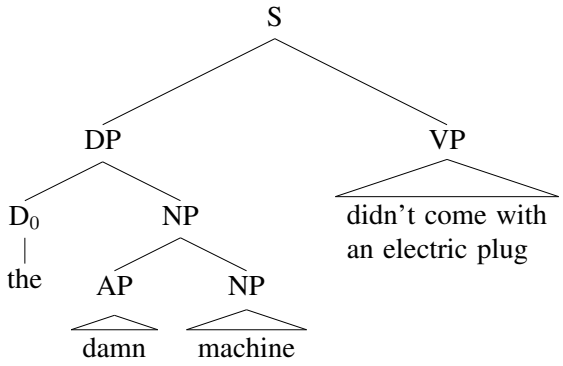
(19)



(Potts 2005:166)

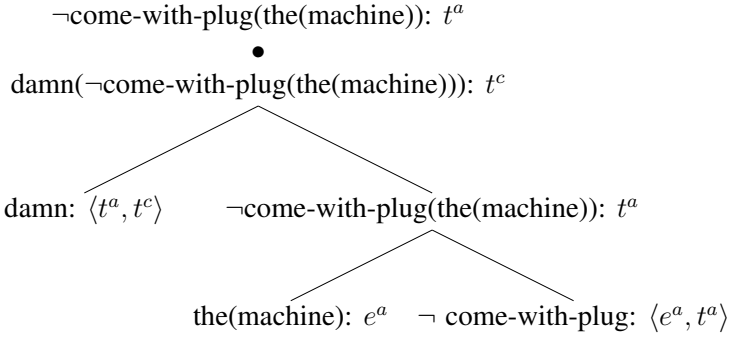
Here, *damn* takes Republicans and triggers a CI meaning that "Republicans are bad in the speaker's opinion". Regarding the analysis of the sentential reading (argument extension) in (15b), Potts (2005) assumes that (15b) involves a mismatch between its syntactic and logical structure. Syntactically, the sentence has a structure similar to (20), whereas semantically, it has a logical structure, as shown in (21):

(20)



(Potts 2005:167)

(21)



(Potts 2005:167)

Potts (2005) then proposes the following general lexical entry for *damn*, whereon *damn* can take any argument of the form $\langle \tau^a, t^a \rangle$ to produce the terms of type t^c. ($\cap$ is the nominalization function/kind formation operator of Chierchia (1984, 1998) that maps a predicate to a corresponding kind):

(22) $[\![\text{damn}]\!] : \langle \langle \tau^a, t^a \rangle, t^c \rangle = \lambda X.\text{bad}(\cap X)$

(Potts 2005:167)

For example, *damn* may have type $\langle \langle e^a, t^a \rangle, t^c \rangle$, as in (19), where it takes an at-issue property as its argument, but can also have type $\langle t^a, t^c \rangle$, as in (21), where it takes an at-issue proposition as its argument. (Here, information about the world and time is omitted.)

Thus, Potts's theory makes it possible to capture the meanings of CI and at-issue compositionally.[4]

[4] Although space limitations preclude a detailed presentation here, Gutzmann (2019) and Saab (2025) analyze the phenomenon of argument extension from a grammar perspective. For example, Gutzmann (2019) develops a syntactic account to argument extension based on the hypothesis that expressivity is a syntactic feature Ex, and it is the mismatch between where this feature is morphologically realized (in the form of the adjective) and where it is interpreted (at the DP or sentence level) that leads to the impression that the adjective extends its argument (Gutzmann 2019:18). He considers that *damn* has an uninterpretable feature uEx and it agrees with the interpretable feature iEx that is present in D^0 or C^0. With regard to this theory, the sentence-level interpretation arises when iEx is at C^0.

As a different syntactic approach, Saab (2025) considers that there is a grammar of expressivity that requires grammatical manipulation, which essentially entails merging material in "expletive" positions. He then claims that expressive adjectives such as *damn* are inserted in the sentence after syntax at the PF interface. In this approach, sentence-level interpretation is possible because it is introduced at PF interface, and "they do not constitute *bona fide* syntactic objects and are not interpreted at LF; hence, they do not partake in standard compositional processes" (Saab 2025).

4.2. THE ANALYSIS OF THE EXPRESSIVE *baka*. In the previous section, I reviewed the analysis of *damn* using Potts' multidimensional theory. Now, let us consider the semantic analysis of the expressive *baka*. The question entails whether the expressive *baka* can be analyzed in the same manner as *damn*. I consider that the expressive *baka* cannot be analyzed based on Potts's CI application. To illustrate this, let us consider the issue based on the following example:

(23) Taro-no baka-ga misu shi-ta.
Taro-GEN idiot-NOM mistake do-PST
'lit. Stupid Taro made a mistake.'

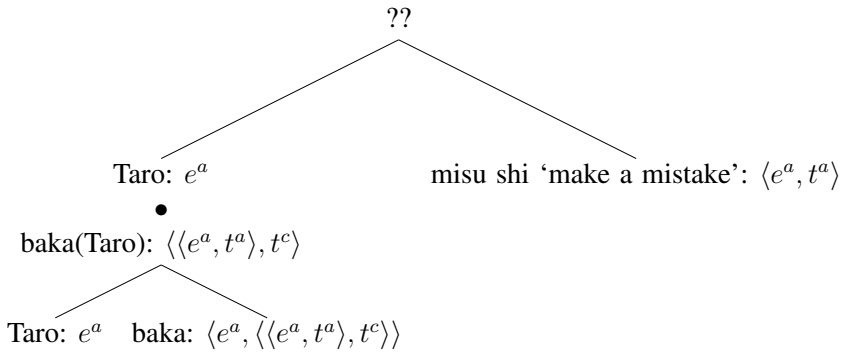
Here, the expressive modifier *baka* is considered a pure CI bearing expression as follows:

(24) (To be revised)
$[\![\text{baka}_{EXPRE}]\!]$: $\langle e^a, \langle\langle e^a, t^a\rangle, t^c\rangle\rangle = \lambda x \lambda P.\text{stupid}_{STAGE}(x) \wedge \text{bad}(P(x))$ for j

In this analysis, the expressive *baka* takes an individual and a property and conventionally implies that the judge j (typically the speaker) thinks that x is (temporarily) stupid and that $P(x)$ is bad. (Note that here the predicate "stupid" is considered as a stage-level predicate.) This analysis properly captures the dual evaluability of the expressive *baka*, but it cannot simultaneously capture both the at-issue and CI meanings of the given sentence.

Baka and *Taro* are combined by CI application, in which Taro is an argument of *baka* and at the same time passes up to the upper level. However, a problem arises in the subsequent semantic calculation:

(25)



At the at-issue level, the predicate of type $\langle e^a, t^a\rangle$ (i.e., *misu suru*, 'to make a mistake') takes Taro as its argument. However, at the CI level, "baka(Taro)" takes the predicate of type $\langle e^a, t^a\rangle$ as its argument. This system, however, cannot handle such a mismatch. If we attempt to combine "baka(Taro)" and the predicate via CI application, the predicate will not only serve as the argument of "baka(Taro)" but also be passed up to a higher level, resulting in an incorrect logical structure.

To avoid the aforementioned problem, I propose that the Japanese expressive modifier *baka* is a special type of mixed content that is typically assumed for words or morphemes that have both at-issue and CI meanings within the same lexical entry. A typical example of mixed content would be *Kraut* which not only has an at-issue meaning of 'German' but also conveys that the judge holds a negative attitude toward German people (McCready 2010; Gutzmann 2011):

(26) Juan is a Kraut.
At-issue: Juan is a German.
CI: The speaker has a negative attitude toward German people.
(McCready 2010:22)

I assume that, unlike *Kraut*, the expressive modifier *baka* does not have an at-issue meaning. However, it still has an at-issue component that takes an individual x and a predicate P and returns $P(x)$. This makes it possible to compute the at-issue and CI meanings in tandem. I propose that the expressive *baka* has the following meaning:

(27) (Revised, final version)
$[\![\text{baka}_{EXPRE}]\!]$:$\langle e^a, \langle\langle e^a, t^a\rangle, t^a\rangle\rangle \times \langle e^a, \langle\langle e^a, t^a\rangle, t^s\rangle\rangle$ =
$\lambda x \lambda P.P(x)\blacklozenge\lambda x \lambda P.\text{stupid}_{STAGE}(x) \wedge \text{bad}(P(x))$ for j

In the at-issue component, *baka* takes an individual x and a predicate P and denotes that $P(x)$ is true. The at-issue component does not contain meaningful content, but it is necessary to compute both at-issue and CI meanings in tandem.[5] In the CI component, it takes an individual and a property and conventionally implies that the judge j (typically the speaker) thinks that x is (temporarily) stupid now and that $P(x)$ is bad.

Crucially, these semantic computations are not possible using Potts' multidimensional compositional system. To make such a computation possible, following McCready (2010), I assume the following type for mixed content:

(28) McCready's modified type system: $\mathcal{L}_{CI}^{+S}$
The type system itself is identical to that of $\mathcal{L}_{CI}$ except that:
a. e^s, t^s, s^s are basic shunting types for $\mathcal{L}_{CI}^{+S}$.
b. If σ is an at-issue type for $\mathcal{L}_{CI}^{+S}$ and τ is a shunting type for $\mathcal{L}_{CI}^{+S}$, then $\langle\sigma, \tau\rangle$ is a shunting type for $\mathcal{L}_{CI}^{+S}$.
c. If σ is a shunting type for $\mathcal{L}_{CI}^{+S}$ and τ is a shunting type for $\mathcal{L}_{CI}^{+S}$, then $\langle\sigma, \tau\rangle$ is a shunting type for $\mathcal{L}_{CI}^{+S}$.

(29) McCready's modified type system: The logic $\mathcal{L}_{CI}^{+}$
The following clauses are added to the type system of $\mathcal{L}_{CI}^{+S}$:
(i) If σ and τ are at-issue types for $\mathcal{L}_{CI}^{+}$, and ζ and υ are shunting types for $\mathcal{L}_{CI}^{+}$, then $\sigma \times \zeta$, $\langle\sigma, \tau\rangle \times \zeta, \sigma \times \langle\zeta, \upsilon\rangle$ are mixed types for $\mathcal{L}_{CI}^{+}$.
(ii) If σ, τ and ζ are at-issue types for $\mathcal{L}_{CI}^{+}$ and υ is a shunting type for $\mathcal{L}_{CI}^{+}$, then $\langle\sigma, \tau\rangle \times \langle\zeta, \upsilon\rangle$ is a mixed type for $\mathcal{L}_{CI}^{+}$.

Following McCready (2010), I then assume that the meaning of mixed content is computed based on mixed application:

(30) Mixed application

$$\alpha(\gamma)\blacklozenge\beta(\gamma) : \tau^a \times \upsilon^s$$
$$\alpha\blacklozenge\beta : \langle\sigma^a, \tau^a\rangle \times \langle\sigma^a, \upsilon^s\rangle \quad \gamma : \sigma^a$$

[5] Sawada & Sawada (2025) call this type of mixed content "computational mixed content".

(Based on McCready (2010)

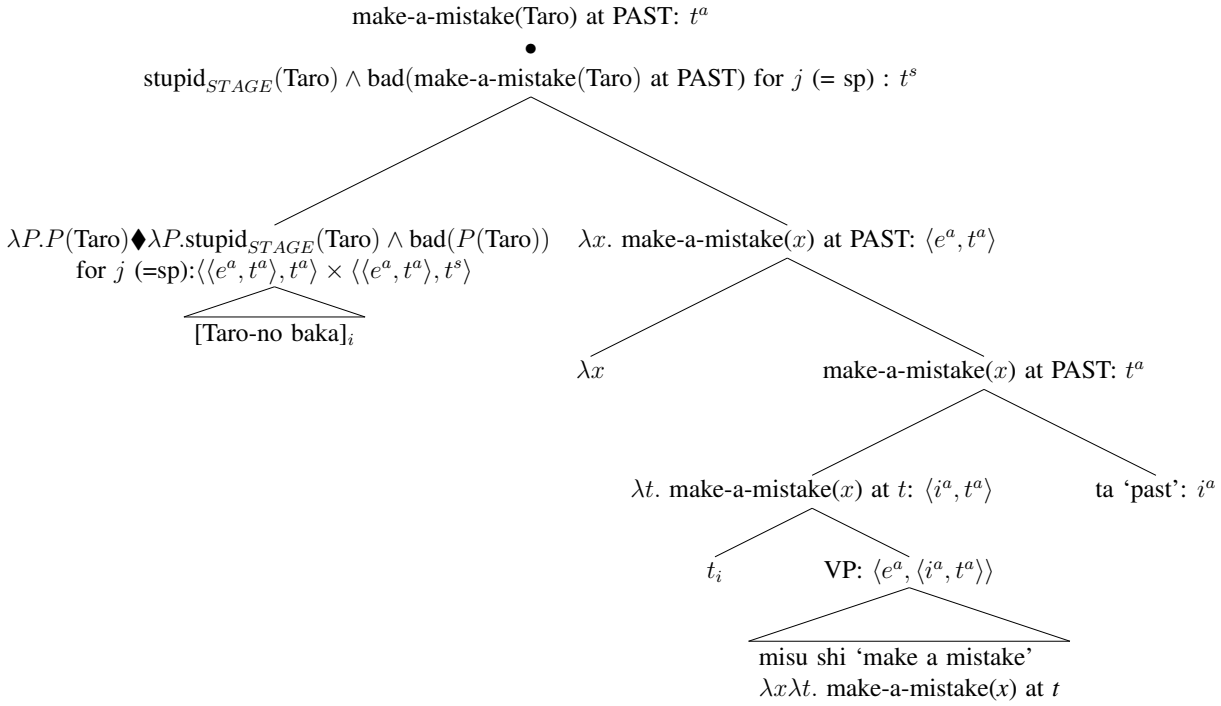
Note that mixed application differs from Potts's CI application in that it is resource-sensitive.[6] Unlike Potts's CI application, the at-issue content is not passed up to the above level. McCready (2010:20) further assumes that the following rule applies to the final interpretation of the CI part of mixed content to totally separate a completed CI from an at-issue meaning by •:

(31) Final interpretation rule: Interpret $\alpha \blacklozenge \beta : \sigma^a \times t^s$ as follows at the next derivation: $\alpha : \sigma^a \bullet \beta : t^s$

According to this rule, the mixed-type terms involving the conjunction ♦ should be replaced with terms conjoined by • when the CI part of the mixed content is propositional (of type t).[7]

The following figure represents the logical structure of (32):

(32)



Importantly, as represented in the above logical structure, "NP-no baka" must be higher than tense in the logical structure because it evaluates the entire proposition. Regarding tense, we assume a referential theory of tense (e.g., Partee 1973) where tenses are treated as pronouns of type i (cf. a quantificational theory of tense).

[6] McCready (2010) uses derivation proofs rather than derivation trees. I assume that they yield essentially the same results. See also McCready (2010) for further details.

[7] McCready (2010) also introduces a shunting application, which is also a resource-sensitive application, that is more basic than mixed application:

(i) Shunting application

$$\alpha(\beta) : \tau^s$$
$$\alpha : \langle \sigma^a, \tau^s \rangle \quad \beta : \sigma^a$$

(Based on McCready (2010))

5. Difference with prenominal non-restrictive modifiers. In the previous section, we discussed the expressive *baka* in the form "X-*no baka*". Interestingly, *baka* can also be placed before a noun as an adjective in the form *bakana* X 'stupid X':

(33) (Prenominal adjective)

[Ano bakana Taro]-ga shihou shiken-ni goukaku shi-ta.
that stupid Taro-NOM bar exam-to pass do-PST

'lit. {That stupid Taro/Taro, who is stupid} passed the bar exam.'

Prenominal *bakana* is an ordinary adjective that denotes that a referent is stupid as a stable permanent property of the referent and can be considered an individual-level predicate in Carlson's sense (Carlson 1977). Conversely, in the case of the expressive *baka* (in the form NP-*no baka*), *baka* can be thought of as a stage-level predicate in that it only expresses a situation wherein an idiotic act has been committed.

Thus, in contexts unrelated to inherent permanent intelligence, the use of the prenominal *bakana* is unnatural:

(34) a. (Context: Taro is playing a tennis match.)
[Taro-no baka]-ga mata daburu foruto-o shi-ta.
Taro-GEN idiot-NOM again double fault-ACC do-PST
'lit. Stupid Taro double-faulted again.'

b. ?? [Ano bakana Taro]-ga mata daburu foruto-o shi-ta.
that stupid Taro-NOM again double fault-ACC do-PST
'That stupid Taro double-faulted again.'

In terms of the semantics–pragmatics interface, the prenominal adjective *bakana* is not an expressive but is still considered a CI: its meaning does not contribute to "what is said". In (34a) *baka* is not in the semantic scope of the past tense. This sentence does not mean that Taro was stupid. Rather, it conventionally implies that Taro "is" stupid.

The adjective *bakana* is not an expressive; it is similar to a nonrestrictive relative clause in English. (See, e.g., Potts (2005) for a CI-based analysis of nonrestrictive relative clauses.)

(35) He lives in Scotland, where he likes walking in the Scottish glens with his dog, Hugo, who is an idiot, and his partner, Jacqui, who is not. (https://www.amazon.co.uk/Theres-Bear-Chair-Ross-Collins/dp/0763689424)

We can paraphrase *bakana* with a similar expression *atama-no warui* 'head-GEN bad' based on a nonrestrictive relative clause:

(36) (Prenominal adjective, with *atama-no warui* 'stupid')

[Ano atama-no warui Taro]-ga shihou shiken-ni goukaku shi-ta.
that head-GEN bad Taro-NOM bar exam-to pass do-PST

'That stupid Taro passed the bar exam.'

6. Varieties of expressive modifiers. Finally, let us consider the variation of expressive modifiers by considering the similarities and differences between the expressive *baka*, the Japanese expressive modifier *yaroo*, and the English *bastard*.

6.1. *Yaroo* 'BASTARD'. Japanese also has a similar expression *yaroo*:

(37) (X-*no yaroo*)

Yamada-no yaroo-ga mata misu shi-ta.
Yamada-GEN bastard-NOM again miss do-PST

'That bastard Yamada made a mistake again.'

Similar to the expressive *baka*, expressive *yaroo* usually conveys a negative feeling toward an individual.

However, *baka* and *yaroo* may differ in terms of use. Unlike *baka*, *yaroo* can co-occur with a proposition that has a positive meaning:

(38) a. Taro-no {yaroo / ??baka}-ga shihou shiken-ni ukat-ta.
Taro-GEN bastard / idiot-NOM bar exam-to pass-PST
'lit. {Bastard/stupid} Taro passed the bar exam.'

b. Yamada-no {yaroo / ??baka}-ga shooshin shi-ta.
Yamada-GEN bastard / idiot-NOM promote do-PST
'lit. {Bastard/stupid} Yamada got promoted.'

c. Taro-no {yaroo / ??baka} saikin ganbat-teru-naa.
Taro-GEN bastard / idiot-TOP these.days doing.well-PROG-Prt
'lit. {Bastard /stupid}Taro has been doing well these days.'

In the examples above, the speaker deliberately uses the coarse word *yaroo* to express friendliness: this strategy is impossible in the case of the expressive *baka*. I would like to consider that the expressive *yaroo* only scopes over an individual and signals a speaker's negative attitude toward the individual by default, but it can also communicate the speaker's positive attitude as a way of conveying friendliness.

Notably, *yaroo* cannot be used for argument extension. This is supported by the fact that the following sentence is ungrammatical:

(39) * Inu-ga keeki-no yaroo-o tabe-ta.
dog-NOM cake-GEN bastard-ACC eat-PST
'lit. The dog ate the damn cake.'

6.2. ENGLISH *damn*. Finally, let us consider the English *damn*. As discussed above and noted in the literature, *damn* can be used for both individual evaluation and argument extension:

(40) a. I hate your damn dog! (Potts 2005)(individual evaluation)
b. The dog peed on the damn couch. (argument extension)

It seems that, in addition to individual evaluation and argument extension, there is a dual evaluation in *damn*:

(41) The damn dog peed on the couch. (dual evaluation)

(41) is more likely to be read as expressing frustration not only with the situation but also with the dog specifically (Thomas Grano, personal communication).

6.3. VARIATION OF EXPRESSIVE MODIFIERS. The abovementioned observations are summarized in Table 1.

	pure individual evaluation	argument extension (situational evaluation only)	dual evaluation
baka	NO	NO	OK
yaroo	OK	NO	NO
damn	OK	OK	OK(?)

Table 1. Varieties of expressive modifiers

The expressive modifier *baka* has neither pure individual evaluation nor argument extension but only dual evaluation. In contrast, the expressive modifier *yaroo* has only individual evaluation. Finally, the English *damn* may have all of these usages.

How can we explain these variations? First, I consider that *baka* cannot represent an argument extension because it typifies an attribute of a person (or intelligent creature). In addition, pure individual evaluation is not possible because *baka* acts as a stage-level predicate.

As for *yaroo*, it is essentially an epithet for humans, and it can only be used to evaluate individuals. Unlike *baka*, *yaroo* does not function as a stage-level predicate, and this seems to be the reason why it does not have a dual evaluative function.

As for *damn*, it may be possible to consider that dual evaluation corresponds to an intermediate stage between pure individual evaluation and argument extension, and historically it might have played an important role in the development of its use as argument extension.

7. Conclusion. In this paper, I investigated the Japanese expressive modifier *baka* 'stupid' and argued 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 CI (Grice 1975; Potts 2005). I suggested 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).

Finally, I compared the Japanese *baka* with Japanese *yaroo* and English *damn* and demonstrated the variation of expressive modifiers. I hope this paper clarifies the existence of a new type of expressive modifier, namely, the dual-expressive modifier, in natural language.

This study offers several avenues for future research. First, it is important to examine the environment where the expressive modifier appears in a non-subject position. It seems that when the expressive *baka* appears in a non-subject position, it does not convey the speaker's negative attitude toward the entire proposition:

(42) (Context: Taro was late again.)

a. Yamada-sensei-wa Taro-no baka-o shikat-ta.
Yamada-teacher-TOP Taro-GEN idiot-ACC scold-PST
'Prof. Yamada scold stupid Taro.'

b. Hanako-wa Taro-no baka-ni monku-o it-ta.
Hanako-TOP Taro-GEN idiot-to complaint-ACC say-PST
'Hanako complained to stupid Taro.'

Here, the expressive *baka* evaluates the individual Taro negatively, but it also negatively evaluates the contextually salient event associated with Taro. The expressive *baka* in the non-subject position seems to refer to an implicit event caused by the individual modified by *baka*.

Second, it is worthwhile to compare the expressive modifier *baka* with the phenomenon of expressive vocatives in Japanese. In English, expressive vocatives are formed with a second-person pronoun and nominal elements, such as *idiot* and *bastard*:

(43) a. You idiot!
b. You bastard! (Gutzmann 2019:173)

Japanese also has expressive vocatives, but their form and use differ from those of English. As Izumi & Hayashi (2018) observed, in Japanese expressive vocatives, it is odd to use a second-person pronoun in the vocative expressive (*Anata* 'you' is the normal form of the second-person pronoun, while *omae* and *temee* are the non-polite forms of a second-person pronoun, indicating a negative attitude toward the listener):

(44) ?? {Anata / omae / temee}-no baka!
you$_{NORMAL}$ / you$_{NEG.ATTI}$ / you$_{NEG.ATTI}$-GEN fool
'You fool!'

To express a negative feeling toward the addressee, a proper name, occupation name, or demonstrative is usually used:

(45) (With a proper name)

Taro-no baka!
Taro-GEN fool

'You fool, Taro!'

The expressive modifier and the expressive vocative appear to be similar in terms of the type of target they address.

Finally, it would be important to consider the variation of expressive modifiers in more detail. In particular, it is necessary to theoretically discuss why Japanese expressive modifiers do not have an argument extension. In this paper, we have discussed this from a semantic point of view; however, further discussion is also needed from syntactic, pragmatic, cross-linguistic, and historical perspectives.

Abbreviations: The following abbreviations are used for example glosses: ACC: accusative, ATTI: attitude, EVAL: evaluative, GEN: genitive, NEG: negation, negative, NMLZ: nominalizer, NOM: nominative, Non.PST: non-past tense, PRED: predicative, PRES: present, PROG: progressive, Prt: particle, PST: past, PROG: progressive, TOP: topic.

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