

# Man

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In recent years, a great deal of research has been done on the semantics of discourse particles. Most of this work has concentrated on German (e.g. Kratzer 1999, Zeevat 2002, Kaufmann 2004, Potts 2005) and, to a lesser extent, Japanese (e.g. McCready 2005). This paper considers the semantics and pragmatics of the English discourse particle *man*. I show that *man* has distinct meanings when used sentence-initially and sentence-finally, describe its functions in each position, and provide a partial formal analysis.

Sentence-initial *man* is, in some ways, more complex than its sentence-final counterpart; I will consider it first. Intonation plays a large role in its interpretation, along two distinct dimensions. First, it is interpreted quite differently when pronounced with an intonational break between it and its host sentence than when it is integrated with the host, as shown by (1). With the break, (1a) is understood as expressing the speaker's attitude toward the fact that the day is nice; when the particle is integrated into the sentence, it is understood as making a claim that the weather is very nice and commenting on that fact. Thus, with integrated intonation degree modification (DM) enters the semantic picture. This can be seen clearly in examples like (1b), which is infelicitous with integrated intonation; presumably the reason is that *be rectangular* is not a gradable predicate and so no DM can take place.

- (1) a. Man, it's a nice day.  
b. Man, this table is rectangular. (comma intonation only)

But clearly DM is not *man*'s only effect—and, in fact, since my goal here is to give a full picture of the particle's effects, I will not be able to provide a full analysis of the DM facts. I concentrate instead on two general issues that also apply to the DM case. The first has already been mentioned: SI *man* expresses some emotional stance toward the proposition in its scope. The nature of the emotional stance is very context-dependent, as shown by (2). First, the emotion expressed by the particle is speaker-dependent, as shown by (2a); here for an avid Republican it is positive, for a Democratic supporter negative. The emotion also depends on the proposition the particle applies to, as shown by (2b,c). World knowledge tells us that (2b) is bad and (2c) good (when intonation is kept neutral); the emotion the particle expresses is parasitic on this knowledge.

- (2) a. Man, George Bush won the election. (good/bad)  
b. Man, John failed his defense. (bad)  
c. Man, I won \$20,000 in the lottery. (good)

We can model this formally by taking a part of the particle meaning to be dependent on Kaplanian contexts (Kaplan 1989). I first define a function  $E$  from contexts to functions from propositions to emotive predicates.

- $E : c \mapsto \wp(W) \mapsto A$ , where  $A \in \{\mathbf{bad}, \mathbf{good}\}$ .

Here **bad**, **good** are ordinary propositional modifiers. Thus the emotion expressed is context-dependent. We can incorporate this content into a lexical entry for *man* by using  $E$  in conjunction with the proposition itself.

- $\llbracket man \rrbracket = \lambda p.[p \wedge E(c)(p)(p)]$

The second point again involves intonation. SI *man* can appear with (at least) two pitch contours, each of which is interpreted differently. (How a sentence containing a particle is interpreted also of course depends on the contour of the whole sentence; I abstract away from this issue here.) These two contours were determined by examining pitch tracks produced using Macquiner. The first contour is a rising tone (R). This tone indicates that the speaker finds the proposition *man* modifies surprising. I model this using a scale of likelihood modelled after one proposed by Guerzoni (2003). The second contour involves a rise followed immediately by a fall (RF); it indicates simply that the speaker has a negative attitude toward the proposition. This can be modelled easily using the emotive predicate **bad** above. Both of these intonational meanings are taken to be independently present in the tree and combined with the particle meaning using function composition (cf. Heim & Kratzer 1998). The pitch contour facts carry over to the integrated particle case that involves degree modification as well.

I conclude with a discussion of sentence-final (SF) *man*. Like the Japanese particle *yo* (McCready 2005), SF *man* produces effects of insistence when appended to a sentence; (3b) sounds as if the speaker is trying to convince the hearer to accept what's being said, unlike (3a). It can also license modal subordination (cf. Roberts 1989), as shown by (4); Japanese *yo* also has this property.

- (3) a. You don't need that.  
 b. You don't need that, man. (insistent/pushy)
- (4) a. A wolf might come in. # It'll eat you first.  
 b. A wolf might come in. It'll eat you first, man.

In light of the similarity with *yo*, I make use of a variation of McCready's (2005) analysis of the Japanese particle for the SF *man* case. On McCready's analysis, *yo* is underspecified with respect to a modal and a 'strong assertive' meaning; Which meaning is selected depends on the discourse relation holding between the sentence containing *man/yo* and the previous sentence. This part of the story is laid out within SDRT (Asher & Lascarides 2003); the semantics more generally is stated in a dynamic logic of epistemic states based on the system of Asher & McCready 2004, although I will not present the full formalism in this talk due to time constraints.

Finally, a brief word about syntax. I take the syntax of the particles to be quite simple. SF *man* must appear sentence-finally to have the effects I describe; I therefore take it to be right-adjoined to CP, as with the Japanese SF particles. SI *man* is also adjoined to CP, but in this case on the left periphery.