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"Drop Dead, Japan!!!": The Semantics of the Japanese Swear Word *Shine*

1. Introduction

In early 2016, at a budget committee meeting in Japan's parliament, an anonymous blog post written in Japanese was brought up when questions were being put to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. This post titled "Didn't Get a Slot in Day Care. Drop Dead, Japan!!!"[1] rants about the failure of the Japanese government's child care policies and excoriates its poor budgetary decision to prioritize hosting the Olympic Games over increasing the number of day care centers. Abe's dismissive response to the post caused public outrage, especially among young adults who struggle to raise children, sparking protest rallies and petitions.[2] During the parliamentary election in mid-2016, both ruling and opposing parties pledged to expand child care funding substantially.

It may be difficult to pinpoint what precisely caused the public outcry in a country where political activism is relatively uncommon, but the emotionally heightened language of the blog post was certainly a major contributing factor to why people from all across the political spectrum strongly reacted to it and engaged in the ensuing debate on child care. Besides the provocative title that includes the swear word *shine* ("die!" or "drop dead!"), the post is filled with cursing and profane expressions, such as *boke* ("idiot") and *kuso* ("shit"), and antihonorific morphemes are used throughout the texts. Some conservative politicians and pundits criticized the use of these foul and crude expressions and deemed the post unworthy of consideration. Even sympathetic parents who strongly support reforming the child care system in Japan found it rude and ill-mannered.

The topic of this paper is the semantics of the Japanese swear word *shine*, which is the imperative form of the verb *shinu* ("die"). I will present its basic characteristics and propose a semantic analysis that accounts for its abusive effects. There are two main motivations for discussing this particular swear word.

First, in recent years, philosophers of language and linguists alike have been investigating the nature of abusive and derogatory language using the tools and concepts that have been

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[1] Anonymous, (2016, February 15). Hoikuen Ochita Nihon Shine!!! Retrieved from http://anond.hatelabo.jp/20160215171759

[2] Osaki, T., (2016, March 7). Angry blog post sparks movement for improved day care. *The Japan Times*. Retrieved from http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/03/07/national/angry-blog-post-sparks-movement-for-improved-day-care/

developed to theorize different aspects of natural language, and there has been a good amount of progress in understanding the semantics and pragmatics of this more troublesome aspect of our language use (Anders and Lepore, 2013; Potts, 2007, among many others). Many studies, however, focus on the English language, and philosophers also focus on analyzing derogatory slurs that target particular populations with certain demographic features (such as *Jap* and *Chink*). By scrutinizing a non-English example of swearing, we can expand the scope of the extant research. This work is a cross-linguistic application of the current research on derogatory language. It is also worth considering a different type of derogatory expression, the imperative form of a verb, to deepen our understanding of derogatory language in general. Anderson and Lepore (2013) write that "[w]hat makes a word offensive varies with its different sources and functions" (p. 40). I will claim that the Japanese word *shine* is offensive in a different way than racial and ethnic slurs.

The second motivation for examining *shine* is its massive prevalence in contemporary society in Japan. It is one of the most typically used abusive expressions that Japanese people find in everyday language; for example, school children use it in name calling and bullying, as described in a recent newspaper article on a lawsuit that alleges school liability for a bullying suicide case: "multiple classmates repeatedly resorted to abuses such as *shine* …"[3] This study is by no means a quantitative one on the frequency of the expression; however, a quick search on Twitter, for example, provides a sense of its ubiquity: a clear instance of the use of *shine* as a swear word can be found in a tweet at least every ten minutes. Despite its popularity, it is unclear what mechanism underlies the abusive nature of *shine*. To begin with, what does it mean? It is a simple enough expression, the imperative form of a verb, and so it appears to give the order to die. The user of *shine*, however, never expects the target to follow the order, and no one seriously regards the word as issuing a genuine order (also consider the "Drop Dead, Japan!!!" case, where there is no person who can follow an order). Nevertheless, each occurrence of *shine* can damage and harm the targeted person, and it is a constant part of disparaging, hateful discourse against racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities in Japan. How can *shine* function so effectively as a derogatory word? The main goal of this paper is to offer a linguistic account of this word so that we can start understanding the societal implications of derogatory language in general.

In what follows, first, I will introduce the basic syntactic and semantic characteristics of the swear word *shine*, discussing some of the main features of derogatory language catalogued in previous research. Second, I will examine and refute an expressivist analysis

[3] Higuchi, T., (2016, August 27). Middle School Senior Student Suicide Case in Nagasaki Shinkamigoto: Parents sued Nagasaki Prefecture for Negligence. *Mainichi Shimbun*, morning edition, p. 29.

that treats *shine* as a device lacking propositional content but functioning to express the user's negative emotions. The expressivist view fails to systematically account for the interactions of *shine* and other expressions such as negation and politeness words. Third, I will argue that Starr's (2016) "preference semantics" for imperatives directly applies to the use of *shine* as a swear word and explains its basic characteristics.

2. Basic characteristics of *shine*

This section specifies the basic characteristics of *shine* by comparing it with expressive and slurring expressions in English, the characteristics of which have been very well documented in the literature. Let us start with the forms of *shine*.

As noted earlier, the swear word *shine* is the imperative form of the Japanese verb *shin-*, which is equivalent to *die* in English, where *shin-* is a verb stem that needs to be conjugated to appear licitly in a sentence. A Japanese verb stem is conjugated to have different functions within a sentence. For example, the verb stem *mat-* ("wait") is conjugated into *matsu* to have the basic present tense form. Verbs can also be conjugated to have the imperative form, as in *mate* ("wait!") and *shine* ("die!") in (1a). Besides the imperative form of a verb, a verb-ending particle *nasai* and the *te/de*-form of a verb can also carry directive meaning, as shown by (1b) and (1c) (Masuoka and Takubo, 1992, p. 118). (1d) also shows that, just like ordinary verbs, the form of *shine* can vary together with different particles and morphemes, such as a politeness word.

(1) mat- ("wait") and shin- ("die")

a.	Mat-e. "Wait!" Shin-e. "Die!"	Imperative form
b.	Mat-i-nasai. "Wait!" Shin-i-nasai "Die!"	Ordering, asking with authority
c.	Mat-te. "Wait!" Shin-de. "Die!"	Requesting
d.	Mat-te-kudasai. "Please wait!" Shin-de-kudasai. "Please die!"	Politely requesting

Now, let us turn to the meaning of *shine*. I will discuss some of the central features of the derogatory expressions identified in previous research (Potts, 2007; Hom, 2010) and lay out the similarities and differences between *shine* and other derogatory expressions.

First, the use of a derogatory expression clearly indicates negative or emotionally heightened psychological states of the user. Just as the prototypical swear phrase in English

fuck you, *shine* expresses contempt and aggression towards the target. Following Hom (2010, pp. 164-5), I will call this feature the "expressive force" of a derogatory expression. Furthermore, the forces of different expressions vary in their strength; the *f*-word seems more offensive than *damn*, other things being equal. The swear word *shine* also has a more emphatic cousin *korosuzo* ("I will kill you"). This phrase appears to be more aggressive and unnerving than *shine*, and it can be interpreted as threatening the safety of the target. The phrase *korosuzo* can be said to have a stronger or more harmful expressive force than *shine*.

Second, Potts (2007) claims that derogatory expressions are "ineffable": it is very difficult to paraphrase the content of a derogatory expression without using similar derogatory expressions, as indicated by the following pairs, where "≠" reads "is not synonymous with":

(2) a. Damn! ≠ I am angry!
    b. John is a damn good lawyer ≠ John is a very good lawyer. (Hom, 2010, p. 166)

Likewise, there seems to be no obvious candidate for paraphrasing the content of *shine*.

(3) a. Shine!
    b. Watashi-wa okotteiru.
       I-TOP angry.be
       "I'm angry"
    c. Watashi-wa anata-ga kiraida.
       I-TOP you-NOM hate
       "I hate you"

Neither (3b) nor (3c) seems to capture the expressive force or the raw feelings expressed by the genuine use of (3a).

Third, the effective force of a derogatory expression is typically "not displaceable" in the sense that its expressive meaning remains effective even when embedded under a variety of constructions such as negation and disjunction; it cannot be displaced from the current utterance situation.

(4) There are no chinks in the building. (Hom 2010, p. 168)
(5) Either Fred is a spic, or he is not. (Anders and Lepore 2013, p. 35)

The speaker of (4) would not be able to get away from the liability of using the epithet *chink*, even though she describes no particular persons as such. Likewise, (5) suggests that the speaker has a scornful attitude towards Hispanics.

The "nondisplaceability" of slurs and expressive words is not always shared with the use of *shine*. First, it loses its effective force with negation. Although *shine* itself cannot be combined with negation, the *te/de*-form can (6a), and the basic verb form together with the prohibition verb-ending *na* is considered to express a negative imperative (6b). (7) embeds

shine within the negation of a statement using the particle *to*, which can introduce a quotation.[4]

(6) a. Shina-nai-de
die-neg-*de*
"Don't die!"

b. Shinu-na!
die.BASIC.FORM-prohibition
"Don't die!"

(7) Watashi-wa shine to iwa-nai
I-TOP die *to* say-neg
"I don't say, 'Die!'"

Neither (6a-b) nor (7) seems to indicate a contemptuous and aggressive attitude that the speaker would have with the use of *shine*. Instead, (6a-b) are verbal encouragements for survival and possibly express a warm attitude towards the target, while (7) seems to merely mention the swear word *shine* rather than use it, as suggested by the accompanying translation.

Additionally, it seems difficult to embed the imperative form of a verb as a part of indirect speech. (8b) is an ordinary, legitimate instance of indirect report, where Yamada uses a first-person pronoun to describe what Tanaka said to Yamada in (8a). By contrast, (9b) is clearly degraded, even though it is formally analogous to (8b). As in (9c), there has to be a second-person pronoun to reflect what Tanaka has actually said. The only way to save (9b) is to place a heavy accent on *watashi-wa kaere* so that the phrase could be interpreted as a direct quote.[5]

(8) a. Tanaka: Omae-wa kaeru bekida.
You-TOP go.home should
"You should go home"

b. Yamada: Tanaka-ga watashi-wa kaeru bekida to itta.
Tanaka-NOM I-TOP go.home should *to* said
"Tanaka said that I should go home"

(9) a. Tanaka: Omae-wa Kaere!
You-TOP go.imperative
"You, go home!"

b. Yamada: *Tanaka-ga watashi-wa kaere to itta.
Tanaka-NOM I-TOP go.home *to* said

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[4] The particle *to* can also play the role of *that* in English, forming a clause in attitude ascriptions. It is not clear to me what role each occurrence of *to* performs. In the glosses, I will describe *to* simply as *to* without specifying its role.

[5] Also, *watashi-wa kaere* would be comprehensible only if the first-person pronoun *watashi* is seen as functioning as a second-person pronoun. Japanese first-person expressions occasionally allow such transferred reference.

Literally: "Tanaka said that I go home"

c. Yamada: Tanaka-ga (omae-wa) kaere to itta.
Tanaka-NOM (you-TOP) go.home *to* said
"Tanaka said, '(You) go home!'"

Similarly, as an imperative, an occurrence of *shine* cannot naturally occur as the antecedent of a conditional or in interrogatives (10-11), just as their English counterparts.

(10) *Moshi shine nara, watashi-wa kaeru.
Perhaps *shine* if, I-TOP go.home.Nonpast
Literally: "If die, then I'll go home"

(11) *Shine desu ka?
shine be.polite Question
Literally: "Is die?"

Imperatives are known to allow embedding under some connectives (Starr, 2016, section 2.1). The imperative *shine* can also appear with disjunction and *because*-clauses.

(12) Damare moshikuwa shine.
shut.up or *shine*
"Shut up or drop dead!"

(13) Uzai kara shine.
annoying because *shine*
"Because you are annoying, drop dead!"

To summarize the three features of the derogatory expressions discussed in this section, (i) they express the negative attitudes of the users (effective force); (ii) their precise contents are very difficult to paraphrase using non-derogatory expressions (ineffability); and (iii) their derogatory contents remain effective in different constructions (nondisplaceability). An occurrence of *shine* clearly has an effective force that is very difficult to paraphrase, and so it shares features (i) and (ii) with English derogatory expressions such as *damn* and *Jap*. By contrast, feature (iii), nondisplaceability, does not straightforwardly apply to *shine*: it does not scope out from negation and also resists being embedded in some constructions such as indirect speech and interrogatives. In what follows, I will consider two possible analyses of *shine* as an attempt to account for these properties.

3. A pure expressivist analysis

The analysis of *shine* I would like to discuss first—the account I will ultimately reject—views the expression as a highly stylized idiom that is used to express the user's negative

feelings. The use of *shine* lacks any descriptive content, attributing no properties to the implicit or explicit subject of the imperative. The swear word *shine* can simply be seen as a way to vent one's anger, pain, frustration, etc. This analysis may be appropriately called "pure expressivism" using the terminology of Croom (2014).

As discussed by Croom (2014) and others, treating racial and ethnic slurs as devoid of any descriptive content may be problematic. A better case, however, can be made for some other swear words such as *fucker* (Hedger, 2012). Hedger notes that to call someone an *asshole* is to say something about that person, whereas to call that person a *fucker* fails to describe him in any way (2011, p. 77). Perhaps *shine* is similar to the *f*-word in this respect. It is a conventionalized device to signal one's negative emotions. When the use of *shine* targets a particular person, it indicates the user's contemptuous and aggressive attitude towards that person, and when it is used more as an interjection addressing no particular person but an abstract entity such as a nation (as in "Drop dead, Japan!!!") or a circumstance (say, you accidentally spilled coffee on your shirt), it depicts the user's frustration and anger towards that entity ("I am angry with the Japanese government!" "I don't like what just happened!").

One way to formalize this general idea of pure expressivism is to adopt Potts's (2007) analysis of the *f*-word and treat *shine* as contributing nothing to the semantic content of an utterance, but to a particular aspect of the context of utterance. In Pott's proposal, the context of conversation stores information about both positive and negative attitudes of a particular individual towards some entity (another individual, etc.), and the functions of derogatory expressions are to manipulate this type of contextual information rather than to contribute to the overall propositional content of an utterance. For example, the context of an utterance can contain a triple like <Tom, [-0.5, 0], Jerry>, which represents Tom's expressive attitude towards Jerry (this triple is called "an expressive index"). Since the interval [-0.5, 0] is negative, this piece of information can be interpreted as depicting Tom's negative feeling towards Jerry. With the use of the *f*-word by Tom, Potts's compositional semantics allows this interval to be shifted further down, for example, to [-1, -0.5]. The swear word *shine* can also be analyzed as a device to manipulate the expressive index of a context.

This pure expressivist semantics of *shine* can account for several aspects of the expression discussed above. First, it captures the expressive force and ineffability of the word. A negatively shifted interval in an expressive index relates to the emotionally heightened state of the speaker, which is suggested by the use of *shine*. Such an interval also does not specify a specific proposition or state of the world; this explains why it is so difficult to paraphrase the content of *shine*. Moreover, the lowered interval in an expressive index is conducive to occurrences of other derogatory expressions and Japanese antihonorifics, as observed in the "Drop Dead, Japan!!!" blog.

There are, however, several disadvantages in this pure expressivist analysis, and I will argue that *shine* is better analyzed using a compositional semantics for imperatives. First, since a pure expressivist semantics is designed to derive the nondisplaceability of derogatory expressions, it fails to explain why the effect of *shine* disappears when embedded under negation, as seen in (6) and (7) above. An occurrence of the *f*-word manipulates the expressive index of the context regardless of the construction in which it appears (it is still vulgar to call someone *not being a fucker*). It is puzzling why the same result is not obtained in the case of *shine*.

One might attempt to rescue the expressivist analysis by claiming that *shine* is a rigidly conventionalized idiom that admits of no variation in form. This move would explain why it cannot be modified with negation and why it resists being embedded under some constructions. Treating *shine* as an ossified idiom, however, directly contradicts the observation that *shine* can take various different forms together with other morphemes and politeness words without largely changing its expressive force. As shown by the examples at the beginning of this paper (1), the verb stem *shin-* can be combined with other verb-endings, including a politeness word. Furthermore, there are non-imperative, conditional constructions that seem to have a similar expressive force as *shine*.

(14) a. Shine ba ii (noni).
Die if good (but)
b. Shinda ra ii (noni).
Died if good (but)
"It would be nice if you're dead (but that's not the case)"

Therefore, the challenge the pure expressivist faces here is to explain why *shine* loses its expressive force with negation while at the same time retaining its abusive effect in a variety of different forms. In the next section, I will show that a compositional semantics for imperatives can meet this challenge and also provide us with resources to account for the other features of *shine*.

4. A preference semantic analysis

Starr (2016) offers a comprehensive theory of imperatives that can deal with the interaction of imperatives and connectives, in particular with conjunction and disjunction. This theory is called "preference semantics," because Starr's basic proposal is that "imperatives promote alternatives" (section 3). Since this paper is not concerned with imperatives embedded under conjunction or disjunction, I will not discuss the dynamic semantic aspect of Starr's theory,

which is essential to accounting for their characteristics. I will instead focus on Starr's main proposal of imperatives as promoting alternatives, arguing that Starr's semantics is directly applicable to the swear word *shine*.

I would like to compare declaratives such as *Dancy danced* and imperatives such as *Dance!* to introduce Starr's basic proposal. Following Stalnaker, let us assume that the participants of a conversation share a "common ground" that they accept for the purpose of the conversation, and that the common ground of a conversation can be characterized as a set of possible worlds.[6] Within this Stalnakerian framework, to assert something can be seen as proposing to add a particular set of possible worlds (a proposition) to a common ground (Stalnaker, 1978). As a result of adding a proposition, the possibilities represented by the common ground are narrowed down. Suppose that the speaker knows that a particular person, Dancy, danced, whereas the hearer does not know that fact—there is an informational asymmetry between them that the speaker would like to eliminate. Now, the speaker utters the declarative sentence *Dancy danced* to make the assertion that Dancy danced. If the hearer accepts this assertion—if she takes it to be sincere and correct enough—then what the speaker and hearer accept would change accordingly. That is, the common ground of the conversation would be updated to include the content of the sentence or the proposition that Dancy danced. The initial common ground includes both possibilities: the possibility of a dancing Dancy and the possibility of a non-dancing Dancy. Because of the assertion, the updated common ground eliminates the possibility that Dancy did not dance. The updated common ground would be used to conduct further information exchange and help form action plans.

According to Starr, the content of an imperative is also understood in terms of the potential impacts on the common ground of a conversation. An imperative updates the common ground by revealing the speaker's preference. The use of an imperative updates a common ground by adding a proposition that the user prefers certain alternative possibilities over the others. For example, if *Dance!* is sincerely uttered towards Dancy, then the common ground now includes the proposition that the speaker prefers the set of possible worlds where Dancy dances to the worlds where he does not.[7]

In this picture, the function of a declarative sentence is to update a common ground. The function of an imperative is also to update a common ground. Nevertheless, the different

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[6] See (Stalnaker 2014) for the notion of common ground and also a broad discussion of context in general.

[7] Starr's discussion of preferences is not as simple as it is presented here. For Starr, a common ground stores information about what the participants of a conversation *mutually* prefer for the purpose of exchange, not just what the speaker prefers. What I suggest here is that a use of an imperative at least implies the preferences of the user in most cases.

ways in which declaratives and imperatives update a common ground are important for understanding the abusive nature of *shine*. To assert a declarative is to *propose to add* a proposition expressed by that declarative sentence. Whether the participants of the conversation accept that proposal is a different question—it may as well be rejected. In other words, a common ground does not have to be updated. By contrast, with the use of an imperative, a common ground must be updated to include the user's preference; an imperative automatically imposes a certain structure onto the common ground. To borrow Murray's (2014) words that describe the effects of evidentials, the effects of imperatives "are not negotiable, not directly challengeable" (p. 9).

Now, let us apply this semantics for imperatives to the swear word *shine*. I assume that a Japanese imperative includes an implicit or explicit subject that refers to a person, a nation, a circumstance, etc., and that the verb stem *shin-* stands for the act of dying. Thus, any occurrence of *shine* denotes the act of dying by someone or something. Since an imperative reveals the speaker's preference for some alternatives, an occurrence of *shine* also reveals the speaker's preference for someone or something dying. It is important to point out that the act of dying denoted by an occurrence of *shine* is fairly underspecified: the preferred alternative is that there is an act of dying by a particular individual, and it does not specify how and when it should take place. This underspecified act is compatible with a variety of different circumstances, helping the speaker express a variety of different feelings.

For example, when someone dies, the person may as well suffer from illness and other difficult conditions, and the suffering of an enemy can be precisely what the user of *shine* wishes for. Suppose that the speaker holds a grudge against the addressee and vents his anger on the addressee by yelling *shine*. The semantics of *shine* promotes the alternative situations in which the addressee dies. In such situations, the addressee would also be likely to suffer from dying, and the speaker might desire such outcomes.

In a different context, the speaker can merely express frustration. Reconsider the "Drop dead, Japan!!!" blog. The author might have intended to express his or her resentment against policymakers, but the subject of this use of *shine* is clearly a nation, Japan. According to the preference semantics for imperatives sketched above, the use denotes the act of Japan's dying. Any entity will be dead as a result of dying, and so the promoted alternatives are situations where Japan is dead, that is, it no longer exists. Today's Japan fails to offer protective environments for child rearing. It would not be surprising that one desires Japan (as a country that fails struggling parents) to cease to exist. Similarly, when a person finds himself or herself in a frustrating situation (e.g., spilling coffee) and swears *shine*, the person is revealing his or her desire for alternative situations where things would not turn out the way they actually did.

The preference semantic analysis of *shine* accounts for the basic characteristics of the expression identified in section 2. First, the discussion in the previous two paragraphs elucidates the expressive force of the expression. Furthermore, the non-negotiable aspect of imperatives adds immediacy to its expressive force. When *shine* is directed towards a particular person, the person has absolutely no means to avoid the effect of that use. The common ground is automatically updated to include the user's preference: the possible worlds in which the person dies are preferred over those in which he or she does not. The learning of this distasteful preference is inevitable and likely to cause distress. Compare an occurrence of *shine* with a declarative such as *I wish you to die*. The latter is of course abusive, but arguably less abrasive than the former. The current analysis suggests that this is because in the latter case, the victim of the abuse is at least given an opportunity to reject the proposal to add the proposition that the speaker has such a desire. By contrast, when an imperative is employed, a particular preference must be registered as part of the common ground; its derogatory message is not negotiable.

Second, since *shine* is an imperative that only reveals one's preference, it is not easy to paraphrase it using words for anger and hatred, as noted earlier using (3). The occurrence of *shine* is ineffable to this extent. The significance of *shine* is, however, to some extent paraphrasable in terms of one's preference. That is why the conditionals in (14)—"it would be nice if you're dead!"—seem to have a similar expressive content to an occurrence of *shine*: they describe the preferred alternatives from the speaker's perspective.

Third, this preference semantic analysis can deal with the embedding patterns of *shine*, which are puzzling for the pure expressivist analysis. As we observed in (6a-b), adding negation to an imperative does not cancel out its imperative force.

(15) a. Kaera-nai-de!
go.home-neg-*de*
"Don't go home!"

b. Kaeru-na!
go.home-prohibition
"Don't go home!"

(15a-b) do not describe the lack of an instruction to go home; it is rather an instruction to stay. Likewise, the negative form of *shine* is still an imperative, and it represents the user's preference that the worlds where the subject does not die are better than those where the subject dies. Updating a common ground accordingly must have no abusive effect at all. That is why *shine* loses its expressive force when embedded under negation. At the same time, *shine* is predicted not to lose its force when combined with different verb-ending morphemes and politeness words, as long as it retains its positive form. For example, *shinde* is an

alternative form of *shine*, and it appears to have an analogous derogatory effect to the target. Thus, we can account for the central features of *shine* based on a compositional semantics for imperatives.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have offered a semantic account of the Japanese swear word *shine*. In section 2, I have presented the basic characteristics of *shine*, discussing some of the central features of derogatory language that have been identified in previous research. The use of *shine* has an expressive force that is ineffable to some extent, just as typical derogatory expressions in English, whereas it loses its derogatory effect altogether when embedded under negation. With respect to nondisplaceability, *shine* is not exactly analogous to English slurs or expressive words such as the *f*-word. In section 3, I have examined a possible expressivist analysis of *shine* that can account for some but not all the characteristics of the word. Since an expressivist semantics along the lines of (Potts 2007) treats *shine* as a completely nondisplaceable expression, it would fail to account for the interaction of *shine* with negation. In section 4, I have introduced Starr's (2016) preference semantics for imperatives and argued that it accounts for this interaction and the other characteristics of *shine* adequately.

The Japanese swear word *shine* promotes alternatives where the target of the abuse dies. The abuser might desire the target's suffering or disappearance as a consequence of the death. These promoted scenarios are non-negotiable and imposed on the common ground. That is, the use of *shine* inevitably influences the mental states of the target as long as he or she is a competent Japanese speaker, no matter how lowly he or she regards such foul language. This is how *shine* causes distress and harm to the victim.

Let me conclude this paper by mentioning one remaining issue for the proposed analysis of *shine*. In the preceding discussion, I have simply assumed that the preference semantics of *shine* directly gives rise to the speech act of swearing or cursing. The basic intuition is that, since the speaker semantically reveals her preference that the world is a better place without the target of the swearing, the meaning of *shine* must be harassing and damaging for the target. This assumption is, however, too simplistic because *shine*, like other imperatives, can be used to perform different actions in various conversational settings. For example, the use of *shine* can be understood as a genuine order or command without a hint of derogation. Warlords in feudal Japan might have given such commands to their subordinates even as a privilege (letting them die an honorable death). In order to account for all the uses of *shine*, we must have a better understanding of the relationship between the semantics of imperatives

and the different types of utterance force expressible by imperatives including the speech act of swearing. The study of this relationship would be a larger topic that I must leave for another occasion.

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