Manifestations of split intransitivity in Old Japanese: A corpus-based study

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About the present research

The present research is a part of my ongoing D.Phil. research, ‘Split intransitivity in Old Japanese (OJ)’, which is in turn a part of a larger collaborated research project: *Verb semantics and argument realization in pre-modern Japanese: A comprehensive study of the basic syntax of pre-modern Japanese.*
Presentation outline

- An introduction to split intransitivity
- Old Japanese texts and the OCOJ Corpus
- Manifestations of split intransitivity in OJ
- Summary
- Features
- Future research
An introduction to split intransitivity

- **Working definition** (a very broad one):

  *Split intransitivity* refers to the heterogeneity of intransitive verbs, differentiated by various clear-cut or gradient syntactic characteristics.
An introduction to split intransitivity

- The *Unaccusative Hypothesis* (Perlmutter 1978, Burzio 1986) splits intransitive verbs into two distinct classes: unaccusative verbs and unergative verbs.
An introduction to split intransitivity

- **Unaccusative:**
  D-structure: e \[ vp \text{ arrived John} \]
  S-structure: John \[ vp \text{ arrived } t_i \]

- **Unergative:**
  D-structure: John \[ vp \text{ work} \]
  S-structure: John \[ vp \text{ work} \]

- **Argument structure:**
  a. transitive verbs: \( x < y \)
  b. unergative intransitive verbs: \( x <> \)
  c. unaccusative intransitive verbs: \( < y > \)
An introduction to split intransitivity

Semantic features

- unaccusative verbs
  - telic
  - patient-like
  - non-volitional
  - affected
- unergative verbs
  - atelic
  - agent-like
  - volitional
  - non-affected
Manifestation samples (1)

- Italian
- perfective operators, experiencer predicates, *si*-constructions and unexpressed arguments, agreement, *Ne*-cliticization, past participles, word order, etc.

(Bentley 2006)
Manifestation samples (2)

- English
- resultative construction, causative alternation, X’s–way construction, prepositional passives construction, there–construction, etc.

(Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995)
OJ language and the Corpus

- Old Japanese (mainly 700 – 800 AD)
- The Oxford Corpus of Old Japanese (OCOJ)
  - both original script and romanized script
  - xml tags following TEI conventions
    - information including original orthography, part-of-speech, morphology (for inflecting words), syntactic constituency, and semantic roles
- Lexicon: lexemes and morphemes are given unique ID numbers (@ana)
Possible manifestations of split intransitivity in OJ

- perfective auxiliaries –(i)n– and –(i)te–
- NV–compounds
- VV–compounds
- VP–preposing
- wo (...) se– construction
- resultative construction
- verbal prefix i– and sa– (ta–)
Perfective auxiliary selection
Distribution of the perfective auxiliaries –(i)n– and –(i)te–

Transitives     Intransitives
  unergatives    unaccusatives
  –(i)te–        –(i)te–        –(i)n–

(cf. Washio 2004, Frellesvig 2010)
Verbs that only select –(i)te–

- **tiras-**
  - ‘scatter (tr.)’

- **omop-**
  - ‘think’

- **ukep-**
  - ‘pray for’

- **nagek-**
  - ‘sigh; weep’

- **wem-**
  - ‘laugh’

- **aswob-**
  - ‘play’

- …
## Verbs that only select –(i)n–

- **tir–**  
  ‘scatter (intr.)’
- **ide–**  
  ‘go out’
- **aye–**  
  ‘fall’
- **oi–**  
  ‘age’
- **ke–**  
  ‘vanish’
- **kwopwi–**  
  ‘love; long for’
- **tagap–**  
  ‘differ’
- **tat–**  
  ‘stand; depart’
- **use–**  
  ‘get lost’
- ...
Verbs that select both –(i)te– and –(i)n– (T; N)
--an exhaustive list
[only phonographically written perfective auxiliaries are counted here]

- nar– ‘become; grow’ (1; 48)
- ko– ‘come’ (4; 40)
- ok– ‘(dew) settles’ (2; 9)
- pur– ‘rain; fall down’ (1; 2)
- se– ‘do’ (4; 5)
- nak– ‘cry’ (7; 7)
- ne– ‘sleep’ (8; 4)
- ar– ‘exist’ (3; 1)
- sinwop– ‘yearn’ (6; 1)
- tor– ‘take; hold in hand’ (2; 1)
- ip– ‘say’ (8; 1)
The Auxiliary Selection Hierarchy

- CHANGE OF LOCATION selects BE (least variation)
- CHANGE OF STATE
- CONTINUATION OF STATE
- EXISTENCE OF STATE
- UNCONTROLLED PROCESS
- MOTIONAL PROCESS
- NON–MOTIONAL PROCESS selects HAVE (least variation)

(Sorace 2000: 863)
NV–compounds
NV–compounds

- In OJ, there are many NV–compounds, among which *subject+unaccusatives* are frequently observed.

  - *yuki+ge-* ‘snow+vanish’  
    (MYS.3.382)
  
  - *pana+dir-* ‘flower+scatter (intr.)’  
    (MYS.18.4092)
NV–compounds

- On the other hand, no typical unergative verb is found to be incorporated with its subject noun.
NV–compounds

Furthermore, most NV–compounds that involve transitivites are \textit{object}+\textit{transitives}, e.g. \textit{mono}+\textit{gatari} ‘things+tell’ (MYS.12.2845) \textit{kuni}+\textit{mi} ‘country+view’ (MYS.10.1971)

whereas no ‘subject+transitives’ is attested.
NV–compounds

Such evidence shows that only internal arguments can be incorporated with the verbs (i.e. the subject of an unaccusative verb, or the object of a transitive verb, in contrast to the subject of an unergative verb or transitive verb).

The possibility of NV–compounding is a manifestation of split intransitivity in OJ.
VV–compounds
Transitivity Harmony Principle

- In Modern Japanese, lexical compounds are built by combining two verbs either both with external arguments or both without. (Kageyama 1999)
  
  - transitive + transitive
  - unergative + unergative
  - unaccusative + unaccusative
  - transitive + unergative
  - unergative + transitive
  - *transitive + unaccusative
  - *unaccusative + transitive
  - *unergative + unaccusative
  - *unaccusative + unergative
Cline of Transitivity Harmony

- transitive + transitive
- unergative + unergative
- unaccusative + unaccusative
- ?transitive + unergative
- ?unergative + transitive
- ?transitive + unaccusative
- ?unaccusative + transitive
- *unergative + unaccusative
- *unaccusative + unergative

(Frellesvig et al. 2010:42)
Frequently observed:

- **transitive + transitive**
  
  *piraki* ‘open (trans.)’ + *ake* ‘open (trans.)’
  
  (MYS.4.591)

- **unergative + unergative**
  
  *aswobi* ‘play’ + *arukedo* ‘walk’
  
  (MYS.8.1629)

- **unaccusative + unaccusative**
  
  *ke* ‘vanish’ + *use* ‘get lost’
  
  (MYS.9.1740)
Rarely observed:

(note that most of the following verbs are attested to select both perfective auxiliaries)

- **transitive+unaccusative**
  
  $mi$ ‘see’ + $matwopu$ ‘get lost’ (MYS.2.199)

- **transitive+unergative**
  
  $kumi$ ‘group (tr.)’ + $ne$ ‘sleep’ (KK.91)

- **unaccusative+transitive**
  
  $puki$ ‘blow’ + $midaru$ ‘make confused’ (MYS.10.1856)

- **unergative+transitive (very rare)**
  
  ? $yuki$ ‘go’ + $pure$ ‘touch (trans.)’ (MYS.13.3324a)
Interesting data

- Rarely observed:
- *unaccusative* + *unergative*
  
  *tati* ‘stand; depart’ + *nageku* ‘cry’

  [*tat*– here is probably a prefix]

  (MYS.15.3580)

  *tiri* ‘scatter (intr.)’ + *tobu* ‘fly’

  (MYS.4.543)
VV–compounds

- The data in OJ not only supports the transitivity harmony principle and its cline to some extent, but also reveals interesting possible combinations for *unaccusative* + *unergative* combination of verbs.

- Nonetheless, in terms of frequency, VV–compounding is a manifestation of split intransitivity in OJ, in that *like typically combines with like.*
VP-preposining
VP-preposing

- In OCOJ corpus, unergative verbs are observed to be involved in VP-preposing.

念衣吾為流

omopi so wa ga suru
think.INF FOC I GEN do.ADN
(MYS.12.3020)

[omop – here is in a different sense as that in *kimi wo a ga mopu* (MYS.20.4301)]
Because people are not speaking well of you, I worry.

(MYS.12.3020)
VP–preposing

Whereas unaccusatives are not observed to be involved in VP–preposing.
Summary of the manifestations of split intransitivity in OJ

- perfective auxiliaries –(i)n– and –(i)te–
- NV-compounds
- VV-compounds
- VP-preposing
- wo (...) se– construction
- resultative construction
- verbal prefix i– and sa– (ta–)
Features

- covert split intransitivity (cf. Creissels 2008)
- deep unaccusativity (cf. Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995)
Future research

In my ongoing DPhil research, I am also going to

- compare the sets of verbs that participate in each type of manifestation, and
- look at the interrelationships between various semantic factors (agentivity, volitionality, affectedness, telicity, etc.),
Future research

in order to

- investigate the lexical–semantic aspects of split intransitivity in relation to its morpho–syntactic expression, and

- explore to what extent intransitive verbs can be classified as unaccusative and unergative in Old Japanese.
References

References


Thank you very much for your attention.

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