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   [$_{vp}$ arrived John]

S–structure: John$_i$ [$_{vp}$ arrived   t$_i$]

‣ **Unergative:**

D–structure: John [$_{vp}$ work]

S–structure: John [$_{vp}$ 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 *object+transitives*, e.g.
  mono+gatari 'things+tell' (MYS.12.2845)
  kuni+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–preposing

VP-preposing

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

念衣吾為流

omopi *so* wa ga su*ru*

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)]

VP–preposing

斑鳩之 　　　 因可乃池之
ikaruga no *yoruka no* ike no
Ikaruga GEN Yoruka GEN pool COP.inf
宜毛 　　　　　 君乎不言者
yorosiku *mo* kimi *wo* ipa-neba
ADJ-ACOP.inf TOP lord ACC say-NEG.PROV
念衣吾為流
omopi *so* wa ga su*ru*
think.INF FOC I GEN do.ADN
'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.

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Thank you very much for your attention.

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