

The analysis of Japanese benefactive constructions in RRG

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The paper analyzes the Japanese benefactive construction using RRG framework. First, the paper claims that the Japanese benefactive constructions involve three types of linkage: (1) cosubordination, (2) nuclear subordination, and (3) ad-nuclear subordination. An example of each type is given below. In nuclear subordination, the giving and receiving verbs are predicating nuclei, contributing to the clausal meaning with a recipient argument, which is absent in the semantic representation of the matrix verb. In the ad-nuclear subordination, a non-predicating nucleus is used as a modifier simply to indicate directional orientation of participants and the physical meaning of giving and receiving (transferring objects) are bleached.

- (1) Josh cooked (me or my in-group person) a dish. (recipient)

Joshu ga (watashi ni) ryoori o tsukut-te kure-ta.
Josh NOM to me dish ACC cook-TE give-PAST
[[**do'** (Josh)] CAUSE [BECOME **cooked'** (dish)]] PURP[BECOME **have'** (I, dish)]

- (2) Josh showed (me or my in-group person) his homework. (metaphorical transfer)

Joshu ga (watashi ni) shukudai o mise-te kure-ta.
Josh NOM to me homework ACC show-TE give-PAST
[**do'** (Josh, I) CAUSE [see' (I, homework)]]

- (3) Josh went for shopping (for me or my in-group person). (deputive)

*Joshu ga (*watashi ni) kaimono ni it-te kure-ta.*
Josh NOM to me shopping for go-TE give-PAST
[**do'** (Josh, [**go'** (Josh)]) & INGR **be-at'** (shopping, Josh) PURP[NOT [**do'** (I, [**go'** (I)])] & INGR **be-at'** (shopping, I)]]

Secondly, I will discuss the understood beneficiary in benefactive construction with the verb *kureru* ‘give to me’. Unlike the other giving and receiving verbs-- *ageru* ‘give’ and *morau* ‘receive’-- the beneficiary of benefactive *kureru* ‘give (to me or my in-group person)’ is by default understood as the speaker or someone the speaker feels closely associated with (Kuno, 1987; Wetzel, 1985) and the beneficial nominal is often not overtly expressed as in (1) and (2). Because this construction always assumes the speaker or an in-group member as the recipient, it has a specified argument in the logical structure-- ‘I’-- and this argument is directly linked from discourse representation when not overtly expressed in the sentence.

Lastly, in the analysis of 268 occurrences of giving and receiving verbs occurring in natural conversations, I found that the speakers produced the recipient type (1) most frequently. I claim these variations as an evidence that Japanese benefactive constructions are typically used to create beneficiary that are absent in the verb’s meaning.

References

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