

## 5.

### Mark Volpe - *SUNY at Stony Brook* *The causative alternation and Japanese unaccusatives*

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Among the four classes of UNACCUSATIVE VERBS recognized by Levin and Rappaport-Hovav (1995), VERBS OF EXISTENCE, VERBS OF APPEARANCE, VERBS OF INHERENTLY DIRECTED MOTION, and VERBS OF CHANGE-OF-STATE, the verbs of change-of-state “figure most prominently in the CAUSATIVE ALTERNATION”, an alternation between pairs of underived verbs (Levin and Rappaport-Hovav 1994). In their 1995 monograph on the topic of unaccusativity, they argue for:

a fundamental division within the class of unaccusative verbs that is motivated with respect to the causative alternation...(V)erbs of existence and verbs of appearance [*and presumably verbs of inherently directed motion* MV], although bona fide unaccusatives, do not participate in the causative alternation. This property is not characteristic of only English, but is typical of a variety of languages (1995: 119).

We claim that in Japanese all four unaccusative classes participate in the causative alternation. If correct, a major claim of Levin and Rappaport-Hovav 1995, that for change-of-state verbs, the intransitive usage is derived from the more basic transitive one through “de-transitivizing”, becomes difficult to maintain.

#### A. Change-of-state

- (1) a. The chair broke  
b. Isu-ga kow-are-ta.  
Chair-NOM break-INTRANS-PAST
- (2) a. The gorilla broke the chair.  
b. Gorira-ga isu-o kow-ashi-ta.  
Gorilla-NOM chair-ACC break-TRANS-PAST

#### B. Appearance

- (3) a. A picture appeared on the screen. (Levin and Rappaport-Hovav, 1994: 39)  
b. Eizō-ga gamen-ni araw-are-ta.  
Picture-NOM screen-LOC appear-INTRANS-PAST
  - (4) a. \*The programmer appeared a picture on the screen.  
b. Purogurama-ga gamen-ni eizō-o araw-ashi-ta.  
Programmer-NOM screen-LOC picture-ACC appear-TRANS-PAST
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### C. Existence

- (5) a. One hundred million yen remained in the bank account.  
b. Ichioku-en ginkō kōza-ni nok-ot-ta.  
100 million yen-NOM bank account-LOC remain-INTRANS-PAST
- (6) a. \*My father remained one-hundred million-yen in the bank account.  
b. Otōsan-ga ginkō kōza-ni ichioku-en-o nok-oshi-ta.  
Father-NOM bank account-LOC 100 million yen-ACC remain-TRANS-PAST

### D. Inherently Directed Motion

- (7) a. The ship arrived at the Port of Hakata.  
b. Fune-ga Hakata fūtō-ni tsui-ta.  
Ship-NOM Hakata Port-GOAL arrive-INTRANS-PAST
- (8) a. \*The captain arrived the ship at the Port of Hakata.  
b. Senchō-ga Hakata fūtō-ni fune-o tsuk-e-ta.  
captain-NOM Hakata Port-GOAL ship-ACC arrive-TRANS-PAST

Examples (1)-(8) show that while only the change-of-state verbs participate in the English causative alternations, all four classes participate in Japanese. These are genuine examples of the causative alternation in Japanese since, as is the case for unaccusative verbs cross-linguistically, we find that the Subjects of the intransitives (marked by the postposition *-ga* in the odd numbered b) examples) are the Direct Objects (marked by *-o* in the even numbered b) examples) of the transitives. Additionally, the Japanese transitive verbs are all lexical causatives as further evidenced by their ability to undergo morphological causativization, e.g. *kowasu* ('to break' transitive) → *kowasaseru* ('to make break'), *arawasu* ('to show') → *arawasaseru* ('to make show'), *nokosu* ('to leave') → *nokosaseru* ('to make leave') *tsukeru* ('to attach') → *tsukesaseru* ('to make attach').

### References

- Levin, B. and M. Rappaport-Hovav (1995) *Unaccusativity: At the Syntax-Lexical Semantics Interface*, MIT Press, Cambridge MA.
- Levin, B. and M. Rappaport-Hovav (1994) "A preliminary analysis of causative verbs in English", in L. Gleitman and B. Landau eds, *The Acquisition of the Lexicon*, MIT Press, Cambridge MA.