

## On a Non-volitional Transitive Construction

Yahiro Hirakawa, Tokyo Institute of Technology

### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to give a principled account for the problems of a non-volitional transitive construction in Japanese. Although the previous studies such as Amano(1987) and Kageyama(1996) provide the descriptive analyses, they don't sufficiently explain this construction theoretically.

### 2. The data and the previous studies

Both (1) and (2) are the examples of the non-canonical transitive sentences provided by Amano(1987, translated by the author).

(1) shinseki no hito ga taifuu de ie no yane o tobashi ta.  
relative gen man nom typhoon by house gen roof acc blow pst.

"My relative had his roof of his house blown off by the typhoon."

(2) karera wa kuushuu de kazaidoogu o minna yai ta.  
they top raid by household effects acc all burn pst.

"They had his all household effects burned out by the raid."

The volitionality of the subjects in (1) and (2) is not observed though the S-syntactic structures show the usual transitive constructions; the predicates take two arguments as well as the objects are marked by accusative case. The subjects of these sentences do not receive agent interpretations but instead the experiencer ones. In addition, as Amano(1987) pointed out, they should include a whole-part relationship between *ga*-DP and *o*-DP. The subject is not understood as a non-volitional agent if the whole-part relationship is not sustained as shown in (3).

(3)\* kare wa taifuu de yuujin no ie o nagashi ta  
he top typhoon by friend gen house acc wash pst

“\*He had his friend's house washed away by the typhoon.”

Thirdly, the predicate of the non-canonical transitive is limited to a change of state verb. The activity verb such as *tataku* "hit" can not construe the non-canonical transitive as shown in (4).

(4) \*kare wa kaze de mado o tatai ta  
he top wind by window acc hit pst

“\*He had his window hit by the wind.”

Kageyama(1996) defines the subject of the non-canonical transitive as “an experiencer placed on the unaccusative structure” which is an example of expansion of *schema*. Though the descriptive analysis of Amano(1987) and Kageyama(1996)'s event structure analysis seem to be basically correct, those are not good enough to explain the properties which the

target construction exhibits as pointed out above.

### 3. Our proposal

Our main claims are: (I) The aspectual interpretation of the predicate is significantly related to a thematic role of *ga*-marked DP (i.e. volitional or non-volitional subject). (II) The possessor restriction is required in assigning a thematic role to the *ga*-marked DP. Following the analysis of *have*-causative construction by Ritter & Rosen(1993, 1997), we will claim the non-volitional subject is obtained from thematic transfer through the whole-part relationship. Based on the insights of Hale and Kayser (1993) and Travis (1992), we propose that the inner Aspect of which [+/-telic] determines assignment of the external argument. If aspect is specified as [+telic], then the external theta role is not assigned to the nominative marked DP. However the *ga*-marked DP must receive a theta role from somewhere else. We propose that the whole-part relation makes it possible that the *ga*-marked DP gets its role. The co-indexed *pro* located in the object position transfers its role to the *ga*-marked DP.

### 4. Summary

We will explain how the non-volitional transitive structure is construed. First, we will see that the aspectual information of its predicate contributes to interpretation of the subject. Second, the possessor relation is thematically necessary for the *ga*-marked DP to be interpreted properly. Lastly, we will present the phrase structure of the VP which accounts for derivation of the non-volitional transitive by the Lexical-syntactic structure proposed by Hale and Kayser (1993) and Travis (1992). We also suggest that this analysis may be applied to other constructions which involve whole-part relationships in other languages.

### References

- Amano(1987) joutai henka shutai no tadooshi bun (The transitive sentence with a change of state subject), *Kokugogaku* 151.
- Hale and Kayser(1993) On Argument Structure and the Lexical Expression of Syntactic Relations. *The View from Building 20*, ed. K.Hale and S.Jay Kayser, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
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- Ritter & Rosen (1993) Deriving Causation , *NLLT*11.
- (1997) The function of have, *Lingua* 101.
- Travis(1992) Inner Aspect and the Structure of VP, *Cahiers Linguistique de l'UQAM*.1.