

The lexical semantics of control: A view from Japanese

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It has been controversial in the literature of control phenomena whether the obligatory control status of the unexpressed subject in the so-called 'finite control' constructions in examples such as (1) is due to syntactic or semantic factors (Fujii 2006, Gamerschlag 2007, Wang 2011, Akuzawa 2018, Akuzawa and Wang 2018):

(1) Ken-ga_i [_{i,*j} Huzisan-ni nobo-ru koto]-o kessin-si-ta.
K-NOM Mt.Fuji-DAT climb-NPST NC-ACC decide-PAST
'Ken decided to climb Mt. Fuji.'

Akuzawa (2018) and Akuzawa and Wang (2018) lean toward a semantic account of the pattern in (1), and identify four classes of verbs taking the "koto" complement clause in Japanese that induce obligatory control for the embedded subject (where the 'directive' class induces control by matrix object rather than by subject):

- phasal: hazimeru 'begin', oeru 'end'
- implicative: seikoo-suru 'succeed', sippai-suru 'fail'
- directive: meirei-suru 'order', motomeru 'ask', yurusu 'permit'
- reflexive: kessin-suru 'decide', kuwadateru 'attempt', kookai-suru 'regret'

It is, however, still unclear whether the four classes of verbs identified by Akuzawa and Wang constitute a natural class, and if they do, what exactly it is that is common to all these verbs that induces obligatory control of the unexpressed subject. Moreover, Akuzawa and Wang leave open the question of whether these particular four classes exhaust the list of semantically control predicates in Japanese.

This talk takes a first step in addressing these questions. A corpus search using the NINJAL Parsed Corpus of Modern Japanese confirms that the classes identified by Akuzawa and Wang do indeed constitute the major types of control-inducing predicates. At the same time, the corpus search reveals two other classes not explicitly identified as such by Akuzawa and Wang, but which seem to be important in delineating the exact range of control-inducing predicates in Japanese.

Based on the results of previous work and the corpus search, as well as studies on the semantics of control phenomena in other languages (mostly English), we propose a refined characterization of semantic control in "koto" clauses in Japanese. Our key claim is that the common property of semantically control predicates can be captured by teasing apart their modal and causal meaning components and identifying their relationship precisely. The proposed analysis aims at combining insights from both lexical semantics (Karttunen 1971, Farkas 1988, Koenig & Davis 2001, Stiebels 2007) and formal semantics

(Chierchia 1987, Stephenson 2010, Uegaki 2011, Grano 2018) to arrive at a better understanding of the lexical generalizations underlying control phenomena.