

## The perspective-sensitive argument structure of Japanese *giving* verbs

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Perspective-sensitive expressions are crucial to understanding the link between syntax and pragmatics (Charnavel 2018, Pancheva and Zubizarreta 2018, etc.). We focus on a case study of giving verbs in Japanese, *ageru* and *kureru*, which we argue trigger an inference about which of the giver or recipient is closer to the perspectival center. This analysis correctly predicts constraints on the placement of first person pronouns with *ageru/kureru*: neither verb can place the speaker further from the perspectival center than any other individual. We argue our account has empirical advantages over related accounts of perspective-sensitive language which do not have the same sensitivity to argument structure (e.g., Tenny 2006) or do not incorporate a notion of relative perspectival “closeness” (e.g., Coppock and Wechsler 2018).

**Data:** *ageru* blocks first person pronouns from the recipient role, while *kureru* blocks them from the giver role (see Kuno and Kaburaki 1977).

- (1) a. *Watashi-ga Taro-ni present-o {age-ta|\*kure-ta}*.  
I-NOM Taro-DAT present-ACC *ageru*-PAST|*kureru*-PAST  
'I gave a present to Taro.'
- b. *Taro-ga watashi-ni present-o {\*age-ta|kure-ta}*.  
Taro-NOM I-DAT present-ACC *ageru*-PAST|*kureru*-PAST  
'Taro gave a present to me.'

A similar effect arises in embedded contexts with respect to the attitude holder.

- (2) a. *John<sub>i</sub>-wa [kare<sub>i</sub>-ga Hanako-ni hon-o {age-ta|\*kure-ta}]-to it-ta*.  
John-NOM pro-NOM Hanako-DAT book-ACC *ageru*-PAST|*kureru*-PAST-C told  
'John said that he gave Hanako a book.'
- b. *John<sub>i</sub>-wa [Hanako-ga kare<sub>i</sub>-ni hon-o {\*age-ta|kure-ta}]-to it-ta*.  
John-NOM Hanako-NOM pro-DAT book-ACC *ageru*-PAST|*kureru*-PAST-C told  
'John said that Hanako gave him a book.'

*ageru* signals that the giver NP is a *perspectival argument* (defined below) while for *kureru* it is the recipient. We observe this perspective-sensitivity with various diagnostics like predicates of personal taste (cf. Charnavel 2018). (3-a) is in a context in which John views the present as beautiful, Mary views it as horrible, and the speaker has no opinion. In (3-b), John and Mary reverse their opinions. The #-examples are out as the judge of *kireina* (marked ☞) is misaligned with the verb's *perspectival argument*.

- (3) a. ☞ *John-ga Mary-ni kireina present-o {age-ta|#kure-ta}*.  
John-NOM Mary-DAT beautiful present-ACC *ageru*-PAST|*kureru*-PAST  
'John gave a beautiful present to Mary.'
- b. *John-ga ☞Mary-ni kireina present-o {#age-ta|kure-ta}*.  
John-NOM Mary-DAT beautiful present-ACC *ageru*-PAST|*kureru*-PAST  
'John gave a beautiful present to Mary.'

**Syntactic accounts:** Zu 2018 and Charnavel 2018 analyze related phenomena in Newari and French respectively. As in Japanese, some Newari/French expressions trigger inferences about the identity of the perspective holder. Zu/Charnavel argue a covert operator in the left-periphery binds perspectival expressions via c-command plus co-indexation (cf. Tenny 2006). We argue such syntactic accounts require additional machinery to extend to the Japanese data. First they must explain the link between the operator and the lexical items *ageru/kureru*. Further, these c-command based accounts must explain the argument-structural sensitivity of *ageru/kureru*, given that these verbs don't alter the relative c-command of their arguments.

**Perspectival argument:** We argue that *ageru* and *kureru* encode the directed motion of a theme from the giver to the recipient. *Ageru* triggers an inference that the motion is oriented away from the perspectival center, while for *kureru*, it is towards the perspectival center. We encode this inference as a presupposition, adapting an analysis of perspective-sensitivity in Coppock and Wechsler 2018 (CW18). *ageru/kureru* are partial functions defined just in case the giver and recipient are ranked according to what we call “closeness to the perspectival center” (symbolized as  $>_{pers}$ ). This notion can be spelled out in terms epistemic authority:  $a >_{pers} b$  implies that the perspective holder is more entitled to assume the perspective of  $a$  than  $b$ .

- (4) a.  $ageru \rightsquigarrow \lambda x \lambda y \lambda z : z >_{pers} y \cdot \mathbf{give}(x_{th})(y_{rec})(z_{giver})$   
 b.  $kureru \rightsquigarrow \lambda x \lambda y \lambda z : y >_{pers} z \cdot \mathbf{give}(x_{th})(y_{rec})(z_{giver})$

In (4), no argument is presupposed to be the perspectival center, just that they are ranked in terms of relative perspectival closeness. CW18 argues that Newari subjects are presupposed to be the perspectival center. We argue this categorical approach in CW18 cannot explain the contrast in (5), adapted from Kuno and Kaburaki 1977. In both (a/b), the argument picked out by *ageru/kureru* (marked with  $\text{☞}$ ) differs across clauses. Under the CW18 approach, the two clauses choose different perspectival centers. Thus (a) and (b) should have the same judgement (both acceptable if perspectival centers can differ across clauses, both \* if not).

- (5) a. \*Taroo<sub>i</sub> wa [Hanako ga  $\text{☞}\emptyset_i$  okane o kureta node]  $\text{☞}$ Hanako ni hon o kureta.  
 Taro.TOP Hanako.NOM pro money.ACC gave since Hanako.DAT book.ACC gave  
 ‘Taro gave a book to **Hanako** since Hanako gave **him**[Taro] money.’  
 b. Taroo<sub>i</sub> wa [Hanako ga  $\text{☞}\emptyset_i$  okane o kureta node]  $\text{☞}$ Yoko ni hon o kureta.  
 Taro.TOP Hanako.NOM pro money.ACC gave since Yoko.DAT book.ACC gave  
 ‘Taro gave a book to **Yoko** since Hanako gave **him**[Taro] money.’

*ageru/kureru* do not demand the giver/recipient be a unique perspective holder. Instead, the relativized approach in (4) predicts the judgements in (5). In (a), the presuppositions are jointly inconsistent, assuming  $>_{pers}$  is a transitive and antisymmetric. In (b), the presuppositions are consistent, implying that Yoko is *closest* to the perspectival center (maybe a member of  $S_p$ ’s in-group).

	Example	Matrix presupposition	Embedded presupposition	Result
(6)	(5a)	<b>hanako</b> $>_{pers}$ <b>taro</b>	<b>taro</b> $>_{pers}$ <b>hanako</b>	<i>Inconsistent</i>
	(5b)	<b>yoko</b> $>_{pers}$ <b>taro</b>	<b>taro</b> $>_{pers}$ <b>hanako</b>	<i>Consistent</i>

The pragmatic theory adapts CW18 but incorporates a notion of *perspectival closeness*. The perspectival center is a contextual parameter  $\odot$ .  $\mathfrak{R}$  is a transitive, asymmetrical ordering of individuals based on their distance from the perspectival center.  $\mathfrak{R}$  determines that no individual outranks  $\odot$ .

- (7)  $[[\mathbf{a} >_{pers} \mathbf{b}]]^{\odot, \mathfrak{R}, \dots} = \mathbf{T}$  iff  $[[\mathbf{a}]]^{\odot, \mathfrak{R}, \dots} >_{\mathfrak{R}} [[\mathbf{b}]]^{\odot, \mathfrak{R}, \dots}$

Unacceptable examples are ruled out when *ageru/kureru* demand that  $\odot$  is improperly ranked below another individual. In ordinary positive declaratives like (1),  $\odot$  is generally equated with the speaker, though may map to other individuals, such as with uses of personal taste predicates as in (3). Under attitudes,  $\odot$  can be shifted to the attitude holder, following McCready’s 2007 treatment of the anaphor *zibun*. Unlike Newari conjunct subjects, there is no requirement in (7) that the individual selected by *ageru/kureru* denote  $\odot$ , just that the denotation not outrank  $\odot$ .

**Conclusion:** Perspective-oriented expressions are common cross-linguistically, but there is more work to be done in providing a broad ranging comparison of their contrasting properties. This paper argues that c-command-based binding treatments such as Tenny 2006 lack the required lexical/argument structural sensitivity needed for Japanese giving verbs, which also demonstrate the need for a notion of an ordering over individuals via their relative closeness to the perspectival center, suggesting that natural language provides multiple paths to perspective-sensitivity.