

## “Some Do Not...” and Why: Unaccusatives in the Japanese Adversative Passive\*

### Abstract

This piece addresses the morphological restriction that alone determines the unaccusative verbs that cannot participate in the JAPANESE ADVERSATIVE PASSIVE (AP). Much of the discussion draws on observations from Akira Watanabe’s 1993 dissertation, but I intend to reach conclusions that build on, but ultimately differ from his, from the viewpoint of morphology. Explanation for the restriction on certain unaccusatives in AP, to my knowledge, cannot be found in the literature.

By adducing syntactic evidence of Perlmutter (1978) and Watanabe (1993), as well as semantic criteria of Dowty (1979) and observations by Chung (1993), the AP is seen to be a *Raising-to-Object* REDUCED CAUSATIVE (RC), that is; a valence-changing operation which adds an external argument to a matrix clause, a necessarily bi-clausal structure, which like the Japanese MAKE-TYPE causative, displays ambiguity of *jibun* binding between matrix and embedded PROTO-AGENTS (see Harley, 1995, for *make*-type causatives as Raising-to-Object causatives).

Shibatani tells us “(t)he connection between transitivization / causativization and passivization / intransitivization...are widely observed in...languages” (1990: 236). This is indeed the case in Japanese. One generalization which seems to be well motivated is that based on the morphology, some unaccusatives were historically prior, from which lexical causatives were derived and conversely, some lexical causatives were prior, forming unaccusative partners through morphological affixation (Martin, 1975 and Shibatani, 1990). This view is based on the transparent relation between the productive causative affix *-(s)ase-* and the *-as-/-se-* found among many lexical causatives, and similarly the relation of the passive morpheme *-(r)are-* to the *-ar-/-re-* found among certain unaccusatives. This morphological generalization crucially determines the unaccusatives that do not participate in AP, that is; those historically derived by passivization from pre-existing lexical causatives cannot participate.

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\* The quotation is the title of the first novel in Ford Maddox Ford’s masterful tetralogy *Parade’s End*. This alone sustained my mental life during Summer 2002.

To explain this restriction, a more specific formulation of an observation by Baker (1989) that passives do not embed under RC is proposed:

*Overt passive morphology, whether an exponent of a passive or an unaccusative feature, does not embed under RC.*

Cross-linguistic morphological evidence as regards embedded verbs in RC from Turkish, English, and Korean upholds the validity of the proposed restriction on certain unaccusatives in Japanese AP/RC.

## References

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