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# SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS OF THE EXISTENTIALS AR-U AND I-RU IN JAPANESE

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Japanese

Massey University, Palmerston North New Zealand

Masami Murata 2003





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## SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS OF THE EXISTENTIALS AR-U AND I-RU IN JAPANESE

#### Masami MURATA

#### **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is a descriptive study of the Existentials *ar-u* and *i-ru* in contemporary standard Japanese. The study encompasses not only the lexical-verb usages of *ar-u* and *i-ru*, which are referred to as Lexical Existentials, or LEs, in this thesis, but also the auxiliary-verb usages, which are referred to as Grammatical Existentials, or GEs.

The reasons for undertaking the present study are: (i) the true characteristics of the Japanese Existentials have not been understood accurately in linguistic-typological studies of Existential constructions due to a paucity of purely descriptive studies on the subject published in English; (ii) although a large body of Japanese literature on the nature of both LEs and GEs now exists, it is still fragmentary and a comprehensive account has yet to be produced; (iii) most studies adhere to previously accepted concepts, such as the strict dichotomy between monovalent intransitives and bivalent (or multivalent) transitives, without questioning the validity of such concepts, and, in consequence, the explanations fail to elucidate the fundamental nature of *ar-u* and *i-ru*.

I first claim that LEs are bivalent verbs, contrary to the conventional view that they are monovalent verbs. I then demonstrate that recognition of the bivalent nature of the Japanese LE leads to a unified analysis for various LE constructions, including those which denote the existence of a possessive relation and those which anticipate the existence of a future event.

I divide GEs into two categories: verbaliser-GEs that turn nominals into verbal predicates, and stativiser-GEs that turn active verbal predicates into stative verbal predicates. I argue that the former preserve the bivalent properties inherited from the LE to a significant extent, whereas the latter do not. I also show that stativiser-GEs serve not only as aspect markers but also as quasi-evidential markers.

The significance of this research project is: (1) the provision of a new framework for analysing the LEs *ar-u* and *i-ru* in contemporary standard Japanese, based on the assumption that they are bivalent verbs; (2) the application of the same framework to an investigation of the GEs in order to shed light on the continuity between the LEs and the GEs.

for my brother Yoichi, whose physical existence is no longer a reality, but whose spirit still exists within our hearts

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Although the present thesis has benefited a great deal from comments and suggestions from various people, including those whom I mentioned above, responsibility for the text (with any remaining errors) is entirely mine.

I would like to acknowledge the mental and physical support provided by my parents, parents-in-law, and other family members. Without their understanding and encouragement, I could not have continued my study in this beautiful country, Aotearoa.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

ACC	accusative	N	noun
ADJ	adjective	NEG	negative
ADV	adverbial	NOM	nominative
AUX	auxiliary	NOMI	nominaliser
CAUS	causative	NP	nominal phrase
CLS	classifier	NPST	non-past
COND	conditional	PASS	passive
CONJ	conjunctive	PL	plural
COP	copula	PNM	prenominal
DAT	dative	POL	polite
EMPH	emphatic	POTEN	potential
FP	final particle	PST	past
GE	grammatical existential	Q	question/interrogative
GEN	genitive	QT	quantifier
GER	gerundive	QTV	quotative
HONO	honorific	S	subject
IMP	imperative	SFE	sentence-final expression
INF	inferential	s.t.	something
INTJ	interjection	TOP	topic
LE	lexical existential	V	verb
lit.	literally	VP	verbal phrase
LOC	locative		

Notes on Japanese examples and texts

A. Romanisation

The Japanese examples and grammatical terms, including the proper nouns in

examples, are Romanised based on the Kunrei system, and written in italics.

However, unlike the Kunrei system, the long vowels are indicated by double vowels.

examples:

Tookyoo 'Tokyo', zyodoosi 'auxiliary'

syooten 'shop', syoten 'bookshop/publisher'

Bibliographic information, such as names of Japanese scholars, novelists, and

publishers, and titles of books and papers in Japanese, is Romanised based on the

Hepburn system, and is not italicised apart from the titles of books and journals.

examples:

Tokyo 'Tokyo', shoten 'publisher', Matsushita 'Matsushita',

Jodoshi no kenkyu 'A Study of Auxiliaries'

When citing works by other scholars in which different Romanisation systems are

adopted, such systems are converted into the system outlined above.

B. Hyphenation

The basic patterns of hyphenation used in the Japanese examples are given below,

with some explanatory notes.

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#### [Verb]

	Inflection types			
	Regular I	Regular II	Irregular (2	verbs only)
V-nonpast	mi-ru 'look'	kak-u 'write'	ku-ru 'come'	su-ru 'do'
V-past	mi-ta	kai-ta	ki-ta	si-ta
V-gerundive / V-conjunctive	mi-te	kai-te	ki-te	si-te
V, (adverbial stop)	mi,	kak-i,	ki,	si,
V-polite suffix-nonpast	mi-mas-u	kaki-mas-u	ki-mas-u	si-mas-u
V-negative suffix-nonpast	mi-na-i	kaka-na-i	ko-na-i	si-na-i
V-passive suffix-nonpast	mi-rare-ru	kaka-re-ru	ko-rare-ru	sa-re-ru
V-potential suffix-nonpast	mi-rare-ru	kak-e-ru	ko-rare-ru ko-re-ru	Ø
V-causative suffix-nonpast	mi-sase-ru	kaka-se-ru	ko-sase-ru	sa-se-ru
V-conditional suffix	mi-reba	kake-ba	ku-reba	su-reba

Note 1: Regular II verbs have roots that end with a consonant. Therefore, strictly speaking, kaki-mas-u, for example, should be written as kak-i-mas-u (root + ending + suffix + ending). However, the system above is adopted for simplification. The same rule is applied to the nominalised usage (for example, kaki in o-kaki ni nar-u 'write' (honorific)). However, the adverbial-stop usage (for example, kaki at the end of a subordinate clause) is hyphenated as kak-i, and the gloss 'V-CONJ' is given.

Note 2: Potential verbs, such as *mieru* 'can be seen/can see' and *kikoeru* 'can be heard/can hear', are hyphenated as *mie-ru* and *kikoe-ru*, rather than *mi-e-ru* and *kiko-e-ru*, since there is no synchronic evidence to suggest that the *e* in these forms is the potential suffix *e*.

#### [Noun + Copula/Particle/Affix]

Noun + copula / polite copula-nonpast	tesuto ('test') da / tesuto des-u
Noun + copula-past / polite copula-past	tesuto dat-ta / tesuto desi-ta
Noun + particle (locative / genitive / nominative)	tesuto de / tesuto no / tesuto ga
prefix + Noun	go-kazoku '(your) family' o-tya 'tea'
Noun + suffix	Yamada-san 'Mr/Ms Yamada' Amerika-zin 'U.S. nationals' watasi-tati 'we'
Numeral + counter suffix	san-nin 'three people' go-kai 'fifth floor'

Note 3: Copula da is not separated into d and a.

Note 4: Polite Copula (past) desita is hyphenated as desi-ta, not des-i-ta. (see Note 1)

Note 5: No hyphen is placed between a Noun and a Copula.

- Note 6: No hyphen is placed between a Noun and a Particle.
- Note 7: A hyphen is placed between a Noun and an affix if the noun can be used without the attached affix.

examples: o-ko-san '(your) child', not o-kosan or oko-san gohan 'meal', not go-han.

- Note 8: A hyphen is always placed between a numeral and a counter suffix.
- Note 9: A hyphen is placed between a Noun and the Verb su-ru 'do', when the two together form a predicate.

examples: benkyoo-su-ru 'study', yooi-su-ru 'prepare'

#### [Adjective and Adjectival Noun]

		Adjective	Adjectival Noun (≤ Noun)
ADJ-nonpast	(predicative)	uresi-i 'happy'	(sizuka da) 'quiet'
ADJ-past	(attributive / predicative)	uresikat-ta	(sizuka dat-ta)
ADJ-prenominal	(attributive)	uresi-i	sizuka-na
ADJ-adverbial		uresi-ku	(sizuka ni)
ADJ-conjunctive		uresi-kute	(sizuka de)

Note 10: In this thesis the form usually labelled as a keiyoo-doosi 'adjectival verb' is regarded as the combination of an Adjectival Noun and a Copula. In the same manner as for an ordinary Noun, no hyphen is placed before and after an Adjectival Noun, except for the case in which it is used in the prenominal position, accompanied by na (for example, sizuka-na, as in the table above).

#### [Adverb]

Note 11: Adverbs are sometimes accompanied by a Particle, such as to or ni. No hyphen is placed between the adverb and the particle.

examples:

yukkuri to 'slowly', karakara ni 'dryly'

#### [Adnominal]

Note 12: Adnominals do not inflect. Therefore, no hyphen is inserted.

examples:

ookina 'big', aru 'a certain'

#### [Sentence-Final Expression]

Note 13: There are some fixed expressions used at the end of a sentence. Their morphological structures are indicated using the hyphenation system above, if applicable. However, the gloss SFE (Sentence-Final Expression) is given with the basic modal meaning in parentheses, and no individual gloss is given to each constituent, except for the tense-marking endings (if any).

examples: hazudatta → hazu dat-ta

SFE (supposition)-PST

kamosirenai → ka mo sire-na-i

SFE (possibility)-NPST

daroo → daroo

SFE (conjecture)

 $monoda \rightarrow mono da$  [see Note 3]

SFE (reminiscence)

When citing works by other scholars in which different kinds of hyphenation systems are used, such systems are converted into the system outlined above, unless it is important to keep the original hyphenation for the purpose of discussion.

#### C. Sources of examples

#### (i) Examples from the 'Original Corpus'

Examples are often cited from a corpus that contains all the sentences in 68 sources (15 drama/movie scenarios, 5 interviews or tripartite talks, 5 scientific essays, 7 novels, and 36 short stories). The corpus is referred to as the 'Original Corpus' in the thesis text. The criteria for selecting the materials and full bibliographic information for each source are given in Appendix 1. However, the following points should be noted.

Note 14: When an example from the Original Corpus appears for the first time in the thesis text, the source of the example is indicated at the end of the example, using the following format:

[material category/material number: page number]

examples: [SC01:42], [TK02:15]

The following abbreviations are used for the material categories:

SC drama/movie scenarios

TK interviews or tripartite talks

SE scientific essays

NV novels/short stories

The material number is a number given to each publication contained in the Original Corpus. See Appendix 1 for the correspondence between the material number and each publication.

Note 15: When an example from the Original Corpus represents spoken conversation, this is indicated by double quotation marks.

Note 16: For the sake of comparison, an alternative word or phrase is sometimes added to the original example. In such a case, the following format is used.

$$\{\underline{A}/B/C\}$$

The word or phrase in the original is always placed in the leftmost position within the parentheses, and underlined.

#### (ii) Examples from works by other scholars

Examples are also cited from studies by other scholars. Bibliographic information for the source studies is provided with the examples. The Romanisation and hyphenation systems outlined above are applied to such examples. However, where double quotation marks appear in the original texts, these are left unchanged in this thesis.

#### (iii) Examples produced by the writer

Examples produced by the writer of this thesis are also used in the discussions. In such examples, double quotation marks are placed around typical conversation-style sentences.

Note 17: (This note is applicable to all three kinds of examples discussed above)

When glosses and/or translations are omitted in subsequent appearances of

examples, the location of their first appearance is indicated using the format [see (example number)].

#### D. Acceptability judgement

In the course of discussion, unacceptable examples are sometimes used. The following marks indicate unacceptability.

- \* completely unacceptable
- ?? not completely unacceptable, but very unnatural or elliptical
- ? acceptable, but slightly unnatural or elliptical

Unacceptable examples marked by \* are accompanied by glosses, but are not translated.

When citing works by other scholars in which different kinds of marking systems are used, such systems are converted into the system outlined above. For example, an example marked by ?? as an unacceptable sentence in the literature is marked by \* in this thesis.