Deixis and implicit argument of Japanese verbs of giving

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INTRODUCTION

1. Japanese has five verbs of giving which are used as both independent and supporting verbs. It has been known that these verbs can be divided into two groups, i.e. the kureru and yaru groups\(^1\), but what the essential element is that distinguishes the two groups has been the subject of considerable debate. The present paper examines the previous analyses of these distinguishing features of giving verbs as presented by Ooe 1975, Kuno & Kaburaki 1977, Wetzel 1985, 1988, Tokunaga 1986 and Kuno 1987, and presents a new analysis. Although it is in line with Wetzel's analysis, the current analysis sheds light on several points previous analyses fail to capture.

The existing analyses fail to notice the fact that the syntactic case, dative, of independent verbs of giving ceases to be a syntactic case but becomes an implicit semantic role, beneficiary, when the verbs of giving are used as supporting verbs. And although the use of the dative with the supporting verb would give rise to an ungrammatical sentence, it is vital to recognize the referent of the implicit argument for a complete comprehension of the sentence. Furthermore, this paper demonstrates that independent verbs of giving as well as their supporting counterparts have this implied beneficiary role as an integral element in their lexical entries in addition to the direct beneficiary referred to by the syntactic dative case. That is, this paper argues that the Japanese verbs of giving, whether used as independent or as supporting verbs, includes the implicit semantic case of beneficiary as an integral semantic element.

In addition, this paper focuses on the point that the use of two types of giving verbs, the kureru group and the yaru group depends upon where the speaker stands in the benefactive event world. This is analogous to the use of the English deictic verbs come and go in which one can be used to describe motion from one place to another but the other cannot, depending upon where the speaker (or the addressee) is. Therefore, this paper claims that these verbs of giving are deictic and terms the deixis 'benefactive deixis'. While the English verbs come and go describe the motion relative to the speaker or the addressee,
Japanese verbs of giving express the benefactive relation between the speaker and the event. And the implicit argument in question is the very element signaling the speaker's position as a beneficiary or as not a beneficiary, thus presenting the deictic egocentric property of these verbs.

**Previous Analyses**

2. Although the two verbs of giving, *kureru* and *yaru*, can be used on appropriate occasions to describe the very same event of giving, it is often the case that one can be used to describe the event but the other cannot, depending upon who is the speaker. This is similar in its context dependent property to the use of *come* and *go*: one can be used to describe motion from one place to another but the other cannot, depending upon where the speaker (or the addressee) is. While much research has been conducted on Japanese verbs of giving from various points of view, special attention was paid to the difference of the lexico-semantics of the *kureru* and *yaru* groups of verbs by Ooe 1975, Kuno & Kaburaki 1977, Wetzel 1985, 1988, Tokunaga 1986 and Kuno 1987.

Ooe 1975 treats verbs of giving as verbs that indicate the speaker's subjective description of a giving event. He explains the difference between *kureru* and *yaru* by using the terms **point of view** and **intention** (1975: 61).

(1) giver -------> receiver

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>giver</th>
<th>receiver</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>kureru</em></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(X)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>@</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>yaru</em></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(X)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>@</td>
<td>Ø</td>
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</table>

The symbol @ denotes the locus where the speaker's point of view lies, and the letter X indicates that the referent performs the designated act intentionally. The parentheses indicate optionality. According to Ooe's analysis the speaker uses *kureru* to describe an event of giving from the point of view of the receiver while he uses *yaru* when he views the giving event in the giver's perspective. Ooe calls *kureru* a "receiver-oriented" verb and *yaru* a "giver-oriented" verb. The intention of the givers of both verbs is lexically specified while that of the receivers is ambiguous but can be evoked in an appropriate context. Therefore, although the following sentences in 2 and 3 all describe giving events, an appropriate verb of giving must be
chosen in each event according to the perspective of the speaker relative to the event.

(2)  
   a. *Hanako-wa watashi-ni ningyoo-o kureru.  
      -Topic I -IO doll -DO give  
      'Hanako will give me a doll.'  
      I -Topic -IO doll -DO give  
      'I will give Hanako a doll.'

(3)  
      -Topic I -DO doll -DO give  
      'Hanako will give me a doll.'  
   b. Watashi-wa Hanako-ni ningyoo-o yaru.  
      I -Topic -IO doll -DO give  
      'I will give Hanako a doll.'

Both 2a and 2b use kureru, but 2a is an acceptable sentence while 2b is not. Because kureru is a 'receiver-oriented' verb, in 2a and 2b the speaker should describe the giving event in the receiver's perspective. Given only two event participants, the speaker and Hanako, 2a, having the speaker as the receiver indicates that the speaker describes the event in his perspective rather than in the other person's perspective, and therefore it is semantically an acceptable sentence. On the other hand, 2b, with Hanako as the receiver, denotes that the speaker places the other person's perspective over his, which is unnatural, and therefore it is a semantically incongruous sentence. Likewise, a similar argument applies for the explanation of the difference in acceptability of 3a and 3b. Because yaru is a 'giver-oriented' verb, the speaker should view the events from the point of view of the giver and therefore he must be the referent of the giver, as in 3b, and he must not be the referent of the receiver of yaru as in 3a.

Kuno & Kaburaki 1977 and Kuno 1987 discuss verbs of giving in the framework of the theory of Empathy. According to them, Empathy is a term which refers to the 'speaker's identification, with varying degrees (ranging from degree 0 to 1, with a person who participates in the event that he describes in a sentence.' It is a technical linguistic term, distinguished from the concept of sympathy, to capture linguistic phenomena found universally. Kuno & Kaburaki formulate the Empathy relationships between the participants in the lexico-semantics of kureru and yaru as in 4.
(4) Empathy conditions on independent verbs of giving
(a) kureru `give': E(subject) < E(dative)
(b) yaru `give': E(subject) ≥ E(dative)

Kureru is called a `dative-centered' verb while yaru is called a `subject-centered' verb. According to Kuno & Kaburaki, acceptability and unacceptability of the sentences in 2 and 3 are due to conformity and violation of the Empathy conditions listed in 4: 2b above is unacceptable since the Empathy condition on the `dative-centered' verb kureru is E(subject) < E(dative), and the speaker, who should empathize most with himself, is instead in the subject position, whereas 3a is anomalous for the opposite reason that the Empathy condition on the `subject-centered' verb yaru is E(subject) ≥ E(dative), and the speaker is instead in the dative position.

The equity sign for the Empathy condition of yaru (but not for that of kureru) is necessary because yaru is used to describe a giving event when the speaker places himself at a distance from the referents of both giver and receiver (cf. 5a below). Giving verbs are used not only as independent verbs, but also as supporting verbs. Kuno 1987 assumes that the Empathy conditions on the supporting verbs yaru and kureru are the same in nature as those on the independent counterparts except that the supporting verb yaru cannot be used for a neutral description, based on the observation of such examples as in 5 and 6.

(5) Independent verbs of giving
a. Toorigakari-no-hito-ga Taroo-ni okane-o yatta.
   passerby -Subj -IO money-DO gave
   `A passerby gave Taro money.'

b. Taroo-ga toorigakari-no-hito-ni okane-o yatta.
   -Subj passerby -IO money-DO gave
   `Taro gave a passerby money.'

(6) Supporting verbs of giving
a. Toorigakari-no-hito-ga Taroo-ni okane-o kasita.
   passerby -Subj -IO money-DO lent
   `A passerby lent taro some money.'

   lending-gave

According to Kuno 1987 the awkwardness of 6b can be accounted for if we assume that the supporting verb yaru requires that E(subject) > E(dative), but does not permit the