AN AUTOMATIC PROCESSING OF THE NATURAL LANGUAGE IN THE WORD COUNT SYSTEM

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## Summary

We succeeded in making a program having the following four functions：

1．segmenting the Japanese sentence
2．transliterating from Chinese characters（called Kanji in Japa－ nese）to the Japanese syllabary （kana）or to Roman letters
3．c lassifying the parts－of－speech in the Japanese vocabulary
4．making a concordance
We are using this program for the pre－ editing of surveys of Japanese vocabu－ lary．

In Japanese writing we use many kinds of writing systems，i．e．Kanji，kana，the alphabet，numerals，and so on．We have thought of this as a demerit in language data processing．But we can change this from a demerit to a merit．That is，we can make good use of these many writing systems in our program．

Our program has only a small table con－ taining 300 units．And it is very fast． In our experiments we have obtained approximately $90 \%$ correct answers．

## Introduction

Obtaining clean date is very important in language data processing．There are two problems here．One is how to input the Japanese text and the other is how to find errors in the data and correct them．The human being is suited to com－ plicated work but not to simple work． The machine，on the contrary，is suited to simple work but not to complicated work．In the word count system using computers，the machine has simple work （sorting，computation，making a list）， and the humans have complicated work （segmentation，transliteration from Kanji to kana，classification of parts of speech，finding errors in the data， discrimination of homonyms and homo－ graphs，ets．）．

However，in this system there is one major problem－－humans often make mis－ takes．And，regrettably，we cannot pre－ dict where they will make them．Thus we
decided to make an automatic processing system．This system has to be compact， fast，and over $90 \%$ accurate．

In Japanese writing we generally use many kinds of writing systems． For example，
COLING80が東京の都市センターホール

で開催された。

In this example sentence we find used the alphabet（ $C, O, L, I, N, G$ ），numer－ als（8，0），kana（hiragana－－the Japa－ nese cursive syllabary－－が，の，で，さ，え， た，and katakana－－the Japanese straight－1ined syllabary－－セ，ン，タ，一，犬，一，ル），Kanji（東，京，都，市，開，催）， and signs（．）．And as you can see，there are no spaces left between words．This makes Japanese data processing difficult．

Our program makes good use of these dif－ ferent elements in the writing system． At present the automatic processing pro－ gram makes more mistakes than humans do． But we can predict where it will make them and easily correct errors in the data．

## Objective

Our objective is a system having the following functions：

1．segmentation
2．tranliteration from Kanji to kana
3．classification of parts of speech
4．adding lexical information by use of a dictionary
5．making a concordance
6．making a word list
Numbers 1,2 ，and 3 are especially im－ portant for our program．Our report will mainly deal with these three functions．

The input data is generally a text writ－ ten in Japanese．The output is a con－ cordance sorted in the Japanese alpha－ betical order，giving information of the parts of speech，and marked with a the－ saurus number．

## System

Figure 1 is a flow chart of our program．
Input is by magnetic tape，paper tape， or card．The input code is the NLRI （National Language Research Institute） code or some other code．Of course we have a code conversion program from other codes to the NLRI code．

The second block of Figure 1 shows what we call the automatic processing of nat－ ural language．In the supervisor square we check and select the results of the three automatic processing programs． Some of these programs have many kinds of processing of natural language． For example，the automatic segmentation program involves the classification of parts of speech，automatic syntactic analysis，automatic transliteration from Kanji to kana，and so on．（An example will be found in the next section．）

In the adding lexical information block of Figure 1，we make use of the diction－ ary obtained by research into some 5 million words at the NLRI．This diction－ ary includes word frequenctes，parts of speech，classes by word origin，and a thesaurus number．

By using the concordance we can find and correct errors in the data．As our pro－ gram is unfortunately not always com－ plete，this concordance is very useful．

In the output block of Figure 1 we can choose a variety of output devices－－an alphabet line printer，a kana line printer，a high－speed Kanji printer，or a Kanji display．

## Method

1．Automatic transliteration from Kanji to Roman letters

The Chinese characters have many differ－ ent readings in Japanese．For example，

```
生/ sei/ /syo/ /um-/ /iki/ nama/ /ai/
立 / tachi/ /tatsu/ /tate/ /dachi/
    /ritsu/ /rittoru/
-/ ichi// /itsu/ /kazu/ hajime//hito/
```

We have to arrange the Japanese words in the Japanese alphabetical order． The program puts the reading way to each word for the word 1ist．

The method of selecting the reading is to choose it in accordance with the surroundings of the Kanji in the text． The possible readings for each Kanji are listed in a small table．The records in this table are of 3 types－Groupsl， 2 ，and 3 represented by numbers $1 ; 2,3$ ；and 4，5， 6 respectively in Figure 2 ．

The Kanji in Group 1 have one reading each．The program replaces the Kanji with this reading．In Figure 2, No． 1 falls into this category．We have about 700 Kanji in Group 1 （院，堂，族，宇，批， ets．）．

The Kanji in Group 2 have tow or more readings each．In Figure 2，Nos． 2 and 3 fall into this category．

The format for these entries is group number，the Kanji，the operation code（a numeral or Capital letter），and the reading（up to 8 small letters）．

The appropriate reading is chosen for the situation of the Kanij in accordance with Table 1.



Figure 1．A flow chart
（1） 1 校KD刦
（2） 2 歌 1 KA
（3） 2 河 1 KA
（4） $3 \| 18$ SENN
（5）了泳11 \＃E\＃I
（6）了水115抽I
（6）
A HITA
（4）
$A K A W A$
（9）

2 HKAWA
＊M河1 N柳1（9）

Figure 2．Table of Kanji reading
（Input）
（1）校歌を歌 3.
（2）川で泳ぐ。
（Output） KOHUKAWLOHUTAHUU． KAMADE \＃DYOGU．
（3）河川で水泳をする，KASENNDESU\＃I\＃FHTHOSURU，
Figure 3．result of experimentation
Figure 3 gives a sample of the results of our experiments．The Kanj1／歌／in no． 1 here is a group 2 Kanji．Its situation in the context／校歌を／is that in front of it is the Kanji／校／and behind it is the non－Kanji／を／．When the context is Kanji + non－Kanji，the program selects reading $1 / \mathrm{ka} /$ ．The situation of 歌／in context／文歌 $) /$ is non－Kanji + non－Kanji so the reading $A / \# u t a /$ is selected．AS a result 皎歌を歌〉／is transliterated to ／ko\＃ukawo\＃uta\｜u／．

Group 2 contains 1500 Chinese characters．
The Kanji in Group 3 have a special reading in a special context in addition to their regular meanings．In Figure 2 ， Nos．4，5，and 6 are in this group．In Figure 3 ，／M／in No． 2 can be processed without a special reading，but in no． 3 the special reading is needed．To obtain this reading，the special context after the the sign＊is applied．The format， as in Figure 2，no．4，is group number （3），Kanji（川），reading number（1，2）， operation code（8，H），reading，sign（＊） code for front or behind（M，N），Kanji （河，柳），and applied reading number（1， 1）．

|  |  | （e．g．） |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Groupe number | 1 | 1etter |  |
| Kanji | 1 |  | 川 |
| Reading number | 1 |  | 1 |
| Operation＇s letter | 1 |  | H |
| Reading way | 8 | sma11 | letter |
| Sighn | 1 | letter |  |
| Sighn of front or behind | 1 |  | M N |
| Caracter | 1 |  | 河㧕 |
| Applied reading number | 1 |  | 11 |

In this case reading number 1 is applied because／河／is found in front of／川l．

The merits of this method are that the table is small and the process fast．If we had a table listing vocabulary rather than Kanji，it would be much larger， requiring at least 70,000 entries．
One demerit is that the process does not completely cover all cases．The phenom－ enon of rendaku or renjo，in particular， requires special contexts．There are no rules for this．Examples of rendaku and renjo are follows：

> (in English)
> 本箱/hon/+/hako/ $\rightarrow$ /honbako/ bookcase
> 子供 $/ \mathrm{kol} / \mathrm{lt}$ tomol-- $/$ /kodomol child
> 天 皇 /ten/+/ou/-ー / tennou/ emperor
> 因縁/in/+/en/ $\rightarrow$ /innen/ karma
> 酒屋/sake/+/ya/--7/sakaya/ wineshop

## 2．Automatic segmentation

We do not use spaces between words in Japanese，but we do use many different elements in our writing system．There are Kanji，kana（hiragana and katakana）， the alphabet，numerals，and signs． Figure 4 shows the ratio of these ele－ ments in Japanese newspapers．If we look at a Japanese text as a string of dif－ ferent kinds of characters，we can replace the characters of a Japanese sentence with the abbreviations of Table 2.

AM． 10 に゙バスに乗る。
$\begin{array}{lllllllll}446 & 55 & 2 & 3 & 3 & 2 & 1 & 2 & 6\end{array}$
In Japanese composition we are taught the proper use of the different char－ acters in this way：

Kanji－to express concepts；more concretely，for nouns，the stems of verbs，etc．
hixagana－for particles，auxiliary verbs，${ }^{*}$ the endings of verbs and adjectives，writing phonetically，etc．
katakana－for borrowed words，foreign personal and place names， onomatopoeia，etc．
alphabet－for abbreviations
numerals－for figures
Therefore，if the different characters are used properly they suggest the type of word．


We checked the character combinations． The ratio of segmental point to the character combinations is as follows．

|  | behind 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| front |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1 | 5.7 | 61.7 | 45.2 | 75.0 | 100.0 | 73.8 |
| 2 | 92.1 | 40.8 | 95.7 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 95.1 |
| 3 | 25.4 | 89.5 | 1.0 | －－－ |  | 33.3 |
| 4 | 2.8 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 13.2 | 0.0 | 90.0 |
| 5 | 2.7 | 100.0 | －－－ | 100.0 | 0.0 | 75.0 |
| 6 | 98.2 | 84.7 | 62.1 | 33.3 | 23.7 | （\％） |
| 1：Kanji，2：Hiragana |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3：Katakana 4：Alphabet |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5：Numeral 6：Sighn |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Object：15，677 characters |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Table 2 ． | A rat | o of | egmen | al po |  |

We can segment at character combinations with a high ratio in Table 2 but not at those with a low ratio．

For our program we converted Table 2 to the form found in Table 3．We can seg－ ment a sentence at the places where nu－ meral 1 is found in the table．
behind
$\begin{array}{llllll}1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6\end{array}$
front
1 Kanji
Hiragana
Katakana
4 Alphabet
5 Numeral
6 Sighn Table 3．Table for segmentation by character combination

| 1 が | 1 R |
| :--- | :--- |
| 4 こうした | 2 C 1E91P |
| 1 た | $1 \mathrm{P}+$ |
| 1 で | $1 Q 9$ |
| 10 | $1 R$ |
| 1 れ | $1 \mathrm{P} \mathrm{\#}$ |

Figure 5．Table for segmentation and Classification of parts of speech

Hiragana－Hiragana type is use of the second most frequent combinations in Japanese．According to Table 2，We are unable to segment for this combination． Therefore we make the following rule．

The hiragana／を／is used only as a parti－ cle and we always segment at it．The other hiragana characters are segmented
according to the character string table found in Figure 5．The format，as in the second line in Figure 5，is the number of characters in the string（4），the character string（up to 10 characters） （こうした），the length of the words（2）， 1，1），the parts of speech（C，E，P）， and the conjugation（9）．

This table contains on $1 y 300$ records． These are the particles，auxiliary verbs， adverbs，and character strings which cannot be segmented by Tabie 3 （ex．こうした in Figure 5）．

This table is applied as follows．The program first searches the character strings of the table in the input sen－ tences．If a character string（こうした） fits part of an input sentence（こうした時 には…）then the program segments it into parts by the lengths of words in the table and adds the information about the parts of speech and conjugation．As a result we obtain the words（こう／し／た／）．

Figure 6 shows the results of automatic segmentation and automatic translitera－ tion from Kanji to Roman letters．The operation of Table 3 has resulted in no segmentation for the strings（／CoLING80 ／），（／倞宗／），（／都市センターホール／），and（／開催 さ／）as well as the segmentation at the sign（／．／）．The operation of the table in Figure 5 has resulted in the segmen－ tation for the hiragana（／が／），（／の／）， （／で／），（／れ／），and（／た／）．

3．Automatic classification of parts of speech

In order to analyze the vocabulary we have to classify it by parts of speech． The program dose this by three methods．

The first method is by using the table found in Figure 5.

The second method is by the form of the word，applying the rules below．The ra－ tio of correct answers obtained is given in parentheses after each rule．

1．If the last character of the word is in Kanji，katakana，or the al－ phabet，then the word is a noun． （ $94.4 \%$ ）
2．If the last character is／W／，then it is a verb in the renyo form （conjugation）or an adjective in the syushi or rentai form．（ $86.2 \%$ ）
3．If the last character is／＜／，then it is a verb in the syushi or rentai form or an adjective in the renyo form．（ $83.4 \%$ ）

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COLING80 が東京の都市センターホールで開催された。
COLING80 GA TO\＃LKIJOAU NO TOSISENNTAO HOO RU DE KAHISAHISA RE TA．遊びにあきた子供らが帰つていく。

遊でにあきな子供らが帰っていく，
\＃ASOBI NI \＃AKI TA KOTOMORA GA KA\＃EQQ TE HIKL．
ジョン・F・ケネディは偉大な大䖻領だった。
ジョン・F，ケネディは偉大な 大続領だった。
ZIJCNN．F．KENEDE＊I HA \＃IDAHI NA DAHITOHURIJDHU DAQD TA．
パン粉を100gか，100円分ください。
パン粉を 100 g か， 100 円分ください。
PANNKO WI 100 g KA， 100 \＃ENNBLINN KUDASA\＃I．

Figure 6．Result of Segmentation and Transifteration from Kanji to Roman character

4．If the last character is／る／，then it is verb，syushi form．（95．8\％）
5．If the last character is／れ／，then it is verb，katei form，or demon－ strative pronoun，or auxiliary verb＊1（92．9\％）
6．If the last character $1 s / 3 /$ ，then it is verb，meirei form，or noun． （ $63.3 \%$ ）
7．If the last tow characters are／かっ／， then it is adjective，mizen form， or verb，renyo form．（ $74.2 \%$ ）
8．If the last character is $/ \sim /=$ ，then it is verb，renyo form．（79．6\％）
9．If the last tow characters are $\frac{\text { Kanji－hiragana }}{(94.4 \%)}$ ，then it is a verb． If the vowel of the last hiragana is／a／，then its conjugation is mizen or renyo form，and if it is／i／，then it is mizen or renyo if it is／u／，then it is syushi or rentai if it is／e／，then it is katei or meirei if it is／o／，then it is meirei

10．If the 1 ast character is a numeral， then it is a figure and if it is a sign，then it is a sign．

The third method is by word combinations． That is，in Japanese grammer word combi－ nation－－especially of nouns or verbs and particles or auxiliary verbs ${ }^{* 1}$－is not free．The formula given in Figure 7 is made from this rule． Its format is as follows：

1．the word
2．its part of speech
3．auxiliary verbs＊or particles which can be used in front of this word
4．parts of speech and conjugations which can be used in front of this word
5．if 3 and 4 do not agree then 5 ap－ plies obligatorily．

```
Figure 8 is the resul.t of automatic
classification of parts of speech. The
explanation of the codes used in it is
as follows:
    1 (noun). E (verb), M (adjective)
    P (auxiliary verbl
    C (adverb), A (conjanction), B(inter-
        jection), Y (sighn), X (figure)
```

（1）（2）
（3）
（1）祭りを待つてい，る。
（2）祭りを待つている。
（3）
（4）
（5）
（6）
（7） $1 R$ ER EY

Figure 8．Result of Classification of parts of speech

Q（auxiliary ver ${ }^{*} \frac{1}{o r}$ particle）
8 （＇mizen＇form）， 9 （＇renyo＇form）
\＃（＇mizen＇or＇renyo＇form）

+ （＇syushi＇or＇rentai＇form）

| char． | char．＇s | word＇s | req． |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | freq． | aux．v．\＆part | t．other |
| $\infty$ | 38404 | 32588（84．9\％） | 2（ 0\％） |
| い | 23633 | 2 （0．0\％） | 1305（ 5．5\％） |
| し | 22124 | $64(0.3 \%) 1$ | 13138（59．4\％） |
| に | 18962 | 17037（89．8\％） | 3（ $0.0 \%$ ） |
| と | 16383 | 10173 （62．1\％） | 0 （ 0\％） |
| は | 16062 | 13324（83．0\％） | 0 （ 0\％） |
| た | 15958 | 10569 （66．2\％） | 1（ $0.0 \%$ ） |
| 3 | 15522 | 17（ 0．1\％） | 0 （ 0\％） |
| な | 14710 | 14702 （99．9\％） | 0（ 0\％） |
| で | 13515 | 8351（61．8\％） | 00 （ 0\％） |

Figure 9．Result of supervisor

6．automatic classification by method 3，resulting in／祭 $\mathrm{J} /$／being changed from a verb to a noun（using the formula for／を／found in Figure 7）．

## 4．Supervisor

The supervisor program checks the re－ sults of the three automatic processing programs and selects the correct results or processes feedback．It also utilizes information obtained through each pro－ gram．That is，

1．The results of the character check
（1）沢山の木をたばねられませんでした。

TAKIUSANN ND KI WO TA BA NE RARE MASE NN DESI TA．
1R1RPRQ P PP PPY

$$
+Q \# \#+9+
$$

沢山 の 木 を たばねら れ ませんでした
TAKUSANN NI KI WI TABANERA RE MASE NN DESI TA．
1R1R EP PP PPY
$8 \# \#+9+$
（2）面白くて遊び過ぎた。
面白くて 遊び 過ぎ た •
\＃OMOSIROKL TE \＃ASQBI SUGI TA．
EMR E EPY
+9 \＃\＃＋
面白く て 遊び過ぎ た。
\＃GMASIRDKU TE \＃ASOBISUGI TA．
EMR EPY
$+9 \quad 9+$
Figure 10．Result of supervisor
and conversion from kana to Roman letters are used for each program．
2．The information obtained in auto－ matic transliteration is used in segmentation．
Namely，if the special context is applied，then the program does not segment at that point because the character string is a word．
3．The information obtained at the conversion from kana to Roman letters is used in segmentation． Namely，if the consonant of the Romanized Japanese is（＊），（J），or （Q）－－these are used as special small characters in kana－－then the program dose not segment at that point．
4．The information obtained in seg－ mentation is used in classifica－ tion． Namely，the program obtains infor－ mation concerning parts of speech and conjugation through using the table in Figure 5 in segmentation．

Checking the results of the processing involves the following：

I．Checking particle and auxiliary verb strings obtained by the pro－ gram at classification．If these strings are impossible in Japanese， then the segmentation was mistaken． The program corrects these．
2．There are not many words composed of one character in Japanese ex－ cept for particles and auxiliary verbs．Figure 9 gives the frequen－ cy of some characters and the fre－ quency of words consisting of that character alone．
Words of high frequency that are not particles or auxiliary verbs are produced by errors in segmen－ tation．The program then corrects these errors，combining them into longer words．
3．If a verb in the renyo form is followed by another verb，then it is a compound word and the program corrects the error to produce a longer word．
Figure 10 shows the results of the supervisor program．In test sen－ tence 1 ，the program at first seg－ mented／た／ば／ね／ら／as auxil－ iary verbs through the use of the table in Figure 5．But the super－ visor program checks and corrects this string and the classification program adds the information of verb to／たばねらノ，＊2 Figure 10 ．
In test sentence 2 ，the program at first segmented it／非ASOBI／SUGI／TA $/$ ，but the supervisor program
checked this and corrected this string to the compound word， ／\＃ASOBISUGI／，plus／TA／．

We can process Japanese sentences using these methods and obtain words and vari－ ous information about these words．With this program we can obtain a rate of correct answers of approximately 90 percent．$* 3$

We should be able to improve this pro－ gram at the level of the supervisor and the tables．However，we don＇t think that it will be possible to obtain 100 percent correct answers because this system uses Japanese writing and the Jap－ anese writing system is not 100 percent standardized．In addition，if we wish to produce a complete program，it is neces－ sary to process on the basis of syntax and meaning．At persent，this is not the object of our efforts．

## 5．Adding lexical information

The National Language Research Institute has been investigating the vocabulary of modern Japanese since 1952 ，and has been using the computer in this research since 1966．As a result，some five mil－ lion words are available as machine readable data．This data contains vari－ ous information such as word frequency， part of speech，class by word origin， and thesaurus number．The thesaurus， Bunrui goihyo in Japanese，was produced by Doctor Oki Hayashi．It contains about 38,000 words in the natural language of Japanese．

## 6．Making the concordance

We will not explain this program here since we have written a separate report about it（number 6 in the list of refer－ ences below）．Please refer to this re－ port for further details．

Figure 11 is the result of this process．

## Acknowledgements

Professor Akio Tanaka developed this plan，made a prototype for automatic transliteration from Kanji to kana，and permitted us to use this program． Mr．Kiyoshi Egawa made a prototype for an automatic segmentation program and permitted us to use it．They also contributed to this study through our
discussions with them．Mr．Oki Haya－ shi furnished us with the opportunity to study this and provided his support for our efforts．

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Notes：
＊ 1 Auxiliary verb ：This term means the bound form which conjugate． It is put Jodoshi in Japanese．
＊2／たばねられ／is rightly segmented for ／たばね／and／かれ／．This case is an error of program．
＊3 A ratio of correct answers is fol－ lows．

Sample ： 2500 words from a high school textbook
Segmentation ： $91.3 \%$
Transliteration from Kanji to Kana ： $95.7 \%$
Clasification of parts of speech： $97.0 \%$

