

On the Alleged Condition on the Base Verb of the Indirect Passive in Japanese

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Abstract

This paper argues against the view that Japanese indirect passives are restricted with respect to the base verb that they take. Specifically, it argues that, despite its initial plausibility, the oft-proposed generalization that unaccusatives cannot appear in indirect passives is too strong and the alleged distribution is a tendency at most, albeit a strong one. After closely examining the restriction along with the counterevidence discussed in the literature, this paper presents novel empirical evidence against the restriction. Moreover, it also argues that no stipulations specific to indirect passives need to be introduced in accounting for the purported evidence for the unaccusative restriction: pragmatic inferences play a crucial role in deriving the observed aversion to unaccusative-based indirect passives.

1 Introduction

Japanese passives have attracted much attention and have been a topic of intense debate due to their peculiar characteristics which present challenges to contemporary linguistic theories. One such characteristic is the existence of two types of passive: direct and indirect passives. Direct passives are passives with the active counterparts, where the passive subject corresponds to an object

in the active, as in (1), whereas indirect passives have no such counterparts, as shown in (2).¹

- (1) Boku-wa sensei-ni home-rare-ta
1SG-TOP teacher-DAT praise-PASS-PST
'I was praised by the teacher.'
cf. Sensei-ga boku-o home-ta
teacher-NOM 1SG-ACC praise-PST
'The teacher praised me.'
- (2) Boku-wa kodomo-ni nak-are-ta
1SG-TOP child-DAT cry-PASS-PST
'The child cried on me.'
cf. Kodomo-ga (*boku-o/-ni) nai-ta
child-NOM 1SG-ACC/-DAT cry-PST
'The child cried (*me).'

Of the many issues brought up by these two types of passive, it is sometimes proposed that indirect passives are restricted with respect to the base verb they take. Specifically, researchers such as Dubinsky (1985, 1997), Kageyama (1993, 1996) and Washio (1989-90) argue for what we refer to as the unaccusative restriction, which bans unaccusatives from appearing as the base verb of the indirect passive. For instance, Kageyama (1996) presents the following examples in (3) and

¹ The following abbreviations are used: 1 = first person, 2 = second person, ACC = accusative, CAUS = causative, COM = comitative, COMP = complementizer, COND = conditional, CONJ = conjunction, DAT = dative, DV = dummy verb, GEN = genitive, IMP = imperative, INCH = inchoative, INST = instrumental, LOC = locative, NEG = negative, NPST = nonpast, PASS = passive, PL = plural, POT = potential, pro = null pronoun, PST = past, SG = singular, STV = stativizer, TOP = topic.

(4), whose base verbs are unergatives and unaccusatives, respectively.

- (3) a. Torakku-ni soba-o hasir-are-ta
 truck-DAT side-ACC run-PASS-PST
 ‘The truck ran by my side on me.’
 b. Titioya-ni sofaa-de ner-are-ta
 father-DAT couch-LOC sleep-PASS-PST
 ‘I was adversely affected by my father sleeping on the couch.’
- (4) a. *Seiseki-ni ot-i-rare-ta
 grade-DAT fall-INCH-PASS-PST
 ‘My grades slipped on me.’
 b. *Syatyoo-ni sikyo-s-are-ta
 president-DAT death-DV-PASS-PST
 ‘The president died on us.’
 (Kageyama, 1996 with minor changes)

This paper attempts to shed some light on Japanese indirect passives by placing special focus on the unaccusative restriction. Specifically, I will make the following two claims: first, the restriction is empirically too strong and it is at most a tendency, not a solid descriptive generalization; second, pragmatic inferences derive the purported cases for the unaccusative restriction, which in turn proves to be illusory and superfluous.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 discusses the nature of the unaccusative restriction and issues concerning split intransitivity. Section 2.1 examines the counterevidence pointed out in the literature, and then Section 2.2 presents novel empirical evidence from two-place unaccusatives. Section 3 considers the purported cases for the unaccusative restriction and argues that pragmatic inferences play a crucial role in accounting for them, thereby showing that the unaccusative restriction can be dispensed with entirely. Section 4 concludes the paper.

Before going into discussion, I would like to mention three things that should be kept in mind. First, I assume without argument that, aside from the customary distinction between direct and indirect passives, the distinction between *ni*-passives and *niyotte*-passives is real (Kuroda, 1979 *inter alia*) and that *ni*-passives involve the introduction of an affected argument by one type of *-rare*, an unaccusative applicative predicate, as in (5)a (cf. Dubinsky, 1985, 1997; Pylkkänen, 2002), while *niyotte*-passives involve the suppression of the external argument of the base

verb by another type of *-rare*, the passive voice head (Kratzer, 1996), as in (5)b.

- (5) a. as an applicative predicate ($\text{Appl}_{\text{Malefactive}}$)²
 $[[\text{-rare}]] = \lambda x.\lambda e. \text{Affectee}(e,x)$
 b. as the passive voice head ($\text{Voice}_{\text{Passive}}$)
 $[[\text{-rare}]] = \lambda e.\exists x[\text{Agent}(e,x)]$

Thus, I assume two homophonous morphemes which function completely differently. Though I consider that the homophony is not accidental and should receive a principled explanation along with other uses of *-rare*, I keep to the naïve assumption for the purposes of this paper.

Second, my aim in this paper is rather modest: it is to show that no stipulations, syntactic or otherwise, need to be introduced in accounting for the strong aversion to unaccusative-based indirect passives because it can be derived by what we already know about pragmatics, and it is not to choose between inferential pragmatic theories like Grice (1975), Horn (1984), Levinson (1987, 2000), and Sperber and Wilson (1995), although I couch my analysis in neo-Gricean terms. To this end, I simply follow the common view on the divide between grammar and pragmatics, with the former defined as a set of codes and the latter as inference.

Finally, there is great variability in acceptability judgments, especially when unaccusative-based indirect passives are involved. Thus, when I cite examples from the previous literature, I cite their reported judgments as well, with minor changes made to the examples when necessary. While the divide appears to be wide between ‘conservative’ and ‘liberal’ speakers, it is also true that an example once judged as unacceptable can become acceptable if a proper context of utterance is carefully constructed and provided, suggesting that the divide results partly from inadequate control of the context of utterance. With this in mind, I will spell out contextual and conceptual settings as much as possible when I present my analysis.

2 The Unaccusative Restriction

As noted above, the unaccusative restriction prohibits unaccusative verbs from appearing as the base verbs in indirect passives. In addition to (4), I give several more examples in (6):

² The benefactive counterpart ($\text{Appl}_{\text{Benefactive}}$) is as follows:
 $[[\text{-te moraw-}]] = \lambda x.\lambda e. \text{Benefactive}(e,x)$

- (6) a. *Nooka-no hito-tati-wa kaze-de
 farmer-GEN person-PL-TOP wind-INST
 ringo-ni ot-i-rare-ta
 apple-DAT fall-INCH-PASS-PST
 ‘The farmers were adversely affected by the
 apples’ falling because of the wind.’
 b. *Taroo-wa anata-no nimotu-ni
 Taro-TOP 2SG-GEN belongings-DAT
 konna tokoro-ni ar-are-ta
 this place-LOC be-PASS-PST
 ‘Taro was adversely affected by your
 belongings being in this place.’
 c. *Taroo-wa situon-ni ag-ar-are-ta
 T.-TOP rm.temp.-DAT rise-INCH-PASS-PST
 ‘Taro was adversely affected by the room
 temperature’s rising.’
 ((6)a,b: Kuno and Takami, 2002 w/minor changes)
 ((6)c: Dubinsky, 1997 with minor changes)

Moreover, the contrast in (8) below between the causative and inchoative forms may also help elucidate what the restriction is intended to capture: as (7) shows, while both the causative and inchoative alternants are fine in the active, they show a stark contrast when indirect passives are formed from them. Specifically, unlike indirect passives based on causatives, as in (8)a, those based on inchoatives are quite awkward and marked in acceptability, as shown in (8)b.

- (7) a. Kodomo-ga mado-o wat-Ø-ta
 child-NOM window-ACC break-CAUS-PST
 ‘A child broke the window.’
 b. Mado-ga war-e-ta
 window-NOM break-INCH-PST
 ‘The window broke.’
 (8) a. Kodomo-ni mado-o
 child-DAT window-ACC
 war-Ø-are-ta
 break-CAUS-PASS-PST
 ‘A child broke the window on me.’
 b. *mado-ni war-e-rare-ta
 window-DAT break-INCH-PASS-PST
 ‘The window broke on me.’
 ((8)b: Washio, 1989-90 with minor changes)

The restriction has sometimes received an explanation in terms of the 1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law (henceforth, 1AEX). 1AEX is originally a law proposed in the framework of Relational Grammar (Perlmutter and Postal, 1984),

which states, in informal terms, that raising to subject occurs at most once in a single clause. Thus, it precludes cases such as double passives and passives based on unaccusatives, both of which require raising to subject to occur more than once. A contemporary explanation of this law takes the suppression of an external argument, as in (5)b, as the key component: the process can apply to predicates with an external argument like transitives and unergatives, but not to those without like unaccusatives and passives, given that vacuous application is impossible.

2.1 Evidence against the Restriction

Although the unaccusative restriction can be clearly stated, the situation is not as clear when we consider the relevant data because there are two complications pertaining to split intransitivity. First, it is not always the case that one verb is fixed with only one verb class—unergative or unaccusative—and some verbs display variable behavior with respect to the class membership, as shown in (9):³

- (9) a. Unergative *slide*
 i. Ted slid into the closet.
 ii. The closet was slid into by Ted.
 b. Unaccusative *slide*
 i. The soap slid into the desk.
 ii. *The desk was slid into by the soap.
 (Perlmutter and Postal, 1984)

Second, these verbs are variable in syntactic behavior, depending on the syntactic context where they appear. That is, they show unergative behavior in some syntactic contexts and unaccusative behavior in others, but not both at the same time. Given this, if one wants to argue that a variable behavior verb is unaccusative in some syntactic context *C*, it only makes sense to show its unaccusative status in *C*, and it may be irrelevant to the argument to do so in other contexts.

With these in mind, let us turn to the following three types of counterevidence to the unaccusative restriction pointed out in the literature.

First, consider cases where the same verb appears to display different behavior. Kuno and Takami (2002) take the contrast in (10) as counter to the unaccusative restriction on the assumption that the base verb is invariable as unaccusative.

³ See Borer (2005) for more on variable behavior verbs.

- (10) a. *Dentyuu-ni tao-re-rare-ta
 utility.pole-DAT fall-INCH-PASS-PST
 ‘The utility pole fell down on me.’
 b. Dooryoo-ni tao-re-rare-ta
 coworker-DAT fall-INCH-PASS-PST
 ‘The coworker got ill on me.’
 (Kuno and Takami, 2002 with changes)

However, the restriction can still be defended if the verb is variable in such a way that it is unaccusative in (10)a but unergative in (10)b, as in (9). Thus, for (10)b to be true counterevidence, it must be demonstrated that the verb is unaccusative in its behavior in the syntactic context of (10)b.

It is well known that floated numeral quantifiers (henceforth, (F)NQ) in Japanese can be used as a test for unaccusativity (Miyagawa, 1989a): unaccusative subjects can be associated with floated numeral quantifiers, as in (11)a, while unergative subjects cannot, as in (11)b.

- (11) a. Gakusei-ga ofisu-ni huta-ri ki-ta
 student-NOM office-to two-CL come-PST
 ‘Two students came to the office.’
 b. *Gakusei-ga zibun-no kane-de
 student-NOM self-GEN money-INST
 huta-ri denwa-si-ta
 two-CL telephone-DV-PST
 ‘Two students called at their own expense.’

Applying this test to (10)b gives the following result:⁴

- (12) Dooryoo-ni ofisu-de batabata-to
 coworker-DAT office-LOC by.turns-COM
 go-nin[?](-mo) tao-re-rare-ta
 5-CL-even fall-INCH-PASS-PST
 ‘We had as many as five of coworkers fall down in the office one after another on us.’

In (12), the locative phrase and the comitative-marked manner adverbial are added to ensure that the NQ is inside the VP, which is a prerequisite for the test. The scalar focus particle *-mo* ‘even’ is also added to the NQ and, as indicated, the lack of it slightly degrades the acceptability for some reason or other. Hence, it is still possible to assume that the verb in (10) is uniformly unaccusative, thus

⁴ Kuno and Takami (2002) also employ this test, but they do not apply it in the relevant context.

taking (10)b to be a true counterexample, but this holds with the proviso that more research is needed to clarify whatever effects the focus particle has on the FNQ test.

The next case, also discussed by Kuno and Takami (2002), involves another unaccusative diagnostic in Japanese, accusative case marking with Sino-Japanese roots (Miyagawa, 1989b): it is possible with unergative or transitive roots, as in (13), but not with unaccusative roots, as in (14).

- (13) a. Taroo-wa iede(-o) si-ta
 Taro-TOP house.out-ACC do-PST
 ‘Taro ran away from home.’
 b. John-wa murabito-ni ookami-ga
 John-TOP villagers-DAT wolf-NOM
 ku-ru-to keikoku(-o) si-ta
 come-NPST-COMP warning-ACC do-PST
 ‘John gave the villagers the warning that a wolf is coming.’
 (Grimshaw and Mester, 1988 with minor changes)

- (14) a. Taroo-wa sono kekka-o kii-te
 Taro-TOP that result-ACC hear-CONJ
 zetuboo^(??)-o) si-ta
 despair-ACC DV-PST
 ‘Hearing the result, Taro despaired.’
 b. Taroo-ga kaidan-de tentoo(*-o) si-ta
 T.-NOM stairs-LOC fall-ACC DV-PST
 ‘Taro fell down in the stairs.’
 (Kageyama, 1993 with minor changes)

Thus, while restricted in its scope, accusative case marking can be used as a test for unaccusativity, and, as shown in (15), unaccusatives can indeed appear in indirect passives.

- (15) a. Sonna koto-de kimi-ni zetuboo(*-o)
 that thing-INST 2SG-DAT despair-ACC
 s-are-tara komar-u
 DV-PASS-COND get.annoyed-NPST
 ‘It bothers me if you despair of that.’
 b. Titi-ni tentoo(*-o) s-are-ta
 father-DAT fall-ACC DV-PASS-PST
 ‘My father fell in the stairs on me.’
 (Kuno and Takami, 2002 with minor changes)

Finally, consider non-alternating unaccusatives, like *sin(-u)* ‘die’ and *hur(-u)* ‘fall’, which can appear in indirect passives, as shown in (16).

- (16) a. Titioya-ni sin-are-ta
 father-DAT die-PASS-PST
 ‘My father died on me.’
 b. Ame-ni hur-are-ta
 rain-DAT fall-PASS-PST
 ‘It rained on me’ (Lit.: ‘Rain fell on me.’)

These verbs are unaccusative when they appear in indirect passives, as shown by the FNQ test in (17).

- (17) a. Sensee-wa osiego-ni sensoo-tyuu
 teacher-TOP student-DAT war-during
 nampoo-de zyuu-nin-mo sin-are-ta
 south-LOC 10-CL-even die-PASS-PST
 ‘The teacher had as many as ten students
 die in the south during the war.’
 b. Sansei-u-ni ip-pun-kan-ni
 acid-rain-DAT one-min.-period-LOC
 zyuu-miri-mo hur-are-ta
 10-millimeter-even fall-PASS-PST
 ‘Acid rain fell as much as 10mm for 1 min.
 on us.’

While Washio (1989-90) treats these verbs as unaccusatives immune to 1AEX, Kageyama (1993, 1996) classifies them as unergatives, assuming that only unergatives can form imperatives. See (18):

- (18) a. Hayaku sin-e
 soon die-IMP
 ‘Die soon.’
 b. Ame, ame, hur-e, hur-e
 rain rain fall-IMP fall-IMP
 ‘Rain, fall!’

(Kageyama, 1993)

However, as Matsumoto (2000) correctly points out, unaccusative imperatives can be used to represent a wish of the speaker, and it is exactly the case with (18). Hence, unaccusatives as well as unergatives can form imperatives after all.

Taking the preceding two arguments together, we can conclude that non-alternating unaccusatives are neither unergatives nor variable behavior verbs functioning as such in indirect passives. Therefore, they also falsify the unaccusative restriction.

In sum, we have examined the counterevidence in the literature carefully, keeping in mind the caveat against confusing the different uses of variable behavior verbs, and demonstrated that the

unaccusative restriction is too strong, as it would wrongly exclude cases like (10)b, (15) and (17).

2.2 New Evidence from Two-place Verbs

We have so far considered the counterevidence to the unaccusative restriction in the literature. The counterevidence examined involved only one-place verbs. In this subsection, I will present new evidence against the restriction involving two-place unaccusative verbs. Consider (19) below:

- (19) Pittyaa-ga {kare-no/zibun-no/Ø}
 pitcher-NOM he-GEN/self-GEN/pro
 ude-o ot-Ø-ta
 arm-ACC break-CAUS-PST
 ‘The pitcher broke his arm.’

The subject in (19) can be construed in two ways, as an agent, who did the breaking, or as an affectee, whose arm underwent the breaking.

The fact that the ambiguity is not illusionary can be shown by the following example, where the agentive interpretation is negated and the affectee interpretation survives.

- (20) Pittyaa₁-ga {kare₁-no/zibun₁-no/Ø₁}
 pitcher-NOM he-GEN/self-GEN/pro
 ude-o ot-Ø-ta kedo,
 arm-ACC break-CAUS-PST but
 zibun₁-de-wa or-Ø-anak-at-ta
 self-INST-TOP break-CAUS-NEG-DV-PST
 ‘The pitcher broke his arm, but he didn’t
 break it himself.’

To obtain this kind of ambiguity, there are two conditions to be met (Inoue 1976): (i) a verb must be such that it does not necessarily select an agent (e.g., causative/inchoative verbs); (ii) there must be a “proximate” relation (e.g., inalienable possession relation) between the subject and the object. Thus, the ambiguity cannot be obtained with non-alternating verbs like *nagur(-u)* ‘punch’ in (21)a. This can be demonstrated by the conjunction test, as given in (21)b, where the sentence results in a contradiction due to the unambiguous subject.

- (21) a. Pittyaa₁-ga {kare₁-no/zibun₁-no/Ø₁}
 pitcher-NOM he-GEN/self-GEN/pro
 ude-o nagut-ta
 ude-ACC punch-PST
 ‘The pitcher punched his arm.’

- b. *Pittya₁-ga {kare₁-no/zibun₁-no/Ø₁}
 pitcher-NOM he-GEN/self-GEN/pro
 ude-o nagut-ta kedo,
 ude-ACC punch-PST but
 zibun₁-de-wa nagur-anak-at-ta
 self-INST-TOP punch-NEG-DV-PST
 ‘*The pitcher punched his arm, but he
 didn’t punch it himself.’

The lack of a “proximate” relation also makes the ambiguity unavailable, as shown in (22).

- (22) a. Pittya₁-ga {kare₁-no/zibun₁-no/Ø₁}
 pitcher-NOM he-GEN/self-GEN/pro
 batto-o ot-Ø-ta
 baseball.bat-ACC break-CAUS-PST
 ‘The pitcher broke his baseball bat.’
 b. *Pittya₁-ga {kare₁-no/zibun₁-no/Ø₁}
 pitcher-NOM he-GEN/self-GEN/pro
 batto-o ot-Ø-ta kedo,
 baseball.bat-ACC break-CAUS-PST but
 zibun₁-de-wa or-Ø-anak-at-ta
 self-INST-TOP break-CAUS-NEG-DV-PST
 ‘*The pitcher broke his baseball bat, but he
 didn’t break it himself.’

Moreover, the ambiguity becomes unavailable even when the two conditions are met, if the sentence undergoes *niyotte*-passive formation, which serves to eliminate the affectee reading, as shown in (23).

- (23) *Pittya₁-no ude-ga kare₁-niyotte
 pitcher-GEN arm-NOM he-by
 or-Ø-are-ta kedo,
 break-CAUS-PASS-PST but
 kare.zisin₁-wa or-Ø-anak-at-ta
 he.self-TOP break-CAUS-NEG-DV-PST
 ‘*The pitcher’s arm was broken by him, but
 he didn’t break it himself.’

Furthermore, the affectee subject passes the FNQ test, as in (24).

- (24) Gakusei-ga ziko-de san-nin
 student-NOM accident-LOC three-CL
 ude-o ot-Ø-ta kedo minna
 arm-ACC break-CAUS-PST but all
 zibun-de-wa or-Ø-anak-at-ta
 self-INST-TOP break-CAUS-NEG-DV-PST

‘Three (of the) students broke their arm in the accident, but they all didn’t break it themselves.’

The facts that only the agentive interpretation survives in *niyotte*-passives and that the affectee subject passes the FNQ test strongly suggest that the verb is unaccusative with the affectee subject.

If unaccusatives can appear in indirect passives, it is predicted that sentences with the affectee subject can be embedded under indirect passives. This prediction is borne out, with the affectee argument marked dative in this case, as shown in (25): the sentence can be construed in such a way that the pitcher didn’t cause, but his arm underwent, the breaking.

- (25) Kantoku-ga pittya₁-ni ziko-de
 coach-NOM pitcher-DAT accident-LOC
 Ø₁ ude-o or-Ø-are-ta
 pro arm-ACC break-CAUS-PASS-PST
 ‘The coach had the pitcher break his arm in
 an accident on him.’

All in all, substantial evidence points to the unaccusative restriction being too strong. Therefore, the alleged generalization is a tendency at most, and unaccusatives, monadic or dyadic, can appear as the base verb in indirect passives.

3 Deriving the Unaccusative Restriction Effects

We have seen that the unaccusative restriction is not valid as a descriptive generalization and what it is intended to capture is a tendency at most. However, the observed tendency is so strong that it is quite unlikely that an array of facts arises from accidents. Thus, there still remains something that demands an explanation.

In this section, I attempt to give an account of the observed tendency with an eye to dispensing with stipulations specific to indirect passives as much as possible. The basic line of thought I would like to pursue is that the aversion to unaccusative-based indirect passives comes from the preference for other alternatives, which arises as a result of pragmatic inferences. In a nutshell, if an unaccusative-based indirect passive is unacceptable, it is infelicitous because there is a better alternative: its causative-based counterpart

or active counterpart. Moreover, if it is still unacceptable with no better alternative, this results from the failure in the access to the relevant conceptual setting.

In the following, I will present an analysis in three steps, with the help of neo-Gricean principles.

3.1 The Q-Principle at Work: The Preference for Causatives over Inchoatives

If you consider again the unacceptable examples of unaccusative-based indirect passive that we saw in Sections 1 and 2, you will notice that the observed tendency is in large part supported by those with the inchoative alternants of causative-inchoative verbs. Moreover, replacing the inchoative verb with its causative counterpart renders the sentence acceptable, as shown by the contrast in (8), repeated here as (26) below.

- (26) a. Kodomo-ni mado-o
 child-DAT window-ACC
 war-Ø-are-ta
 break-CAUS-PASS-PST
 ‘A child broke the window on me.’
 b. *mado-ni war-e-rare-ta
 window-DAT break-INCH-PASS-PST
 ‘The window broke on me.’

I argue that part of the tendency can be restated in such a way that the causative alternant is preferred over its inchoative counterpart as the base verb in indirect passives, and moreover that this preference can be reduced to the classic observation on the use of the two alternants in general (Fillmore, 1981; McCawley, 1978, 1989): “you must expressly indicate an agent’s involvement in an event [with the causative alternant -TT] as soon as you know of the agent’s involvement in it” (McCawley, 1989: 315).

This observation can be reduced further to the following principle of neo-Gricean pragmatics:⁵

- (27) The Q-Principle
 a. Horn (1984)
 Say as much as you can [given I]. (p.13)
 b. Levinson (1987)
 Do not provide a statement that is informationally weaker than your knowledge of the world allows, unless providing a

stronger statement would contravene the I-principle (p.401)

In light of the Q-Principle, causative-based indirect passives like (26)a are more informative than, and thus are preferred over, those based on the inchoative alternants like (26)b, in the context where there is a salient agent in the embedded event. The use of the inchoative implies otherwise, thereby resulting in infelicity.

As it only partially explains the contrast in (26), the Q-Principle does not explain why (26)b is infelicitous when there is no contextually salient agent in the embedded event. We will turn to this in the next subsection.

3.2 The I-Principle at Work: The Preference for Actives over Indirect Passives

As the Q-Principle is operative, the I-Principle, given in (28), is also at work, being responsible for the preference for actives over their corresponding indirect passives:

- (28) The I-Principle
 a. Horn (1984)
 Say no more than you must [given Q]. (p.13)
 b. Levinson (1987)
 Say as little as necessary, i.e. produce the minimal linguistic information sufficient to achieve your communicational ends (bearing the Q-principle in mind) (p.402)

When we compare an indirect passive and its active counterpart with respect to informativeness, it is always the case that the former is more informative than, i.e. asymmetrically entails, the latter, with the difference being that the former expresses a relation in which the individual introduced by the indirect passive morpheme is adversely affected by the embedded event. Thus, if it is unclear to the hearer how the adverse relation is established between the individual and the embedded event, then the use of an indirect passive makes the utterance irrelevant and unnecessary, and that of its corresponding active form suffices.

For brevity’s sake, I assume that indirect passives based on causatives (or, transitives for that matter) trivially satisfy the I-Principle because there is no observed aversion to them and it is fairly easy to come up with contexts where the adverse relation is properly established.

⁵ The I-Principle corresponds to Horn’s (1984) R-Principle.

This said, consider the following examples:

- (29) a. *Kigi-ni seityoo-s-are-te
 tree.tree-DAT growth-DV-PASS-CONJ
 uti-ni hi-ga atar-anai (<-anak-Ø)
 home-DAT sun-NOM hit-NEG-NPST
 ‘I am adversely affected by the trees
 growing, which blocks out the sunlight on
 my house.’
 a'. Kigi-ga seityoo-si-te [...]
 tree.tree-NOM growth-DV-CONJ
 b. *Okane-ni naku-nar-are-te
 money-DAT lost-INCH-PASS-CONJ
 kaimono-ga deki-nak-at-ta
 shopping-NOM do.POT-NEG-DV-PST
 ‘My money disappeared on me and I could
 not do the shopping.’
 b'. Okane-ga naku-nat-te [...]
 money-NOM lost-INCH- CONJ

(29)a involves a non-alternating unaccusative, and (29)b the inchoative alternant. Moreover, for (29)b, suppose the context where there is no salient agent in the embedded event. In both the examples, though some unfavorable consequence is explicitly stated in the second conjunct to facilitate the judgments, the active form is preferred over the indirect passive counterpart. This is because, in normal situations, it is nonsense to attribute responsibility to inanimate objects, such as trees or money, which have no control over what happened. Therefore, since it makes no sense unless some special context is given, the use of an indirect passive is irrelevant and unnecessary, and thus, that of its active counterpart is more preferable.

In accounting for (29), I mention the dative subject of the embedded event being responsible for it, following the spirit of Kuno and Takami (2002), who invoke the notion of animacy and propose the hierarchy expressing preference for the dative subject (i.e., human > animate > natural force > inanimate).

I take a step forward by arguing that Kuno and Takami’s hierarchy can be captured in terms of Dowty’s (1991) proto-agent properties in (30), with the hierarchy effects dissolved into the number of proto-agent properties that the dative subject has. Moreover, for an indirect passive to be felicitous with an inanimate, insentient being as the embedded dative subject, it should be understood as having at least (30)c and hence some degree of

controllability over the event in which it is a participant; otherwise, the use of the indirect passive would be infelicitous, as shown in (29).⁶

- (30) Contributing properties for Proto-agent
 a. volitional involvement in the event or state
 b. sentience (and/or perception)
 c. causing an event or change of state in another participant
 d. movement (relative to the position of another participant)
 (e. exists independently of the event named by the verb)

(Dowty, 1991: 572)

It should be emphasized that in Dowty’s original system, proto-role properties are lexical entailments coded by the predicate. Here I assume that they are also properties that are inferred for the satisfaction of the I-Principle. In other words, they can contribute to pragmatic meaning as well as lexical semantic meaning. Thus, it is possible that, even when a predicate does not entail the sentience of an argument that it takes, the argument should be understood as sentient as imposed by the I-Principle and allowed by the context.

Returning to indirect passives based on the inchoative alternants of causative/inchoative verbs like (26)b and (29)b, it is now clear that they end up violating either the Q- or the I-Principle, irrespective of the presence of a salient agent in the embedded event. Likewise, indirect passives based on non-alternating unaccusatives violate the I-Principle. This way, we effectively derive the aversion to unaccusative-based indirect passives, without making recourse to stipulations such as the unaccusative restriction. Note, however, that this only holds when normal contexts are involved, and, in what follows, we will see cases where unaccusative-based indirect passives are allowed.

To sum up, the aversion to unaccusative-based indirect passives is in fact the preference for such alternatives as causative-based indirect passives or unaccusative actives, which can be explained in terms of the general neo-Gricean principles. Therefore, pragmatic inferences play a crucial role in deriving the unaccusative restriction effects.

⁶ Natural phenomena such as rain seem irrelevant to (30), but the required adverse relation can be easily established for them, thereby satisfying the I-Principle.

3.3 When Unaccusative-based Indirect Passives are Felicitous

If the present approach is on the right track, it is predicted that unaccusative-based indirect passives are felicitous when they best satisfy both the Q- and the I-Principles. Specifically, they should be possible if the following two conditions are met: (i) there should be no contextually salient agent in the embedded event; (ii) the individual introduced by the indirect passive morpheme must be adversely affected by the embedded event for which its dative subject argument is responsible. In the following, I will show two cases which satisfy both.

First, consider again the examples with an animate being as the embedded dative subject, as in (10)b, (15), and (16)a. They are felicitous because they can be construed as utterances in the contexts which trivially satisfy both (i) and (ii): the dative subject is sentient and with some degree of controllability, and thus it can be held responsible for what happened. Thus, the prediction is clearly borne out, and as far as I can see, this much is uncontroversial.

The other case which satisfies both (i) and (ii) involves inanimate beings as the dative subject, and most examples of this kind fall under the M-Principle of Levinson (2000), given in (31), and they vary greatly in acceptability judgments.⁷

(31) The M-Principle (Levinson 2000: 136)

Indicate an abnormal, non-stereotypical situation by using expressions that contrast with those you would use to describe the corresponding normal, stereotypical situation.

Simply put, according to the M-Principle, the use of a marked expression will implicate a marked message or situation. Such a message or situation often requires the hearer to stretch the imagination so as to comprehend the relevant conceptual setting, and thus, the acceptability of the marked expression depends on whether or not that relevant conceptual setting can be successfully accessed or not. The successful access renders the marked expression acceptable and felicitous, while the failure in the access renders it unacceptable and unnecessary, eventually the expression resulting in a violation of the I-Principle.

⁷ We are not concerned with the question of whether the M-Principle is an epiphenomenon.

With this consideration in mind, let us quickly go over the following two examples, one involving a marked situation and the other a marked message. I do not discuss their acceptability status, only explicating their marked contexts of utterance.⁸

Suppose the following marked situation: Taro had an artificial tooth for one of his upper front teeth, but he was annoyed because it frequently came out despite all his efforts to the contrary. It just came out by itself again and again. What was worse, his tooth came out at one of the most inappropriate occasions, when he was on a lunch date. Later, in response to the question of how the date went, Taro described the incident as follows:

- (32) Mata ha-ni nuk-e-rare-ta
again tooth-DAT come.out-INCH-PASS-PST
'My tooth came out on me again.'

Next, suppose the following context: due to a sharp decline in BMR in his mid-thirties combined with a fattening diet, Taro gained 10 kg in one month. Since he did not want to accept the rightful responsibility for the result of his action, he said the following in an attempt to impute his overweight to something else:⁹

- (33) Ikinari taizyuu-ni
abruptly weight-DAT
hu-e-rare-ta (<huy-e-rare-ta)
increase-INCH-PASS-PST
'Weight gain happened abruptly on me.'

These examples will lend further support to the present approach, provided that they are acceptable.

In this subsection, we have seen that unaccusative-based indirect passives are acceptable when the pragmatic principles are satisfied. Moreover, in case they are still unacceptable, the unacceptability results from the failure in the access to the relevant conceptual setting.

4 Concluding Remarks

We started with the validity of the unaccusative restriction and rejected it in the presence of a variety of counterevidence. Instead, we provided an alternative pragmatic account, couched in neo-

⁸ Even for the 'conservative' speakers, who detest them, anthropomorphosis, or personification, works as a wildcard.

⁹ This falls under the case of flouting the Q-Principle.

Gricean terms, for the unaccusative restriction effects, i.e. the aversion to unaccusative-based indirect passives. The current approach derives the effects without stipulations specific to indirect passives, while leaving room for exceptional instances to the restriction, which I take to be an advantage over the rigid syntactic approach.

Since this paper is quite restricted in its scope, there are many questions that are left out. One question particularly relevant to the present account is how to define the alternatives. In this paper, I simply take it for granted that causative-based indirect passives and active unaccusatives are among the alternatives to consider in the process of pragmatic inferencing. Needless to say, a complete account should give an analysis of what mechanism makes such competition possible.

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