The Agent/Affectee ambiguity and beyond

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This paper investigates sentences whose subject can be interpreted either as an Agent or an Affectee in Japanese and English. It argues that a purely semantic approach (Amano 1995) and a causation-based approach (Kageyama 1996) cannot be maintained as they stand, and shows that a syntactic factor must be involved in determining the distribution of Affectees. Specifically, it proposes a Case-theoretic approach in conjunction with minimal assumptions about the argument structure of verbs. Evidence in favor of this approach comes from languages in which an Agent and an Affectee can co-occur.

1. Introduction
1.1. The Agent/Affectee ambiguity

This paper is primarily concerned with ambiguous sentences as in (1):[1]

(1) a. Taroo-ga   ude-o   ot-ta (<or-Ø-ta)
    Taro-NOM   arm-ACC   √break-CAUS-PST
    'Taro broke his arm.'
  b. Taroo-ga   kaze-de   boosi-o   tob-asi-ta (<tob-as-ta)
    Taro-NOM   wind-in   cap-ACC   √fly-CAUS-PST
    'Taro had his cap fly away in the wind.'
    (Lit. 'Taro flew his cap.'; * in English)

When the arm is understood as Taro's in (1a), and when Taro is understood as wearing his cap in (1b), the sentences are ambiguous between two readings, each involving a distinct interpretation of the subject. In one reading, Taro is the person who instigated the breaking of the arm in (1a), and is the person who

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[1] I apologize to the reader in advance for this paper being full of brutal examples. The following abbreviations are used in the glosses: NOM = nominative; ACC = accusative; DAT = dative; TOP = topic; 1 = first person; 3 = third person; SG = singular; PL = plural; CAUS = causative; INCH = inchoative; PST = past; NEG = negative; COP = copula; GER = gerundive. Moreover, √ indicates a morphological root, and it should not be confused with a category-neutral root proposed by Marantz (1997), which is adopted in this paper.

acted upon the cap in order for it to fly in (1b).   On the other reading, Taro does not instigate, but rather, merely undergoes the event in which he is involved, by means of possessing the object.   The same holds in English to a varying degree.   The former interpretation of the subject is customarily called Agent.   For want of a suitable technical term, I will call the latter Affectee.

It can be shown that sentences like (1) are truly ambiguous: since no contradiction arises in conjoining a VP with its negated counterpart in (2), it must be that the two subjects receive different interpretations.   The presence of an emphatic reflexive in one of the conjuncts facilitates the judgment, as it forces the subject to be interpreted as an Agent.

(2) a. Taroo-ga   ude-o   ot-ta (<or-Ø-ta)   kedo
         Taro-NOM   arm-ACC   √break-CAUS-PST   but
         (zibun-de-wa)   or-Ø-anak-at-ta (<-ar-ta)
         self-by-TOP   √break-CAUS-NEG-COP-PST
         'Taro broke his arm, but he didn't break it (himself).'
    b. Taroo-ga   kaze-de   boosi-o   tob-asi-ta (<tob-as-ta)   kedo
         Taro-NOM   wind-in   cap-ACC   √fly-CAUS-PST   but
         (zibun-de-wa)   tob-as-anak-at-ta (<-ar-ta)
         self-by-TOP   √fly-CAUS-NEG-COP-PST
         'Taro had his cap fly away in the wind, but he didn't do it (himself).'
         (Lit. 'Taro flew his cap, but he didn't do it (himself).'; * in English)

However, the Agent/Affectee ambiguity is not always available, and the distribution of Affectees is more restricted than that of Agents.   Inoue (1976) has shown that there are two descriptive generalizations concerning the distribution of Affectees, as follows:

(3) a. Verb class:
         Affectees   appear   with   verbs   that   show   the   causative/inchative
         alternation.
    b. The possession requirement
         There must be a "close" relation, typically that of possession, between
         the subject and the object.

Thus, (4) and (5) are unacceptable with their subjects interpreted as an Affectee. This is because (4) contains a transitive verb that does not enter into the causative/inchoative alternation, and because (5) does not involve a relation of possession between the subject and the object.

(4) *Taroo-ga   ude-o   nagut-ta (<nagur-ta) kedo
     Taro-NOM   arm-ACC   punch-PST   but
     (zibun-de-wa)   nagur-anak-at-ta (<-ar-ta)
     self-by-TOP   punch-NEG-COP-PST
     'Taro punched his arm, but he didn't do it (himself).'

(5) *Taroo-ga   Ziroo-no boo-o   ot-ta (<or-Ø-ta)   kedo
    Taro-NOM   Ziro-GEN stick-ACC √break-CAUS-PST   but
    (zibun-de-wa)   or-Ø-anak-at-ta (<-ar-ta)
    self-by-TOP   √break-CAUS-NEG-COP-PST
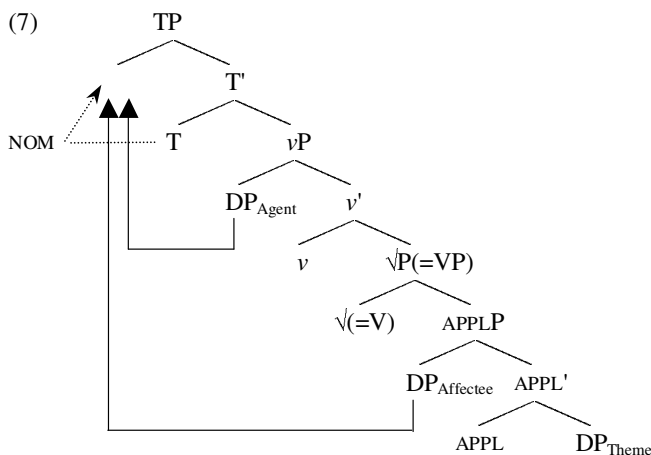   'Taro broke Ziro's stick, but he didn't break it (himself).'

Attempts have been given to explain the distribution of Affectees, and existing analyses are either purely semantic (Amano 1995) or assume a tight connection with lexical causatives (Kageyama 1996).   The aim of this paper is to argue that a syntactic factor, specifically Case, plays an important role in deriving the distribution of Affectees and that it explains the Agent/Affectee ambiguity in concert with the argument structure of the verbs involved.

1.2. Proposals

I will first refine the generalization concerning verbs that allow an Affectee subject in Japanese and English and then provide an analysis that explains why this generalization holds in Japanese and English.
   The generalization and the structure proposed in this paper are given in (6) and (7):[2]

(6) If the subject is interpreted as an Affectee, then the root of the verb involved
     does not necessarily require the presence of an external argument, where an
     external argument is a Proto-Agent (in the sense of Dowty 1991)—e.g. an
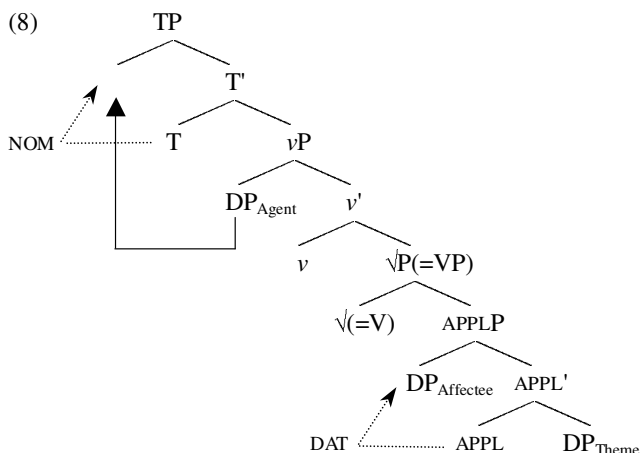   Agent, an Experiencer, and the like.

(7)

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[2] (6) is stated in terms of the category-neutral theory of lexical categories (Marantz 1997).   In this theory, lexical categories are derived from a combination of a functional category and a category-neutral root (√).   Thus, a verb and a noun are realized as a result of syntactic composition: specifically, [*v* √P] and [D √P], respectively.

On the basis of (6), I will propose, rhetorically put, that the Agent/Affectee ambiguity results from an Agent and an Affectee competing for nominative Case in Japanese and English, as depicted in (7), under the assumption that the Affectee theta-role is assigned by the functional head APPL(icative) (Marantz 1993, Low APPL in Pylkkanen 2000a, 2000b).

An immediate consequence of this Case competition approach is that verbs that do not fall under (6), i.e. verbs that require the obligatory presence of an Agent, do not allow an Affectee to appear due to their requirement, while verbs that do fall under (6), however, allow either an Agent or an Affectee (but not both) to appear, thereby yielding the Agent/Affectee ambiguity.

Evidence in favor of the Case competition approach to the Agent/Affectee ambiguity comes from languages with possessor datives such as Modern Hebrew and Spanish. Assuming that the dative-marked possessor argument is an Affectee in such constructions and, contrasting with Japanese and English, that inherent dative Case is available to Affectees in these languages, I thus argue that possessor dative constructions have the following structure when an Agent and an Affectee co-occur.

(8)

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              TP
             /  \
                T'
               /  \
       NOM    T    vP
                  /  \
             DP_Agent  v'
                      /  \
                     v    √P(=VP)
                         /   \
                    √(=V)   APPLP
                           /    \
                    DP_Affectee  APPL'
                                /   \
                  DAT ....... APPL   DP_Theme
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Moreover, I argue that the presence of such an extra Case feature (here, of dative) versus the lack thereof accounts for the differences in the distribution of Affectees between languages with the Agent/Affectee ambiguity, like Japanese and English, and those that allow the co-occurrence of an Agent and an Affectee, like Modern Hebrew and Spanish.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2, I refine the generalization concerning verbs that allow an Affectee subject in Japanese and English, and briefly summarize previous approaches to the distribution of Affectees. Section 3 discusses languages in which, unlike Japanese and English, an Agent and an Affectee can co-occur. I show here that the previous approaches to the Agent/Affectee ambiguity do not go beyond the Japanese and English data, and cannot account for this additional possibility of the co-occurrence of an Agent

and an Affectee. In section 4, an analysis is provided that explains the two types of languages in a unified way. Section 5 concludes the paper.

Due to space limitations, I will not discuss here the possession requirement posed on the subject and the object, mentioned in (3b). I will note, however, on this matter, that inalienable possession counts as what is characterized as a "close" relation in every language, but that languages vary as to whether alienable possession counts as such a relation.

2. Agent or Affectee: Japanese and English
2.1. Verbs

Let us consider verbs that allow the Affectee subject in Japanese and English. I propose the generalization in (6) that says that verbs with an Affectee subject are characterized in terms of the non-obligatory presence of an Agent.

There are two ways to show that a root does not require the presence of an Agent: the causative/inchoative alternation and process nominalizations. First, if a verb, or more precisely a verbalized root, enters into the causative/inchoative alternation, then an Agent is not necessarily required by the verb. Second, if an Agent cannot appear in the process nominal of a root, then the root does not require an Agent (Marantz 1997).

Inoue (1976) observes that the distribution of Affectees is tightly correlated with verbs that display the causative/inchoative alternation, as in (3a) above. This is illustrated in the following examples.

(9)   a.   Taroo-ga   ude-o   ot-ta (<or-Ø-ta)
           Taro-NOM   arm-ACC   √break-CAUS-PST
           'Taro broke his arm.'
    a'. Taroo-no   ude-ga   or-e-ta
           Taro-GEN   arm-NOM   √break-INCH-PST
           'Taro's arm broke.'
    b.   Taroo-ga   kaze-de   boosi-o   tob-asi-ta (<tob-as-ta)
           Taro-NOM   wind-in   cap-ACC   √fly-CAUS-PST
           'Taro had his cap fly away in the wind.'
           ('Lit. Taro flew his cap in the wind.'; * in English)
    b'. Taroo-no   boosi-ga kaze-de   ton-da (<tob-Ø-ta)
           Taro-GEN   cap-NOM   wind-in   √fly-INCH-PAST
           'Taro's cap flew away in the wind.'

On the other hand, verbs that do not allow an Affectee subject do not enter into the causative/inchoative alternation.

(10) a.   Taroo-ga   ude-o   nagut-ta (<nagur-ta)   (*Affectee)
           Taro-NOM   arm-ACC   punch-PST
           'Taro punched his arm.'

    a'. *Taroo-no   ude-ga   nagut-ta (<nagur-ta)
        Taro-GEN   arm-NOM punch-PST
        'Taro's arm punched.'   (* in English)
    b. Ziroo-ga   migi-asi-o   ket-ta (<ker-ta)   (*Affectee)
        Ziro-NOM   right-leg/foot-ACC kick-PST
        'Ziro kicked his right leg/foot.'
    b'. *Ziroo-no   migi-asi-ga   ket-ta (<ker-ta)
        Ziro-GEN   right-leg/foot-NOM kick-PST
        'Ziro's right leg/foot kicked.'   (* in English)

However, there are cases in which non-alternating verbs do allow an Affectee subject in English, as in (11).[3] This indicates that the generalization in (3a)—the correlation between Affectees and verbs showing the causative/inchoative alternation—holds in one way only: if a verb enters into the causative/inchoative alternation, then an Affectee subject can appear, but not vice versa.

(11)   a. John lost his son in the war, but he didn't lose him himself.
       a'. *John's son lost in the war.   ([OK] in the sense of being defeated)
       b. Mary injured her arm, but she didn't injure it herself.
       b'. *Her arm injured.

Although the examples in (11) do not pose problems under the one-way interpretation, (3a) nonetheless makes no predictions about examples like (10) and (11), since the verbs involved there do not show the causative/inchoative alternation.   This amounts to claiming that there is no regularity to be captured concerning the distribution of Affectees with non-alternating verbs.

    In fact, however, there is a regularity to be captured here, and this emerges when process nominalizations are considered.   As mentioned above, an Agent cannot appear in the process nominalization of a root when that root does not require an Agent (Marantz 1997).   In (12), then, we see from the process nominal readings involving *loss* and *injury* that the roots of the verbs in (11) do not require an Agent.

(12)   a. i. John's frequent loss of $50 or more (is shocking.)
           ii. *The frequent loss of $50 or more by John (is shocking.)
       b. i. John's frequent injury of/to his arm (is shocking.)
           ii. *The frequent injury of/to an arm by John (is shocking.)

Therefore, since positing the non-obligatory presence of an Agent captures both the causative/inchoative alternation and process nominalizations, the refined generalization in (6) subsumes cases covered by (3a), while additionally capturing the facts involving non-alternating verbs in (11) and correctly ruling out cases like (10).

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[3] There seem to be no corresponding cases in Japanese.   See Takehisa (2001) for discussion.

2.2. Previous approaches

Let us briefly review the previous approaches that attempted to explain the generalization concerning verbs with an Affectee subject in (3a).[4] In the following, I assume for the sake of discussion that the basic tenets of the approaches to be considered are not undermined in the face of cases involving non-alternating verbs with the Affectee subject in (11).

The distribution of Affectees has received attention in the Japanese literature, and previous approaches that sought an explanation for the generalization in (3a) either fall under one of two categories, or are a hybrid of the two. One approach can be called purely semantic. Its basic tenet can be formulated as in (13), and (14) has been proposed by Amano (1995) under this approach.

(13)   A semantic notion determines the distribution of Affectees.

(14)   An Affectee appears with a verb that denotes an activity of the subject and a change of state of the object in the Agent interpretation.

(14) can only be taken to hold in such a way that if the subject is interpreted as an Affectee, then the verb denotes an activity of the subject and a change of state of the object, as there are verbs that denote both an activity and a change of state but do not allow an Affectee, as illustrated in (15). As (15a) shows, the verb *koros-* 'kill' does not allow the Affectee interpretation of the subject, although it does denote a change of state, as shown in (15a), and an activity of the subject, which can be further specified as in (15c).

(15)   a. *Taroo-ga   titioya-o   korosi-ta   kedo
             Taro-NOM   father-ACC   kill-PST   but
             (zibun-de-wa)   koros-anak-at-ta (<-ar-ta)
             self-by-TOP   kill-NEG-COP-PAST
             'Taro killed his father, but he himself didn't kill him.' (* in English)
        b. *Taroo-ga titioya-o   korosi-ta kedo   sin-anak-at-ta (<-ar-ta)
             Taro-NOM father-ACC   kill-PST   but   die-NEG-COP-PST
             'Taro killed his father, but he didn't die.'   (* in English)
        c. Taroo-ga titioya-o   boo-de   tatai-te   korosi-ta (<koros-ta)
             Taro-NOM father-ACC   stick-with hit-GER   kill-PST
             'Taro killed his father by hitting him with a stick.'

Note that the verb does not have an intransitive alternant, as in (16), thus showing that reference to the causative/inchoative alternation or to the non-obligatory presence of an Agent is still necessary to characterize verbs that allow an Affectee subject, independently of (14).

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[4] In the previous literature, what is called an Affectee has been called an Experiencer.

(16)   *Taroo-no   titioya-ga   korosi-ta (<koros-ta)
         Taro-GEN   father-NOM   kill-PST
         'Taro's father died.' (Lit. 'Taro's father killed.'; * in English)

Amano's proposal is very similar to the rejected interpretation of (3a), given that the notion of change of state plays an important role in the causative/inchoative alternation (Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995), but it might also account for non-alternating verbs in (11) by assuming that verbs like *lose* and *injure* both denote a change of state.   Thus, it is hard to choose (6) or (14), as far as Japanese and English are concerned.

More importantly, Amano further proposes that the notion of change of state derives the Affectee interpretation in conjunction with the notion of possession, which is independently necessary to obtain the Affectee interpretation: if a part of X undergoes a change of state, then X undergoes a change of state.   As she argues, this explains why verbs must be such that they imply a change of state, i.e. lexical causatives.   In this sense, if an Affectee appears, then it undergoes a change of state in addition to being a possessor.   I will show in section 3 that this claim is untenable.

The other approach that I discuss can be called a causation-based approach, and analyses within this approach assume the following:

(17)   The distribution of Affectees is tightly correlated with the distribution of lexical causatives.

In other words, this approach claims that the presence of a lexical causative morpheme plays a crucial role in allowing an Affectee to appear.[5]   Moreover, given that it is impossible to have more than one occurrence of a lexical causative morpheme in a single sentence and in such a case, one of them is construed as a syntactic causative, this approach requires that either an Agent or an Affectee can appear in a single clause, but that the co-occurrence of the two is impossible.   For instance, Kageyama (1996) implements this idea by proposing the lexical rule in (18) and the lexical semantic templates in (19). To account for sentences like (19a), Kageyama assumes that a lexical causative morpheme can function either as CAUSE or as EXPERIENCE, as represented in (19b) and (19c), respectively.   The former function is a result of the lexical rule in (18), which is only applicable to verbs that show the causative/inchoative alternation.[6]

(18)   If a verb has the lexical semantic templates in (19b) and (19d), then it can have (19c).

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[5] Affectees cannot appear with syntactic causatives, with the matrix subject being an Affectee. An Affectee, being a possessor, must be a co-argument of its possessum (Takehisa 2001).

[6] (19c) has an independent problem.   It is implausible to encode the second occurrence of the variable *x* in the verb's lexical representation, as it is possible to have the Affectee interpretation in sentences like *John broke Bill's arm* under sufficiently rich contexts, e.g. if Bill's arm was transplanted onto John.

(19) a. Taroo-ga ude-o ot-ta (<or-Ø-ta)
   Taro-NOM arm-ACC √break-CAUS-PST
   'Taro broke his arm.'
 b. [x CAUSE [y BECOME *BROKEN*]] (x = Agent)
 c. [x EXPERIENCE [[x's y] BECOME *BROKEN*]] (x = Affectee)
 d. [x BECOME *BROKEN*]]
         (Kageyama 1996: 286, with minor changes)

The lexical rule in (18) makes crucial reference to the causative/inchoative alternation in the antecedent clause, but it does not explain why the distribution of Affectees is tightly correlated with verbs showing this alternation.   In this sense, Kageyama's analysis, in particular (18), is a restatement of the generalization in (3a) and at most does not go beyond the level of description.

 As briefly presented in section 1.2, I propose instead that the Agent/Affectee ambiguity arises from an Agent and an Affectee competing for Case when the verb involved does not necessarily require the presence of an Agent.   This allows a straightforward explanation for the observed restrictions in the distribution of Affectees in Japanese and English.   We turn next to look at languages in which an Agent and an Affectee can co-occur, and show that the Case competition approach to the Agent/Affectee ambiguity also provides an account for the co-occurrence of an Agent and an Affectee, which is again superior to the purely semantic and causation-based approaches just reviewed.

3. Agent and Affectee: Languages with possessor datives

Previous approaches to the Agent/Affectee ambiguity have only considered languages in which either an Agent or an Affectee, but not both, can appear in a given sentence.   Given that the defining characteristic of an Affectee is being a possessor, there are in fact languages in which both can appear.[7] Specifically, the possessor datives found in many languages can be taken to be Affectees. In this section, I will show that the distribution of Affectees in these languages is not as restricted as in Japanese and English.   I then argue for the Case competition approach by showing that the previous approaches reviewed do not go beyond the Japanese and English data, and that they fail to account for the differences between the two types of languages.

 One crucial difference between Japanese and English, on the one hand, and languages with possessor datives, on the other, is that dative Case is available only in 3-place predicates in Japanese and English, while it is available rather freely, in 1- and 2-place predicates as well as 3-place predicates, in the languages with possessor datives.   This is illustrated in the following

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[7] This is the reason why there must be a relation of possession between the subject and the object in Japanese and English.   The present treatment stipulates rather than explains the possession requirement.

examples from Modern Hebrew and English.[8] (20) and (21) involve 2-place predicates and 1-place predicates, respectively.

(20)   a.   ha-yeladim   zarku le-Gil   'et   ha-kadur le-tox ha-gina
            the-boys   threw DAT-Gil ACC   the-ball   into   the-garden
            'The boys threw Gil's ball into the garden.'
            'The boys threw the ball into Gil's garden.'
                                                                    (A. Shaked, S. Ofir p.c.)
       b.   *The boys threw the ball to Gil into the garden.
            'The boys threw Gil's ball into the garden.'
       c.   *The boys threw the ball into the garden to Gil.
            'The boys threw the ball into Gil's garden.'

(21)   a.   Gil   caxak   le-Rina   ba-mitbax
            Gil   laughed   DAT-Rina   in-the-kitchen
            'Gil laughed in Rina's kitchen.'   (Landau 1999)
       b.   ha-mitriya   nafla   le-Nina
            the-umbrella fell   DAT-Nina
            'Nina's umbrella fell down.'   (Arad 1998)
       c.   *Gil laughed in the kitchen to Rina.
            'Gil laughed in Rina's kitchen.'
       d.   *The umbrella fell to Nina.
            'Nina's umbrella fell.'

   With this difference in mind, let us look at the distribution of Affectees. First, as already mentioned above, it is possible to have an Agent and an Affectee in a single clause, as illustrated in (20a) and (21a) above, and (22) below, where agentive transitives and unergatives are involved.[9] It is clear that

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   [8] The claim about the difference in Case properties between the two types of languages does not apply to benefactive constructions in Japanese and English, which are left for future research.
   [9] Other languages that are claimed to have possessor datives are French, German, and so on. However, as reported by Guéron (1999), native speakers of French prefer a dative clitic to a full DP. If a dative argument is realized as a full DP, as in (i-a), a sentence degrades in acceptability.

(i)   a.   ?J'ai   cassé   le bras   à   Jean.
           I-have   broken   the arm   DAT   Jean
           'I broke Jean's arm'
      b.   Je lui   ai   cassé   le bras
           I   3SG.DAT   have   broken   the arm
           'I broke his/her arm.'

Since it can be assumed that (i-b) might involve an ethical dative, I will remain neutral here regarding whether the dative clitic in (i-b) is possessive or ethical, and leave it for further research.
   As for German, there is some microvariation among the dialects. Specifically, some dialects, but not all, allow a possessor dative associated with a DP inside a spatial PP (S. Mohr, p.c.):

(ii) (*)Hans hat dem   Peter   gestern   im   Haus   geraucht.
        Hans has the.DAT Peter   yesterday   in.the   house   smoked
        'Hans smoked in Peter's house yesterday.'   (T. Grüter, S. Wurmbrand p.c.)

Since I do not have a satisfactory answer at present, I also leave this for further investigation.

the verbs which can be involved in these languages are not restricted to lexical causatives, contrasting with Japanese and English. Kageyama's (1996) approach makes a wrong prediction that the co-occurrence of an Agent and an Affectee should be impossible here, contrary to fact.[10] The purely semantic approach makes no predictions in this respect.

(22) Spanish[11]

a. Les   revise   los   informes   a   los   estudiantes.
   3PL.DAT   1SG.revised   the   reports   DAT   the   students
   'I revised the students' reports.'   (Kempchinsky 1992)

b. Juan   le   nadó   en la   piscine   a   Ricardo.
   Juan   3SG.DAT   swam   in the   pool   DAT   Ricardo
   'Juan swam in Ricardo's pool.'   (P. Ruiz, E. Valenzuela p.c.)

Secondly, an Affectee can appear in cases where an Agent cannot appear, as in (23) and (24), where non-alternating unaccusatives or weather verbs are involved. This contrasts sharply with Japanese and English, where the distribution of Affectees is a subset of that of Agents. This fact also argues against the causation-based approach, since it claims that the distribution of Affectees is restricted to lexical causatives, and that, unlike the distribution of Agents, it is further restricted by the possession requirement, thereby being a subset of the distribution of Agents. As was true regarding the co-occurrence of an Agent and an Affectee, the purely semantic approach predicts nothing about the relation between the distribution of Affectees and that of Agents.

(23) Modern Hebrew

a. ha-kelev   ne'elam   le-Rina
   the-dog   disappeared   DAT-Rina
   'Rina's dog disappeared.'   (Landau 1999)

b. ha-mitriya   nafla   le-Nina
   the-umbrella   fell   DAT-Nina
   'Nina's umbrella fell down.'   (Arad 1998)

(24) Spanish

a. El   niño   se le   murió   a   Lola.
   The   child   SE 3SG.DAT   died   DAT   Lola
   'Lola's child died.'   (P. Ruiz, E. Valenzuela p.c.)

b. Nos   llovió   en   la   casa.
   1PL.DAT   rained   in   the   house
   'It rained in our house.'   (P. Ruiz, E. Valenzuela p.c.)

Note, however, that the arguments in this paper hold nonetheless.

[10] One might assume a lexical semantic template that accounts for the co-occurrence of an Agent and an Affectee. Once it is assumed, it should be explained why it does not exist in Japanese and English and why the two types of languages differ the way they do.

[11] Note that Spanish is a clitic-doubling language and the dative clitics in the Spanish examples are not ethical.

Thirdly, an Affectee cannot occur in cases where it cannot be Case-licensed (Landau 1999). Specifically, it is impossible to have an Affectee in addition to the dative-marked Goal argument in the languages under consideration, where only one dative argument is allowed per clause unless one of the two dative phrases is an ethical dative clitic, as shown in (25) and (26). These facts are straightforwardly explained if we assume that the Affectee and the Goal compete for dative Case. Neither the purely semantic approach nor the causation-based approach predict anything in this respect.

(25)   Modern Hebrew
    a. ?*Gil   hirbic   le-Rina   la-yeled
        Gil   beat-up   DAT-Rina   DAT-the-child
        'Gil beat up Rina's child.'
    b. ?*Gil   natan   le-Rina   la-misrad   konanit   sfarim   gdola
        Gil   gave   DAT-Rina   DAT-the-office   case   books   big
        'Gil gave Rina's office a big bookcase'

                                    (Landau 1999)

(26)   Spanish
    a. *Maria   le   dio   un proyecto   grande   a   la oficina
        Maria   3SG.DAT   gave   a   case   big   DAT   the office
        a   Juan.
        DAT   Juan
        'Maria gave a big case to Juan's office.'
    b. *Hablo   a   la   mujer   a   Ricardo.
        1SG.talk   DAT   the   wife   DAT   Ricardo
        'I talk to Ricardo's wife.'

                                  (P. Ruiz, E. Valenzuela p.c.)

The examples presented so far show that Affectees can appear with all verb classes, and that they resist receiving a coherent semantic characterization such as change of state. Thus, Amano (1995) cannot account for the distribution of Affectees in the languages under consideration. The same criticism applies to Kageyama (1996), given that the causative/inchoative alternation can be semantically characterized (Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995).[12]

To sum up, neither the purely semantic approach nor the causation-based approach go beyond the Japanese and English data, and thus fail to account for the distribution of Affectees in Modern Hebrew and Spanish. As mentioned at the outset of this section, the two types of languages differ with respect to Case properties, and this difference is directly correlated with differences in the distribution of Affectees. Taking the former to be the primary difference, I

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[12] Note that the lexical semantic treatment of the causative/inchoative alternation itself does appear tenable. My claim, though, is that, though the change-of-state semantics does account for the causative/inchoative alternation, it does not play a role in the distribution of Affectees per se: the Agent/Affectee ambiguity in Japanese and English results from an interplay between the argument structure of the verb, which hinges on the lexical semantics of that verb and on the unavailability of an extra Case in these languages.

give next a unified analysis of the distribution of Affectees in the two types of languages in terms of Case theory, and provide as well an explanation for the generalization in (6) that holds in Japanese and English.

4. Analysis

We have seen that there are two types of languages concerning the distribution of Affectees, and the differences between them can be reducible to the ability to license the Affectee argument—the availability of an extra Case feature.

Under the current Principles-and-Parameters framework (Chomsky 1995), it is assumed that the computational system of human language is invariant among languages, and that language variation is derived in terms of what enters into the computation. To derive the difference between the two types of languages under consideration, I take the different Case properties of the two types of languages at face value, and entertain the possibility that a formal feature, in particular, a Case feature, is what differentiates them. Specifically, I assume that inherent dative Case is available freely in 1- and 2-place predicates, as well as in 3-place predicates, in Modern Hebrew and Spanish, while it is not in Japanese and English (cf. Borer & Grodzinsky 1986, Kempchinsky 1992). The assumption that dative Case in these languages is inherent is supported by the fact that the dative-marked argument in an active sentence cannot be the subject in its passive counterpart, as shown by the following passive sentences corresponding to the active (20a). Cases involving unaccusative verbs as in (23) and (24a) also lend further empirical support to this assumption, in that the Theme argument, which is lower than the Affectee argument, moves to SpecTP to receive nominative Case.

(27) a. ha-kadur nizrak   le-Gil   le-tox   ha-gina
          the ball   was-throw n DAT-Gil   into   the-garden
          'Gil's ball was thrown into the garden.'
          'The ball was thrown into Gil's garden.'
      b. *Gil   nizrak   et   ha-kadur le-tox   ha-gina
          Gil   was-thrown   ACC   the-ball   into   the-garden
          'Gil had his ball thrown into the garden.'
          'Gil had the ball thrown into his garden.'

Moreover, as depicted in (7) and (8) above, I assume that Affectee is assigned by the independent head APPL(icative) (Marantz 1993, Pylkkanen 2000a, 2000b), and that the APPL heads in the two types of languages differ in their ability to license the Affectee argument. Thus, APPL in Japanese and English cannot license an Affectee in terms of Case, while APPL in Modern Hebrew and Spanish can.[13] This single difference in the ability of APPL derives the

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[13] Landau (1999) accounts for possessor datives in terms of movement (possessor raising). At the present stage of investigation, however, his arguments for a movement analysis do not

differences between the two types of languages.

Let us first consider Modern Hebrew and Spanish. Given that the APPL head in these languages has the ability to license an Affectee with inherent dative Case, it follows that an Agent and an Affectee can co-occur, being Case-licensed by T and APPL, respectively, and that an Affectee can appear where an Agent cannot appear. This is because the distribution of Affectees is solely determined by APPL in these languages. In contrast, the APPL head in Japanese and English does not have the ability to license the Affectee argument in terms of Case. Due to the lack of an "extra" Case feature, an Affectee cannot co-occur with an Agent: only one of them can appear in a single clause, being marked nominative. In this sense, the Agent and the Affectee compete for Case in these languages. Moreover, an Affectee cannot appear with verbs which obligatorily require an Agent are involved, since, in such cases, an Agent must appear and be marked nominative and, for that reason, an Affectee will be unable to be Case-licensed. Furthermore, non-alternating unaccusative verbs like *arrive* are excluded as well, since their internal argument will be marked nominative, due to their inability to check accusative Case. Hence, environments where an Affectee can appear are ultimately restricted to those involving transitive verbs which do not necessarily require the presence of an Agent. Therefore, the difference in Case-licensing between the two types of languages explains why they differ in terms of the distribution of Affectees and, in particular, why the generalization in (6) holds in Japanese and English.

5. Conclusion

We have seen that the differences in the distribution of Affectees between languages with the Agent/Affectee ambiguity such as Japanese and English, and languages with possessor datives such as Modern Hebrew and Spanish can be explained by a single factor: the availability of an extra Case feature. Given that Case is a syntactic property, the distribution of Affectees is a case in which syntactic factors determine the possible thematic interpretations for a given language, and this thus constitutes an argument against a purely lexical treatment of valency alternations.

Acknowledgments

convincingly exclude a base-generation analysis. I implement an analysis in terms of base generation as the null hypothesis, in consideration of the existence of base-generated dative arguments such as Benefatives. See Takehisa (2001) for discussion.

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