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Psychological deictic *–te kuru* compared to passive: The case of victims’ stories in Japanese

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Abstract: Japanese is often said to be stronger than English in construing an event and reporting it from the subjective position. While the auxiliary verb *–te kuru* ‘COME’ is one of the deictic devices that reports an event from a subjective perspective, very limited attention has been given to the use of *–te kuru* when it denotes ‘psychological deixis’ (Sawada 2000). Using on-line postings of sexual harassment victims, this study examines how the psychological *–te kuru* expresses the victims’ experience subjectively particularly in comparison with the much-studied passive structure. While showing that the two syntactic structures would often be interchangeable in the data, the study reveals that when the victim feels powerless and subdued by the offender’s act upon her/him, only the passive is used, while if the victim has a sufficient sense of power to feel anger, *–te kuru* tends to be used. The study argues that the semantic traits of the passive [associated with the perfective aspect] and *–te kuru* [which is interpreted as ‘psychological inchoative’ in this study] are reflected in the choices made in the victims’ narratives.

Keywords: *–te kuru*, passive, subjectivity, emotion, Japanese

1 Introduction

Although the speaker is generally at the deictic center in any language, the degree to which the subjective perspective of the speaker is communicated differs from language to language. Ikegami argues Japanese to be a “subjective language” (2005a: 22), claiming “the Japanese speaker’s utterance is characteristically profuse with marks, both overt and covert, indicating his or her involvement in what is to be conveyed” (see also Hirose 2013; Ikegami 2005b; Ikegami 2007; Ikegami 2011; Iwasaki 1993; Kuno and Kaburaki 1997; Masuoka 1991; Morita 1995; Sawada 1993; Uehara 2011).

Speaker-centeredness is manifested not only in the spatial dimension in Japanese, but also in the temporal, social and evaluative domains. As an

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example of social deictics, there are two verbs in Japanese that denote ‘to give,’ *ageru* ‘give’ and *kureru* ‘give (to me)’, the latter used only when something is given to the speaker or to someone whose perspective the speaker can readily adopt. Another example of social deictics is the well-developed honorific system, which clearly indicates where the speaker is socially located. When it comes to the evaluative domain, predicates that denote emotional inner states and processes, such as thoughts, physical sensations, desire and emotion, in their non-past, unmarked form, are automatically taken to refer to the speaker. We will discuss an example of temporal deictics in Section 2.1.

Not only lexical devices, but also syntactic structures, which we are concerned with in this study, play an important role in conveying a subjective (speaker-centered) perspective in Japanese. One example is the frequent use of the passive construction to ensure that a first person participant is presented as the subject, even when in the semantic role of patient:

< passive >

- (1) *Watasi-wa zyoosi-ni sawar-are-ta.*¹
 I-TOP boss-by AGT touch-PASS-PST
 ‘I was touched by my boss.’

< active >

- (2) ??*Zyoosi-ga watasi-o sawat-ta.*²
 boss-NOM I-ACC touch-PST
 ‘My boss touched me.’

1 Abbreviations used are as follows: NOM (Nominative); ACC (Accusative); GEN (Genitive); DAT (Dative); by AGT (By-agent); TOP (Topic); VOL (Volitional); QUO (Quotation); POL (Polite); INF (Infinitive); PST (Past); CONJ (Conjunctive linking form of a predicate); and HON (Honorific). The copula morpheme appearing after the inflectional adjective is marked as POL rather than COP as its function in this context is simply that of a politeness marker. The case particle *ni* is sometimes glossed as DAT and sometimes glossed with prepositions such as ‘to,’ ‘for’ or ‘in’ depending on the example. Small capitals are used for grammaticalized auxiliary verbs, showing the meaning of the original lexical verb.

2 It was noted by an anonymous reviewer that the following is natural:

- (i) *Zyōsi-ga watasi-no koto-o sawat-ta.*
 boss-NOM I-GEN thing-ACC touch-PST
 ‘My boss touched me.’

‘Noun no koto’ literally means ‘thing(s) of X’ and is often interpreted as ‘about X’. It functions to ‘set up a loose theme’ (see Martin 1987, p. 841, for example).

As shown in the English translation of (2), an agent who is not the speaker can take the subject position in English even when the speaker is involved in the action as a patient. However, in Japanese, the passive construction is strongly preferred in such a case, as illustrated in (1).

This preference for the use of the passive in such cases can be explained by the Empathy Hierarchy Hypothesis put forward by Kuno and Kaburaki (1997) and Kuno (1978). These authors propose the Speech-Act Empathy Hierarchy, which suggests that, in Japanese, “it is not possible for the speaker to empathize more with someone else than with himself” (631). They further propose the Surface Structure Empathy Hierarchy, claiming that “it is easiest for the speaker to empathize with the referent of the subject;” (647). In example (1), the subject of the sentence, whose referent attracts empathy most (in accordance with the Surface Structure Empathy Hierarchy) is the speaker rather than someone other than the speaker (in accordance with the Speech-Act Empathy Hierarchy).

Other scholars, such as Kuroda (1979) and Masuoka (1991: 191–207), for example, also discuss the relationship between subjectivity and the use of the passive in Japanese. Okutsu (1983: 78) argues that the frequent use of the passive construction in Japanese reflects the tendency to maintain the perspective of the speaker.

A subjective perspective can be conveyed through syntactic means in Japanese not only by the passive but also by marked active sentences. Two such constructions involve the benefactive auxiliary verb phrase *-te kureru*, grammaticalized from the lexical verb *kureru* ‘to give (to me),’ and the less-studied deictic auxiliary verb phrase *-te kuru*, derived from the verb *kuru* ‘to come.’ Both of these grammaticalized forms serve to tell a story from the speaker’s point of view.

< *-te kureru* > ‘to give (to me)’

- (3) *Zyoosi-ga ie made okut-te kure-ta.*
 boss-NOM house as.far.as accompany-CONJ GIVE-PST
 ‘My boss took [me] home (‘That was good for me).’

< *-te kuru* > ‘to come’

- (4) *Zyoosi-ga sawat-te ki-ta.*
 boss-NOM touch-CONJ COME-PST
 ‘My boss touched (me).’

In spite of the centrality of the speaker in these types of sentences, the first person does not usually appear explicitly as an argument (e.g., as a non-subject

argument in the role of patient or recipient), as shown in these examples. Nevertheless, these auxiliary verb phrases clearly imply the speaker's involvement in the event. In example (3), the benefactive *-te kureru* construction expresses that the event has benefited the speaker. The clear implication is thus that it was the speaker whom the boss took home. Likewise, in (4), even though the first person does not appear explicitly in the sentence, the use of the auxiliary verb phrase *-te kuru* leaves no doubt regarding whom the boss touched.

However, the contribution of *-te kuru* (grammaticalized from 'come') is not quite so straightforward as that of *-te kureru* (grammaticalized from 'give (to me)'). Sawada (2009: 2) refers to the function of *-te kuru* in sentences like (4) as that of expressing "psychological deixis" or "the *-te kuru* of directionality of action." He says it is used when "the speaker psychologically perceives the action of the agent (the subject) as being directed/planned towards the speaker (an action which has been 'manifested' within the speaker's domain)." In this study, we will call this use of *-te kuru* 'psychological *-te kuru*.'

Although Sawada (2009) analyzes the meaning and use of psychological *-te kuru* in detail with some reference to a small number of attested examples, there has been no research investigating how this type of *-te kuru* is used in natural language data. In a subjective and yet non-benefactive context, how is psychological *-te kuru* actually used? Furthermore, does it express a different kind of subjective meaning to that conveyed by the passive in examples like (1)?

This study will examine how a subjective perspective is expressed through the choice of syntactic structures in narratives in Japanese, with particular regard to the use of psychological *-te kuru* in comparison with the passive. The data source is a collection of narratives from a Japanese internet forum in which personal experiences of sexual harassment are reported. This genre of text was chosen as it was anticipated that there would be a concentration of instances where speakers report events from personal and subjective perspectives.³

In Section 2 below, I will discuss the semantic characteristics of psychological *-te kuru* in more detail, especially in comparison to those of the passive. Section 3 provides the analysis of the data from the Japanese internet forum. This will be followed by the Conclusion.

³ I will use 'the speaker' as a generic term for the first person in this study, even though the primary data source is in written form.

2 The semantics of psychological *-te kuru*

Before beginning the data analysis, in this section I will discuss the semantic characteristics of psychological *-te kuru* in more detail.

2.1 Temporal *-te kuru* and psychological *-te kuru*

The spatial deictic verb *kuru* ‘to come’ has been grammaticalized in various ways in Japanese following the conjunctive *-te* form of the main verb. The variety of meanings of the grammaticalized *-te kuru* have been analyzed from multiple perspectives (see for example, Alam 1999; Hasegawa 1996; Kaiser et al. 2001; Kindaichi 1976; Ōe 1975; Shibatani 2003; Teramura 1984; Yoshikawa 1976).⁴ In all grammaticalized uses of *kuru* the centripetal characteristic of the lexical verb meaning is evident, serving to locate the speaker centrally in space and time and to portray a sense of movement (physical or metaphorical) towards the center. In addition, different grammaticalized uses of *-te kuru* draw our attention to different aspects of the meaning of the lexical motion verb *kuru* ‘to come,’ i.e., a departure point (somewhere/someone other than the speaker), a destination point (the speaker) and the movement towards that destination.

Psychological *-te kuru*, which we are concerned with in this study, can clearly be seen as a metaphorical extension of this centripetal movement towards a speaker. I will re-cite example (4) below:

- (4) *Zyoosi-ga sawat-te ki-ta.*
 boss-NOM touch-CONJ COME-PST
 ‘My boss touched me.’

Moreover, psychological *-te kuru* also draws our attention to the departure point. This is analogous with the temporal use of *-te kuru* which denotes the onset of an event:

- (5) *Samuku nat-te ki-ta.*
 cold(INF) become-CONJ COME-PST
 ‘It started to become cold.’

⁴ In some of these studies, the various uses of *-te kuru* are compared to those of *-te iku*, another grammaticalized auxiliary verb phrase, derived from the lexical verb ‘to go.’ In others, its meanings are examined from the point of view of the division of spatial and aspectual characteristics. Still other researchers address its metaphoric meanings in the context of loss of elements of the meaning of the lexical verb *kuru* ‘to come,’ i.e., departure and destination points, etc.

Example (5) draws our attention to some point in the past when the event emerged, looking back at it from the here and now. In a similar way, psychological *-te kuru*, as in example (4), draws our attention to an event emerging in the periphery of the speaker's psychological domain. In this aspectual inchoativeness, the temporal and psychological uses of this auxiliary are analogous.

2.2 Non-adversity of psychological *te-kuru*

Although psychological *-te kuru* may be associated with an adversative meaning, adversity is not its inherent meaning:

- (6) *Kare-ga kekkonsi-yoo to it-te kita.*
 boy.friend-NOM get.married-VOL QUO say-CONJ COME-PST
 'My boyfriend proposed to me.'

Psychological *-te kuru* can even be followed by the benefactive auxiliary *-te kureru* (grammaticalized from 'give (to me)'):

- (7) *Tomodati-ga issyoni ik-oo to it-te ki-te kure-ta.*
 friend-NOM together go-VOLQUO say-CONJ COME-CONJ GIVE-PST
 'My friend offered to go with me.'

If adversity were part of the meaning of the psychological *-te kuru* construction, it would clearly not be able to co-occur with the beneficial *-te kureru*.

2.3 Direct or indirect involvement of the speaker

Psychological *-te kuru* can express either the direct or indirect involvement of the speaker. Example (8) shows direct involvement and (9), indirect involvement:

< speaker's direct involvement >

- (8) *Zyoosi-ga karakat-te ki-ta.*
 boss-NOM tease-CONJ COME-PST
 'My boss teased me.'

<speaker's indirect involvement>

(9) *Teki-ga banto-o si-te ki-ta.*

opponent-NOM bunt-ACC do-CONJ COME-PST

'The opponent used a bunt (as a strategy towards our team).'

(Sawada 2009: 10)

In (8) the speaker is a participant in the event 'the boss teasing me' while in (9) the event of 'the opponent using a bunt' does not involve the speaker.

The use of psychological *-te kuru* to express both the direct and indirect involvement of the speaker reminds us of the relationship between direct and indirect passive.⁵ However, while the indirect passive in Japanese always expresses an adversative meaning, the indirect involvement expressed by psychological *-te kuru* does not necessarily carry an adversative meaning.

2.4 The semantics of psychological *-te kuru* compared to those of the passive

In this section, I will reconsider J. Sawada's observation on the meanings of psychological *-te kuru* in light of clearly definable semantic criteria to understand the semantic nature of this construction, especially in comparison to those of the Japanese passive construction with a human subject.⁶

5 The syntactic and semantic workings of the 'direct passive' in Japanese are similar to those of the passive in English: The patient or the recipient is expressed as the subject of the sentence, the agent is marked as a peripheral argument, and the verb occurs in the passive form. On the other hand, with the 'indirect passive' in Japanese, syntactically, the person who is affected by the event is added as an additional argument, the subject. It always expresses an event that has an adversative effect. For example, the indirect passive (i) is similar to (9) in that the event of 'the opponent using a bunt' (a tactic in baseball) does not involve the speaker. However, (i) expresses that the speaker is affected adversely. Note that, in this example, the speaker's team (the subject) is not overtly expressed:

(ii) *Teki-ni banto-o s-are-ta.* (Sawada 2009:10)

opponent-by AGT bunt-ACC do-PASS-PST

'The opponent used a bunt on us.'

6 When the subject is not human, the Japanese passive is used in a variety of different ways [see for example, Iwashita (2007), Okutsu (1983), Masuoka (1991)], some of which are highly objective. These additional uses are beyond the scope of this paper.

Both the passive and the *-te kuru* forms are used when telling a story from the speaker's perspective and in this respect they are often interchangeable:

- (1) *Watasi-ga zyoosi-ni sawar-are-ta.*
 I-NOM boss-By AGT touch-PASS-PST
 'I was touched by my boss.'
- (4) *Zyoosi-ga sawat-te ki-ta.*
 boss-NOM touch-CONJ COME-PST
 'My bossed touched me.'

Not only are the passive and *-te kuru* constructions often interchangeable, but as we will observe further in the data presented in Section 3, they can be conjoined freely. This is because they both report the event from the same point of view, i.e., from the point of view of the speaker.

However, there are some important semantic features of psychological *-te kuru* which differ from those of the passive construction. The first of these differences pertains to the difference in voice. The *-te kuru* construction is an active sentence. It maintains the actor – a participant other than the speaker – in the subject position, giving this participant full agency (i.e., someone does something that affects the speaker). The sense of direction in the meaning of 'coming' as well as the agency of someone other than the speaker in the *-te kuru* construction accords with J. Sawada's observation, noted earlier, that the subject's action is "directed/planned towards the speaker" (2009: 2). In the passive counterpart, however, the actor, and along with it the agency of this participant, is backgrounded.

Second is the difference pertaining to aspect. Sawada (2009) notes that there are cases in which psychological *-te kuru* cannot replace its passive counterpart, which suggests another crucial semantic difference between these two subjective constructions:

- (10) *Watasi-wa yakuza-ni ude-o or-are-ta.*
 I-TOP yakuza-by AGT arm-ACC break-PASS-PST
 'I got my arm broken by a yakuza.'
 (Sawada 2009: 8)
- (11) * *Yakuza-ga watasi-no ude-o ot-te ki-ta.*
 yakuza-NOM my arm-ACC break-CONJ COME-PST
 'A yakuza broke my arm.'
 (Sawada 2009: 8)

Sawada (2009: 8) points out that the reason why psychological *-te kuru* cannot be used in (11) is because the “*shūketsusei* ‘culmination’ [of the event of breaking an arm] contradicts the meaning of *-te kuru*, which expresses the emergence [of an event].”⁷ This is because the concepts of a completion and an onset, referring to the same event simultaneously, seem to contradict each other. An action such as ‘touching’, on the other hand, can be described with *-te kuru* even if the touching only happened once and even if it is conceived of as an event that culminated in the past. The notion of *shūketsusei* which J. Sawada uses should not be interpreted as the culmination of an action temporally construed, but rather psychologically construed. In this sense I would describe the deictic meaning of psychological *-te kuru* as “psychologically inchoative.” An event described by psychological *-te kuru* can be temporally culminating as long as it is construed as psychologically inchoative. From a pragmatic point of view, J. Sawada states “a *-te kuru* event has to be something to which the speaker can think up some counter-action and a further event is to take place” (2009: 8). This pragmatic implication comes from the very semantics of the psychological inchoativeness of *-te kuru*. Thus, if there were a further development to be expected in the context, (11) would be a well-formed *-te kuru* sentence. Observe, for example, sentence (11’):

- (11’) *Yakuza-ga mazu watasi-no ude-o ot-te ki-ta.*
 yakuza-NOM at first my arm-ACC break-CONJ COME-PST
 ‘A yakuza began by breaking my arm first.’

Note that when we construe the emergence of an event in one’s psychological territory, it may invoke surprise or shock. At the same time it assumes that the emergence point of the event is not unified with the very center of the psychological deixis, just as the beginning of an event is not unified with the present time.

Compared to these inchoative-like characteristics of *-te kuru*, the passive is associated instead with resultative aspect. Comrie notes: “there are certain correlations between aspect and voice, in particular between perfect (resultative) aspect and passive voice” (1981: 65). The psychological inchoativeness of *-te kuru* and the temporally construed resultative aspect of the passive do not form a binary contrast and cannot be compared in the same paradigm. Nevertheless, the contrast will potentially be revealing when it comes to comparing the use of these two syntactic forms in authentic texts.

⁷ Phrases in the square brackets were inserted by the current author.

Thus, the semantic nature of the –psychological *-te kuru* in relation to passive can be understood in light of (a) the voice and the agency of the actor, (b) the aspectual difference of inchoative (psychological *-te kuru*) and resultative (passive), and (c) the semantic domain in which the aspect is projected, i.e., the psychological dimension (in the case of psychological *-te kuru*) and the temporal dimension (in the case of the passive).

Yoshikawa (1976: 219) notes that a semantic feature pertaining to psychological *-te kuru*, which is absent in the passive construction, is that it is likely to conjure up an event “vividly”. We can explain this in light of the semantic differences discussed above: Psychological *-te kuru* retains the agency of the subject which maintains focus on the action; the focus of the passive is mainly on the resultative state, and both agent and action are defocused. The sense of “vividness” of *-te kuru* also comes from the original meaning of a motion event of ‘coming’, which assumes a span of space and time through which a change (emergence, motion, arrival) takes place.

Summing up, both psychological *-te kuru* and passive constructions report an event from the speaker’s point of view. Psychological *-te kuru* maintains the agency of the actor (a person other than the speaker) and draws our attention to the emergence of the action, intended towards the speaker, in the speaker’s psychological territory. This event is portrayed in a vivid way and is one which the speaker may feel allows scope for further development or responsive action. In the passive, on the other hand, the agent is backgrounded, the action is defocused, and the attention is on the resultative outcome of the event. These semantic characteristics of psychological *-te kuru*, and the pragmatic implication suggested by Sawada (2009), are likely to be relevant in the choice of a subjective construction in the victims’ stories investigated in this study.

3 Use of psychological-*te kuru* and passive in victims’ stories

In this section, we will examine how the *-te kuru* and passive constructions are used in the primary data used for this study, a Japanese forum site *Sekuhara keijiban mikuru* ‘Sexual Harassment Forum *Mikle*.’⁸ Out of the 200 postings

⁸ The origin of the naming of the forum, *Mikle*, pronounced as /mikuru/ is not certain. It is most likely that it comes from an animation character *Mikle*. Judging from the catch phrase of the site *minna minikuru mikuru* ‘everyone comes to see (this site),’ *Mikle* (/mikuru/) may be a contracted pun on the phrase *minikuru* which means ‘come to see.’

examined, 159 contained reference to sexual offences. In these postings, 461 tokens of verbs were found that describe sexual events in which the speaker was involved, and felt physically, verbally or visually harassed. First, for each of the 159 postings, the following factors were noted: (a) the emotional and physical reaction of the victim to the offence, (b) the gender of the victim,⁹ (c) the relationship between the victim and the offender.¹⁰ Second, for each of the 461 verbs extracted from these postings, the following factors were noted: (a) the direct or indirect involvement of the victim, (b) the type of offence (e.g., physical, verbal), and (c) the syntactic constructions used for each verb. Note that each verb was counted as one token; many sentences contained more than one verb and in some cases these appeared in a variety of forms: passive, *-te kuru*, *-te kuru-passive* combined, and unmarked active.

3.1 Frequency of subjective constructions used in the victims' stories

The writers of these Japanese texts containing reference to sexual offences predominantly used subjective constructions. Among the total of 461 verbs that described the offences, 409 (89%) of the verbs were in either the passive or psychological *-te kuru* construction (or both). As can be seen in Table 1, of the two constructions, the passive was much more commonly used, suggesting that *-te kuru* carries more specific meaning in subjective reporting.

Here are some of the examples of the passive and *-te kuru* construction that describe the direct involvement of the victim:

< passive >

- (12) *Hoppe ya kuti-ni kisu-are-tari, ...*
 cheek and mouth-DAT kiss-PASS-and
 '(I) get kissed on my cheeks and lips and, ...'

⁹ Out of the 159 postings, all but five were posted by females.

¹⁰ Out of the 159 postings, in 94 cases the offences occurred in the workplace and in all these cases the offenders were male. In the 72 of these workplace cases the offenders were either in a direct supervisory relationship to the victim or were older than the victims, while in 20 cases the status or age relationship was not clear from the context. There were only two cases where the offender was junior to the victim. In 17 of the 159 cases offences occurred in a family or extended family situation and were attributed to male offenders. In just one case the victim was a male and the offender a female (his mother). In 10 cases offences occurred in an aged care facility and were attributed to male patients. Other offenders included strangers, teachers and customers in shops.

Table 1: Breakdown of the unmarked active and the marked subjective forms of the verbs in the Japanese texts from the internet forum.

Subjectivity	Syntactic structures	Direct involvement		Indirect involvement	
[+ subjective]	passive	282	3	285	409(89%)
	-te kuru	121	1	122	
	-te kuru-passive	2	0	2	
[-subjective]	unmarked active	52	0	52	52(11%)
total		457	4	461	461

- (13) *Te-o tunag-are-tari,*
hand-ACC hold-PASS-and
'My hand gets held and, ...'

<psychological -te kuru >

- (14) *Sugoi ikioi-de sukaato-o mekut-te ki-te, ...*
extreme force-with skirt-ACC flip.up-CONJ COME-CONJ
'(He) flipped up my skirt up with great force and ...'

- (15) *Taikei-no koto-o situkoku it-te kuru.*
body.shape-GEN thing-ACC persistently say-CONJ COME
'(He) persistently talks to me about my body shape.'

The two subjective constructions often co-existed within one posting and sometimes they even co-occurred within a single sentence:

- (16) *Denwa-o si-te ki-tari, syokuzi-ni sasow-are-tari*
telephone-ACC do-CONJ COME-and dinner-to invite-PASS-and
si-te komat-te imasu.
do-CONJ troubled-CONJ is (POL)
'(I) am bothered as he phones me and I get invited out to dinner and so on.'

In (16), the elided subject of the verb *denwa o shite kuru* 'phone (me)' is the offender/actor and that of *sasowareru* 'be invited' is the victim/undergoer. Both constructions are juxtaposed within the *~tari ~tari* adverbial construction, which is used to give illustrative instances of actions and events. An example like this suggests how closely the two constructions work together in their common role

of maintaining a subjective perspective. We will discuss the different factors that may motivate the appearance of one construction rather than the other in detail in Sections 3.2–3.4 below. In Section 3.5 we will discuss the anomalies of the unmarked active verbs noted in Table 1.

3.2 The relationship between how the victim reacts and the subjective construction used

We discussed in Section 2.4 that while both psychological *-te kuru* and passive portray an event from a subjective point of view and they are interchangeable at times, the two constructions have different semantic characteristics. What factors might motivate a speaker to choose the psychological *-te kuru* construction over the passive?

In order to find out if there is any correlation between how the victim reacts to the offence and the construction used, the 159 postings were classified into four types: those in which only passives were used, both passive and *-te kuru* were used, only *-te kuru* was used, and only unmarked active sentences were used. The 159 postings were also classified according to the different reactions of the victims, on the basis of the hypothesis that the choice of construction may be linked to the types of emotion expressed elsewhere within the same posting. Table 2 shows the breakdown of the relationship between the types of constructions used in the posting and the nature of the reaction the victim expressed.

Table 2: Breakdown of the syntactic structures and the underlying attitudes of the victims in 159 postings from the Japanese internet site.

	Angry	Submissive	Mixed	Indecisive	∅	Favorable	Total
passive only	7	59	1	7	9	2	85
passive/ <i>-te kuru</i>	11	29	0	1	4	0	45
<i>-te kuru</i> only	11	5	1	1	3	1	22
unmarked active	2	2	0	0	3	0	7
total	31	95	2	9	19	3	159

Out of the 159 stories, 85 stories used only the passive (54%), 45 stories used both the passive and *-te kuru* (28%), 22 stories used only *-te kuru* (14%) and 7 stories used only unmarked active sentences. As the semantics of the two

constructions are not mutually exclusive, each highlighting different aspects of subjectivity, it is not surprising that there were stories in which both constructions were used.

The stories were classified into three types, according to the emotional and physical reactions of the victims. Generally ‘submissive’ was the most predominant reaction (95 cases, 60%) compared to ‘angry’ (31 cases, 19%). I have defined ‘angry’ and ‘submissive’ in the following manner. ‘Angry’ means that there were expressions in the story which suggest the victim’s anger and some accusatory remarks to show that the victim had at least some sense of potential power over the offender. These expressions include *hara ga tatu* ‘I am angry,’ *mukatuku* ‘I am angry,’ *iraira suru* ‘I am irritated,’ *kyooboo na kibun* ‘I am in a violent mood,’ *tatakaitai* ‘I want to fight,’ *ikari ga bakuhatusisoo* ‘My anger is about to explode,’ *keibatu ga hituyoo* ‘there is a need for a punishment [against the offender],’ etc. ‘Submissive,’ on the other hand, means that the victim’s response to the offending incident did not express anger or any sense of power over the offender, suggesting that the victim was in a weak position. These expressions include: *kowai* ‘I am scared,’ *kimoti ga warui* ‘it is gross,’ *komatte iru* ‘I am in trouble,’ *sinitai* ‘I want to die,’ *suguni yametai* ‘I want to quit [work] straight way,’ *nayande iru* ‘I am anguished,’ *turai kimoti* ‘it is a painful feeling,’ *kizutuku* ‘it hurts me,’ *syokku da* ‘it is a shock,’ etc. ‘Indecisive’ means that victim is indecisive about the nature of the offence and is simply asking if what they have experienced was indeed sexual harassment or not. ‘Ø’ means there was no indication of the victim’s reaction to the event expressed within the posting. ‘Favorable’ means that the victim thinks well of the offender.

If we examine the relationship between these types of reactions and the types of subjective constructions used in the posting concerned, a clear pattern emerges. Although the number of postings in which only *-te kuru* was used is much smaller than those in which only the passive or the combination of both structures was used, ‘anger’ is most frequently expressed in stories that only used *-te kuru* constructions (50%), less frequently expressed in ones that use both passive and *-te kuru* (25%) and least of all in stories that only use the passive (8%). Figure 1 illustrates the proportions clearly.

I propose that we can attribute these relationships to the semantics of *-te kuru* and the passive discussed earlier. The *-te kuru* form focuses on the emergence of an event in the speaker’s psychological territory. However threatening it may be, the event is portrayed as an emergence in the periphery of this psychological territory. Recall that Sawada (2009: 9) notes “a *-te kuru* event has to be something to which the speaker can think up some counteraction and a further event is to take place.” The victim feels that they at least have the power

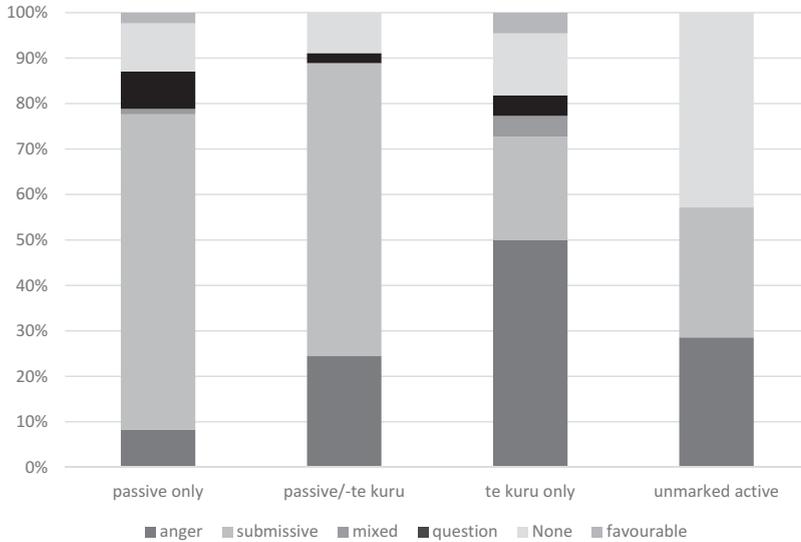


Figure 1: Underlying attitudes of the victims in stories and the syntactic structures used.

to feel angry towards the act of the offender and that they may even feel able to take action concerning the offence. On the other hand, as noted above, the passive is associated with the resultative aspect. Its use may simply imply the irreversibility of the completed action; thus it is less associated with reactions that contain anger or a sense of the victim's power to respond in some way, and more with those that involve psychological submissiveness.

3.3 The victim-offender relationship and the choice of constructions used

An examination of the relationship between the victim and the offender and the choice of subjective construction(s) used also revealed some interesting patterns. Firstly, only in the stories where the passive was used exclusively did we find comments that suggest that the victim holds some respect towards the offender or feels they should be submissive in some way to the offender. These might, for example, be situations in which the offender is a person who is a benefactor to the victim and the victim feels they should not accuse the offender because of this relationship. In such stories we find benefactive auxiliaries like *-te kureru* 'gives me the favour of doing/does for me' being

used to describe the offender's actions towards the victim in general—actions other than the sexual offence itself, that is. In other cases, the victim's sense of a lack of power in these stories in which only passive is used is expressed in part by overt reference to the offender's social status, as someone who is beyond the reach of accusation, such as *sitawareteiru hito* 'a person who is idolized,' *o-erai-sama* 'Mr Important,' *syokuba no erai hito* 'an important person at work.' Further, the presence of the polite title *-san* is used referring to the offender in some situations, such as *yopparatta o-kyaku-san* 'drunken customer' and *nyuukyosya-san*, 'resident.'

On the other hand, in the stories where only *-te kuru* was used and the passive did not appear at all, the victim often used derogatory or even condescending words to refer to the offender. This suggests their sense of power over the offender. Examples include: *zirozoro mite-kuru yatu* 'a person (derogatory) who stares at me,' *gehinna otoko* 'a vulgar man' (impolite term for 'a man'), *kaisya no ozisan* 'an old man at the company' (impolite term for 'an old man'), *sekuhara zizii* 'sexually frustrated old man' (derogatory term for 'an old man'). One of the victims described the action of the offender in general as *herahera shite* 'to brown-nose.' Very rough language was used in two cases: *Uzee n da yo* 'It bloody well irritates me' and *mazi kimoi* 'dead revolting.'

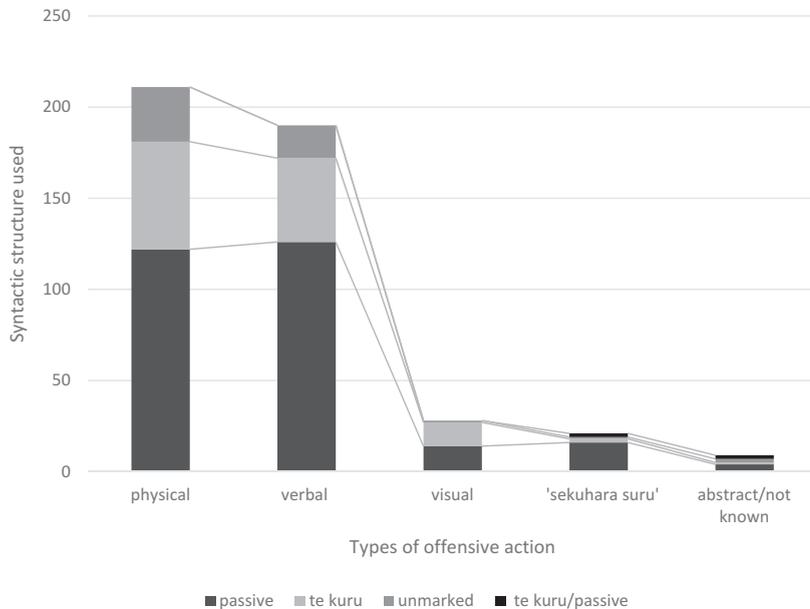
3.4 The relationship between the types of offensive action and the choice of subjective construction

In order to find out if a certain type of offence is expressed by a particular construction, 457 verbs that describe the speaker's direct involvement in the event were categorized into types of offensive act: 'physical,' 'verbal,' 'visual,' etc. The relationship between the type of offensive action and the construction used is shown in Table 3 (raw numbers) and Figure 2 (schematically illustrated).

As Table 3 and Figure 2 above show, no type of offensive action was expressed *exclusively* by either of the constructions. The ratios of passive and *-te kuru* used to describe 'physical' offences (58% vs. 28%) and 'verbal' offences (66% vs. 24%) were similar to the average occurrence of the passive (61%) and *-te kuru* (26%) across the whole of the data set. However, there were two instances of divergence from this pattern. First, although it must be acknowledged that the number was small (28 cases), a much higher proportion of *-te kuru* forms than appeared elsewhere in the data (13 out of 28, 46%) were used to report 'visual' offences such as 'watching' and 'staring'. For example:

Table 3: Relationship between the type of offensive action and the structures used.

	Physical	Verbal	Visual	' <i>sekuhara suru</i> '	Abstract/ not known	Total
passive	122 (58%)	126 (66%)	14 (50%)	16 (84%)	4	282 (61%)
<i>-te kuru</i>	59 (28%)	46 (24%)	13 (46%)	2 (10%)	1	121 (26%)
unmarked	30 (14%)	18 (10%)	1 (4%)	1 (6%)	2	52 (12%)
<i>kuru/passive</i>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2	2 (1%)
total	211	190	28	19	9	457

**Figure 2:** Relationship between the type of offensive action and the structures used.

- (17) *Onazi busyo-ni monosugoku ziroziro mi-te kuru*
 same section-in intensely staring-way look-CONJ COME
ozisan-ga imasu.
 old.man-NOM exist
 'In the same section, there is a man who stares at me very intensely.'

It may be plausible to attribute this anomaly to the physical situation: watching or staring at someone could be done from a much farther distance than

physically ‘touching’ or verbally ‘inviting’ or the like, and this may be reflected in the sense of distance conveyed by *-te kuru* between the periphery and the center of the psychological domain of the speaker.

In a second type of offensive action that did not fit the usual pattern, 16 out of 19 instances (84%) of the verb *sekuhara-suru* ‘to sexually harass,’ which refers generically to an act of sexual harassment, were expressed in the passive:

- (18) *Mise-no zyooren-san-ni sekuharas-are-te*
 restaurant-GEN regular-HON-by AGT sexually.harass-PASS-CONJ
imasu.
 is (POL)
 ‘I am sexually harassed by a regular of the restaurant.’

There were only 2 cases (10%) in which this verb was used with *-te kuru*. This could be because the generic term *sekuhara-suru* ‘to sexually harass’ is not descriptive enough to be reported by the deictic expression *-te kuru*.

As noted, no type of offensive action was expressed *exclusively* by either of the constructions. Furthermore, none of the *individual* verbs which occurred most frequently in the data were expressed exclusively by either of the constructions. This is shown in Table 4 (raw numbers) and Figure 3 (schematically illustrated).

Table 4: Breakdown of most frequently used verbs and the structures in which they occurred.

		Passive	<i>-te kuru</i>	Unmarked active	Total
physical	<i>sawaru</i> ‘to touch’	33	18	8	59
	<i>suru</i> ‘to do’	17	7	2	26
	<i>kisu-suru</i> ‘to kiss’	8	2	2	12
	<i>dakituku</i> ‘to throw one’s arms around’	6	7	0	13
verbal	<i>lu</i> ‘to say’	76	26	10	112
	<i>sasou</i> ‘to ask out’	15	2	1	17
	<i>kiku</i> ‘to inquire’	6	8	0	14
visual	<i>miru</i> ‘to watch’	7	10	0	17

3.5 Anomalies

52 unmarked active verbs (12%) were found in the data, suggesting deviation from a subjective perspective even though the speakers felt sexually harassed. Detailed examination of these examples revealed that they had linguistic and

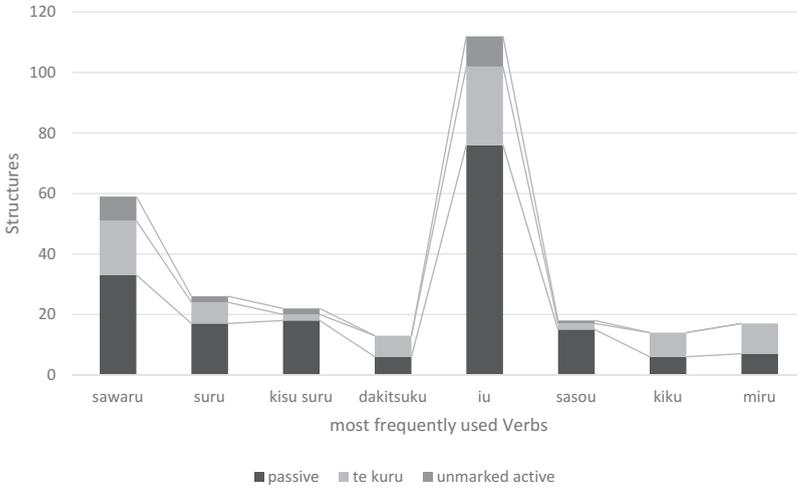


Figure 3: Breakdown of most frequently used verbs and the structures in which they occurred.

contextual characteristics that suggest that the motivation to portray the event from a speaker-centered perspective is somewhat reduced in these cases. These characteristics were: (a) offensive actions are listed in the non-past tense to exemplify the *kinds* of offence committed, rather than referring to a specific event that has happened in a specific situation; (b) the verb that describes the offence is in a complement clause, thus removed from a position of assertion in the main clause; (c) the action was directed towards the victim not in a one-to-one personal situation but in the presence of other people as a public event, in which the construal of a one-to-one deictic relationship between the offender and the victim may be diffused in the presence of other people in the scene; (d) the offender is someone the speaker wishes to respect and so the speaker does not wish to accept the act as offensive; and lastly (e) the offensive action is narrated from an emotionally detached position, as in a literary narrative.

In addition to these instances of unmarked active verbs, there were three other types of minor anomaly noted in the subjective constructions themselves. First, although most of the examples refer to situations where the victim was directly involved in the action as an undergoer, there were four cases where the victim was indirectly involved. For example, in (19) below, the victim was not present when the actor performed the action concerned. The victim was only affected indirectly as a consequence of the action:

- (19) *Kureemu-o irer-are-masita.*
 claim-ACC lodge-PASS-PST (POL)
 '[The patient] (went and) lodged a complaint (on me).'

The second of these minor anomalies was those cases in which *-te kuru* itself occurred in the passive form, *korareru*. Although Sawada (2009: 10) notes that this is not possible, as the subjective meaning of the passive would be redundant in such a context, in fact two cases of the combination were found. Both of these occurred in the same story:

- (20) *Seiteki-na yokkyuu-o motome-te ko-rare-ta node, ...*
 sexual desire-ACC demand-CONJ COME-PASS-CONJ
 '(He) demanded (I) satisfy (his) sexual desire, so'
- (21) *Karada-o motome-te ko-rare-te*
 body-ACC demand-CONJ COME-PASS-CONJ
 '(He) demanded (my) body and,'

The final anomaly involved four cases in which harassment directed at someone other than the speaker was reported using the passive, reflecting the speaker's empathy towards the victim of the offence (see Kuno 1978: 253–254). This is illustrated by (22)¹¹:

- (22) *Gassyuku-saki-de nakayoku natta onnanoko-wa*
 school.camp-place-at get.along.well became girl-TOP
hikakuteki wakai kyookan-ni sasow-are-te
 relatively young instructor-by AGT ask.out-PASS-CONJ
masita.
 be-PST(POL)
 'A girl who (I) became friends with at the school camp was invited out by a relatively young instructor.'

Summing up the analysis provided in Section 3, the passive was more frequently used than *-te kuru* in the data examined. Although the passive and *-te kuru* are

¹¹ There were only four instances of such reports in the entire data, and none involved the *-te kuru* form. It is difficult to draw a conclusion on the basis of this small data sample, but it may be that the more deictic nature of the psychological *-te kuru* construction precludes it from use in reporting an event that happened to someone else.

often interchangeable in light of the subjective perspective they provide, the data revealed a clear relationship between the preference for one or the other construction and the type of emotion expressed in the postings, reflecting the semantic characteristics of each construction used. The findings confirmed Sawada's (2009) suggestions that *-te kuru* is used when there is scope for the speaker's reactive response to the action directed towards them. This was evidenced by expressions of anger and other expressions that suggest the victim's feeling of at least some degree of power over the offender. On the other hand, the passive tended to be used when the victim felt a sense of complete powerlessness towards the offender in general. We found little correlation between types of verbs and their tendency to occur in one or the other of these subjective constructions. We found that no individual verbs were exclusively used with either of the constructions.¹²

4 Conclusion

Japanese has a wealth of linguistic devices that can be used to maintain a subjective perspective. Within this broad context, this study has examined how the psychological use of the *-te kuru* form, a less studied subjective construction, is used in natural data, alongside the use of the more widely studied, subjective passive construction.

Taking J. Sawada's examination as a foundation, this study has first elucidated the different semantic foci of these two subjective constructions in relation to (a) the agency of the actor, (b) the aspectual interpretation (resultative state

¹² A brief sampling of two comparable data sets which shared a common theme of sexual harassment—one a Japanese novel and the other an English internet forum—suggests that the extent of use of subjective constructions vary in different text types, even those involving first-person narratives dealing with a similar theme.

In the novel *Hebi ni piasu* (translated into English as 'Snakes and Earrings'), out of 142 verbs from the entire novel - which describe acts involving the protagonist and one or the other of these two lovers in which she is the undergoer, but nevertheless a willing participant - a subjective narrative style using subjective syntactic structures occurred in only 17% of cases. This may be because, even though the story is told from a first person perspective, the writer adopts a more detached way of story-telling in this Japanese novel compared to that of the victims who posted on the Japanese internet forum.

In the stories posted on an English internet site, Sexual Assault Message Board, out of 331 verbs describing an event in which the speaker felt sexually harassed, either physically or verbally, only 28% of examples reported the event from a subjective point of view by using the passive construction.

vs. inchoativeness), and (c) the semantic domains in which such these aspects are projected. The study has thus redefined the meaning of psychological *-te kuru* as a ‘psychological inchoative.’ Sawada’s (2009) statement that “the speaker can think up some counteraction” was interpreted from the point of view of the semantics of psychological *-te kuru*.

This study then examined both quantitatively and qualitatively how psychological *-te kuru* is used in natural data in comparison with the passive. A Japanese internet forum, which had very high occurrences of these two subjective constructions, was used for examination. While both constructions appeared quite freely together within one posting and even within the same sentence, a relationship was revealed between the choice of the construction and the underlying tone of the victim’s reaction to the experience of sexual harassment they reported. The underlying semantic characteristics of both constructions identified in this study were thus supported by contextual clues within the same posting. Although in general, submissiveness was the predominant sentiment of the victims, there were cases where victims expressed anger and a feeling of at least potential power over the offender. These feelings were expressed more often in postings where only psychological *-te kuru* was used, confirming Sawada’s (2009) observation that *-te kuru* is used when a counteraction is possible. On the other hand the passive occurred more often in postings where the submissive attitude of the victim was expressed. The examination did not reveal any correlation between verb type or the meaning of individual verbs and a preferred construction, apart from some minor anomalies.

The findings of this study can be appreciated in the broader context of understanding how grammar is used to reinforce the subjective perspective that permeates so many narratives in Japanese.

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