

Lexical and Phrasal Semantic Extension of Japanese Color Words Based on Metonymic Motivation

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Abstrak

(Judul: Perluasan Makna Leksikal dan Frasional pada Kosakata Warna Bahasa Jepang) Penelitian mengenai perluasan makna biasanya menjelaskan mengenai makna yang baru yang berbeda dari makna inti suatu kata. Penelitian ini menggunakan data korpus untuk melihat proses kognitif perluasan makna pada kosakata warna Bahasa Jepang dalam sebuah frase yang tidak mendeskripsikan warna. Data korpus menunjukkan bahwa metonimi adalah metode yang paling banyak digunakan untuk mengungkapkan perluasan makna pada kosakata warna. Penelitian ini mengajukan sebuah model perluasan makna kosakata warna yang berdasarkan pada penggunaan metonimi.

Kata kunci: warna; perluasan makna; metonimi

Abstract

Research on semantic extension is concerned with words that develop a new, separate, but related meaning from their core sense. By using corpus data, this paper seeks to identify the extended meaning of Japanese color words on a phrasal level and reveal the cognitive processes behind their extended meaning. The corpus data show that metonymy is one of the most common routes for conveying the extended meaning of Japanese color words. This paper, therefore, proposes a model of semantic extension of such color words based on metonymy.

Keywords: color words; metonymy; semantic extension

INTRODUCTION

To reveal the cognitive processes driving the semantic extension of a color word, we need to consider the use of the color word in a broader context, rather than as a single word.

(1) 仕事のスピードが遅い。いつも青い顔をしている。

Shigoto no supiiido ga osoi. Itumo aoi kao o siteiru.

work GEN speed NOM be.slow always blue face ACC be.doing

“His work speed is slow. His face is always pale.”

In (1), the word *aoi* as a single word means “blue.” Considering the context of the phrase in which it is embedded, however, *aoi kao* indicates a pale complexion due to lack of blood circulation to one’s face. Therefore, we need to consider the whole context in which the color word occurs to understand its meaning entirely.

Wierzbicka (1996) claimed that color is not a universal concept. It is because not every culture has the color word. The term “color” is an artificial concept categorized differently in every language. Rather than the universality of color, Wierzbicka proposes the universality of the concepts of “seeing” and “likeness.” For example, in Warlpiri, a Pama-Nyungan language indigenous to Australia’s Northern Territory, the word for red is expressed as *yalyu-yalyu*, which literally means “blood-blood.” Furthermore, Wierzbicka (Ibid.) argued that color could only exist as a property of an entity. Therefore, when analyzing the meaning of a color word, one must also consider how that color word links to the entity that possesses it as a property. For example, the English color word of “red” has some conceptual link to fire. This connection is indicated by an expression such as “red coals,” “red-hot,” and “fiery red.”

In our research, we investigated how color words are used in the written text by using The Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese (BCCWJ). All the data were collected from this corpus, except for several examples that were used to describe our analysis. Our results showed that

metonymic motivation was commonly used to convey semantic extension of the color word both at the lexical and at the phrasal level. Based on our results, we concluded that there is a mechanism of semantic extension of the color word at the phrasal level by which the extended meaning feeds back to the original color word.

RESEARCH METHOD

Berlin and Kay (1969) proposed a set of universal basic color words that fall into 7 stages based on their morphological aspect. However, the way in which Berlin and Kay categorized basic color words was criticized for overlooking unique color words such as that of Warlpiri shown above. Our study adopted the standpoint of Wierzbicka (1996) and argued that the concepts of “seeing” and “likeness” are necessary for understanding color words.

This study selected the abundant lexicon of Japanese color terms and finally settled on 269 color words based on Nagata (2002) JIS (Japanese Industrial Standard) color names for objects. Furthermore, using the BCCWJ, we ranked which color words were the most likely to collocate with a noun.

The result is shown in Figure 1. Out of 14,455 nouns that collocate with 110 color words found in the BCCWJ, *shiroi* ‘white,’ *kuroi* ‘black,’ *akai* ‘red,’ *aoi* ‘blue,’ and *midori* ‘green’ represent 54.2% of the total number of noun + color word collocations. These five most commonly used color words are considered to be basic color words in Japanese.

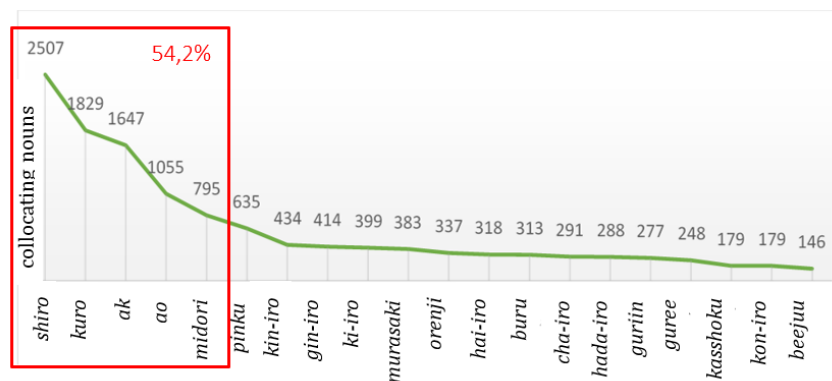


Fig 1. Japanese color words that are most frequently collocated with a noun

Furthermore, by using the BCCWJ, we analyzed whether those words specify color or not when they are collocated with their requisite nouns to investigate the process of semantic extension in the phrasal context. In order to do so, the following search conditions were set to accommodate Japanese morphological patterns: [<color word> *no* <noun>], [<color word> *iro no* <noun>], [<-i adjective color word> <noun>]. Based on those conditions, we identified 7 categories, as shown in the Table.1:

No.	Color Words Extension Category	Example of Phrase	Interpretation
1	Color word specifying a color	<i>Kuroi fuku</i>	Black clothe
2	Color word semantically extended via metonymy at the lexical level	<i>Midori no jyuutan</i>	Carpet like laid out plants
3	Color word semantically extended via metonymy on the phrasal level	<i>Aoi kao</i>	Pale face
4	Color word expressing a different lexical meaning	<i>Aka</i>	Communist
5	Color word functioning as an idiom	<i>Akai ito</i>	String of fate
6	Color word used in a creative expression	<i>Shiroi kodoku</i>	White loneliness
7	Color word used indexically to identify an object	<i>Kuro no soshiki</i>	Black organization

Table 1. Color word usage categories

Color word specifying a color

(2) ヒロインはガマンして黒い服を着るのだけれど、つい

Hiroin wa gaman site kuroi fuku o kiru noda keredo, tui

Heroine TOP patience do black clothes ACC wear COP but, unconsciously
素材やデザインに女っぽい洒落っ気が出ちゃうのよ。

sozai ya dezain ni onnappoi syarek-ke ga dechau noyo
material CONJ design DAT girlish fashion-sense NOM come out SFP
,

The heroine puts up with wearing black clothes, but a feminine style is
evident in their materials and design.'

Color word semantically extended via metonymy at the lexical level

(3) それをくまどるように緑のじゅうたんを敷いた植物群落がみられる。

Sore o kumadoru yooni midori no jyuutan o siita syokubutsu

That ACC shading becomes green GEN carpet ACC lay plant
gunraku ga mi-rareru.
cluster NOM see-PASS

'You can see a green carpet of clustered plants laid out to give shade.'

Color word semantically extended via metonymy on the phrasal level

(4) そして当日、御数寄屋御坊主衆は、耳鳴りで気が狂いそう

Soshite toojitsu, gosukiya goboozuyuu wa, mimi-nari de ki-ga-kurui sou
And the day, Gosekiya Gobozyuu TOP, tinnitus cause crazy seem

じゃと蒼い顔で震えている浅野どのを見ております。

jya to aoi kao de huruete iru Asano-dono o mite orimasu
COP QUOT blue face with a trembling be Lord Asano ACC see HON
'And on that day, Gosekiya Goba, whose tinnitus appeared to be driving
him mad, looked at the trembling, pale face of Lord Asano.'

Color word expressing a different lexical meaning

(5) 理由はいろいろあるようですが、赤だから政治的に

Riyuu wa iroiro aru yoo desu ga, aka dakara seiji-teki ni
Reason TOP various exist seems COP but, red because political DAT

問題があったという説が有力ですね・・・。

mondai ga atta toiu setsu ga yuuryoku desune...

problem NOM exists QUOT theory NOM prominence SFP

'Apparently, there are various reasons, but because it is red, it is probably due to political turmoil.'

Color word functioning as an idiom

(6) おれ、結婚します！おれとカナは赤い糸で結ばれていたんです！

Ore, kekkon simasu! Ore to Kana wa akai ito de musu-bareteitan desu!

I Marry do! I and Kana TOP red thread INS tied-PASS COP

'I'm going to marry! Kana and I are bound by the red thread of fate!'

Color word used in a creative expression

(7) ぼくはオレンジ色の照明と白い孤独を映す

Boku wa orenji iro no syoomei to siroi kodoku o utusu

I TOP orange color GEN light and white loneliness ACC project

瞳の虹彩を、じっと盗み見る。

hitomi no koosai o, jitto nusumi-miru.

eye GEN iris ACC, still steal a glance.

'I stealthily fix my gaze on the orange-colored light and white loneliness projecting from my irises.'

Color word used indexically to identify an object

(8) もし、生かしておけば、其奴から、黒の組織について

Mosi, ikasite okeba, soyatu kara, kuro no sosiki ni tsuite

If, live-TR let-COND, that-guy from, black GEN organization DAT about

の情報がとれたであろうが。

no jyoohoo ga toreta dearou ga.

GEN Information NOM get-POTEN maybe SPF

'If I let him live, maybe I could get information about the black organizations from him.'

Since this research focuses on extended color words at the phrasal level, we chose categories 2 and 3 out of the seven categories above as the objects of our analysis.

ANALYSIS

Metonymy is a cognitive mechanism that exploits the most prominent relation of a single semantic domain. Momiyama and Fukada (2003) offered the phrase "reading Shakespeare" as an example. "Reading Shakespeare" does not mean to read Shakespeare as a person literally, but rather to read Shakespeare's written works. In that sense, Shakespeare and his works constitute a prominent relation by which the author William Shakespeare himself becomes more salient than his works.

This research also considers Traugott and Dasher's (2002) perspective on the semantic extension. They argued that metonymy as a mechanism of semantic extension is related to the context in which the speaker/writer and listener/reader is involved. As a participant of a conversation, it is essential for a listener to use pragmatic inference to understand the message that the speaker is trying to convey.

For example, Traugott and Dasher (2002) argued that grammaticalization of the word "must" as shown below from "mandatory/obligation" to "epistemic modality" is a semantic change from lexical meaning to grammatical function due to pragmatic inference from non-language factor as it is being used as communication tools.

- (a) They must be married

(b) They must be married, I demand it.

(c) They must be married, I am sure of it.

Based on Traugott's and Dasher's point of view, it is essential to use pragmatical inference to convey metonymy meaning. It applies whether it is on lexical or phrasal level metonymy, as we have seen on the 7 categories above.

Color Word Semantically Extended via Metonymy at the Lexical Level

Metonymy at the lexical level is defined as the use of a color word, whose meaning is extended within its related domain via metonymy. This lexical level of metonymy is supported by Wierzbicka's (1996 & 2006) argument stating that, in understanding the meaning of color, one must depend on the universal human capacity to conceive "seeing" and "likeness." Wierzbicka also argued that color itself would not exist in the world without the existence of an entity of which color was a property. Therefore, when analyzing the meaning of a color word, one must also consider how that color word links to the entity that possesses it as a property. Based on the data, we can confirm the use of metonymy as a mechanism to link color to such an entity.

(9) 翌日、種子島に帰還。真っ青な海。

Yokujitsu, Tanegasima ni kikan. Massaona umi.

The next day, Tanegashima DAT return. Blue ocean.

そよぐ緑。彼らの目に染みた。

Soyogu midori. Karera no me ni simita.

soothing green. They GEN eye DAT sink in.

'The next day I returned to Tanegashima. Blue ocean. Soothing green. The colors sank into their eyes.'

(10) 伝三だった。倒れている。周囲の雪に、

Denzoo datta. Taorete iru. Syuui no yuki ni,
Denzo COP Fall be. Surroundings GEN snow DAT

赤い染みが広がっていた。

akai simi ga hirogatte ita.
red stain NOM spread-INTR was.

'It was Denzo who fell. A bloodstain spread out on the surrounding snow.'

In (9), the word *midori* is extended to mean "plants." It can be understood as plants have green as their color property, which is a prominent relation used to convey the meaning of "plants" via metonymy. In (10), the word *akai* may indeed indicate the color red itself, but from the whole context, it refers to blood. It can be understood as we have the encyclopedic knowledge of blood being red.

This kind of strong relationship between a color word and the entity that possesses it as a property generates a lexical level of metonymic extension that affects the whole meaning of the phrase. It makes the lexical level of metonymic use quite productive in creative expressions, as shown in the example below.

(11) 建物の窓や壁面を日差しから守る

Tatemono no mado ya hekimen o hizasi kara mamoru
Building GEN window and wall ACC sunlight from protect

緑のカーテンは、過度な冷房による環境への負荷を軽減します。

midori no kaaten wa, kadona reiboo ni yoru kankyoo e no
green GEN curtain TOP excess cooling DAT by the environment to GEN
fuka o keigen simasu.
burden ACC reduce do.

‘The green curtain that protects the building’s windows and walls from direct sunlight reduces the environmental burden caused by excessive cooling.’

(12) それをくまどるように緑のじゅうたんを敷いた植物群落がみられる。

Sore o kumadoru yooni midori no jyuutan o siita syokubutsu

That ACC shading become green GEN carpet ACC lay plant

gunraku ga mi-rareru.

cluster NOM see-PASS

‘You can see a green carpet of clustered plants laid out to give shade.’

Neither (11) *midori no kaaten* nor (12) *midori no jyuutan* mean that the color of a curtain or carpet is green. The curtain and carpet as a collocation of *midori* ‘green’ refer to a kind of plant that grows together like a curtain or carpet. In (11), vine plants are perceived as forming a curtain-like object that can prevent strong sunlight from entering the window. (12) also depicts a wide-spreading plant covering the land like a carpet.

Color Word Semantically Extended via Metonymy on the Phrasal Level

Phrase-level metonymy involves instances wherein not only the color word but also the entire phrase in which it is embedded is associated with some state or situation. The influence of collocating nouns infers a metonymic implication. In the case of *kuroi kao* in (13), it appears that the father is a violent man; thus, the relation to *kuroi kao* is understood in the frame of violent action. Based on one’s understanding of violence, *kuroi kao* ‘blackface’ is inferred to be a bruise left by an act of violent aggression. As a result, the phrase *kuroi kao* in (13) expresses “bruised” via metonymy.

(13) 彼女の父親が酔うと母親を殴る男だ

Kanojyo no titioya ga you to hahaoya o naguru otoko da
She GEN father NOM drunk COND mother ACC punch men COP

ということと、彼女の黒い顔は関係があるのだろうか。

toiu koto to, kanojyo no kuroi kao wa kankei ga aru no darouka.
QUOT NOM and, She GEN black face TOP relation NOM exist GEN MOD
'Maybe there is a relation between her black face and the fact that her father
always punches her mother when he is drunk.'

(14) 途中で一人尋問の終わった学生が、

Tocyuu de hitori jinmon no owatta gakusei ga,
Halfway at alone interrogation GEN end-PST student NOM,

青い顔をして私のところへ謝りに来た。

aoi kao o site watasi no tokoro e ayamari ni kita.
blue face ACC do I GEN place LOC apology DAT come.
'Halfway through, one pale-faced student who finished the interrogation
approached me to apologize.'

(15) 鳴島は白い顔をして勇を見ていた、なまった風

Narushima wa siroi kao o site Isamu o mite ite, namatta kaze
Narushima TOP white face ACC do Isamu ACC see CONT sluggish wind

が勇の横顔を舐めた。

ga Isamu no yokogao o nameta.
NOM Isamu GEN profile ACC lick.PST

'Narushima looked at Isamu shocked while the wind lapped at Isamu's cheeks.'

The expression *aoi kao* in (14) does not indicate a face that is blue in color, but rather expresses the idiomatic sense of "shocked" or "surprised" due

to the blood draining from one's face. The same situation can also be expressed by the phrase *siroi kao* 'white face' in (15).

Color Phrase	Related Domain	Inference
Lexical Extension		
<i>Soyogu midori</i>	The color of plant	Plants
<i>Midori no kaaten</i>	The shape of vine plants	Vine that functions as a curtain
<i>Midori no juutan</i>	The vastly laid plants	Plans that looks like a carpet
<i>Akai shimi</i>	Blood color	Trace of someone being injured
Phrasal Extension		
<i>Kuroi kao</i>	Color of the blacken blood	Marks of bruises
<i>Shiroi kao</i>	Pale complexion	Shocked
<i>Aoi kao</i>	Pale complexion	Shocked

Table 2. The related domain of color phrase metonymy

Relation between Lexical and Phrasal Meaning

Compositional semantic is based on the notion that the meaning of a whole phrase or sentence is established by combining the lexical meaning of its composite parts according to the rules of grammar. However, as in the above examples, in some cases, the overall meaning of a phrase cannot be understood by merely combining the meanings of its elemental parts. For instance, to understand the meaning of the phrase *akai me* in (16), knowing the lexical meanings of *akai* 'red' and *me* 'eye' is insufficient. *Akai me* may also include the meaning of "lacking sleep." While *akai kao* in (17) might indicate a face that looks red, it can also simultaneously mean "drunk."

(16) 「あの子昨夜、弟が肺炎で死んだのよ」当直

"ano ko sakuya, ootoo ga haien de sinda noyo" toocyoku

"that kid last-night, brother NOM pneumonia cause died SFP" duty

明けの看護婦が赤い目をして教えてくれた。

ake no kangofu ga akai me o site osiete kureta.

After GEN nurse NOM red eyes ACC do tell give

“That kid lost his brother due to pneumonia last night,” said the nurse, exhausted after her duty.’

(17) PM 9 : 00 新橋の居酒屋「炉ばた焼 大関」では、

PM 9:00 Sinbasi no izakaya “Robatayaki Ozeki” de wa,

PM 9:00 Shinbashi GEN tavern “Robatayaki Ozeki” LOC TOP,

すでに赤い顔をした後輩が集まっている。

sudeni akai kao o site koohai ga atumatte iru.

Already red face ACC do junior NOM gather CONT.

“The junior members were gathered at 9:00 pm at “Robatayaki Ozeki” tavern, already drunk.’

The interpretation of “exhausted” in (16) and “drunk” in (17) does not occur from merely combining the meanings of *akai* and *me* or *akai* and *kao*, respectively. In other words, the combination of the lexical meanings of the color term *akai* and the noun with which it collocates does not entail a complete understanding of the meaning of the whole phrase. In terms of the phrase *akai me* or *akai kao*, one’s encyclopedic knowledge, which extends beyond one’s lexical or grammatical knowledge of Japanese, affects the semantic interpretation of the phrase in its entirety.

The critical point here is that this semantic inference occurs in a specific linguistic environment. For example, the interpretation of *akai kao* as “drunk,” “embarrassed,” “angry,” etc. is determined by the linguistic environment occurring at the phrasal rather than the lexical level. *Akai* itself is insufficient

to generate implications such as “drunk” or “embarrassed”; such an implication occurs only for the entire phrase *akai kao*.

In our research, we argue that it is necessary to analyze the meanings of color words in the context of pragmatic implications. As described in Traugott and Dasher (2002:3), “at every level, language use is constrained by the structural properties of the form in question, and the cognitive and communicative purposes for which language is used.” They state that the basic concept of meaning is cognitive and communicative, as the most basic function is to convey meaning. Furthermore, Traugott and Dasher (Ibid.) argued that pragmatic influence plays a significant role in the extension of lexical meaning for communication purposes. Based on a pragmatic point of view, it is not enough to rely solely on the lexical meaning of linguistic expressions in the framework of communication. It is necessary to consider the context of an utterance in an actual scene in which communication occurs (Ohori 2004: 6).

Regarding the phrase of *akai kao*, there are various interpretations, including “lacking sleep” depending on the situation. As seen in (18), the phrase *akai kao* is interpreted as “drunk” despite the possibility for it to be interpreted as “embarrassed.” This interpretation emerges as the speaker or writer uses pragmatic implications in a specific context to limit the possible interpretations.

(18)それが彼女たちにもつたわって、みんな赤い顔をして

Sore ga kanojyo tati ni mo tutawatte, minna akai kao o shite
That NOM she PL DAT CJP convey, everyone red face ACC do

いました。ぎこちないなかにも、妙な甘美さのただよう、不思議な一時間で
した。

imasita. Gikocinai naka ni mo, myoona kanbi sa no tadayou,
PST Awkward in DAT CJP odd sweet NOM GEN drift,

‘It was made clear to the girls, too, and everyone was drunk. Even in such an awkward situation, a strange sweetness drifted through the mysterious hour.’

(19) 2人前はありそうな量を3分で飲み干した。

Ni ninmae wa ari souna ryoo o san pun de nomihosita.

Two servings TOP exist might volume ACC 3 minutes in drink up.

もうすでに顔が赤い。

Mou sudeni kao ga akai.

Already face NOM red.

‘I gulped down drinks served for two in 3 minutes. I was already drunk.’

"Drunk/embarrassed" can be interpreted as one of the semantic extensions of *akai kao* in an appropriate communicative context. The meaning of *akai kao* is firmly established by the frequent use of the phrase, even if the collocating noun *kao* does not appear, as shown in the example below. Phrasal level and lexical level metonymy are common phenomena that have pragmatic implications. However, the former exhibits an additional phenomenon by which the phrasal meaning is extended to the lexical meaning. Looking at (20), the restriction of the appropriate linguistic environment required by *akai kao* is reduced, and the context of the semantic extension is reflected in the color word *akai* as a process of de-contextualization. Therefore, as seen in Figure 2, even if *akai* appears in a novel syntactic environment, it can be interpreted from the context of "about one's face."

(20) 彼女は赤くなった。

Kanojyo wa akaku natta.

She TOP red becom

‘She became red’

(21) ?彼は赤かった。

Kanojyo wa aka katta.

She TOP red was

‘She was red’

In fact, in seven different dictionaries (*Nihongo Daijiten*, *Kokugo Daijiten*, *Gakken Kokugo Daijiten*, *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten*, *Daijisen*, *Meikyou Kokugo Jiten*, and *Meikyou Kokugo Jiten*), the definition of *akai* includes “embarrassed, angry, excited, and feverish.” In relation to face, it means “drinking alcohol, being healthy and tinged, sunburned, etc.” In other words, the meaning of “drunk” or “embarrassed” at the phrasal level is fed back to the word *akai* at the lexical level, as shown in Figure 2 below. However, even though de-contextualization is progressing, it is considered difficult to accept the semantic extension only with the color word *akai* as in (21). In that instance, the semantic extension of “drunk/embarrassed” established by the color word *akai* is not yet fully lexicalized.

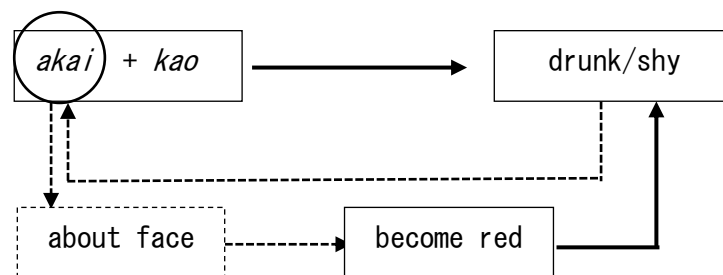


Fig 2. Correlation between lexical meaning and semantic extension of color words

CONCLUSION

The corpus data of Japanese color word usage showed that semantic extension occurred not only at the lexical level but also at the phrasal level. Based on these data, we also observed metonymy functioning as a productive method for semantic extension of color words. Based on the observation of the phrasal level of semantic extension of Japanese color words, we can see that the use of pragmatic inference from the collocating noun is necessary. In the case of the extension of Japanese color word *akai* ‘red,’ the semantic extension of “embarrassed” or “drunk” could be interpreted because of the collocating noun “face” in the phrase *akai kao* ‘red face.’ Furthermore, the semantic extension of the phrase *akai kao* serves as feedback to the word *akai* as the

new meaning becomes more entrenched. To propose a model of semantic extension of color words, further analysis is needed to determine to what extent such feedback occurs so that the color words can express the semantically extended meaning in the absence of the collocating noun.

Metonymy is a universal human cognitive process. The meaning of the extension process motivated by metonymy is expected to be seen in every language. Since the exploitation of pragmatic inference is involved in the semantic extension process of color words, every language may have a different semantic extension, for the same color word. As this paper only focuses on Japanese, further research is needed to see the phenomenon in other languages

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CORPUS

BCCWJ (Balance Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese) (2016)
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<http://www.kotonoha.gr.jp/shonagon/>

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ACC	Accausative
CJP	Conjunctive Particle
COND	Condition
CONT	Continuative
COP	Copula
DAT	Dative
GEN	Genitive
HON	Honorific
INS	Instrumental
INTR	Intransitive
LOC	Locative
MOD	Modality
NOM	Nominative
PASS	Passive
PL	Plural
POTEN	Potential
PST	Past
QUOT	Quotative
SFP	Sentence Final Particle
TOP	Topic
TR	Transitive