BA in Japanese grammar and communication

Toshiyuki SADANOBU

sadanobu@kobe-u.ac.jp

(Kobe University)

Acknowledgement

Three presuppositions of *BA* linguistics

- **Human beings are not detached from their environment. There is always a dense interaction between human beings and their environment.**

- Language cannot be isolated from the human body. Rather, it depends on the physical body.

- 'Self' and 'others' are not mutually separated. They are interconnected in the realm of the unconscious.

  [Otsuka 2015: ch. 2, sec. 2.]

The aim of this presentation

is to show that the first presupposition can be supported from a descriptive point of view. Based on my research on event expressions in Modern Common Japanese (henceforth Japanese), I will show that significant parts of Japanese grammar and communication are based on interactions between humans and the environment.

Traditional research on event models

- **Energy-based types**
   "force dynamics" [Talmy 1985]
   "causal chain" [Croft 1991, 1998]
   "billiard-ball model" [Langacker 1991]
- **Spontaneous type**
   "*naru*-language" (distinct from *suru*-language")
      [Teramura 1976] [Ikegami 1981] [Nakagawa 1992]

Event expressions of energy-based types

(1) a. She hit me.

b. I was hit by her.
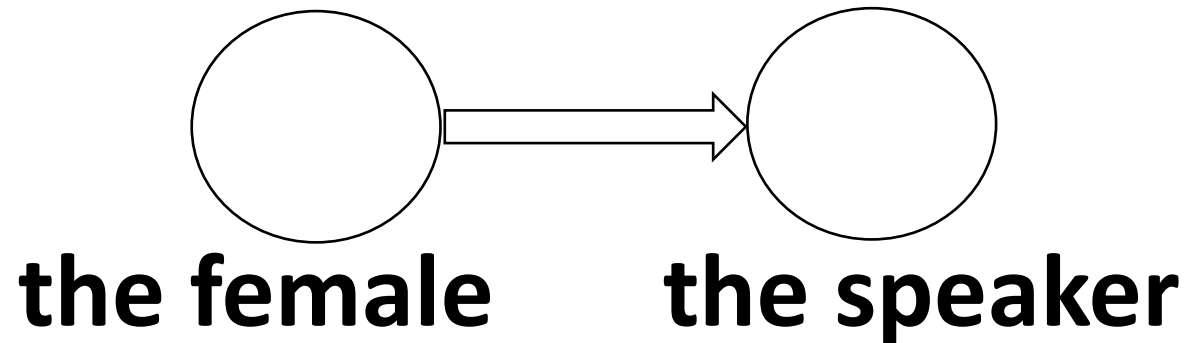

the female   the speaker

Figure 1: Energy transfer expressed by (1a,b)

Suru-language vs. *naru*-language

(2) a. **I have decided to get married.**

    b. *Kekkonsuru koto-ni nari-mashi-ta.*

       get married event-into become-POLITE-PAST

    "(Lit.) I am to be married."

Event expressions of energy-based types

(1) a. She hit me.

b. I was hit by her.

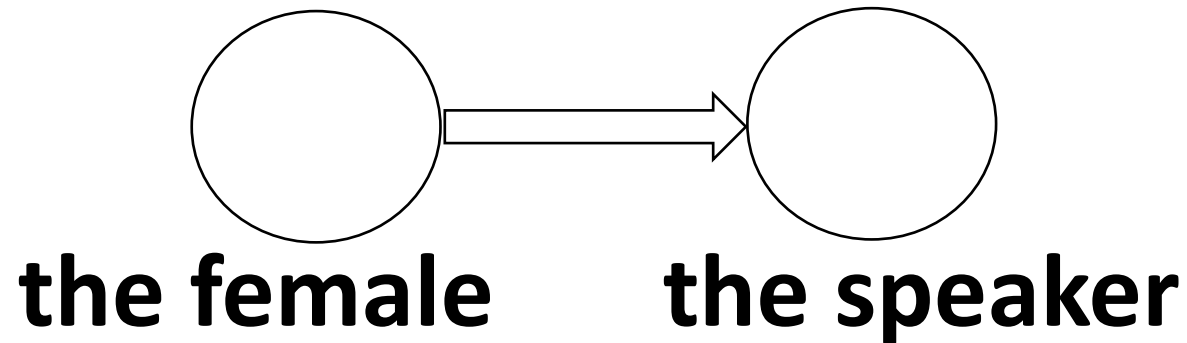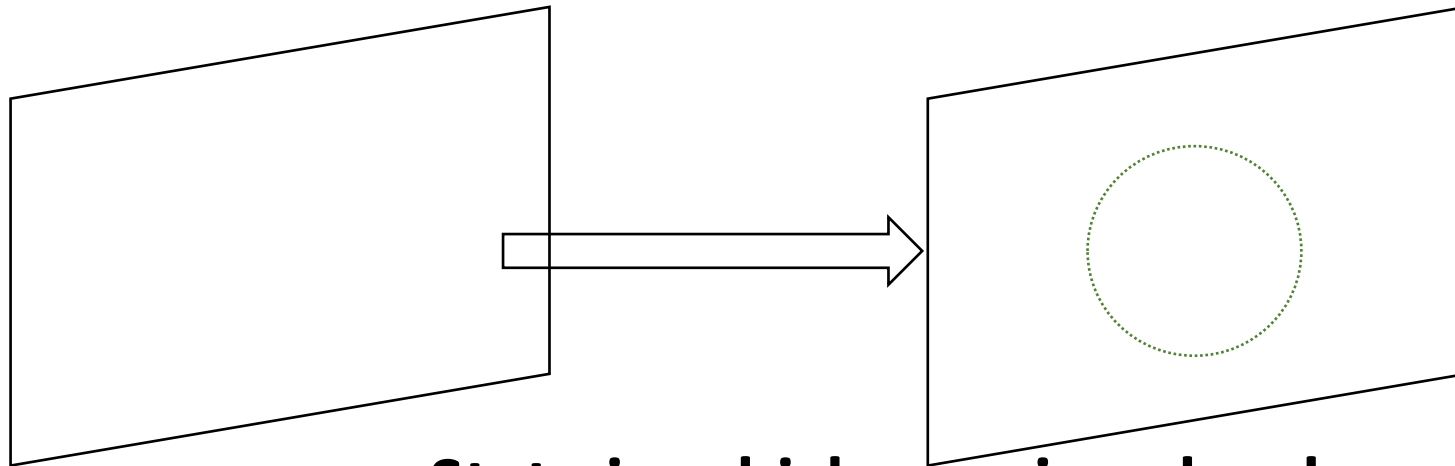**the female   the speaker**

Figure 1: Energy transfer expressed by (1a,b)

Mold-growth model (*Kabihae-moderu*)

State in which marriage has not been settled

State in which marriage has been settled

Figure 2: A spontaneous change of state expressed by (2b)

[Sadanobu 1995, 2000]

A state can be an event.
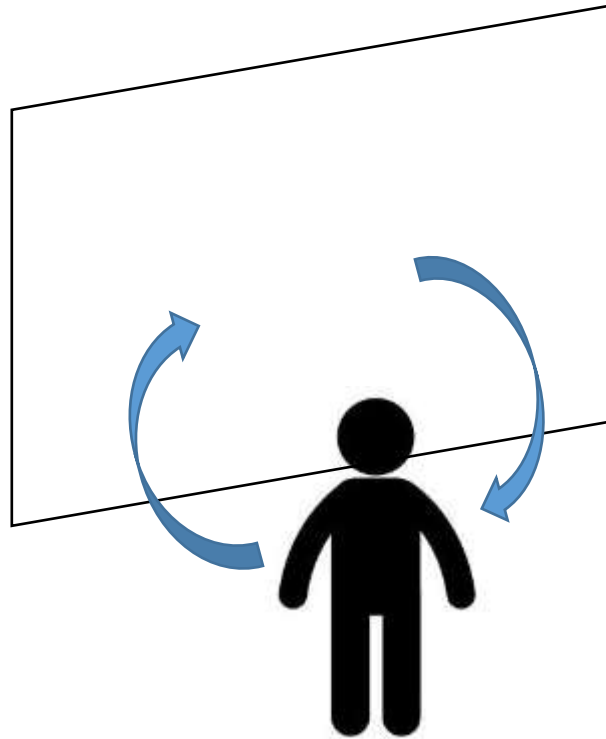
Figure 3: Event model without time shift

[Sadanobu 2010]

Locative markers *ni* and *de*

- **Just as English has locative prepositions such as *in*, *on*, *at*, and *to*, Japanese has several words for marking location. Chief of them are *ni* and *de*.**

- **Marker of locations is determined by whether the subject that exists in the location is a thing or an event.**

A thing's location is marked with *ni*

(3) a.　　*Niwa-ni*　　*ki-ga*　　　　*aru.*
　　　　　garden-ni　tree-NOM　exist

b.??*Niwa-de*　　*ki-ga*　　　　*aru.*
　　　　　garden-de　tree-NOM　exist

"There is a tree in the garden."

An event's location is marked with *de*

(4) a.??*Niwa-ni*   *paatii-ga*   *aru.*
     garden-ni   party-NOM   exist

    b.   *Niwa-de*   *paatii-ga*   *aru.*
     garden-de   party-NOM   exist

    "There is a party in the garden."

States ⊄ events (in knowledge expressions)

States are not included in events.

(Otherwise, (5b) should be natural.)

(5) = (3) a.   *Niwa-ni*   *ki-ga*   *aru*.
                garden-ni   tree-NOM   exist

b.??*Niwa-de*   *ki-ga*   *aru*.
       garden-de tree-NOM exist

"There is a tree in the garden."

States ⊂ Events (in experiential expressions)

(6) rondakai:

I heard a rumor that a considerable number of PS3s remain unsold. Is it true? I have never seen one in Tokyo.

puipuihaohao:

kinoo   geo-de ari-mashi-ta-yo.
yesterday GEO-de   exist-polite-past-I tell you
"I saw one at GEO yesterday."

Why do states count as events?

Figure 4: Mach's self-portrait [Mach 1906]
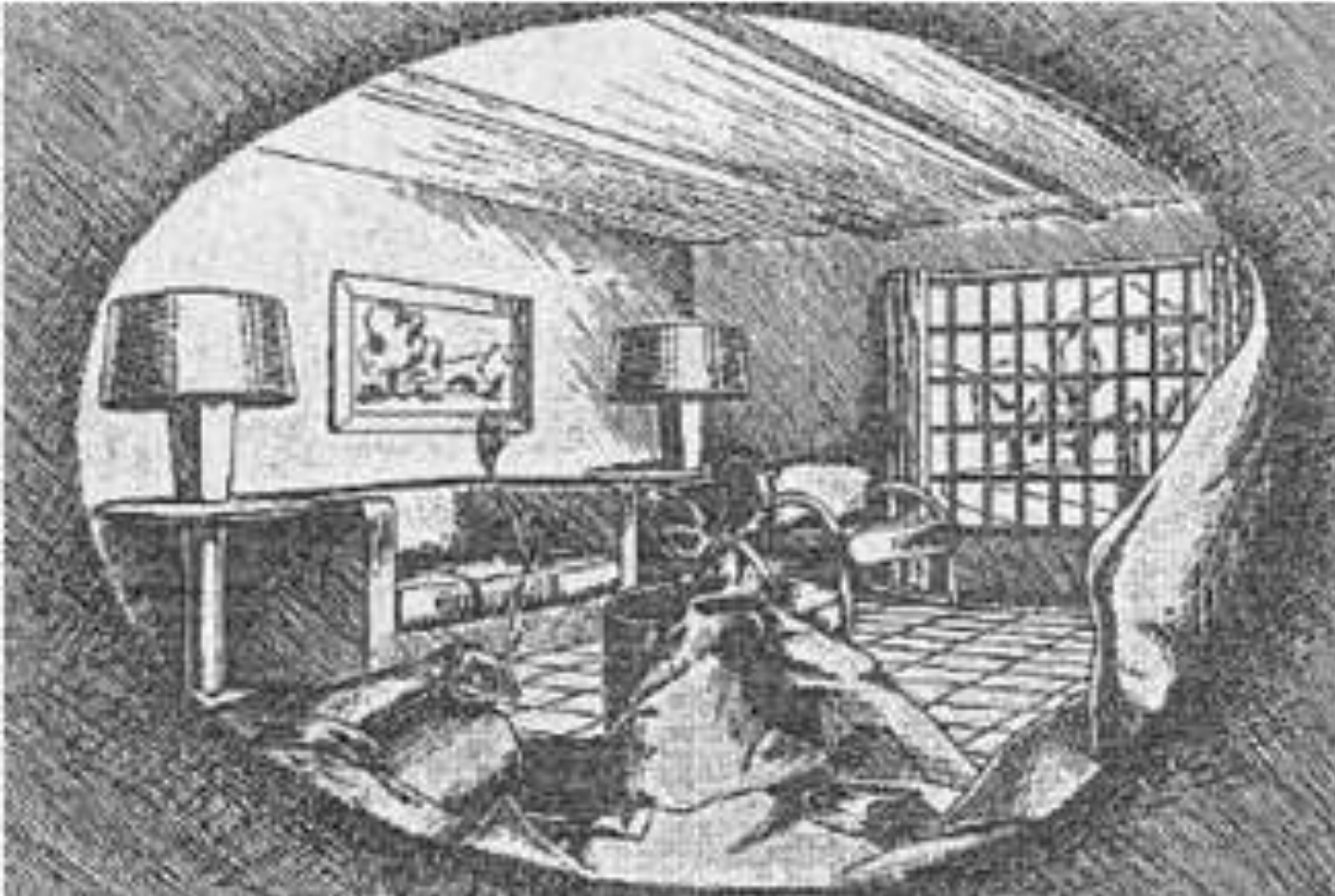
Because our life consists, in each moment, of experienced states.

In each moment, we live in and experience the present state.

Our living and experience of states makes them into events.

A state can be expressed as an event only given a strong interaction between experiencer and environment.

(5) b.??*Niwa-de*   *ki-ga*   *aru*
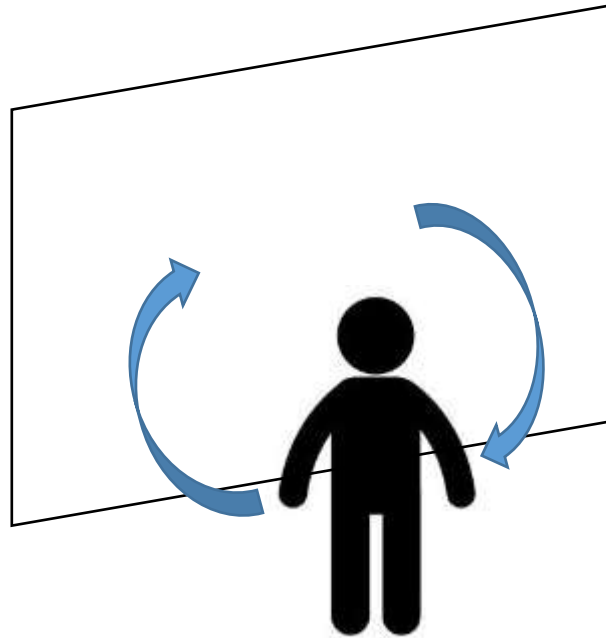
Figure 3: Event model without time shift

[Sadanobu 2010]

Two types of strong interaction

- **Exploration: an interaction where the approach from the experiencer to the environment is well motivated.**

- **Somatics: an interaction where the response from the environment to the experiencer is intense.**

Environment

Environment

Experiencer

Experiencer
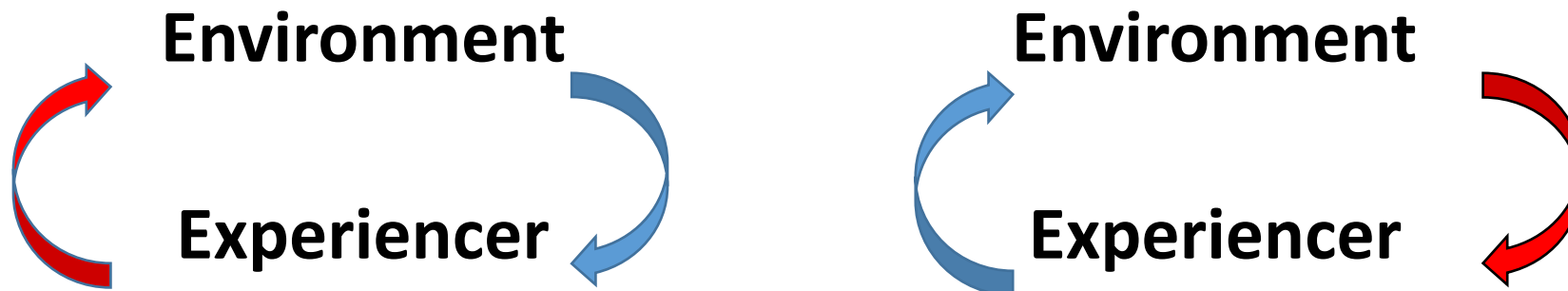
Figure 5: Exploration (left) and somatics (right)

Exploration affects naturalness of the locative marker *de*

(7) a.   *PS3-nara **Pekin-de** ari-mashi-ta-yo*.

      PS3-TOP Peking-LOC exist-POLITE-PAST-I tell you

      "There was PS3 in Peking (and I saw it)."

b.?? *PS3-nara **uchi-no oshiire-de** ari-mashi-ta-yo*.

      PS3-TOP my house-GEN cupboard-de exist-POLITE-PAST-I tell you

      "(Lit.) There was PS3 in the cupboard of my house (and I saw it)."

Exploration affects naturalness of words of frequency 1/3

(8) *Tani-o nuketeikutoki **tokidoki** ie-ga a-tta*.

    through the valley   **sometimes** **house-NOM exist-past**

"There was a house now and then through the valley."

(9) *Sadanobu-toyuu namae-no hito-wa **mettani i-nai**.*

Sadanobu-QUOT   **name-GEN**   **person-TOPIC seldom exist**

"There is seldom a man named Sadanobu."

Exploration affects naturalness of words of frequency 2/3

(10) *Shikashi,* *tamaniwa* *aishoo-de yobareruno-o*
　　 but 　　sometimes nickname-by being called-ACC

kirau ningen-ga iru-kara chuuigahitsuyooda.
　　 dislike man-NOM exist-since you should take care

"But you should be careful, because some people dislike
to be called by their nickname (in U.S.A.)"

[Masahiko Fujiwara, *Wakaki Suugakusha-no Amerika*, 1977.]

Exploration affects naturalness of words of frequency 3/3

(11) a. ??*Uchi-no kinjo-wa shocchuu resutoran-ga aru-yo.*

my house-GEN neighborhood-TOP often restaurant-NOM exist-I tell you

" (Lit.) There are often restaurants in my neighborhood."

"There are many restaurants in my neighborhood."

b. *Kono machi-wa, shocchuu resutoran-ga aru-ne.*

this town-TOP   often   restaurant-NOM exist-aren't there

"(Lit.) There are often restaurants in this town, aren't there?"

"There are many restaurants in this town, aren't there?"

Exploration affects naturalness of *bakari*

(12) a.   ***Ano kyaku*-wa, miteiru-bakari-de chittomo kawa-nai-nee.**

that customer-TOP watching-only-and at all buy-NEG-TAG Q

"That customer is never going to buy anything and is only looking, isn't she?"

b.?? *Ie ie, (watashi-wa) miteiru-bakari-desu-kara.*

no no   (I-TOP)   looking-only-COPULA-because

"(Lit.) No, thank you. (I don't want to try anything on) because I am only looking."

Somatics affects naturalness of words of frequency

(13) a. ??*Ano ika-wa sakki-kara **tokidoki karada-ga shiroi**.*

      that squid-TOP just now-from sometimes **body-NOM white**

    "(Lit.) That squid' body is sometimes white."

b.   *Ano kyaku-wa sakki-kara **tokidoki koe-ga ookii**.*

     that customer-TOP just now-from sometimes **voice-NOM loud**

    "That customer's voice is sometimes loud."

Somatics affects naturalness of *bakari*

(14) a. *Ano ryouri-wa **tadamou** karai-**bakari**-de, sukoshimo oishiku-nai.*

that dish-TOP **tremendously** hot-only-and, at all   delicious NEG

"That dish is only tremendously hot, not at all delicious."

b. ??*Ano ryouri-wa **chotto** karai-**bakari**-de, sukoshimo oishiku-nai.*

that dish-TOP   **a little** hot-only-and   at all   delicious NEG

"(Lit.) That dish is only a little hot, not at all delicious."

Somatics affects naturalness of conditionals

(15) a. ??*Kore oshi-tara, gamen-ga akai-yo.*

this puch-if screen-NOM red-I tell you

"(Lit.) If you push this button, the screen will be red."

b.　*Kore oshi-tara, kimochi-ga ii-yo.*

this push-if feeling-NOM good-I tell you

"If you push this button, you will feel fantastic."

Exploration and somatics contribute to reportability

- **In talking of experiences, other participants may take turns, but the speaker role automatically returns to the narrator (Sacks 1992: II, 3-5).**

- **As argued by William Labov (2001: 66), talk of experiences must be intriguing and reportable enough to justify this automatic reassignment of the speaker role to the narrator.**

- **Exploration and somatics are two factors that contribute to making an experience reportable intersubjectively.**

Grammar based on communication

- **The expressions of state, discussed above, which lack exploration or somatics, are not boring, just somewhat unnatural.**

  E.g. (5) b.??*Niwa-de ki-ga aru*.

- **Such a grammar can be thought as the result of the grammaticalization of our pursuit of reportability of experience spoken about in everyday communication.**

Figure 6: History of *TA*'s Semantics
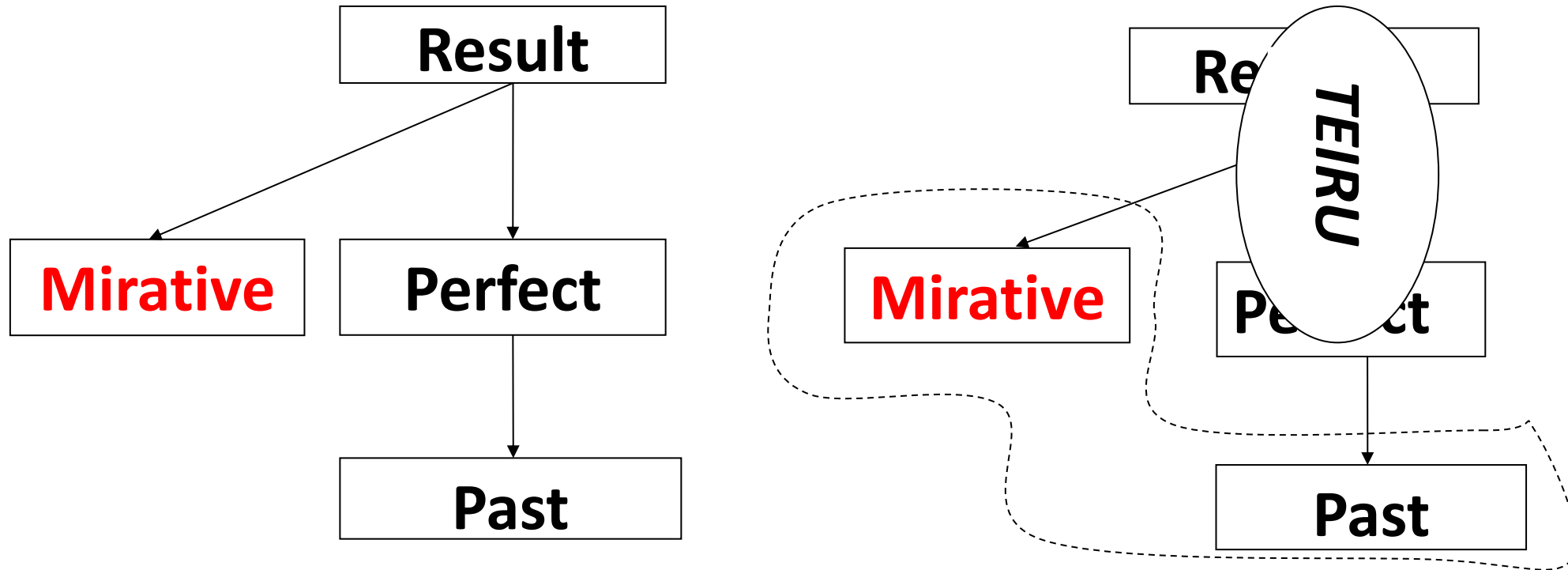
Initial range covered by *TA*   Erosion by *TEIRU*

[Sadanobu and Malchukov 2011]

Connection of mirativity and pastness

Experienced state talked about

Present state

t1
t2
t3
Time

Fig. 7 Connection of mirativity & pastness

Feeling surprised motivates a speaker to talk of the present state as it is experienced. In the consciousness of living in the moment, the present state, as it is experienced, becomes an event in the immediate past when it is discussed.
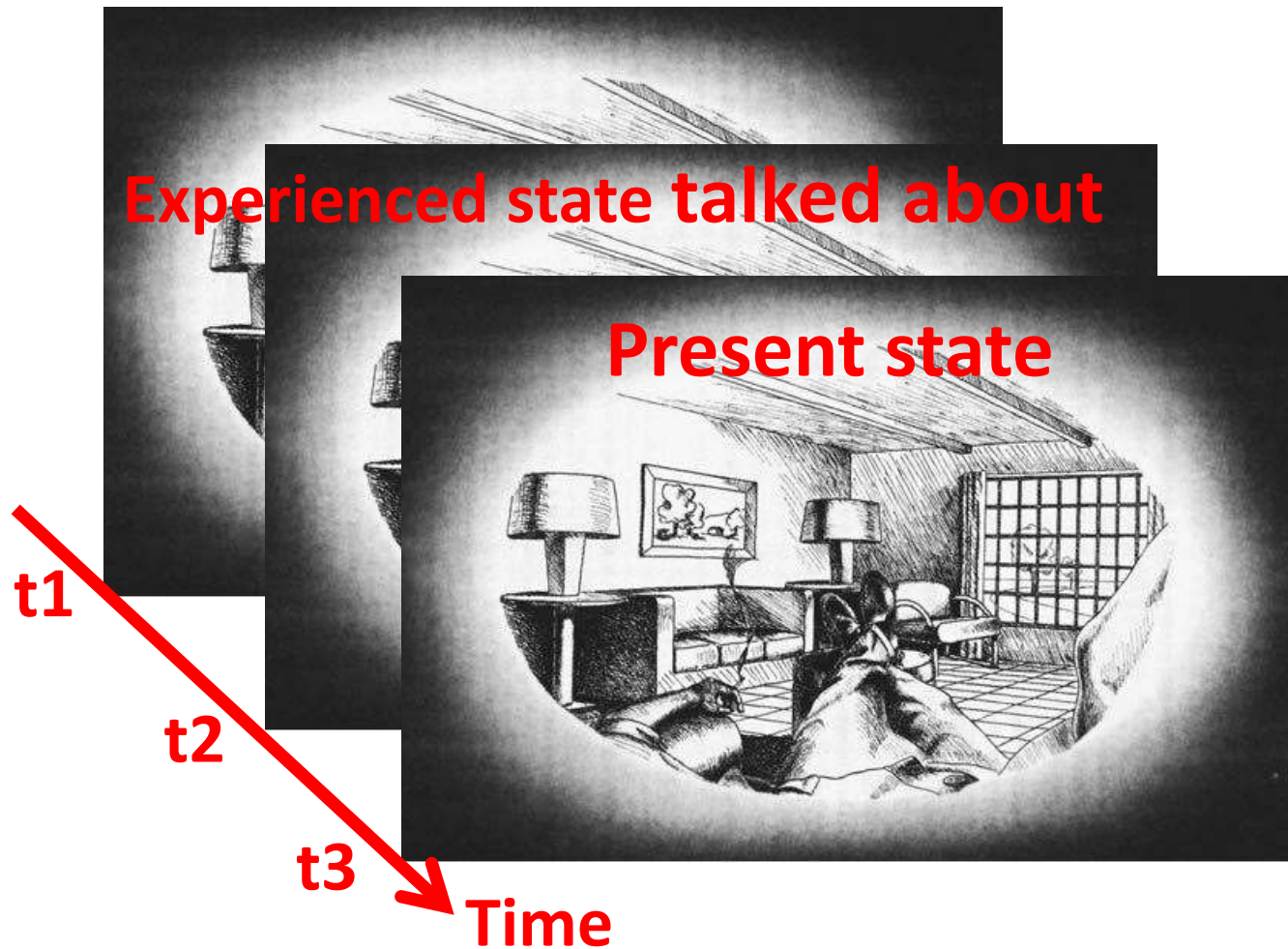
Example of mirative *TA* from a novel

(16) This man has other strange habits. When no one is looking, he has the odd habit of hiding his own coins between cracks in walls, then saying "*Oya, kokoni zeni-ga at-ta*. (Lit. Oh, there was some money in here.) Let's go for a drink," and then treating others to a drink.

[Masuji Ibuse, *Ekimaeryokan*, 1956-57.]

Exceptional unnaturalness of mirative *TA*

- **Unlike a thing's existence, a thing's property and activity are less likely to be expressed with mirative *TA*.**

(17) [At the sight of a very slender person]
 a.   *A, hosoi!*   "Oh, s/he is slender!"
 b.?? *A, hosoka-tta!* "Oh, s/he was slender!"

  Such information based on existential information is too complex to ingrain in a moment.

Effect by 'exploratory theme' 1

Such exceptions are not exceptions in contexts where the information is easier to capture in a moment.

(18) [The speaker was thinking about whether the person who would appear would be slender]

   a. *A/Hora, hosoi!*   "Oh/Yes, (s)he is slender!"

   b. *A/Hora, hosoka-tta!*

"(Lit.)Oh/Yes, (s)he was slender!"

Effect by 'exploratory theme' 2

It is generally impossible to express the completion of an activity until the activity has come to its end.

(19) [At the sight of a man who is drinking liquor]

    a.   *A, nonde-(i)ru!*   **"Oh, *s*/he is drinking!"**

    b.??*A, non-da!*   **"(Lit.) Oh, *s*/he drank!"

Effect by 'exploratory theme' 2

(20) [At the sight of a man who gave up drinking liquor and vowed to pay ¥10,000 to anyone who saw him drink]

a. *A, nonde-(i)ru!*

"Oh, s/he is drinking!"

b. *A, non-da!*

"(Lit.) Oh, s/he drank! (I get the money!)"

The exploratory theme in problem-solving communication

It is only the person responsible for the problem who can express his/her experience of discovering some state in terms of mirative *TA*.

(21) a. *A, saido bureeki kaka-tteru!*

oh handbrake   is applied-CONTINUOUS

"Oh, the handbrake is on!"

b. *A, saido bureeki kaka-tte-ta!*

oh handbrake   is applied-CONTINUOUS-PAST

"(Lit.) Oh, the handbrake was on!" (driver only)

[Sadanobu 2010]

Summary 1/2

- **In this presentation I showed that we should admit to the dense interaction between humans and their environment in order to fully understand Japanese event expressions, as pointed out by Masayuki Ohtsuka.**

- **Unlike the traditional view, it is possible to express a single state as an event.**

- **But it is only possible with the support of either of two types of strong interaction, exploration or somatics. They are grammaticalized patterns of the reportability of spoken experience.**

Summary 2/2

- **Exploration is further related to the naturalness of mirative *TA*. It can be natural to express a thing's property and activity with mirative *TA* as experienced in the immediate past. But this is only with the support of the exploratory issue.**

- **The setting of exploratory issue can be related with the speaker's position in communication. In problem-solving situations, only the person responsible for the problem can express his/her experience of discovering some state in terms of mirative *TA*.**

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