

EXPLORING COGNATE OBJECT CONSTRUCTIONS IN JAPANESE

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ABSTRACT. *Exploring Cognate Object Constructions in Japanese.* The aim of this paper is to explore Cognate Object Constructions in Japanese. To do so, we will rely on the definitions that have been proposed in the literature to account for this phenomenon, as well as on the constraints which apply to such constructions. We will see that Japanese does make use of COCs, although the status of such constructions available in this language is not always agreed upon by the authors who have investigated verbs and their cognate objects. This paper is also concerned with investigating Hyponymic Object Constructions as well as Cognate Object Constructions built on unaccusative verbs. After examining the data, we conclude that although the former are accepted in Japanese, the latter constitute violations.

Keywords: *verb, cognate object, Japanese, unergative, unaccusative*

REZUMAT. *O explorare a obiectelor cognate din japoneză.* Scopul prezentei lucrări este acela de a explora acele construcții din limba japoneză care implică complementele cognate, i.e. complemente care au aceeași origine morfologică precum verbele pe care le însoțesc. Pentru a face acest lucru, vom apela la definițiile care au fost propuse în literatura de specialitate pentru a descrie acest fenomen lingvistic, precum și la constrângerile ce se aplică acestor construcții. Vom vedea că limba japoneză conține astfel de complemente, deși nu toți autorii care au studiat verbele și complementele înrudite cu acestea sunt de acord că toate exemplele din japoneză s-ar putea încadra în această clasificare. În lucrarea de față ne vom îndrepta atenția și asupra construcțiilor formate din verb și complement hiponimic, cât și asupra celor formate din verb neacuzativ și complement cognat. Ulterior examinării datelor, vom concluziona că, deși construcțiile hiponimice sunt acceptate în japoneză, complementele cognate ce însoțesc verbe neacuzative nu formează propoziții gramaticale în această limbă.

Cuvinte-cheie: *verb, obiect cognat, japoneză, verb neergativ, verb neacuzativ*

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1. Introduction

Cognate Object Constructions (COCs) have often been said to be best represented in English, where one can find a substantial number of verbs and nouns which derive their spelling and pronunciation from the same root. Other languages, such as Romance languages, for example, seem to display this behaviour as well, with the only mention that COCs are not as rich in these languages as they are in English. Sometimes, they are restricted to a small number of verbs, or they are no longer productive in those languages (cf. Romanian). However, the status of some of these constructions is not universally agreed-upon in the literature, and there have been authors who have argued that some of the constructions which are regarded as COCs are, in fact, combinations of transitive verbs and their direct objects. There are others, however, who claim that these constructions should not be differentiated, but only regarded as different instantiations of the same phenomenon. We do not concern ourselves with whether these claims are unfounded or not, and we invite the reader (if interested) to take on this enterprise. Rather, we choose to focus on whether COCs can be found in Japanese, and we try to see which verbs allow combinations with nouns whose root they share. We believe that this is an important step to do, as before venturing on a more in-depth investigation of Japanese COCs, one must inquire whether this phenomenon is present and productive in this language. One mention must be made, however, about the data, which is by no means extensive. We will only examine the behaviour of the most representative verbs which enter these constructions, although it might very well be that other verbs (possibly only present in Japanese) share this behaviour as well.

2. Literature overview

The term *Cognate Object Construction* is used to refer to the phenomenon where a verb takes as its object an NP which is related, if not identical, to the spelling and/or pronunciation of the verb. One of the definitions put forward for these constructions belongs to Willson (2), who argues that COCs are constructions where “the object is semantically included in and morphologically related to the verb of the same clause.” Hence, for a cognate object (CO) to be licensed, it needs to first meet these criteria. Under this view, we can differentiate between sentence (1) where we have a CO, and sentence (2) where we simply have a DO accompanying the verb.

1. a. Leah cried a heart-breaking cry.²
b. *Leah cried a cry.
2. Leah ate a juicy peach.

Another requirement that COCs must meet is that all objects which enter such constructions need to be modified, otherwise the final sentence - apart from not having a CO- will turn out ill-formed. A sentence like the one in (1b) where the noun *cry* is bare will not make a candidate for embedding a COCs. Ogata (13) proposes that there are three constraints on COCs, one of them being the fact that “to identify a specific member of the category, the cognate objects should be modified.” In the example in (1a), *heart-breaking* acts as the modifier which contributes to the acceptability of the sentence. Sentence (2) also has *juicy* as a modifier, however, this is not enough to construct a proper COCs.

A closer look at the examples above will reveal that not any type of verb is licenced to appear in COCs. As it has been pointed out by Kuno et. al, “only unergative verbs can appear in the cognate object construction. No unaccusatives can.” (Kuno and Takami, 2004: 107 qtd. in Kitahara (2010: 46)). This view is also supported by James (1998), Kitahara (2010), Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995), Matsumoto (1996), Real-Puigodollars (2008), Willson (2020) as well as other authors. Let us now review the two sets of sentences proposed below, as they offer a clearer representation of what the above authors argue.

3. a. Mary laughed a sad laugh.
b. Bob grinned a sideways grin.
c. The wolf howled a long howl.
d. Sue slept a sound sleep.

(Takami and Kuno (2002b: 133) qtd. in Kitahara (2010: 55))

4. a. *The glass broke a crooked break.
b. *The apples fell a smooth fall.
c. *Phyllis existed a peaceful existence.
d. *She arrived a glamorous arrival.

(Takami and Kuno (2002b: 134) qtd. in Kitahara (2010: 55))

The sentences in (3) are grammatical since they meet the criteria presented above. However, the ones in (4) are regarded to be ungrammatical, although the COCs are modified and related to the meaning of the verb. This

² *Cried* and *cry* share the same root, unlike *eat* and *peach*.

happens because a verb like *break* takes an internal argument which is generated as a Theme, and afterwards undergoes movement to the specifier position associated with the subject. This behaviour is typical of unaccusative verbs, and it is different from that of unergative verbs, whose external argument, i.e., the subject, is generated in the specifier position of the TP and does not undergo movement to reach this position. There have been, however, authors who support the idea that unaccusative verbs can license COs, although they are not as common as COCs formed with unergative verbs. Takami and Kuno (2002a qtd. in Ogata (13) revisit their previous work and suggest that there are several alterations with unaccusative verbs which can form grammatical sentences in COCs. They put forward the examples below to support their view:

5. a. The tree *grew* a century's *growth* within only ten years.
(Takami and Kuno 134)
 - b. The gale *blew* its hardest *blow* in the next hour.
 - c. The stock market *dropped* its largest *drop* in three years today.
 - d. The stock market *slid* a surprising 2% *slide* today.
 - e. Stanley watched as the ball *bounced* a funny little *bounce* right into the shortstop's glove.
 - f. The apples *fell* just a short *fall* to the lower deck, and so were not too badly bruised.
- (Takami and Kuno 142)

This view is also supported by Ogata who argues that "COCs can be made with unergative verbs, unaccusative verbs, and transitive verbs (13)." Following Hale and Keyser (2002), Real-Puigdollars claims that "COs can be analysed as establishing a semantic relation of hyponymy between the verbal root and the object" (158). What this presupposes is that the object can appear in a Hyponymic Object Construction (HOC) even if it is not morphologically related to the verb in the same clause. Rather, it can be expressed by any noun "which is understood as a hyponym of the verbal root (Real-Puigdollars 158)." The definition which *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics (vol. 2)* offers for *hyponymy* is "the relation between two lexical units in which the meaning of the first is included in that of the second". Thus, sentences can be built up from an unergative verb which usually appears in COCs and a noun which is related to the missing CO. Jones (89) offers the following examples for such instances:

6. a. Sam danced a jig.
- b. Bill dreamed a most peculiar thing.
- c. Bill dreamed that he was a crocodile.

However, he seems to dismiss the claim that such objects do act as genuine COs since the tests³ proposed to distinguish COs cannot be applied to them (as shown in Real-Puigdollars 158). Jones suggests that these objects might, in fact, be genuine direct objects of transitive verbs, although he leaves this affair open to further research. If this should be the case, then it follows that the verbs *dance* or *dream* used with hyponymic objects do not represent instances of unergative verbs and are, thus, unable to license cognate objects.

3. Analysis of findings

In this section we investigate whether Japanese allows COCs to appear in grammatical sentences. We will survey several verbs which have been proposed in the literature to be compatible with COs and we will check to see if they have counterparts in Japanese. The topic of COs built on unaccusative verbs is also explored, and we claim that these constructions are not allowed in Japanese. Lastly, we claim that HOCs are allowed in Japanese because these constructions find their roots in a group of verbs which have been argued to enter transitive constructions rather than COCs.

3.1. Evidence for COCs in Japanese

Although they are perhaps best represented in English, COCs do appear in other languages as well. We can see this by examining the examples below taken from Spanish, Italian, and French, as indicated in Real-Puigdollars (3)

- | | | |
|-------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 7. a. Reir | la risa de un niño. | [Spanish]
(Mendikoetxea 1578) |
| | to.laugh the laugh of a child | |
| | ‘To laugh the laugh of a child’ | |
| b. Dorme il | sono del giusto. | [Italian]
(Renzi 60) |
| | sleeps the sleep of.the fair | |
| | ‘He/she sleeps the sleep of the just.’ | |
| c. Pleurer | toutes les larmes de son corps | [French]
(Grevisse 393) |
| | to.cry all the tears of his body | |
| | ‘To cry all the tears of his/her body’ | |

Now let us see if the same can be said about Japanese. Our paper is concerned mainly with finding out if COCs can be found in Japanese, which verbs allow them, and we do not dwell on whether these constructions play the role of

³ These tests are passivization, topicalization, pronominalization, definiteness restriction, questioning, modifier obligatory, object necessary cognate. For more details about the tests see Jones (1988).

a modifier or adjunct. Although the problem of which syntactic role COCs play has been much discussed in the literature (see Jones 1988, Takami and Kuno 2002a, Kitahara 2010 and others), we will not allow it more space than it will be necessary for our study. To begin, let us examine the table below, which is adapted by Kitahara (2010: 36) from Hoeche (125, 298-300). The possible lexical equivalents in Japanese and possible CO candidates have been added by us.

	Verb	CO	Jap. Verb	CO	Examples
1	Live	Life	生きる	人生	—
2	Sing	Song	歌う	歌	大好きな歌を歌う
3	Tell	Tale	語る	物語	ふしぎな物語を語る
4	Smile	Smile	微笑む	微笑み	天使の微笑みを微笑む
5	Sow	Seed	蒔く	種	—
6	Produce	Product	生産する	産物	—
7	Give	Gift	あげる	プレゼント	—
8	Build	Building	建てる	建物	印象的な建物を建てる
9	Die	Death	死ぬ	死	—
10	Think	Thought	考える	考え	—
11	See	Sight	見る	景色	—
12	Do	Deed	する	仕業	—
13	Dream	Dream	—	夢	—
14	Weave	Web	編む	編み物	面白い編み物を編む
15	Feel	Feeling	感じる	感じ	—
16	Drink	Drink	飲む	飲み物	爽やかな飲み物を飲む
17	Feed	Food	食わず	餌	—
18	Fight	Fight	戦う	戦い	見事な戦を戦う
19	Grin	Grin	—	—	—
20	Plant	Plant	植える	植物	—
21	Sleep	Sleep	眠る	眠り	永い眠りを眠る
22	Dance	Dance	踊る	踊り	すごい踊りを踊る
23	Smell	Smell	嗅ぐ	におい	—
24	Laugh	Laugh	笑う	笑い	変わった笑いを笑う

Table I

From the list of 24 verbs listed by Kitahara (2010), only 10 appear in grammatical constructions in Japanese. The remaining verbs either fail to

construct acceptable sentences, or, in some cases, do not have a Japanese equivalent which allows a noun derived from the same root. One such case is represented by the *smell a smell* construction, which in Japanese has the romaji transcription *kagu*⁴ for the verb, and *nioi* for the noun. Other verbs, on the other hand, do share the root with the corresponding noun, although they do not form proper sentences. This is represented by the verb *kanjiru* 感じる ‘to feel’ which is not combined with *kanji* 感じ ‘feeling’. Rather, in order to render the meaning that something produced an unpleasant feeling, the noun *kimochi* 気持ち ‘feeling’ is accompanied by the verb *suru* ‘to do’. This is illustrated in (8) below.

8. Kare no me ga iyana kimochi ga shita.
 He GEN eyes NOM unpleasant feeling PART to do
 ‘His way of looking produced an unpleasant feeling (on me)’.

Miura (1979) argues that one of the influences English had on Japanese was the introduction of cognate objects. He links this to the fact that such constructions can be found in the literary works produced after Japan was forced to renounce the isolation policy and establish contact with the West. One of the examples that he offers to support this is “... watashi-tachi no aida ni ha hageshii tatakai ga tatakawareta” translated as ‘...among us was fought a fierce battle’ (25). Although we do not argue against the origins of the COCs that Miura finds, it is important to note that the second example he lists “juninnami na seikatsu o seikatsu-shite-inagara...”, translated as ‘...I was living an average life’ is not natural in Japanese, as opposed to the Japanese hyponymic objects which will be discussed later. (25) The natural way to express the English construction would be to use the verb 送る *okuru*, which is not related to *seikatsu* ‘life’. With this verb *seikatsu* can still be modified by an adjective. The unnatural nuance can be, indeed, attributed to the influence that English word-to-word translations had on Japanese during that period. Another example which can be accepted if the context allows for it is 人生を生きる *jinsei o ikiru* ‘to live a life’, where the kanji used for the verb appears in the word *jinsei*. However, the choice of this construction instead of the natural *seikatsu wo okuru* would imply emphasis.

We see that the semantics of the verbs also plays an important part in their distribution in COCs, or at least this appears to be the case in the example with *kimochi*. Whether similar pairs of *noun + verb* can be found in other languages is left to future research to find out. However, it is worth noting that

⁴ This verb is also read におう *niou*, in which case, it shares the same root as the noun におい *nioi*. However, when this reading is used, it can only refer to something that gives off a bad smell, whereas the reading *kagu* does not have this semantic restriction.

Japanese is a language which uses ideograms for its writing system. Thus, it is not surprising that semantics and word meaning in association with ideograms plays an important role in the COCs which are found in Japanese. All the verbs which form grammatical sentences when a cognate object is introduced have one aspect in common: all their readings are *kun-yomi*, i.e., Japanese readings. This might be one of the conditions for forming such constructions in Japanese, although it could be a sufficient, but not an imperative requirement, especially since there are verbs which do not yield COCs although they share the *kun-yomi* readings. This is further illustrated in Miura (1979, 25), where we find a noun-verb pair which yields a COC even though the readings used are *on-yomi*.

It is also important to observe that there are verbs which use a combination of the word *mono* 'thing' to form a compound word along with a part of the reading of the verb. Such words are *monogatari*, *nomimono*, and *tatemono*, where *-gatari*⁵ is the pre-*ます* form of *kataru* 'to tell', *nomi-* is the pre-*ます* of *nomu* 'to drink', and *tate-* is the pre-*ます* of *teteru* 'to build.' There are other constructions which conform to this pattern, and they are found below.

9. Aoi wa oishii *tabemono* o *tabeta*.
 Aoi TOP delicious food ACC eat
 'Aoi ate delicious food.'
10. Kimiko wa hadeyakana *kimono* o *kiteita* ne.
 Kimiko TOP extravagant kimono ACC wearing.PROG.PAST PART
 'Kimiko wore an extravagant kimono, right?'

Here, the kanji used for *tabemono-tabeta*, respectively *kimono-kiteita* are the same for each noun-verb pair. As already noted, the pronunciation of the verbs slightly changes when *mono* is added. Nonetheless, their morphology and phonetics still bear resemblance to the *kun-yomi* reading of the kanji. However, one would not be wrong to assume that these verbs are instances of transitive verbs, and the that objects they take are DOs and not COs. This makes us wonder whether *monogatari o kataru*, *tatemono o tateru*, and *nomimono o nomu* are in fact COCs or a combination of DO + transitive verb. Ogata (12) suggests that depending of the behaviour of COCs they can be classified into four types:

- A. Verbal COCs
- B. Synchronous nominal COCs (dependent on the timespan of the activity)
- C. Asynchronous nominal COCs (no limitation on the timespan of the activity)
- D. Pseudo COCs

⁵ The form is *gatari* and not *katari* because the initial consonant undergoes phonetical alteration when combined with *mono*.

He argues that in Japanese only type C and D are accepted. His examples involve the following verbs.

11. Hanako-wa tenshi no hohoemi o hohoemu.
Hanako TOP angel GEN smile ACC smile
'Hanako smiled an angelic smile.'
12. Hanako wa uta o utau.
Hanako TOP song ACC sing
'Hanako sang a song.'

According to him, pseudo COCs like the one in (12) form grammatical sentences even in the absence of a modifier. Such verbs, however, can also appear modified. This is exemplified by Matsumoto (212).

13. Taro ga henna odori o odotta.
Taro NOM strange dance ACC danced
'Taro danced a strange dance.'

We believe that the verbs which take *mono*⁶ to form nouns behave like the Ev/R₂⁷ notion which Kitahara (2011) borrows from Höeche (2009). However, they also pass the passivization test proposed in the literature to distinguish between COCs and DOs. This can be accounted for if we consider that in Kitahara's terms the constructions of this type involve a CO which "functions as an affected object or an effected object" (2011: 23) because the Ev/R₂ type are, in fact, transitive constructions. Event-dependent COCs on the other hand (or Ev/R₁) are typical CO constructions like the one in sentence (11) which is built on an unergative verb. Let us see if there are any other instances in Japanese which make use of the event-dependent pattern. Kitahara (2010: 307) proposes that even if such constructions are harder to find, they can be extracted from literary works. The examples he gives can be found below.

- 14.a. Sakoku irai no nagai nemuri o nemuri tsuzukete-kita mono wa...
isolation policy since GEN long sleep ACC sleep.PRF ones TOP
'the ones which have slept a long sleep since the national isolation policy...'
(Toson Shimazaki, *Yoakemae*)

⁶ Note, however, that the verb *eat* in (9) is not a cognate object in the other languages which allow COCs, but a transitive verb.

⁷ Ev/R₁ stands for Event/Result₁, or in Kitahara's terms (2011) they are *event-independent* COCs.

- b. Hitori de niyatto bukimina warai o warat-teiru.
 alone in a meaning manner uncanny smile ACC smile.PROG
 'He is smiling an uncanny smile alone, in a meaning manner.'
 (Sakunosuke Oda, *Shigatsubaka*)

The above verbs represent, indeed, unergative verbs which can occur with cognate objects, although Kitahara alludes that outside literary works these examples are rather odd, and not likely to be used. This is consistent with what Miura (1979) claims, i.e., that cognate objects appeared under the influence of literary translations. However, in section 3.3. we will see that some authors regard hyponymic objects in the same way as COs. Under this view, we can no longer claim that the origin for COs is solely related to translations to and from European languages.

3.2. COCs built on unaccusative verbs

We have mentioned in the beginning of the paper that there are authors who support the view that COCs can appear with unaccusative verbs as well. Let us return to this topic and see if the examples offered in section 2 can be translated in Japanese without losing their characteristics.

The examples offered by Kuno and Takami (2004) were the following:

15. a. The tree grew a century's growth within only ten years.
 Ki ga tatta jūnenkan de hyakunen bun no seichō o togeta.
 Tree NOM only ten years in a hundred years ratio GEN growth ACC attained
- b. The gale blew its hardest blow yet in the next hour.
 Sono tsugi no ichijikan de soremade de ichiban hageshii toppū ga fuita.
 After GEN one hour in until then best strong gust NOM blew
- c. The stock market dropped its largest drop in three years today.
 Kabushiki-ichiba wa kyō kakyo sannenkan de ichiban geraku shita
 The stock market TOP today past three years in best fall did
- d. The stock market slid a surprising 2% slide today.
 Kyō kabushiki-ichiba wa igai nimo ni pāsento geraku shita.
 Today the stock market TOP surprising 2% fall did

e. Stanley watched as the ball bounced a funny little bounce right into the shortstop's glove.

Yūgekishu no gurabu ni bōru ga chotto fushigina baundo o suru no
o Sutanri wa mita
Shortstop GEN glove in ball NOM a little funny bounce ACC do NP⁸
Stanly TOP saw

f. The apples fell just a short fall to the lower deck, and so were not too badly bruised.

Ringo wa shita kanban made sukoshi ochita no de sorehodo hidoku
kizutsukerareteimasen deshita.
Apple NOM down deck until a little fell as that much badly
hurt.Passive.Past were.

All the sentences in (15) fail to render COCs in Japanese. In some cases, there is no corresponding verb which can be linked to the object to allow such constructions. This is the case with *bounce* in (15e), which, although translated using the English borrowing *baundo*, combines with the verb *suru* 'to do'. The sentence ends up having only one instance of *baundo*, and it does not allow another one which should correspond to the verb. A similar situation occurs with *slid a slide* in (15d), which once again uses the verb *suru* in combination with the noun *geraku* to render what in English can be rendered by a COC. The same holds for (15c), where the same combination of *noun+ suru* is used to express a similar, although morphologically different English COC.

In the case of (15f) the verb *ochita* is, indeed, present in the sentence as the past simple counterpart for the English *to fall*. However, there is no object which can be assigned the role of CO. Rather, the overall meaning is expressed using *sukoshi*, and adverb which usually translates by 'a little, a bit'. Example (15a) is another one which allows a modifier along with a CO candidate, however, the verb *togeru* 'to attain' is not morphologically or semantically related to *seichō* 'growth.' The same behaviour is present in (15b).

From the data examined above, we can conclude that Japanese does not allow unaccusative verbs in COCs. Even if the sentences above meet Ogata's second constraint which says that "cognate objects should be modified" (14), they appear to meet only one part of Willson's (2020) definition of COCs. As mentioned, when the English counterpart of the proposed verbs is available, the CO is not. The vice-versa is true as well. Thus, when an object appears in the sentence, it takes by default the verb *suru*, and not a verb which shares the same

⁸ Short for *Nominalising Particle*

kanji root. Moreover, it must be noted that the candidates for the CO position are composed of two kanji, and because of this they have *on-yomi*, i.e., Chinese readings. As we have already suggested, Japanese COs seem to appear only when the objects have *kun-yomi* readings. Of course, this does not mean that Japanese disallows verbs which have *on-yomi* readings. However, when such verbs do appear, they necessarily combine with the verb *suru* because this is the process by which Japanese forms verbs from nouns. However, combinations of *on-yomi* readings on both the verb and the noun are not grammatical in COCs. This is illustrated below:

16. The stock market dropped its largest drop in three years today.
 *Kabushiki-ichiba wa kyō kakyo sannenkan de ichiban geraku o
 geraku shita
 The stock market TOP today past three years in best fall ACC
 fall did

Another mention that needs to be made has to do with the English examples proposed by Kuno and Takami, which sometimes appear odd, as it is the case with (15b). It might very well be that such sentences are used in a special context, where emphasis and discourse-oriented factors play an important role in the acceptance of COCs built on unaccusative verbs. This is supported by the fact that the same authors argue that example (4a)⁹ is not grammatical taken alone, although it becomes acceptable in English when it is incorporated in (15f). This can be explained by the addition of context.

3.3. *Hyponymic Object Constructions and Japanese*

The last part of the paper investigates whether Hyponymic Object Constructions are felicitous in Japanese. To do this, let us look at the example sentences in 17, built on verbs that have been proposed to allow HO (Real-Puigodollars).

17. a. Rin wa seikōna tango o odotta.
 Rin TOP exquisite tango ACC danced
 'Rin danced an exquisite tango.'

⁹ The apples fell a smooth fall.

b. Ana wa utsukushii doina¹⁰ o utaimashita.

Ana TOP beautiful doina ACC sang.

'Ana sang a beautiful doina.'

c. Hiyori wa sawayakana remonēdo o nonda.

Hiyori TOP refreshing lemonade ACC drank

'Hiyori drank a refreshing lemonade.'

All the examples in (17) form grammatical sentences when used with HOCs, and these HOCs are built on the same verbs that accept COs. There is, however, a verb which has been proposed to have a hyponymic object, and which does not appear in Japanese. This verb is *dream*. In Japanese there is no counterpart to express the verbal meaning of *dream*. Rather, the verb *miru* 'to see' is used in combination with the corresponding noun for dream, i.e. *yume*. Thus, if we were to adopt a one-to-one translation, then the equivalent for the English *to dream a dream* would be 'to see a dream' (*yume o miru*). It is rather interesting that this verb does not allow COCs or HOCs in Japanese, as this contrasts with English and Romance languages such as Spanish or Romanian.

What is more, the verbs under discussion (including *sleep*) have an intermediate status in the literature concerned with cognate objects. As mentioned, some authors argue that the objects they take are faux-cognate objects, suggesting that they represent clear cases of transitive constructions¹¹, others regard them as hyponymic objects, while Kitahara (2010) introduces the term event-independent constructions to refer to them. It is not our present purpose to analyse which view is best fit to describe COCs and HOCs, but only to see if they can appear in a language other than the European languages which have been largely discussed and accounted for. However, if one agrees that COCs include hyponymic objects, then one can argue that COCs verbs were used in Japanese even before the influence of European languages. We conclude that HOCs form grammatical constructions, except for *yume* which does not have a corresponding verb in Japanese. Because of this, it does not represent a candidate for our present discussion.

4. Conclusions

In this paper we have investigated whether COCs are a present phenomenon in Japanese and concluded that although they are not as numerous

¹⁰ A traditional Romanian song.

¹¹ This also applies to constructions of the type *dance a dance*.

as English COCs, Japanese COCs do exist. They meet the same requirements as English COCs (semantic and morphological semblance), and they also allow modifiers. However, most of the verbs which enter COCs have a disputed status in the literature and are treated by some authors in the same way as the DO of a transitive verb. If we followed this line of reasoning, then we could say that Japanese has only three genuine COCs represented by *warai o warau* 'laugh a laugh', *hohoemi o hohoemu* 'smile a smile' and *nemuri o nemuru* 'sleep a sleep', although these phenomena could be attributed to translations, and not very productive in daily conversation. The other type of objects, i.e., HOs, have a problematic status in the literature, although they do appear in grammatical constructions in Japanese. Another aspect that this paper tackled was that of COCs built on unaccusative verbs. After examining the data, we have concluded that Japanese does not allow such constructions in grammatical sentences and that COCs are restricted to unergative and transitive verbs only. What this paper has not touched upon is whether the COCs appear as modifiers or adjuncts. This aspect, along with the actual status of verbal construction like *odori o odoru* 'dance a dance' is worth pursuing as it is sure to answer more questions about Japanese COCs and their characteristics. Nevertheless, this study can be used as a steppingstone in the investigation of Japanese COCs as it establishes which verbs and nouns enter such constructions.

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