The influence of translation upon the historical development of the Japanese passive construction *

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abstract

The most important subclasses of Japanese passive sentences from a syntactic and functional point of view are the \textit{ni}-passive and the \textit{niyotte}-passive. While the \textit{ni}-passive is a construction which is indigenous to the Japanese language, the \textit{niyotte}-passive is a new construction that arose through the influence of European languages.

\textit{Niyotte}-passive sentences happened to come into the Japanese language when the translation word \textit{niyotte}, expressing means and way, was assigned to Dutch \textit{door}—a marker of path, means and way and of the agent in a passive sentence—in the literal translation of Modern Dutch texts.

Although the appearance of the \textit{niyotte}-passive had historical reasons, the form has come to be widely used because it was, structurally and functionally, in the position of filling up a gap in the system of the Japanese language. Structurally it shifts the agent to an adjunct position without changing the roles of the arguments of a transitive construction, and functionally it describes an activity of a human being or human beings from a completely neutral standpoint.

1 Introduction

This paper discusses issues in the historical development of Japanese passive expressions in terms of their structures and functions. The primary concern here is the identification of the prototype of the passive expression indigenous to the Japanese language and the influence of the translation of foreign languages on the historical development of the Japanese passive.

As is well known, the Japanese passive subsumes not only the ‘direct passive’ formed with the object of a transitive verb as subject, but also the ‘indirect passive’ whose

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subject is not an argument subcategorized by the verb in the active voice. The latter construction can be formed with an intransitive verb as well as a transitive verb. The morpheme \((r)are\) that forms the Japanese passive is used not only in the passive construction but also in the ‘spontaneous’ construction, which describes non-volitional occurrence of an event, and in the ‘potential’ construction, as well as in one type of honorific construction. In this paper, we will characterize the Japanese \((r)are\) constructions mentioned above following the idea of Shibatani (1995) that captures them in terms of the relationship between the ‘subject’ and the event. Based on his view, prototypical Japanese passive sentences are those that denote an event in which the subject undergoes the influence of another participant. This characterization matches the observations made by the Japanese traditional grammarians.

On the other hand, we can find passives with a neutral interpretation that do not belong to the prototypical passive defined above. They are to be found in some Japanese classical documents, especially in kanbun, the Japanese reading of Chinese classics (i.e., the word-for-word translation of Chinese classics). They undoubtedly had an enormous influences to the Japanese vocabulary and syntax. However, the most drastic change to the Japanese passive structure was brought about by the influence from European languages. In particular, the word-for-word translation of a Dutch grammar published in the 19th century contributed to the establishment of the \(niyotte\)-passive. This construction made possible the kind of passive expressions that had not been possible by means of the original passive construction, and brought to the language ways of expressions comparable to passive sentences in Dutch and English. However, we cannot simply explain the incorporation of the \(niyotte\)-passive as an incident in the history of the Japanese language brought about by the translation of foreign literature. There had to be room for the \(niyotte\)-passive to be accepted in Japanese. This paper tries to shed light on the issues of how a foreign language can have an effect on the development of a grammatical category in another language, taking the course of the development of Japanese passive sentences as an example.

The organization of this paper is as follows: Section 2 presents a hypothesis concerning the historical relationship between the \(ni\)-passive and the \(niyotte\)-passive on the basis of insights gained from previous studies. In Section 3, I will give an overview of the historical development of Japanese passive sentences and examine how \(niyotte\)-passive sentences took root in Japanese. Section 4 discusses some reasons as to why \(niyotte\) are firmly established in Modern Japanese from the viewpoint of their structure and function. Section 5 is devoted to the conclusion.

2 Some Characteristics of Passive Sentences in Japanese

2.1 Direct Passive vs. Indirect Passive

In comparison with passive sentences in English and other European languages, Japanese passive sentences are generally considered as belonging to two types, the direct passive and the indirect passive. The direct passive is formed by taking the object of a transitive verb sentence as the subject, and has a direct correspondence to the passive in English.
The following is an example of the direct passive:

(1) Yamada ga Tanaka ni koros-are-ta.
   NOM    DAT    kill-(r)are -PAST
   ‘Yamada was killed by Tanaka.’

On the other hand, in the indirect passive, the nominative NP is not derived from any argument in the active counterpart. Semantically this construction denotes an event in which the referent of the nominative NP undergoes some influence from the action brought about by a different agent. There are two types of indirect passive constructions: one is based on a transitive verb as in (2a), and the other on an intransitive verb as in (2b).

(2) a. Watashi wa Yamada ni sakini mondai wo tok-are-ta.
    I    TOP    DAT    in advance problem ACC    solve-(r)are -PAST
    ‘I had Yamada solve the problem (on me) before I solved it.’

   b. Watashi wa tsuma ni nige-rare-ta.
    wife    run away-(r)are -PAST
    ‘I had my wife run away on me.’

In the generative literature there was a controversy between the ‘uniform theory’, which derives both kinds of passive sentence from a single deep structure (Kuroda, 1965; Howard & Niyekawa-Howard, 1976) and the ‘non-uniform theory’, which assumes two different deep structures (Kuno, 1973; Shibatani, 1978). Since the ‘possessor passive’ (see the next example), where the subject of the passive sentence and remaining accusative NP are in the possessor-possession relationship, has characteristics intermediate between the direct passive and the indirect passive, the position admitting a continuum of the two passives is now becoming the accepted view.

(3) Yamada wa sensei ni namae wo yob-are-ta.
    teacher    name    call-(r)are -PAST
    ‘Yamada had his name called by his teacher.’

As I will discuss later on, the analysis of passive sentences as isolated constructions is superficial. They should be analyzed in relation to the other uses of (r)are and their correspondence with intransitive verbs and transitive verbs.

It should be noted here that indirect passive sentences as well as direct passive sentences can both be found in Japanese literature from the early times. The following are some examples of the indirect passive in Old Japanese:

(4) awa-yuki ni fur-aye1-te sak-eru ume no hana ..
    bubble-snow DAT    fall-(r)are -CONJ open-RESULT plum of flower
    ‘plum flowers that are in bloom, with light snow falling on them ..’
    (Man-yoo-shuu: No.1641, composed around A.D.750)

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1(R)aye is the old form of (r)are used in the literatures before the 8th century.
(5) kure-take no na wo ito toku if-are-te inuru koso
Chinese-bamboo name ACC very quickly say-(r)are -CONJ come back FOCUS
itofosikere
pitiable
‘They are unfortunate since you said in no time another name of a Chinese bamboo, which they had not expected, before they could say a word’
(Makura no Sooshi : §137)

2.2 Indigenousness of Passive and the Form of the Indication of Agent

Many of the traditional Japanese grammarians believe the “non-sentient passive = non-indigenous passive hypothesis”.

(6) Non-sentient passive = non-indigenous passive hypothesis:
The prototype of the Japanese passive represents an event where one animate NP referent receives influence from the other. Therefore, the ‘non-sentient passive’ with an inanimate subject is not indigenous to Japanese, but arose through translation from Western languages in modern times. (Yamada, 1908; Mitsuya, 1908)

Although this hypothesis is open to many counterarguments, it still has a large number of followers. This hypothesis is supported by the intuition that the Japanese passive has both an indigenous prototypical variant and a non-indigenous variant, whose use increased under the influence of foreign languages, and that non-sentient passive sentences are quite common in these foreign languages.

The non-sentient passive = non-indigenous passive hypothesis has as a corollary the niyotte-passive = non-indigenous passive hypothesis as a variant. The niyotte-passive has a postposition, niyotte, as the marker of the agent of a passivesentence. Contrasting with it is the ni-passive, which makes use of a locative/dative marker, ni, to mark the agent.

(7) Niyotte-passive = non-indigenous passive hypothesis:
The ni-passive is the passive indigenous to Japanese and the niyotte-passive arose through the influence of foreign translation.

The earliest version of the niyotte-passive = non-indigenous passive hypothesis is found in Matsushita (1930). Matsusita argues that (r)are expresses the category of ‘affectivity’, and then classifies ‘affectivity’ into ‘beneficial/aversiveaffectivity’, ‘simple affectivity’, ‘potential affectivity’ and ‘spontaneous affectivity’. According to Matsusita, of the four, the first two categories belong to the passive; ‘beneficial/aversive affectivity’ depicts a situation where the subject of a passive sentence receives benefit or adversity from someone or something else while the agent is represented by the secondary argument with the particle ni. On the other hand, ‘simple affectivity’ is the passive that is neutral with respect to benefit or adversity, and whose agent is not represented or, if represented, is introduced by niyotte.
Kuroda (1979) analyzed the contrast between \textit{ni} and \textit{niyotte} from the viewpoint of generative grammar. Kuroda argues that \textit{ni}-passive sentences are derived from complex structures regardless of the direct/indirect distinction, and they express the subject’s undergoing affectivity brought about by the event described by the embedded sentence. The \textit{niyotte}-passive, on the other hand, is derived from a simple active sentence by means of transformation, as in the typical analysis of English passive, and is associated with a neutral meaning without affectivity. Kuroda suggests that the \textit{ni}-passive is indigenous to Japanese while the \textit{niyotte}-passive may be a recent innovation brought about by the literal translation of European languages.

On the basis of some historical texts, Kinsui (1992b) traces the course of development of the \textit{niyotte}-passive showing how it was later used in the literal translation from Dutch in the 18th century, how it was used in translating English and other languages, and how it even later was generally used in non-translated, originally Japanese texts.

Teramura (1982) discusses the combination of \textit{ni}, \textit{niyotte}, \textit{kara} (ablative marker) with verbs. According to his observation, \textit{ni} is most commonly used in passive sentences with verbs that denote physical/psychological effects such as \textit{korosu} ‘kill’, \textit{tsukamaeru} ‘catch’, \textit{tasukeru} ‘help’, \textit{odokasu} ‘threaten’, \textit{kowasu} ‘break’ and \textit{waru} ‘split’. \textit{Niyotte} with these verbs sounds rather literal and formal. \textit{Kara} cannot be used in this case. Let us call these verbs type 1. Both \textit{ni} and \textit{kara} are used with verbs denoting the transition of emotion and perception such as \textit{aisuru} ‘love’, \textit{nikumu} ‘hate’, \textit{kirau} ‘dislike’, \textit{sonkei-suru} ‘respect’, \textit{miru} ‘see’, \textit{kiku} ‘hear’. \textit{Niyotte} is not used with these verbs (type 2). Verbs of creation such as \textit{tateru} ‘build’, \textit{tsukuru} ‘make’ and \textit{kaku} ‘write’ do not go with \textit{ni} and \textit{kara} but can take \textit{niyotte} (type 4). In addition to Teramura’s observation, we can point out that verbs that denote direct contact with a patient like \textit{sawaru} ‘touch’, \textit{tataku} ‘hit’ and \textit{naderu} ‘rub’ neither take \textit{niyote} nor \textit{kara}, but only \textit{ni} (type 3). To the class of verbs taking only \textit{niyotte}, we can add verbs—many of them of Sino-Japanese origin—that denote extremely abstract and neutral relationships such as \textit{shoyuu-suru} ‘possess’, \textit{un’ei-suru} ‘manage’, \textit{hajimeru} ‘begin’, \textit{okonau} ‘do’ and \textit{giron-suru} ‘discuss’ (type 5). These observations are summarized as in the following table.

\begin{table}[h]
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\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & \textit{ni} & \textit{niyotte} & \textit{kara} \\
\hline
\textit{type 1} & \textit{korosu} ‘kill’ \textit{tsukamaeru} ‘catch’ \textit{kowasu} ‘break’ & ok & (ok) & * \\
\textit{type 2} & \textit{aisuru} ‘love’ \textit{nikumu} ‘hate’ \textit{kirau} ‘dislike’ & ok & * & ok \\
\textit{type 3} & \textit{sawaru} ‘touch’ \textit{tataku} ‘hit’ \textit{naderu} ‘rub’ & ok & * & * \\
\textit{type 4} & \textit{tateru} ‘build’ \textit{tsukuru} ‘make’ \textit{kaku} ‘write’ & * & ok & * \\
\textit{type 5} & \textit{shoyuu-suru} ‘possess’ \textit{un’ei-suru} ‘manage’ \textit{hajimeru} ‘begin’ & * & ok & * \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

We can summarize the above observations as follows. The typical \textit{niyotte}-passive is the passive with a non-sentient subject. Even when it takes a sentient subject, we can say that it treats the subject as non-sentient in that the event is conceived of an abstract, formal and superficial relationship. We can also explain that in passive sentences with verbs of emotion, perception verbs and verbs of effect, the effect of these actions can only be on the emotion and senses of a human being. This gives rise to the meaning of emotional and internal effect, which is incompatible with the \textit{niyotte}-passive.
As pointed out by a number of researchers, the niyotte-passive is a rather stiff literal expression and is not used in the spoken language. We can, therefore, assume the stylistic constraint below.

(9) **Stylistic Constraint on the Niyotte-Passive:**
The content of a niyotte-passive sentence must be suitable for the solemn style.

The example below sounds odd because it violates the Stylistic Constraint in (9).

(10) "uraniwa no ana wa John no kaiinu niyotte hor-are-ta.
backyard GEN hole TOP GEN pet dog dig-(r)are-PAST
'The hole in the backyard was dug by John’s pet dog.'

Given the characteristics of the niyotte-passive together with the non-indigenous passive hypothesis, we can say that a ni-passive sentence principally means that the referent of the subject is influenced by the action of another participant and that this blocks the types of verbs that do not match such a meaning. There seem to be some factors that helped to establish the niyotte-passive with verbs that did not take the ni-passive; it has a different structure from the ni-passive and (according to Kuroda, 1979), it went through a different derivation. It also has a different function from the ni-passive. We will give a detailed examination of these points in Section 4.

3 The History of Passive Constructions

3.1 The System of ‘Voice’ in Japanese

Since passive constructions in Japanese have a close morphological and semantic relationship to the transitive-intransitive verb pairs and to causative constructions, it makes sense to see how passive sentences are placed in the entire picture of verbal constructions. Shibatani (1995), based on Hosoe (1928), Mikami (1953) and on studies done before the 19th century, places the categories of verbal sentences in Japanese on a transitivity scale. The following table is what I developed on the basis of the ideas presented in Shibatani. Case-marking is based on the system of Old Japanese.
We will first examine the case-marking patterns, because the case marking system of Old Japanese is different from that of Modern Japanese. Since Old Japanese has no marker for the main clause subject, nominative is determined on the basis of case marking by no or ga used for the subject of the embedded clause. Accusative is indicated by wo but marking here is not obligatory. We can, therefore, determine an NP that can occur with wo in a given construction as accusative. Dative is marked by the particle ni.

'SUBJECT' and 'OBJECT' in the table are based on a semantic and functional definition. The features of subject are stated as follows:

1. Subject is the main body of volition of action and recognition of an event and the typical referent is a human being.

2. Subject is the most likely candidate to be focused on, and in many cases it is a zero pronoun without morphological realization, or it is presented as a topic with fa (= the old form of the topic marker wa) or the zero particle.

Of the semantic roles, theme represents an argument that necessarily undergoes a change of state due to the event concerned, and patient is a receiver of the effect of an action that does not necessarily involve a change of state. Typical examples of transitive II that have the patient as the object are verbs of thinking, verbs of emotion, and verbs of senses like omofu ‘think of’, nikamu ‘hate’ and miru ‘look at’ as well as verbs of contact involving a patient like idaku ‘cuddle’, furu ‘touch’ and so on.

The constructional categories in the table are ordered in terms of their rank of transitivity. Transitivity here denotes the volition and force originating from the subject. The causative construction, which represents causation of action by manipulating the causee, is ranked at the top, and it is followed by transitive I, which represents the causation of a change of state in the object, and by transitive II, which represents only volitional effect without involving a change of state in the object. Among intransitive verbs, unergative verbs represent volitional actions and have a reflexive meaning in that
the agent performs the action by affecting itself. To be more specific, it is considered that the subject of an unergative verb plays a dual role of agent and patient. Unaccusative verbs represent non-volitional change of state, and we can still see a weak reflexive nature here in that they do not require any external source of force. Some of these verbs can be used as volitional verbs (tatu ‘stand up’, ku ‘come’, etc.). Still in this case we can argue for the reflexive nature in them since the subject are both agent and theme at the same time.

Passive I corresponds to the ‘direct passive,’ and passive II to the ‘indirect passive.’

We do not have ‘spontaneous’, another semantic category of (r)are, in the table. It is a category that is derived mainly from transitive II and unergative, and forms constructions expressing non-volitional, spontaneous occurrence of an action of the subject. In this construction, the human being as the referent of the subject, which is agentive in nature, bears the role of experiencer of the non-volitional action conducted by itself. Passive represents the meaning that the subject is affected by the action conducted by someone else.

In passing, I might mention that the potential construction is derived from the spontaneous construction. Those (r)are constructions that are considered as potential in texts earlier than the 12th century, however, are all accompanied by negation markers. This means that potential is regarded not as an independent category but as one type of spontaneous before the 12th century because potential as a category developed from the category spontaneous through negation.

(R)are has also the function to form ‘honorifics’. It is assumed that the ‘honorific’ meaning derived from the passive meaning in the ninth century, and it is no different in form from a usual active sentence. We will put ‘spontaneous’, ‘potential’ and ‘honorific’ aside in the discussion below.

The conceptual relationships among different categories presented above are schematized in (12). This figure follows the ideas of the “force dynamics” developed by Talmy (1985), of the “action chain” developed by Croft (1991), the “billiard-ball model” of Langacker (1991) and others with some modifications. □ and △ represent a human being or an object that is a referent of the subject or the object, and the arrow represents transmission of energy. △ also represents a change as a natural result of the event in question.
I will point out here the relationship between the verb types in (8) and the categories of voice presented here. Passives I and II in (11) and (12) are indigenous passive and are considered to belong to the ni-passive. A Ni-passive sentence can be formed from causative, transitive I, transitive II or unergative: the type of verb is irrelevant as long as the verb is volitional and active. On the other hand, a niyotte-passive can be formed in principle from transitive I, which gives a hint that it is a construction highly dependent on a specific structure.

3.2 The Prototypical Function of (R)are

Based on the paradigm above, the function of (r)are can be defined as follows:

(13) The Prototypical Function of (R)are:

To remove the agent of an active verb from subject position while retaining the nature of a verbal clause.

There are two possible ways to effect this function, which leads to the two different constructions. One is the spontaneous and the other the passive. In the case of the spontaneous, the semantic role of agent is dissolved and, as a result, the subject remains to be the experiencer in the event. In the case of the passive, the agent is expressed as an entity other than the subject. The subject is involved in the event as the undergoer of influence. The relationship of the derivations can be schematized as below:

(14) agent (NOM) (patient (ACC)) transitive II/unergative

experience φ (patient (NOM, ACC)) spontaneous (potential)

agent (NOM) (theme/patient) (ACC) transitive/unergative

affectee (NOM) agent (affecter) (DAT) (theme/patient (ACC)) ‘passive’
According to the schema, passive constructions are limited to the sentient passive with a human being or human beings as the subject. It is true that many of the passive sentences found in the literature in Old Japanese take human beings as their subjects. Here are two examples illustrating this.

(15) Yamasuga no mi nara-nu koto wo ware ni yose if-are-si true COPULA-NEG thing ACC I to compare say-(r)are -PAST
  kimi fa tare to ka mu-ramu you TOP who with Q sleep-GUESS
  ‘You were told what was not true in relation to me. Who on earth are you sleeping with?’
  (Man-yoo-shuu : No.564, composed around A.D.740)

(16) Mata yamugotonaki fito no yorodu-no fito ni kasikomar-are also noble person NOM every person DAT humble oneself-(r)are kasiduk-are-tamafu, miru mo ito urayamasi.
  service-(r)are-HON look also very envious
  ‘Also I feel envious to see the noble treated in a reverential manner and served by everybody.’
  (Makura no Sooshi : §158)

These are examples of indirect passive. They have been in the language since the earliest literary period.

3.3 The Non-Sentient Passive in Old Japanese

Even if the passive sentences in Old Japanese center around human beings, the non-sentient passive does exist in the language. We can regard the non-sentient passive as a derivative of the prototype of (r)are. Although there are some passive sentences with non-sentient subjects found in the texts of Old Japanese, most of them involve physical influence on the themes by natural phenomena or actions by human beings. Observe:

(17) awa-yuki ni fur-aye-te sak-eru ume no hana ..(=(4))
  bubble-snow DAT fall-(r)are -CONJ open-RESULT plum of flower
  ‘plum flowers that are in bloom with light snow falling on them’
  (Man-yoo-shuu : No.1641, composed around A.D.750)

(18) noki tikaki wogi no imiziku kaze ni huk-are-te, kudake-madofu eaves near reeds NOM hard wind DAT blow-(r)are -CONJ break-tremble
  ga ito afare ni-te NOM very pitiable COPULA-CONJ
  ‘I feel pity to see common reeds near the eaves blown hard and falling around.’
  (Sarashina Nikki)
(19) afugi tataugami nado, yobe makura-gami ni oki-sika-do,
fan paper and-so-on the last night pillow-side LOC put on-PAST-though
onodu kara fik-are tiri-nikeru wo motomuru ni..
by itself pull-(r)are be scattered-PAST ACC look for when
‘When I was looking for the fan and the pieces of paper which I put by my pillow
but which were pulled away and got scattered by themselves’
(Makura no Sooshi : §63)

(20) kagura no fue no omosiroku wananaki fukisumas-are-te noboru-ni
sacred music GEN flute NOM tastefully waving blow finely-(r)are -CONJ go up-CONJ
‘When we climbed up the slope, hearing a flute, playing sacred music tastefully,
blown and waving,...’
(Makura no Sooshi : §142)

In other words, they were still not far from the prototype of the indigenous passive
sentence that denotes a situation in which the subject is affected by a certain event
although the nature of the subject was extended from human beings to non-human
entities.

Furthermore, I should add a comment to the following example, which is said to
illustrate the non-sentient passive with a verb of creation in Old Japanese (Okutsu,
1992). The example is about an event happened in the family of a powerful aristocrat
called ”Saion-zi”, and we should accordingly regard the function of (r)are here not as
that of passive but as that of ‘honorific’.

(21) Saion-zi no kanai, wausiki-deu ni i-raru-besi-tote, amata-tabi i-kafe-rare-keredomo,
Saion-temple of bell ‘la’ in scale to cast-(r)are -must-COMP many-times cast-repeat-though
kanaya-zari-keru-wo, won-goku yori tadune-idas-are-keri.
agree-NEG-PAST-ACC far-country from find-out-(r)are -PAST
‘For the reason that the bell of the Saionjis should be cast to produce la on the
musical scale, casting was repeated time after time in vain, and then a bell of the
la scale was found in a far country.’
(Tsurezure-gusa : §220)

We can identify a large number of examples of honorific(r)are that may be misunder-
stood as non-sentient passive (r)are in the classics. Removing such misleading examples
will render the non-sentient passive in Old Japanese to be a quite limited variation of
the prototype of the indigenous passive that does not deviate from it decisively.

It should be noted that passive sentences with quite a different function are to be
found in passages literally translated from Chinese, a technique called the Japanese
classics is the word-for-word translation of Chinese classics and Buddhist scriptures
introduced to Japan. The practice became popular gradually after the ninth century,
and it established itself as a unique literary style, the so-called ‘kanbun-style,’ distinct
from the ‘Japanese writing’ (wabun), which was based on spoken Japanese in vocabulary,
grammar and expression. The technique of the Japanese reading of Chinese classics is based on a method of applying an equivalent in Japanese to each single Chinese word and reading them, if necessary, by changing the word order so as to match the Japanese word order. A large number of neutral passive clauses can be found in this style, e.g.:

(22) Yu fa sumafati kore in no itibu ni wosamer-aru

‘The metaphor is namely included to a part of the cause.’

(Dai-jou-kou-hiaku-ron-siaku-ron Jou-wa-ten)

The kanbun style did not only remain as a translation style of Chinese writings but also started to have an influence on the whole writing of Japanese. Most political, academic, and religious writings had been written in the kanbun style from the ancient time to the modern time because this was the loftiest official style. One assumes that the kanbun style facilitated the spread of neutral passive sentences unknown to the original Japanese language. However, in kanbun, even in passive sentences the agent is usually not expressed, if their meaning is neutral. Niyotte and its old form niyorite were not used to mark the agent. It was not until the emergence of the word-for-word translation of Dutch in the 19th century that passive sentences came into existence which were neutral in meaning yet were accompanied by an overtly expressed agent marked by niyotte.

In the next section, we will examine the history of the niyotte particle and its meaning as well as its usage, before we go into the discussion of the literal translation of the Dutch language.

3.4 The History of Niyotte

Ni is one of the particularly old and basic particles in Japanese. It is used with an extremely high frequency, and its meaning and function have not changed much since Old Japanese. It denotes roles of location, time, goal, resultant state, cause and so forth, and has been used as an agent marker in the passive and the causative since ancient times. On the other hand, niyotte is a particle derived by compounding the particle ni and the conjunctive form of a verb yoru. Its early form niyori or niyorite was often used. There are some other postpositions derived by compounding a particle and a verb, such as ni-taite ‘about’, ni-oite ‘in/at’, ni-totte ‘by means of’, ni-kansite ‘in respect of’, o-motte ‘with’, and o-tuuzite ‘through’. The kanbun reading of Chinese classics is the origin of many of them.

The verb yoru intrinsically means ‘to approach’, ‘to go via’, ‘to lean against’ and ‘to depend on’. The derived form niyori(te) has roughly the two meanings of ‘cause/reason’ and ‘means/way’. The usage that has existed in Japanese since early times is the first of these. Niyotte with this usage can attach to a noun or a clause.

(23) kimi-niyori waga na-fa sudeni tatuta-yama

‘I have already been spoken of as involved in a love affair because of you.’
In the Heian period (794-1192), the Japanese reading niyorite was assigned to the Chinese ideographic characters 由(yu), 依(yi), 因(yin) and a few more in the kanbun reading of Chinese classics. In kanbun, a new meaning of ‘means/way’ developed in addition to that of ‘cause/reason’. The following example illustrates this point.

How dare I not to share a bed with you only because there is a persistent rumor in the streets?’

The new usage had been preserved ever since in passages that were written under the influence of the kanbun style, as in the following example:

‘If I will keep my life by means of the Chinese medicine, the medicine in our country is practically gone.’

Niyotte in the niyotte-passive arose through the appropriation of niyotte with a ‘cause/reason’ meaning to the Dutch preposition door ‘through’; the kanbun style as such does not have any niyotte-passive sentences.

3.5 Word-for-word Translation of European Texts and Passive Constructions

For two hundred years after 1650, primarily on religious grounds, Japan virtually closed its doors to the outside world, except China and the Netherlands, with which the Shogunate permitted a limited trade. Despite the isolation policy, new scientific achievements and technologies from European countries, including medicine, were brought into Japan through Dutch publications, and they stirred great interest among the Japanese. They were studied as a new academic field called Rangaku (the Dutch studies), and as a matter of course, this included the study of the Dutch language.
Rangaku at the early stage was limited to the extent that interpreters mainly learned to converse in daily life and commercial contact, but it gradually expanded as the translation of academic writings became an important task of the specialists.

However, grammatical studies properly expanded and a translation method based on the notion of parts of speech developed only in the nineteenth century.

At first a word-for-word translation method was applied and one read Dutch writings in the manner of the kanbun style. [However, even when these were read in word-for-word translation, because there was not yet a clear sense of parts of speech or appropriate Japanese equivalents, it was difficult to decipher the meanings. Thus, it was necessary to take these word-for-word translations and reformulate them into sentences (in traditional kanbun kundoku style) whose meaning made sense. [inserted on 1/May/2002]] At the beginning, therefore, there was no room for a novel sentence pattern like the niyotte-passive to develop. In the 1850’s, however, a textbook was published that contains a faithful word-for-word translation of the original for the first time—this reflected the social condition under which the Great Powers of the West demanded that Japan opened its doors, which increased the interest in the study of Dutch among the Japanese. The book was a translation of the second edition of the Dutch grammar called Grammatica of Nedelduitsche Spraakkunsts (1822, Leyden/Groningen). This grammar was known as Garammachika, and it was the most commonly used textbook of Dutch grammar in those days. It is in this context that the niyotte-passive sentence made its first appearance. In the following I want to consider how this happened.

A Dutch passive sentence has the structure:

\[(27) \text{NP}_1 \text{ zijn/worden PP (door NP}_2)\]

\text{Zijn/worden} are auxiliary verbs used to form a passive sentence, PP indicates the past particle form of a verb, \text{NP}_2 is the agent, and \text{door} is the marker of the agent. The preposition \text{door} is a cognate of the English through whose intrinsic function is to indicate path, means and way. The Japanese students of Dutch grammar followed the vocabulary of the kanbun style, and assigned niyotte to \text{door} in the translation. Furthermore, they made translations as consistent as possible with the method of the kanbun style of that time while their translations of Dutch materials were at the same time quite literal. It is through such literal translation that the niyotte-passive was born. In other words, \text{niyotte} was assigned to \text{door} whether the sentence including it contained a passive or not, and when \text{door} occurred in a passive sentence this mechanically resulted in marking the agent with \text{niyotte}, an option which Japanese had not had until then.

I investigated three literal translations of Garammachika, published in 1856 and 1857, and found that the passive sentences with the agent marked by \text{door} were translated by the niyotte-passive without exception. (28) is the original Dutch sentence and (29) is an example of its literal translation.

\(\text{(28)} \ldots \text{Er zijn echter eenige algemene regelen en waarnemingen hieromtrent door kundige Taalbeoefenaars voorgesteld,}...\)

\(^2\text{See from 9 to 11 in the list of cited literary works at the end of this paper.}\)
‘There are, however, some general rules and observations proposed thereby by erudite linguists’
(Grammatica of Nedelduitsche Spraakkunsts: section 32)

(29) Sokoni shikashinagara kokonitsuite takuminaru gogakusha-ni yotte sadamer-are-taru ichi-ni-no ippan-naru kisoku-ya oyobi keiken-ga aru some general rules-and experience-NOM exist
(Soo-yaku Garammachika, 1856)

As far as I know, this is the earliest example of the niyotte-passive to be found.
Around the establishment of the Meiji government in 1868, replacing the Tokugawa Shogunate, the zeal of Dutch studies dropped off all of a sudden, and the interest was shifted to the learning of English, French, German and Russian. The method of translation and comprehension developed in the learning of Dutch, however, was carried over to the study of English and other languages. Although niyotte was not always used as a translation equivalent of English by, the by-passive in literal translation is always translated as the niyotte-passive.

(30a) is a passage from an English grammar textbook used at the beginning of the Meiji Period, and (30b) is its literal translation.

(30) a. Art.95. The nominative case denotes the agent ; as, ‘Mary loves her mother;’
‘the earth is round.’ What is meant by the agent ?
(Pinneo’s Primary Grammar of the English Language for Beginners)

b. Shukaku-wa nominative-TOP dousha-wo agent-ACC arawasu represent for example Maarii-wa Mary-TOP kare-no she-of haha-wo mother-ACC ai-su love earth-TOP round be nani-ga what-NOM dousya-ni yotte arawas-a ruru-ka represent-(r)are-Q
(Pinneo-shi Genban Eibunten Chokuyaku, 1870)

Later the literal translation style was used in general, because there was a perception in those days that a literal translation was more precise than a rendering in natural Japanese. Niyotte-passives invented in the literal translations of grammar books and novel expressions were accepted as a new style called the ‘Oobun-chokuyaku-tai’ (the literal translation style of European languages) and started to be used by Japanese in creative writings as well.

4 Why were niyotte-passive sentences accepted?

The niyotte-passive is not the only novel sentence pattern found in the literal translation style of European languages. Other example, some transitive verb constructions with a non-sentient being as subject and literally translated relative clause constructions, with the relative pronoun translated as tokorono. These constructions became popular as the
literal translation style of European languages, since the non-traditional, novel styles matched the social need for a new culture. However, these other sentence patterns developed through translation make a foreign and artificial impression on the render even today, whereas the niyotte-passive is used quite frequently in the written style, and has been thoroughly accepted as a standard sentence pattern of Japanese. This means that the niyotte-passive was accepted, not simply because it was novel but because there was a gap for it to fill in the system of Japanese grammar. I will now discuss what this gap was from a structural and functional point of view.

We have pointed out that, in comparison of the typology of verbs in (8) with the Japanese voice system diagrammed in (11) and (12), verbs that can form niyotte-passive sentences in type 1, type 4 and type 5 tend to belong to the category of transitive I. This would indicate that the gap that the niyotte-passive should fill in (11) and (12) is the exact opposite of transitive I. The following is a revised figure that captures the point:

(31)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{causative} & \quad \bullet \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{event} \\
\text{transitive I} & \quad \bullet \quad \rightarrow \quad \bigcirc \\
\text{transitive II} & \quad \bullet \quad \rightarrow \quad \bullet \\
\text{unergative} & \quad \bullet \quad \bigcirc \\
\text{unaccusative} & \quad \bigcirc \\
\text{passive I} & \quad \bullet \quad \rightarrow \quad \bullet \\
\text{niyotte-passive} & \quad \bigcirc \\
\text{passive II} & \quad \bigcirc \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{event}
\end{align*}
\]

The niyotte-passive brings the object into focus without changing the roles of the arguments of transitive construction, as the figure shows. The idea is consistent with Kuroda (1979), who proposes to derive a niyotte-passive sentence from a simple transitive sentence by movement transformation. Although Japanese did not have such a construction at the beginning, the later establishment of the niyotte-passive in the

\[\text{sono shujutu wa Yamada daini-geka-butyoo niyotte sittoo o performing operation ACC} \]

\[\text{TOP second chief surgeon performing operation ACC}\]
language testifies that the existence of the construction would not be inconsistent with the entire system at all; rather it was advantage from a functional point of view.

We will next examine the function of the niyotte-passive. What the niyotte-passive makes possible in Japanese is an impersonal description of a human activity. Transitive verb constructions foreground the agent and assign the speaker's empathy to it. When one describes a human activity from a neutral point of view, its only recourse in the past was to make use of an intransitive verb construction that corresponded to the transitive counterpart. Yet intransitive verbs were closed set, and many transitive verbs did not have intransitive counterparts; therefore, the option was not available in their case. Moreover, since intransitive constructions could not formally express the agent that causes the event denoted by the verb, they had an expressive limitation. At the same time, the indigenous passive sentences could not often express a neutral meaning because the subjects were assigned ‘affectee’ role in them. On the other hand, the niyotte-passive sentences can be formed from transitive verbs without intransitive counterparts, and they can express the agent phrase freely. In addition they can describe events from a completely neutral point of view without assigning any empathic meaning to the subject. It should be noted, however, that the niyotte-passive is not suitable for the verbs that sound exaggerated when deliberately expressed from a neutral point of view, or for the verbs with a psychological or perceptual meaning that always requires a certain viewpoint.

We may note, in passing, that it is not a necessary condition that what we call niyotte-passive sentence here takes a niyotte phrase explicitly: it is the (r)are construction that is neutral without a special thematic role, affectee, assigned to the subject. In that sense, ‘simple passive’ in Matsushita (1930) or ‘demoting passive sentence’ in Masuoka (1987) is more precise a term, which, in turn, would imply that this type of passive sentences had already existed in the kanban style before modern times. Nevertheless, it is not necessarily misleading to call it niyotte-passive, given that what guaranteed this category in Japanese was the application of niyotte phrase, and that it is doubtful whether it would be established in Japanese as much as today if niyotte used in the literal translation style of European languages and (r)are hadn’t come across each other.

Another factor that enabled niyotte-passive sentences to become widespread seems to be the appropriateness of niyotte as a form of expression. It is absolutely impossible to completely cancel the meanings of ‘affectedness’ and ‘adversity’ that the indigenous passive carries when the agent of a passive sentence is marked with ni. This seems to be because ni has a syntactic function to indicate the subject of an embedded sentence as seen in causative constructions and shite morau constructions\(^5\). Differently put, ni

\[\text{kaisi-s-are-ta} \]
\[\text{inception-do-(r)are-PAST}\]

'The operation began to be performed by the second chief surgeon Yamada.'

As this example indicates, however, that the possessive relationship between the second chief surgeon Yamada and the operation holds, the niyotte-passive as an indirect passive should be one type of the 'possessor passive'. Besides, it is not possible to form a niyotte-passive sentence as an indirect passive with an intransitive verb. Therefore, we can maintain the hypothesis in Kuroda (1979) if we admit the possibility that some possessor passive sentences are formed by movement of a simple sentence.

\(^5\)The Shite morau construction is a variant of the benefactive construction as follows:
connotes the existence of an embedded sentence, which necessarily gives the ni-pasive
the meaning borne by the indigenous passive. On the other hand, niyotte only has
an additional meaning of means/way in nature, and it successfully carried out a new
grammatical operation to indicate the agent NP as an adjunct.

5 Concluding Remarks

We have discussed the following points in this article:

1. The most important subclasses of Japanese passive sentences from a syntactic
and functional point of view are the ni-pasive and the niyotte-pasive. While
the ni-pasive is a construction which is indigenous to the Japanese language, the
niyotte-pasive is a new construction that arose through the influence of European
languages.

2. The ni-pasive indicates that the derived subject is affected by the action of another
participant. Although there were non-sentient passive sentences as well as sentient
passive sentences in Japanese before modern times, their meanings were more or
less subsumed under that of the ni-pasive, apart from passive sentences in the
Japanese reading of Chinese classics (kanbun).

3. Niyotte-pasive sentences happened to come into existence when the translation
word niyotte, expressing means and way, was assigned to door—a marker of path,
means and way and of the agent in a passive sentence—in the literal translation
of Modern Dutch.

4. The niyotte-pasive has come to be widely used in ordinary passages, without
ending up as a temporal vogue expression, because it was, structurally and func-
tionally, in the position of filling up a gap in the system of the Japanese language.
Structurally it shifts the agent to an adjunct position without changing the roles of
the arguments of a transitive construction, and functionally it describes an activity
of a human being or human beings from a completely neutral standpoint.

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{(i) watasi wa Tanaka ni mado o ake-te mora-tta .} \\
&\quad I \quad \text{TOP} \quad \text{DAT window ACC open-GERD receive-PAST}
\end{align*}
\]
List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>accusative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMP</td>
<td>complementizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONJ</td>
<td>conjunctive form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPULA</td>
<td>copula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>dative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOCUS</td>
<td>focus marker</td>
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<tr>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>genetive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUESS</td>
<td>guessing marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>honorific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOC</td>
<td>locative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEG</td>
<td>negation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>nominal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Q</td>
<td>question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESULT</td>
<td>resultative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reference


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