

Syntactic Complexity of *Komu*-compounds in Japanese

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1 Introduction

Kageyama (1996:248) argues that Japanese lexical compounds are generally formed at the level of argument structure rather than at the level of conceptual structure. Examples of Japanese lexical compound verbs are shown below (Kageyama 1993:75–76):

(1) Lexical compound verbs in Japanese

<i>tobi-agaru</i> ‘jump up/leap up’	<i>naki-sakebu</i> ‘cry out’
<i>uri-harau</i> ‘sell off’	<i>uke-tsugu</i> ‘take over/succeed to’
<i>toki-hanasu</i> ‘release/set free/free’	<i>tobi-komu</i> ‘jump into/leap into’
<i>hanashi-kakeru</i> ‘talk to/speak to’	<i>kobiri-tsuku</i> ‘stick to’
<i>aruki-mawaru</i> ‘walk around’	<i>fumi-arasu</i> ‘trample (under foot)’
<i>home-tataeru</i> ‘admire/praise’	<i>katari-akasu</i> ‘talk overnight’
<i>waki-tatsu</i> ‘get excited at’	<i>kiki-kaesu</i> ‘ask the same questions’
<i>mochi-saru</i> ‘take away/carry away’	
<i>furue-agaru</i> ‘be terrified/be scared’	
<i>akire-kaeru</i> ‘be astonished at/be disgusted with’	

Kageyama (1993) argues that both the V1s (the first verbal components) and the V2s (the second verbal components) of these lexical compounds can show their transitivity or unaccusativity along with their argument structures; their V1s and V2s can be either an unaccusative verb, an unergative verb, or a transitive verb. He also claims that the combinations of verbal components of these lexical compounds are generally explained

with his Transitivity Harmony Principle.¹ Besides these claims, he also points out that there are some exceptional cases which do not follow the principle.

One example of this case is Japanese lexical compounds with *komu* ‘get into/do thoroughly’ as a V2. This paper will examine lexical compounds with this verbal morpheme. This paper argues that this verbal morpheme does not show certain types of grammatical properties in its compounds that most other V2s have, such as transitivity and unaccusativity. That is, instead of retaining its syntactic properties as an independent verb, the morpheme *komu* seems to change to a word that carries less grammatical properties in its compounds. In other words, the morpheme *komu* may transform its transitivity or unaccusativity along with changing or maybe losing its argument structure in its amalgamation processes.

Thus, the point proposed in this paper is that some of the grammatical properties of the Japanese morpheme *komu* might be bleached out as a result of grammaticalization. First, in order to validate the point, Section 2 will provide the basic information on *komu*-compounds and their amalgamation processes.

Section 3.1 will deal with *komu* in light of the Transitivity Harmony Principle of Kageyama (1993). Specifically, this section will examine the cases in which *komu*-compounds show syntactic ambiguity in terms of argument structure, transitivity, and unaccusativity; it will show that *komu* does not change the grammatical properties of the V1s in its compounds. The discussion will be made based on different interpretations with *komu*.

Section 3.2 will illustrate several cases that seem to be exceptions to the proposal made in this paper. It will discuss two types of exceptions. One exception involves expressions in which a prefix attaches to *komu*. The other exception is regarding *komu*-compounds that involve semantic

merging. These cases are clearly identifiable and need to be excluded from regular *komu*-compounds. Finally, Section 4 will summarize this paper.

2 Lexical compounds with the morpheme *komu*

2.1 Basic information on *komu*

Morita (1990) argues that the morpheme *komu* is one of the most productive morphemes in terms of making compounds in Japanese. According to Daijirin (2005), a well-known Japanese dictionary, *komu* can be considered a free morpheme. When it is used as a free morpheme (it seems that it is an intransitive verb at least in Modern Japanese), it has an interpretation of ‘be jammed’ or ‘be congested’ as in (2):

- (2) Densha-ga kom-u.
train-Nom be.crowded-Pre
‘The train is crowded.’

Another interpretation of *komu* as a free morpheme is ‘be elaborate’ as in (3):

- (3) Te-no kon-da shigoto
hand-Gen elaborate-Past work
‘elaborate work’

In addition to these interpretations, *komu* is also used in Japanese compounds. It attaches to another verbal morpheme to make its compounds. Note that only two morphemes are used to make a single compound verb in Japanese in general, and the morpheme *komu* can occur as either a V1 or a V2 in compounds. With respect to the former case, Daijirin (2005) shows only three cases in which *komu* is used as a V1 in Japanese compounds.² In these cases, *komu* is used with its connective verbal form (called the *renyoo-kei* ‘[lit.] continuous verbal form’), *komi* (Daijirin 2005):³

- (4) a. komi-a-u
 be.jammed-match-Pre
 ‘be crowded; packed; jammed’
- b. komi-age-ru
 be.jammed-raise-Pre
 ‘well up; be filled (with emotion)’
- c. komi-ir-u
 be.jammed-enter-Pre
 ‘be complicated’

However, *komu* predominantly appears as a second verbal component rather than as a first component in most compounds. Daijirin lists almost 200 cases of such *komu*-compounds, and *komu* normally represents one or more of the following three different interpretations:

- (5) ‘to enter; put something in/into’
- a. Ame-ga fuki-kom-u.
 rain-Nom blow-komu-Pre
 ‘Rain blows in.’
- b. Tegami-ga mai-kom-u.
 letter-Nom dance-komu-Pre
 ‘A letter came unexpectedly.’
- c. tobi-kom-u
 jump-komu-Pre
 ‘jump in; dive’
- (6) ‘to do/become something thoroughly/fully/deeply/intensively’
- a. omoi-kom-u
 think-komu-Pre
 ‘be convinced; be under the impression; set one’s heart; fall in love’
- b. oshie-kom-u
 teach-komu-Pre
 ‘inculcate a thing (in a person’s mind); instill into (a person); give a good training’
- c. ni-kom-u
 cook-komu-Pre
 ‘cook; stew’

- d. fuke-kom-u
grow-komu-Pre
'grow old'
- (7) 'to continue an action within the same condition'
- a. damari-kom-u
shut-komu-Pre
'fall silent; keep one's mouth shut; clam up'
 - b. suwari-kom-u
sit-komu-Pre
'sit oneself down'

The first interpretation 'to enter or put something in/into' implies a physical transition where an object (or a person) shifts from a place into an enclosed location. On the other hand, the second interpretation 'to do/become something thoroughly/fully/deeply/intensively' normally denotes that someone undergoes a certain physical/psychological occurrence that produces physical/mental changes or development. The third interpretation 'to continue an action within the same condition' indicates that someone is involved in a physical recurrent action.

Note that it is not always easy to distinguish these interpretations where *komu* occurs as a V2 in its compounds since they seem to be semantically related. The path notion which *komu* describes can be either physical or psychological. When an object or an agent is physically in motion in the course of a period of time, it is generally concrete and can be perceived visually. On the other hand, if an object or an agent is psychologically in motion, the event can be viewed as an abstract and non-perceptible entity. Moreover, there is another case which is a mixture of these two interpretations: the motion could be an occurrence in both physical and psychological processes. In this case, a recursive activity can be done by a causer of the event, and the result of the activity is described from a speaker's subjective point of view.

Specifically, it seems that the second interpretation ‘to do/become something thoroughly/fully/deeply/intensively’ and the third interpretation “to continue an action in the same condition” are very close in terms of describing continuation, replication, or fulfillment of one’s actions.

The following examples show some cases that have either the second or the third interpretation. They can denote both psychological and physical events:

- (8) shoge-kom-u
get.depressed-komu-Pre
‘get depressed’
- (9) jire-kom-u
get.irritated-komu-Pre
‘get irritated’
- (10) fusagi-kom-u
get.depressed-komu-Pre
‘get depressed’

It seems that these three *komu*-compounds above denote both a psychological/physical action/process that can be associated with fulfillment, intensity, or completeness and a continuous action at the same time.

It might be not easy to see this interpretation clearly in these examples; however, both *shogeru* and *fusagu* mean simply ‘get depressed’ while *shoge-komu* and *fusagi-komu* ‘get depressed’ imply not only someone gets depressed but also the person stays in the same condition of being depressed. Another example *jire-komu* ‘get irritated’ denotes that someone starts becoming irritated and continues to be irritated whereas *jireru* alone implies a simple action which is ‘get irritated.’

Thus, although Daijirin provides the three interpretations with *komu*, we can suggest that the second and the third ones have very close meanings, that is, ‘someone undergoes a psychological/physical action that can be associated with fulfillment, intensity, or completeness, and continuation of

the action in the same condition.’ Therefore, it is reasonable not to take these two interpretations completely apart.

Hence, we will categorize the last two interpretations as one in this paper; *komu* in its compounds denote: 1) to engage in a physical transition where an object shifts from a place into an enclosed location; 2) to continue a certain psychological/physical action in a same condition that could produce mental development or a psychological state within an action.

Based on the two different interpretations, we will consider syntactic properties of *komu*-compounds, such as transitivity and unaccusativity, in Section 3.

2.2 The amalgamation processes of *komu*-compounds

This section examines the amalgamation process of *komu*-compounds. According to Kageyama, the free morpheme *komu* is generally considered to be an unaccusative verb (1996:250).⁴ This verbal morpheme can be combined with any of the three types: transitive, unergative and unaccusative:

- (11) a. transitive + *komu* [unaccusative]⁵

oshi-kom-u
push-komu-Pre
‘push into’

nage-kom-u
throw-kom-Pre
‘throw into’

- b. unergative + *komu* [unaccusative]

kake-kom-u
run-komu-Pre
‘run into’

donari-kom-u
yell-komu-Pre

‘storm in/complain angrily’

c. unaccusative + komu [unaccusative]

nagare-kom-u
flow-komu-Pre
‘flow into’

korogari-kom-u
roll-komu-Pre
‘roll into’

Again, Kageyama points out that each component verb in *komu*-compounds in (11) has a combination of different argument structures (an unaccusative verb and one of the others) and that the combination patterns in (11a) and (11b) are not allowed under his Transitivity Harmony Principle. However, these *komu*-compounds are well-formed despite the principle.

Regarding these exceptional cases, Kageyama (1996) attempts to give an account as follows. He argues that there are two different amalgamation processes concerning compound verb formations: (1) one which produces compound verbs at the level of argument structure; and (2) one which produces compound verbs at the level of conceptual structure. He also points out that the *komu*-compounds in both (11a) and (11b) are amalgamated conceptually and not at the level of argument structure. Moreover, he argues that it is not always necessary for Japanese lexical compounds to account for their formation at the level of argument structure.

As concrete examples, Kageyama illustrates the two different amalgamation processes for *komu*-compounds along with their conceptual structures. One type consists of two different unaccusative verbs, such as *korogari-komu* ‘roll into’ [*korogaru* ‘roll’ + *komu* ‘get into’], and the other type consists of an unergative verb and an unaccusative verb, such as *abare-komu* ‘break into’ [*abareru* ‘act violently’ + *komu* ‘get into’] (Kageyama 1996:249):

- (12) Amalgamation between internal arguments at the lower level (unaccusative structure)

korogaru ‘roll’: [_{sub-EVENT} y MOVE]

komu ‘get into’: [_{sub-EVENT} BECOME [y BE AT-IN z]]

-> *korogari-komu* ‘roll into’:

[_{sub-EVENT} y MOVE] and [_{sub-EVENT} BECOME [y BE AT-IN z]]

-> [_{sub-EVENT} y1 MOVE and BECOME [y1 BE AT-IN z]]

- (13) Amalgamation between the upper level (unergative structure) and the lower level (unaccusative structure)

abareru ‘act violently’: [_{super-EVENT} x ACT]

komu ‘get into’: [_{sub-EVENT} BECOME [y BE AT-IN z]]

-> *abare-komu* ‘break into’:

[_{super-EVENT} x1 ACT] CAUSE [_{sub-EVENT} BECOME [y1 BE AT-IN z]]

Kageyama argues that both *korogaru* ‘roll’ and *komu* ‘get into’ are originally unaccusative telic verbs (achievements) in (12). When the two verbs are combined, the NP argument *y* at the upper level is amalgamated with another *y* at the lower level, and *korogari-komu* ‘roll into’ becomes an achievement, so that it is considered to be a telic verb. On the other hand, in (13), *abareru* ‘act violently’ is originally an unergative atelic verb (activity), and *komu* ‘get into’ is an unaccusative telic verb (achievement). This is an exceptional case with respect to the Transitivity Harmony Principle. When these verbs are combined, the NP argument *x* at the upper level and *y* at the lower level are amalgamated at the level of conceptual structure.

It seems that this explanation of Kageyama’s along with conceptual structure does not fully illustrate how the compound verbs, consisting of an unergative atelic verb and the unaccusative telic verb, can obtain a telic interpretation together. In addition, although he tries to find another way to account for the counterexamples in terms of the Transitivity Harmony Principle, he has not described what is happening to the transitivity and

unaccusativity of the two verbal components in (13). Kageyama's analysis might have the advantage of explaining the amalgamation of two verbal components of lexical compound verbs; however, again, it seems that he has not completely accounted for how the two verbal components are combined conceptually.

This paper proposes that the attachment of *komu* in its compound amalgamation processes leads to changes of the syntactic (and maybe semantic) properties of whole compounds because the morpheme *komu* has been grammaticalized.

We are going to pay attention to syntactic and semantic changes in *komu*-compounds and two other exceptional cases for the principle. The next section will provide a syntactic analysis with *komu*-compounds for the evidence.

3 Syntactic properties of *komu*-compounds

3.1 Syntactic ambiguity

Daijirin (2005) currently provides more than 200 examples of *komu*-compounds. We will examine transitivity and unaccusativity of the amalgamated compound forms with a V1 and *komu*. The following data demonstrates that the first verbal components in *komu*-compounds are generally not affected by the morpheme *komu* in terms of transitivity and unaccusativity in the amalgamation processes. Note that we have to consider the two interpretations of *komu* as discussed in the previous section. First, we take a look at the data for *komu*-compounds with the first interpretation 'to engage in a physical transition where an object shifts from a place into an enclosed location.' Examples are as follows:

- (14) ami-kom-u am-u (transitive) + kom-u
 weave-komu-Pre -> ami-kom-u (transitive)

- ‘interweave (A with B); weave (into)’
- (15) agari-kom-u agar-u (unergative) + kom-u
 go.up-komu-Pre -> agari-kom-u (unergative)
 ‘enter (a house); come [go, step] in’
- (16) ue-kom-u ue-ru (transitive) + kom-u
 plant-komu-Pre -> ue-kom-u (transitive)
 ‘plant, sow; fit [put] a thing into’
- (17) okuri-kom-u okur-u (transitive) + kom-u
 send-komu-Pre -> okuri-kom-u (transitive)
 ‘send someone to’
- (18) oshi-kom-u os-u (transitive) + kom-u
 push-komu-Pre -> oshi-kom-u (transitive)
 ‘force (one’s way) (into); push in’
- (19) ori-kom-u or-u (transitive) + kom-u
 weave-komu-Pre -> ori-kom-u (transitive)
 ‘interweave (A with B); weave (into); incorporate (one’s idea in(to)
 the plan)’
- (20) ore-kom-u ore-ru (unaccusative) + kom-u
 be.broken-komu-Pre -> ore-kom-u (unaccusative)
 ‘be broken and be inside of a thing’
- (21) kagami-kom-u kagam-u (unergative) + kom-u
 crouch-komu-Pre -> kagami-kom-u (unergative)
 ‘crouch; squat’
- (22) kaki-kom-u [1] kak-u (transitive) + kom-u
 write-komu-Pre -> kaki-kom-u (transitive)
 ‘write in; enter; insert; fill out the blank’
- (23) kaki-kom-u [2] kak-u (transitive) + kom-u
 scratch-komu-Pre -> kaki-kom-u (transitive)
 ‘rake in; eat [have] a hasty meal’
- (24) kake-kom-u kake-ru (unergative) + kom-u
 run-komu-Pre -> kake-kom-u (unergative)
 ‘run [rush] (into a house); seek [take] refuge (in, under)’
- (25) katsugi-kom-u (a) katsugu (transitive) + kom-u
 carry-komu-Pre -> katsugi-kom-u (transitive)
 ‘carry a person into a place’

The data above shows that the transitivity or unaccusativity of these V1s

are retained and that the morpheme *komu* does not affect the properties of VIs in these *komu*-compounds. Based on this result, let us treat *komu* as a bound morpheme and call it ‘a bound verb,’ since it looks like it still behaves like a verb in the sense that it can hold tense markers but does not carry an argument structure.

Note that the judgment of transitivity and unaccusativity in the data above is based on the unaccusativity diagnoses, such as the resultative and quantifier float tests.

Next, let us look at transitivity and unaccusativity of *komu*-compounds that have the second interpretation, ‘to continue a certain psychological/physical action in a same condition that could produce mental development or a psychological state within an action’:

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| (26) | ate-kom-u
expect-komu-Pre
‘expect; count on’ | ate-ru (transitive) + kom-u
-> ate-kom-u (transitive) |
| (27) | uri-kom-u
sell-komu-Pre
‘sell; find a market (for); conduct a sales campaign’ | ur-u (transitive) + kom-u
-> uri-kom-u (transitive) |
| (28) | oi-kom-u
get.old-komu-Pre
‘get old’ | oi-ru (unaccusative) + kom-u
-> oi-kom-u (unaccusative) |
| (29) | oshie-kom-u
teach-komu-Pre
‘inculcate (a thing in a person’s mind); instill (into a person); give a good training’ | oshie-ru (transitive) + kom-u
->oshie-kom-u (transitive) |
| (30) | oboe-kom-u
remember-komu-Pre
‘remember things thoroughly’ | oboe-ru (transitive) + kom-u
-> oboe-kom-u (transitive) |
| (31) | omoi-kom-u
think-komu-Pre
‘be convinced that...; be under the impression that...; set one’s heart (on a matter); fall in love (with)’ | omo-u (transitive) + kom-u
-> omoi-kom-u (transitive) |

- (32) kai-kom-u ka-u (transitive) + kom-u
 buy-komu-Pre -> kai-kom-u (transitive)
 ‘buy; lay in (a stock of)’
- (33) kakoi-kom-u kako-u (transitive) + kom-u
 enclose-komu-Pre ->kakoi-kom-u (transitive)
 ‘enclose, fence (in), rope in [off]’
- (34) kangae-kom-u kangae-ru (transitive) + kom-u
 think-komu-Pre -> kangae-kom-u (transitive)
 ‘think hard; be in deep thought; brood (over, on)’
- (35) kioi-kom-u kio-u (unergative) + kom-u
 be.eager-komu-Pre -> kioi-kom-u (unergative)
 ‘be eager’
- (36) ki-kom-u ki-ru (transitive) + kom-u
 wear-komu-Pre -> ki-kom-u (transitive)
 ‘wear [dress in] several clothes’
- (37) kime-kom-u kime-ru (transitive) + kom-u
 decide-komu-Pre -> kime-kom-u (transitive)
 ‘take (something) for granted; pretend (ignorance)’

The data above also shows that *komu* does not affect the transitivity or unaccusativity of the VIs in its compounds. These results, also show a clear evidence that the morpheme *komu* in its compounds does not have an argument structure. Again, if this assumption is correct, most *komu*-compounds do not need to follow Kageyama’s Transitivity Harmony Principle to account for their amalgamation processes.

In sum, *komu* could behave as an independent unaccusative verb; however, based on the data above, *komu*-compounds show that this morpheme does not affect the transitivity or unaccusativity of the VIs in its compounds. Thus, it behaves as a bound verb although it carries other grammatical properties, such as tense markers.

3.2 Unique cases

Despite the result in the previous section, we have to recognize that there

are still some exceptional combinations for the assumption above. This means that there are several cases in which the transitivity and unaccusativity of V1s might change. The following data illustrates the exceptional cases, and we will give some explanations to support the current proposal.

Among these exceptions, the following two patterns appear. In the first, *komu* behaves as a free morpheme in its compounds and V1s are prefixes that attach to *komu*; in the second, V1s and *komu* are semantically merged and change the meaning of V1 greatly. We will look at these two patterns in this section.

3.2.1 Prefixes and *komu*

The first pattern of exceptions is that *komu* enters into its compounds as a free morpheme and the V1 can be treated as a prefix. The first example is *tsuk-komu* ‘crash [rush] (into).’ (38a) shows its transitive usage and (38b) illustrates its intransitive usage:

- (38) (a) *tsuk-kom-u* *tsuk-u* (transitive) + *kom-u*
 thrust-komu-Pre -> *tsuk-kom-u* (transitive)
 ‘thrust in; plunge into; penetrate; ask a pointed question’

e.g. *Taro-ga yu-ni ashi-o tsuk-kon-da.*
 Taro-Nom hot.water-Dat foot-Acc thrust-komu-Past
 ‘Taro put his foot into hot water.’

Hanako-ga mondaiten-o tsuk-kon-da.
 Hanako-Nom problem-Acc thrust-komu-Past
 ‘Hanako asked a pointed question.’

- (b) *tsuk-kom-u* *tsuk-u* (transitive) + *kom-u*
 crash-komu-Pre -> *tsuk-kom-u* (unaccusative)
 ‘crash [rush] (into)’

e.g. *kuruma-ga kawa-ni tsuk-kon-da.*
 car-Nom river-Dat crash-komu-Past
 ‘The car crashed into a river.’

The first component *tsuk* ‘thrust’ in (38a) is originally a transitive verb.

However, in (38b), we cannot prove the assumption that *komu* loses its transitivity or unaccusativity and that the V1 retains their transitivity and unaccusativity in *komu*-compounds. The solution may be that *tsuk* in (38b) should be treated as a prefix (Daijirin 2005) in this compound. Other examples of the prefix *tsuk* are as follows (the final *-k* of *tsuk-* is assimilated to the following *-p* giving *tsup-*):

- (39) a. *tsup-pashir-u*
 thrust-run-Pre
 ‘run fast; dash’
- b. *tsup-par-u*
 thrust-stretch-Pre
 ‘prop up; stretch (one) against; stick to; insist on; get tight; be defiant; ‘thrust (at sumo game)’⁶

Like *tsuk-komu* ‘crash into’ in (38b), the data in (39) also shows that the compounds do not have the meaning of thrusting. Instead, it denotes the intensification of the activities. In (38b), the compound *tsuk-komu* ‘crash [rush] (into)’ maintains the meaning and unaccusativity of the independent verb *komu*. Here, we can assume that *tsuk* is a prefix and *komu* in *tsuk-komu* (unaccusative) maintains its status as an unaccusative verb. If this is correct, we can explain the change from a transitive verb *tsuk* ‘thrust’ to an unaccusative verb *tsuk-komu* ‘crash into’ in (38b).

Note that we have to be careful of the meaning of *komu* in (38b). *Komu* in *tsuk-komu* ‘crash into’ does not have the meaning of ‘be jammed’ or ‘be congested’ anymore. Instead, it has the meaning ‘to engage in a physical transition where an object shifts from a place into an enclosed location.’ It seems that this type of *komu* is related to *komu* in Old Japanese (OJ hereafter). According to Daijirin (2005), *komu* in OJ has other meanings, such as ‘load,’ ‘cover,’ ‘hide,’ ‘include,’ ‘concentrate,’ and ‘hang.’ Although this type of *komu* is a free morpheme, it could involve

some of these meanings, such as ‘include.’ Actually, these interpretations in OJ are closely related to the bound morpheme *komu* in *komu*-compounds in Modern Japanese.

Another example is *uchi-komu* ‘devote oneself (to); be absorbed (in).’ *Uchi* ‘fire/hit’ is originally a transitive verb. The data in (40) shows that *uchi-komu* behaves either as a transitive or an unergative verb:

(40) *uchi-kom-u*

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| (a) | <i>uchi-komu</i> | <i>uts-u</i> (transitive) + <i>kom-u</i> |
| | <i>fire-komu-Pre</i> | -> <i>uchi-kom-u</i> (transitive) |
| | ‘fire [shoot] (into); smash; strike (at person)’ | |
| (b) | <i>uchi-komu</i> | <i>uts-u</i> (transitive) + <i>kom-u</i> |
| | <i>hit-komu-Pre</i> | -> <i>uchi-komu</i> (unergative) |
| | ‘devote oneself to’ | |

e.g. Taro-ga benkyoo-ni *uchi-kom-u*.
 Taro-Nom study-Dat hit-komu-Pre
 ‘Taro devotes himself to his study.’

The second usage of *uchi-komu* ‘devote oneself to’ in (40b) seems to be another exceptional case for the proposal. In this case, the V1 *uchi* does not retain its transitivity as shown above.

However, again, the first verbal component *utsu* can be considered a prefix according to Daijirin (2005). It has several functions, including 1) intensifying the meaning of V2s, 2) adding the meaning of ‘a little bit,’ 3) making the meaning of V2s abstract, and 4) adjusting the meaning of the whole compound. Although *uchi* can be used as a transitive verb by itself, it is not a verb within *uchi-komu* ‘devote oneself to.’ In this compound, *komu* is the main verb and thus the prefix *uchi* does not affect the transitivity of *uchi-komu* ‘devote oneself to.’ Like *tsuk-komu* ‘crash into,’ *komu* in this compound could have some of OJ meanings.

Note that the difference between *komu* in *tsuk-komu* ‘crash into’ and *komu* in *uchi-komu* ‘devote oneself to’ is that *komu* itself in the second

case could behave like an unergative verb originally. It shows that *komu* might have been shifting between unaccusative and unergative along with some interpretations in OJ, and it behaves as an unaccusative on one hand and as an unergative on the other hand. However, at least it can be argued that these two cases involve prefixes, and they have to be excluded as the exceptional cases of the current proposal.

3.2.2 Semantic merging in *komu*-compounds

Let us observe the other exceptional cases. The first two examples are *kui-komu* ‘cut into’ and *tate-komu* ‘be busy; be crowded.’ The data below includes two different interpretations with *tate-komu*.

- (41) *kui-kom-u* *ku-u* (transitive) + *kom-u*
eat-komu-Pre -> *kui-kom-u* (unaccusative)
 ‘cut into; cut into the flesh; eat into; encroach (upon); make inroads (on, upon, into); leave a deficit; run over into’
- (42) a. *tate-kom-u* *tate-ru* (transitive) + *kom-u*
stand-komu-Pre -> *take-kom-u* (unaccusative)
 ‘be busy [pressed] (with) [a schedule]; be crowded [with people]’
- b. *tate-kom-u* *tate-ru* (transitive) + *kom-u*
build-komu-Pre -> *take-kom-u* (unaccusative)
 ‘be crowded [packed] (with) [a building]’

In (41), *komu* denotes a physical transition whereas *komu* has a meaning of physical concentration in (42). These cases should be treated differently from *tsuk-komu* and *uchi-komu*. In these cases, *komu* can be considered a ‘semantically’ main verb. This analysis is based on Teramura’s (1984) analysis of Japanese verbal compounds. Regarding Japanese compounds, Teramura (1984: 167) categorizes them into four types as follows:

- (43) a. V-V: compounds in which two morphemes have equivalent relations
- b. V-v: compounds in which the first morpheme is a main verb and

the second morpheme is a subordinate component

- c. v-V: compounds in which the second morpheme is a main verb and the first morpheme is a subordinate component
- d. v-v: compounds in which the meanings of two morphemes are merged and their forms are listed in dictionaries

It can be argued that compounds in the data in (41) and (42) belong to Teramura's third category. First, it seems that the first component, *kui* 'eat' in *kui-komu* 'cut into' in (41) is not a prefix, but the meaning of *kui* is used more abstractly and metaphorically along with the meaning 'cut' and does not take a direct object NP as an NP argument. In addition, we can see that the morpheme loses transitivity at the same time and changes from a transitive verb to an intransitive verb; the base form of *kui*, which is *kuu* 'eat,' is a typical transitive verb and has to take an NP object. However, the compound *kui-komu* 'cut into' is apparently an intransitive verb and it does not require an object NP.

In addition, it seems that we do not have a big semantic change from the base of *tate* 'stand; build' to *tate* in *tate-komu* 'be busy; be crowded.' Although *tate* is not a prefix in these cases, it simply denotes a situation which is being crowded. Thus, *tate-komu* can also be categorized into Teramura's third category.

There are another cases which involve certain semantic merging between V1s and *komu*. This type of amalgamation processes could belong to Teramura's fourth category, which is v-v:

- (44) naguri-kom-u nagur-u (transitive) + kom-u
 strike-komu-Pre -> naguri-kom-u (unergative)
 'raid on'
- (45) wari-kom-u waru (transitive) + kom-u
 divide.into-enter-Pre -> wari-kom-u (unergative)
 'cut [push, force, squeeze] in; intrude (into); jump a queue'
- (46) kuri-kom-u kur-u (transitive) + kom-u

reel-komu-Pre -> kuri-kom-u (unergative)⁷
'march [stream] in [into]; transfer (to)'

e.g. Taro-ga kaijoo-ni kuri-kom-u.
Taro-Nom hall-Dat march-komu-Pre
'Taro marches into the hall.'

(47) fumi-kom-u fumu (transitive) + kom-u
step-komu-Pre -> fumi-kom-u (unergative)⁸
'step into (a room); raid; set foot in; get stuck in'

e.g. Taro-ga nukarumi-ni fumi-kom-u
Taro-Nom mud-Dat step-komu-Pre
'Taro gets stuck in the mud.'

Unlike *uchi* in *uchi-komu* 'devote oneself to,' the V1s above are not prefixes. Instead, the data above shows that the V1 components lose their transitivity and change to an intransitive verb. At the same time, they change unaccusativity from the combination of transitive and unaccusative verbs into an unergative verb. Along with these changes, these interpretations of both V1s and V2s in these compounds are merged and their syntactic structures are transformed.

Another type of example of semantic merging is *tsuke-komu*. There are two different meanings with *tsuke-komu*. One is 'enter in a book'⁹ and the other is 'devote oneself to':

(48) a. tsuke-kom-u [1] tsuke-ru (transitive) + kom-u
write-komu-Pre -> tsuke-kom-u (transitive)
'enter [write] in a book'

b. tsuke-kom-u [2] tsuke-ru (transitive) + kom-u
attach-komu-Pre -> tsuke-kom-u (unergative)
'take advantage of'

It seems that the first verbal component of the compound *tsuke-komu* in (48b) also changes its transitivity in its amalgamation. *Tsukeru* 'attach; fit; put' is a transitive verb but the whole compound behaves as an intransitive verb when it has the meaning 'take advantage of.' This means that the

verb *tsukeru* changes its meaning to a great extent and loses the original meaning in this case; the meanings of the verb *tsuke* and *komu* are merged and shows different argument structures from their original forms.

Now we go back to the several cases that show the change from [transitive + unaccusative] to [unergative]. Those are *tsuk-komu* ‘crash into (to),’ *kuri-komu* ‘march into,’ *naguri-komu* ‘raid on,’ *fumi-komu* ‘step into,’ and *wari-komu* ‘cut in.’

Let us apply the five unaccusativity diagnoses by Kageyama (1996:22) to the VIs of some of them, such as *uchi-komu* ‘devote oneself to’ and *tsuke-komu* ‘take advantage of,’ and see if they are real unergative verbs:

(49) Non-verbal compounds

(a) Aru otoko-ga benkyoo-ni uchi-kom-u.
 one man-Nom study-Dat hit-komu-Pre
 ‘A man devotes himself to his study.’

(a') *Aru okoto uchi-kom-i.
 one man hit-komu-Nominal.ending
 ‘[lit.] devoting himself by a man’

(b) Aru otoko ga Taro-ni tsuke-kom-u.
 one man-Nom Taro-Dat attach-komu-Pre
 ‘A man takes advantage of Taro.’

(b') *Aru otoko tsuke-komi.
 one man attach-komu-Nominal.ending.
 ‘[lit] taking advantage of Taro by a man’

(50) Resultative Construction

(a) *Aru otoko-ga benkyoo-ni kurakura-ni/hetoheto-ni uchi-kon-da.
 one man-Nom study-Dat dead-tired-Dat hit-komu-Past
 ‘[lit]A man devoted himself to his study tired.’

(b) *Aru-otoko-ga Taro-ni kurakura-ni/hetoheto-ni
 some-man-Nom Taro-Dat dead-tired-Dat
 tsuke-kom-u.
 attach-komu-Pre
 ‘[lit] A man takes advantage of Taro tired.’

(51) Indirect Passive Construction

- (a) Taro-ga benkyoo ni uchi-kon-da.
Taro-Nom study-Dat hit-komu-Past
'Taro devoted himself to his study.'
- (a') Taro-ni benkyoo-ni uchi-kom-are-ta.
Taro-Dat study-Dat hit-komu-Pass-Past
'Someone was affected by Taro's devoting to his study.'
- (b) Taro-ga Jiro ni tsuke-kon-da.
Taro-Nom Jiro-Dat attach-komu-Past
'Taro took advantage of Jiro.'
- (b') Taro-ni tsuke-kom-are-ta.
Taro-Dat attach-komu-Pass-Past
'Someone was affected by Taro's taking advantage.'

(52) With *shite-morau* 'have someone do something'

- (a) Taro-ga benkyoo-ni uchi-kom-u.
Taro-Nom study-Dat hit-komu-Pre
'Taro devotes himself to his study.'
- (a') Taro-ni benkyoo-ni uchi-kon-de-mora-u.
Taro-Dat study-Dat hit-komu-Conj-receive-Pre
'Someone has Taro devote himself to his study.'
- (b) Taro-ga Jiro ni tsuke-kom-u.
Taro-Nom Jiro-Dat attach-komu-Pre
'Taro takes advantage of Jiro'
- (b') Taro-ni tsuke-kon-de-mora-u.
Taro-Dat attach-komu-Conj-receive-Pre
'Someone has Taro take advantage'

(53) With Numeral Quantifiers

- (a) San-nin-no otoko-ga benkyoo-ni uchi-kom-u.
three-num-Gen man-Nom study-Dat hit-komu-Pre
'Three men devote themselves to their study.'
- (a') ?Otoko ga benkyoo-ni san-nin uchi-kom-u.
man-Nom study-Dat three-num hit-komu-Pre
'[lit] Three men devote themselves to their study.'
- (b) San-nin-no otoko ga Taro-ni tsuke-kom-u.
three-num-Gen man-Nom Taro-Dat attach-komu-Pre

‘Three men take advantage of Taro.’

- (b) ?*Otoko-ga Taro-ni san-nin tsuke-komu-u.*
man-Nom Taro-Dat three-num attach-komu-Pre
‘[lit.] Three men take advantage of Taro.’

All of the diagnoses above demonstrate that both *uchi-komu* ‘devote oneself to’ and *tsuke-komu* ‘take advantage of’ are unergative verbs. However, we still need to pay attention to the difference between these expressions. *Uchi-komu* ‘devote oneself’ is not a compound but a single verb [a prefix + *komu*] and *tsuke-komu* is a compound although the transitivity of the first verbal component of this compound changes as it loses original meaning.

In sum, we have the following findings. The morpheme *komu* does not affect the unaccusativity of its compounds in general. If the V1 is an unaccusative verb, its whole compound is an unaccusative verb; if the V1 is an unergative verb, the whole compound is an unergative verb; and if the V1 is a transitive verb, the whole compound is a transitive verb.

On the other hand, some *komu*-compounds have a prefix in the V1 position. In this usage, *komu*-compounds change their transitivity if the first component is a secondary component (or a subordinate component) and *komu* is a main verb. In these cases, even though the first verbal morpheme appears to be a transitive verb, the whole compound can be an intransitive verb since the prefix in the V1 position does not impose an argument structure.

In addition, other exceptional cases seem to belong to Teramura’s categories of *v-V* or *v-v*, and the morpheme *komu* is the main verb in the former case, and it is not in the latter case. However, in any case, the first verbal components do not affect the transitivity of their whole compounds. If this observation is correct, it can be argued that the morpheme *komu* is

transparent in terms of transitivity or unaccusativity as a bound verb.

As far as we can see, the morpheme *komu* can be transparent in terms of both transitivity and unaccusativity. When we go back to Kageyama's account that *komu* can attach to unaccusative, unergative, and transitive verbs, it is easy to understand how he arrived at this conclusion.

4 Concluding remarks

This paper has discussed syntactic properties of *komu*-compounds. We have examined how the compounds behave in terms of their transitivity and unaccusativity, and investigated whether or not some of the grammatical properties of the morpheme *komu* are bleached out as a result of grammaticalization.

First, the basic information concerning the morpheme *komu* and amalgamation processes of its compounds were provided in Section 2.

Section 3.1 dealt with *komu* in light of the Transitivity Harmony Principle of Kageyama (1993). Based on the two different interpretations with *komu*, we analyzed how the syntactic properties of *komu* are associated with the grammatical properties of the V1s in its compounds. The finding in the section was that *komu*-compounds show syntactic ambiguity in terms of argument structure, transitivity, and unaccusativity. We concluded that the morpheme *komu* undergoes grammaticalization in its compounds as a bound verb.

Section 3.2 pointed out several examples which seem to be exceptional cases of this assumption. It discusses two types of exceptions. One type is expressions where a prefix attaches to *komu*, such as *tsuk-komu* 'crash into' and *uchi-komu* 'devote oneself to.' The other type is *komu*-compounds that involve semantic merging, such as *kur-komu* 'march into' and *fumi-komu* 'step into.' These are cases which we need to exclude from regular

komu-compounds.

In sum, as the second component in a compound, the morpheme *komu* has bleached out its original grammatical properties, such as transitivity and unaccusativity as a result of having been grammaticalized. Instead of retaining them, the morpheme *komu* does not carry their argument structures in its compounds and behaves as a bound verb.

Notes

1. The Transitivity Harmony Principle explains that “Verbs which have different types of argument structures cannot form a compound verb (Kageyama 1993:117).”
2. This paper focuses only on the synchronic data of Japanese compounds, not diachronic data.
3. The data show that the first verbal component changes the basic form to the continuous verbal form.
4. Matsumoto (1996:206) argues that *komu* is an unergative verb rather than an unaccusative verb.
5. The designation [unaccusative] is Kageyama’s (1996).
6. *Tsuki* is a modified form of *tsuku* ‘thrust,’ and *tsuki* can also become a prefix.
 - a. *tsuki-susum-u*
thrust-head-Pre
‘head; rush; push one’s way through’
 - b. *tsuki-kaes-u*
thrust-return
‘thrust back, push back; reject; refuse to accept’
 - c. *tsuki-mato-u*
thrust-wear
‘follow (one) about; shadow; dog; haunt’
7. In addition, *kuri-komu* has a transitive usage which shows the first meaning of the regular *komu*-compounds.
 - (i) *kuri-kom-u* *kuru* (transitive) + *kom-u* -> *kuri-kom-u* (transitive)
reel-komu-Pre
‘reel in; haul in; wind; spin; turn over; look up’
 - e.g. *John-ga tsuna-o kuri-kom-u.*
John-Nom rope-Acc reel-komu-Pre
‘John hauls in the rope.’

8. Also, *fumi-komu* has transitive usage.
- (i) fumi-kom-u [2] fumu (transitive) + kom-u -> fumi-kom-u (transitive)
step-komu-Pre
'step down on, press down with the foot.'
- e.g. Jiro-ga akuseru-o fumi-kom-u
Jiro-Nom accelerator-Acc step-komu-Pre
'Jiro steps on the accelerator.'
9. *Tsukeru* is used as an independent word meaning 'write, keep (a diary).'
- (i) Mainichi nikki-o tsuke-ru.
everyday diary-Acc write.in/keep
'I write in my diary every day.'

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