Japanese enter/exit verbs revisited

A reply to Kita (1999)

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Kita (1999) compares Japanese and English Enter/Exit verbs in spatial expressions, and argues that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs lack semantic encoding of motion. He claims that this runs counter to the view which considers motion and location to be primitives in the semantics of spatial expressions; instead, he proposes that discrete change of state should be included in the set of primitives. In this reply, I will first show that Kita’s evidence does not support lack of motion in Japanese Enter/Exit verbs, but that instead these verbs do pattern with motion verbs in the language, where conflation of motion is not disputable. I finally demonstrate that Kita’s claim about change of state may be well taken, but it should be put in a larger context of regular polysemy.

1. Introduction

In comparing motion verbs in Japanese and English with a focus on their use as describing spatial configuration, Kita (1999) argues against the position (Talmy 1985, Langacker 1987) that motion and location (stasis in location) are primitives in the semantics of spatial expressions. He argues that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs, in contrast to their English counterparts, do not encode motion, and yet can be used to describe spatial configuration. He claims that these verbs in Japanese solely denote discrete change of state, instead, and thus discrete change of state should also be included in the inventories of primitives for spatial expressions. His central claim can be summarized by the following quotation (p.309).

I will argue that the Aktionsart of Japanese hairu ‘enter’ and deru ‘exit’ (and possibly other verbs)\(^1\) is discrete change of state, which is neither motion nor stasis in a location. Furthermore, when the verbs are combined with the
The purpose of this response is three-fold. First, I shall demonstrate that the evidence Kita provides to show that there is no encoding of motion in Japanese Enter/Exit verbs does not prove what it is intended to illustrate, and hence that Kita's argument does not successfully show that motion in Japanese Enter/Exit verbs is “defeasible” as he claims. I will argue instead that these verbs in Japanese do indeed express motion. Second, in relation to the issue of motion with Japanese Enter/Exit verbs, it will be argued that those verbs behave no differently than motion verbs in the language, both directed motion verbs such as iku 'go', kuru 'come', and tuku ‘arrive’, and manner of motion verbs like aruku 'walk', hasiru 'run', and oyogu ‘swim’. These two points together lead to the conclusion that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs do encode motion as a crucial meaning component. Third, I do not disagree with Kita in admitting that change of state (or more accurately, change of location) can be asserted with what he calls Enter/Exit verbs. However, I would like to advance the claim that the source of change of state should be found in a larger generalization that seems to be specific to Japanese: that is, directed motion verbs in Japanese observe the “regular polysemy” in the sense of Apresjan (1974) that they all seem to have the meaning that is characterized by verbs of putting, i.e., change of location. Therefore, the recognition of change of state, if relevant at all, should not be made solely with respect to Japanese Enter/Exit verbs, but rather should be made in a larger context of verbal polysemy.

2. Kita’s evidence

Based on various phenomena, Kita attempts to demonstrate that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs do not involve the encoding of motion in comparison with their English counterparts. In this section I will show that each piece of evidence that he provides can receive another interpretation, thereby arguing that his observations do not necessarily point to the conclusion that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs lack motion or transition in spatial expressions.

2.1 Unavailability of the progressive reading

Kita claims that the interpretation of -te iru illustrates that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs do not encode transition. It is well known that verbs that appear in the
-te iru form are interpreted either as progressive or resultative depending on the
verb's aspectual nature (Kindaichi 1976, Soga 1983, Jacobsen 1992, Tsujimura
1996, Shirai 1998, among many more). Examples of the two interpretations are
given below.

1. **progressive**
   
   Taroo-ga hasit-te iru.
   
   ‘Taro is running.’

2. **resultative**
   
   Inu-ga sin-de iru.
   
   ‘A dog is dead.’

(1) describes Taro’s ongoing activity of running, while (2) depicts a dog being
dead as a result of having died. Kita argues that no dynamic phase is expressed
in the aspectual properties of Japanese Enter/Exit verbs, and thus when they
appear in the -te iru form, they are not associated with the progressive reading.
He gives the following examples to support his claim (p.315). (The judgments
are his.)

3. Uma-ga saku-no naka-ni hait-te iru.
   
   horse-NOM fence-GEN inside-into enter
   
   ‘A horse has been inside the fence-enclosure.’
   
   *‘A horse is entering the fence-enclosure.’

   
   horse-NOM fence-GEN outside-into exit
   
   ‘A horse has been outside the fence-enclosure.’
   
   *‘A horse is exiting the fence-enclosure.’

He states (p.314) that -te iru receives the progressive interpretation when the
verb is an “action verb” such as hasiru ‘run’ while when the verb is a “change
verb” like tuku ‘arrive’, the resultative interpretation is available. Underlying
this generalization is the assumption that verbs that have the dynamic phase get
the progressive interpretation while those that have the static phase receive the
resultative meaning for -te iru. (3) and (4) show that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs
in the -te iru form do not induce the progressive reading; thus, Kita concludes
that they lack the dynamic phase.

There are a number of problems with this conclusion, however. First, it is
far from true that the Enter/Exit verbs cannot be characterized by the dynamic
phase. Consider the following example.
(5) Uma-ga ima umagoya-kara de-te iru (-no-o mitegoran).
   horse-NOM now barn-from exit (-ACC look)
   ‘(Look at) the horse that is exiting from the barn right now.’

(5) is minimally different from (4) with a change in postposition and addition of a time adverbial ima ‘now’ to make the action-in-progress reading more readily available, and the progressive interpretation is indeed possible.

Second, the assumption that the presence or absence of the dynamic phase determines the choice of the progressive and resultative interpretations is not substantiated. Achievement and accomplishment verbs certainly have the dynamic phase as a part of their aspectual properties, and yet achievement verbs must, and accomplishment verbs can, be associated with the resultative interpretation. To show the point more directly as it relates to Japanese Enter/Exit verbs, consider the following examples, where the verbs, tuku ‘arrive’, iku ‘go’, and kuru ‘come’, are all classified as directed motion verbs (i.e., verbs with inherent direction).

(6) Kyaku-ga goji-ni tui-te iru.
   guest-NOM 5 o’clock-at arrive
   ‘The guest arrived at 5 o’clock (and he is here now).’

(7) Gakusei-ga nihon-ni it-te iru.
   student-NOM Japan-to go
   ‘A student is gone to Japan.’

(8) Nihonjin-ga takusan koko-ni ki-te iru.
   Japanese-NOM many here-to come
   ‘A lot of Japanese have come here.’

These verbs do denote motion, and as a member of directed motion verbs, they represent transition in location. That is, with these verbs, a terminal point is designated as a part of the meaning, and thus transition in location is definitely encoded as a semantic property. Notice that despite Kita’s prediction, the sentences in (6–8) all have the resultative interpretation. Thus, it is misleading at best to propose an analysis whereby if a verb contains the dynamic phase, it should have the resultative-only reading. Rather, (6–8) as well as (3–4) bear only the resultative reading because these verbs are achievements.

2.2 The construction with nagara
Along similar lines, Kita presents a construction that includes nagara ‘while doing …’ to demonstrate that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs do not have the
dynamic phase associated with them. His examples (p.316) are given below.

(9) Taroo-ga en-o kaki-nagara tabako-ni hi-o tuketa.
Taro-nom circle-acc draw-as cigarette-onto fire-acc lit
‘As he drew a circle, Taro lit a cigarette.’

(10) *Taro-ga {heya-ni hairi/heya-kara de}-nagara tabako-ni
Taro-nom room-into enter/room-from exit-as cigarette-onto
hi-o tuketa.
‘As he {entered/exited} the room, Taro lit a cigarette.’

Based on the contrast above, he concludes that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs “do not semantically encode the movement during the transition phase” (p.316).

Contrary to Kita’s judgments and explanation, I find (10) acceptable. An additional example with hairu ‘enter’ and deru ‘exit’ in the simultaneous construction is given below.

(11) Taroo-ga {heya-ni hairi/heya-kara de}-nagara kaigi-no
Taro-nom room-into enter/room-from exit-as meeting-gen
koto-o kangae-dasita.
things-acc thought/began to think
‘Taro thought/began to think about the meeting as he entered/exited the room.’

What seems to be crucial to this construction is the aspectual properties of verbs that appear in the nagara-clause. That is, when an achievement verb is in the nagara-clause, the simultaneous construction is unequivocally ill-formed. This explains the sharp contrast between (9–10) and (12–13) below.

(12) *Taroo-ga hoteru-ni tuki-nagara,…
Taro-nom hotel-at arrive-as
‘As Taro arrives at a hotel,…’

(13) *Taro-ga sini-nagara,…
Taro-nom die-as
‘As Taro dies,…’

Both tuku ‘arrive’ and sinu ‘die’ are achievement verbs. Furthermore, tuku in (12) is an inherently directed motion verb. If Kita’s explanation of (10) is correct and it is indeed the lack of motion encoded in those verbs that is responsible for the alleged ungrammaticality of the sentence, (12) should be grammatical on the grounds that the verb tuku ‘arrive’ is clearly a motion verb.
Hence, the contrast between (9) and (10) does not substantiate Kita’s claim that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs lack movement.

2.3 Adverbial modification

Finally, Kita argues that the lack of transition or motion in Japanese Enter/Exit verbs is evidenced by “low acceptability” of adverbial modification. Manner adverbials such as hayaku ‘quickly’ and yukkurito ‘slowly’, according to Kita, tend to derive less acceptable sentences with hairu ‘enter’ and deru ‘exit’ than prototypical activity and accomplishment verbs, and this is why the following contrast (p.316) emerges (Kita’s judgments).3

(14) ??/??Taro-ga yakkurito heya-ni haitta.
    Taro-nom slowly room-into entered
    ‘Taro entered the room slowly.’
(15) Taro-ga yakkurito en-o kaita.
    Taro-nom slowly circle-acc drew
    ‘Taro drew a circle slowly.’

Again, I find his argument inconclusive. Besides the fact that the alleged contrast between (14) and (15) is quite subtle, if present at all, other manner adverbials (perhaps in clearer context) straightforwardly cooccur with hairu ‘enter’ and deru ‘exit’. This is shown in (16–17).4

    cold-because quickly house-into enter
    ‘Enter the house quickly since it's cold.’
b. Mirarenai uti-ni satto uti-ni haitta.
    not be seen within quickly house-into entered
    ‘I entered the house quickly before being seen (by someone).’
(17) a. Daradarato denaide!
    lazily don’t exit
    ‘Don’t exit lazily.’
b. (Hara-ga tatta node) wazato yakkuri deta.
    (was angry because) on purpose slowly exited
    ‘(Because I was angry, I exited slowly on purpose.’

Hayaku/satto ‘quickly’ and daradarato ‘lazily’ are manner adverbials on a par with yakkurito ‘slowly’ in (14–15) above. As is indicated, the adverbials and the verbs can readily establish a modification relationship, specifically modifying
the motions denoted by the verbs. In this regard there is no difference between these Enter/Exit verbs and other motion verbs, as in (18–19).

(18) a. Samui-kara hayaku aruita. (manner of motion verb)
cold-because quickly walked
‘I walked quickly because it was cold.’
b. Atui-kara daradarato aruite-simau. (manner of motion verb)
hot-because lazily walk-end up
‘I end up walking lazily because it’s hot.’
(19) Kaigi-ni yukkanito itta. (directed motion verb)
meeting-to slowly went
‘I went to the meeting slowly.’

Again, the distribution of manner adverbials does not provide substantial evidence that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs lack association with movement and transition. The examples above in fact argue against Kita’s contention.

2.4 Discrete change of state

In addition to the evidence for lack of movement and transition examined above, Kita argues that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs denote discrete, rather than punctual, change of state. Consider the following.

(20) Kuruma-ga tonneru-ni hairi-hazimeta.
car-nom tunnel-into enter-began
‘The car began to enter the tunnel.’
(cf. *sini-hazimeta ‘began to die’)
(21) Kuruma-ga tonneru-ni haitta shunkan
car-nom tunnel-into entered moment
‘the moment when the car entered the tunnel’

Kita explains (20) as follows: “…[(20)] refers to the initial moment of the boundary crossing, when the front-most part of the car goes through the tunnel boundary. … If the semantics of hairu ‘enter’ and deru ‘exit’ were punctual change of state, then it would not be possible to refer only to the initial moment of change.” (p.317) As for (21), Kita states that the sentence is ambiguous: it refers both to the moment at which the front-most part of the car goes through the tunnel and to the moment at which the back of the car does so.

It is apparent that the role the subject NP plays in the interpretations of (20–21) is overlooked in Kita’s explanation. Consider the examples below.
(22) Taroo-ga heya/uti-ni hairi-hazimeta.
   Taro-nom room/house-into enter-began
   ‘Taro began to enter the room/house.’

(23) Taroo-ga heya-ni haitta shunkan
    Taro-nom room-into entered moment
    ‘the moment when Taro entered the room’

(22) sounds odd because the subject, Taro, cannot be interpreted incrementally. That is, the car in (20) is cognitively viewed as an incremental theme, which implies a non-punctual change. Such an interpretation is not normally available due to the physical nature of human beings: Taro’s entering a room is more naturally regarded as an instantaneous event. Whether the subject of hairu and deru is viewed incrementally or not, however, is relative, and can be overridden by further contextual information. For instance, if we were looking at Taro’s entrance to a room in a slow-motion video, the moment at which he puts one of his feet in the room can readily be described by (22), and in this context, the sentence is perfectly acceptable. The significance of the nature of the subject of these verbs is further supported by (23). Unlike Kita’s claim that (21) is ambiguous, (23) is unambiguous under normal circumstances. Again, this has to do with the physical nature of human beings, and the instantaneous interpretation of the action is more naturally associated with the sentence. Under the slow-motion context mentioned in regard to (22) above, however, (23) can be construed ambiguously: that is, (23) would describe the situation in which Taro puts one of his feet in the room. Hence, it is too hasty to conclude that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs denote only discrete change of state based on the range of data Kita provides. The situation appears to be more vague than Kita wishes to claim in that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs may well be characterized as denoting either punctual change of state or discrete change of state in addition to denoting motion.

2.5 Uniformity among motion verbs

In this subsection I will briefly illustrate that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs exhibit semantic properties parallel to directed motion verbs and manner of motion verbs, two prominent verb classes subsumed under motion verbs. Using Talmay’s (1985) terminology, in Japanese, directed motion verbs are those that conflate motion and path while manner of motion verbs conflate motion and manner. Since Enter/Exit verbs at issue clearly express deictic paths, they belong to directed motion verbs. The two classes of verbs have the following members.
(24) a. directed motion verbs
noru ‘get on’, oriru ‘get off’, noboru ‘climb’, tikazuku ‘come closer’,
toozakaru ‘go away’,…
b. manner of motion verbs
aruku ‘walk’, hasiru ‘run’, oyogu ‘swim’, tobu ‘fly’,…

Directed motion verbs in (24a) all denote motion and a deictically specified path. For example, agaru ‘ascend’ expresses motion that goes up while sagaru ‘descend’ refers to motion that goes down. Due to deictic specification of direction, a range of postpositions is consistent: motion toward a designated location is ni or e ‘to’ whereas motion away from a specific location is kara ‘from’. This semantic description and the choice of postpositions directly apply to hairu ‘enter’ and deru ‘exit’, and in this respect, Enter/Exit verbs show no difference from directed motion verbs in (24a).5 Denying the presence of the semantic component of motion in hairu ‘enter’ and deru ‘exit’, thus, means that directed motion verbs in (24a) do not bear motion as their semantic properties.

Furthermore, two of Kita’s “diagnostic tests” discussed above, namely, the construction with -nagara and adverbial modification illustrate that hairu ‘enter’ and deru ‘exit’ pattern not only with directed motion verbs but also with manner of motion verbs. Consider the following examples.

(25) a. Hanako-wa gakkoo-e iki-nagara, syukudai-no koto-o
Hanako-top school-to go-as assignment-gen things-acc
kangaeta.
thought
‘Hanako thought of the assignments as she went to school.’
b. Watasi-wa koko-e ki-nagara, tomodati-no koto-o
I-top here-to come-as friends-gen things-acc
kangaeta.
thought
‘I thought of my friends as I came here.’
c. Hanako-wa aruki-nagara, syukudai-no koto-o kangaeta.
Hanako-top walk-as assignments-gen things-acc thought
‘Hanako thought of the assignments as she walked.’
d. Watasi-wa hasiru-nagara, tomodati-no koto-o kangaeta.
I-top run-as friends-gen things-acc thought
‘I thought of my friends as I ran.’
(26) a. (10-pun kakete) yukkuri soko-e itta.
   (10 minutes take) slowly there-to went
   ‘I went there slowly, taking 10 minutes.’

b. (10-pun kakete) yukkuri koko-e kita.
   (10 minutes take) slowly here-to came
   ‘I came here slowly, taking 10 minutes.’

c. (10-pun kakete) yukkuri kooen-made aruita.
   (10 minutes take) slowly park-to walked
   ‘I slowly walked to the park, taking 10 minutes.’

d. (10-pun kakete) yukkuri kooen-made hasitta.
   (10 minutes take) slowly park-to ran
   ‘I slowly ran to the park, taking 10 minutes.’

The nagara-phrases in (25) all refer to the transitional motion denoted by the verbs, whether they are directed motion verbs, as in (25a–b), or manner of motion verbs, as in (25c–d). Crucially, the interpretation of the nagara-phrases and what is being referred to in (25) are no different from what is expressed in (11): they all refer to the duration in which the dynamic motion continues. Similarly, in (26), the adverb yukkuri modifies motion denoted by the verbs: it does not modify direction in (26a–b) or manner in (26c–d). In this respect, too, the directed motion verbs and manner of motion verbs in (26) are no different from the earlier examples with hairu/deru ‘enter/exit’ such as (16–17). (Also see (18–19).) Therefore, we can conclude that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs do not show any pattern different from motion verbs in the language.

In this section I have demonstrated that the evidence Kita presents does not show that hairu/deru ‘enter/exit’ do not encode any form of motion, and hence I conclude that his evidence cannot be used to argue for lack of motion with these two verbs in Japanese. Furthermore, I have argued that they exhibit a great deal of similarities in their semantic properties to directed motion verbs and manner of motion verbs in Japanese, which unquestionably encode motion. These two verbs indeed express motion, and thus, they are full-fledged motion verbs.

3. Regular polysemy and change of location

The discussion in Section 2 explicitly demonstrates that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs hairu/deru encode motion. On the other hand, Kita’s claim about change of state is not entirely incorrect, either, if we put the observation in a larger context. In this section I will argue that change of state, or more accurately,
change of location, is a consequence of what Apresjan (1974) calls “regular polysemy.”

Apresjan (1974:16) gives the following definition of regular polysemy: “Polysemy of the word A with the meanings $a_i$ and $a_j$ is called regular if, in the given language, there exists at least one other word B with the meanings $b_i$ and $b_j$, which are semantically distinguished from each other in exactly the same way as $a_i$ and $a_j$ and if $a_i$ and $b_i$, and $a_j$ and $b_j$ are nonsynonymous.” He further describes the productivity accompanying regular polysemy by pointing out that if a verb has the meaning “to subject to the action of a sharp instrument,” then, it may also be expected to have the meaning “to produce by using a sharp instrument” (p.18). Russian examples illustrating such productivity include burit’ [kopat’] zemlju ‘to drill (dig) the earth’ vs. burit’ [kopat’] skvažinu ‘to bore [dig] a hole’; and similarly, pilit’ dosku ‘to saw a board’ vs. pilit’ figurku iz doski ‘to make a figure from a board by sawing.’ Some change of state verbs in English have the meaning of creation: for example, bake as in bake a potato vs. bake a cake, where the former illustrates change of state described with respect to a potato while the latter denotes creation of a cake. Other change of state verbs that have this pattern of polysemy include carve, sew, and mold.

What I would like to argue is that directed motion verbs, under which I categorize hairu/deru, demonstrate regular polysemy in that when a morphological condition is met, they systematically exhibit properties as verbs of putting, whereby change of location is denoted. The generalization that is crucial to the explanation of the change of location sense of hairu/deru is the following: directed motion verbs (which are all intransitives) display the semantic property of putting verbs when their morphologically related transitive counterparts are available.

As is well known (Jacobsen 1992), Japanese exhibits a large number of causative-inchoative verb pairs that are morphologically related. Some examples are given below.

(27)   causative (transitive)  inchoative (intransitive)  gloss
kowasu  kowareru  break
simeru  simaru  close
kawakasu  kawaku  dry
sizumeru  sizumu  sink
tukeru  tuku  turn on
todokeru  todoku  deliver
mitukeru  mitukaru  find
Many of directed motion verbs also display transitive-intransitive pairs of the sort exemplified in (28). Consider the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(28) causative (transitive)</th>
<th>inchoative (intransitive)</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ireru</td>
<td>hairu</td>
<td>'put in'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dasu</td>
<td>deru</td>
<td>'take out'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ageru</td>
<td>agaru</td>
<td>'raise'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sageru</td>
<td>sagaru</td>
<td>'lower'</td>
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<tr>
<td>noseru</td>
<td>noru</td>
<td>'put up'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orosu</td>
<td>oriru</td>
<td>'take down'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sizumeru</td>
<td>sizumu</td>
<td>'sink'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tikazukeru</td>
<td>tikazuku</td>
<td>'make something closer'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toozakeru</td>
<td>toozakaru</td>
<td>'keep something away'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toosu</td>
<td>tooru</td>
<td>'pass'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The intransitive verbs in (28) are systematically used as directed motion verbs; and the gloss reflects the meaning of their transitive counterparts. That is, the intransitive (or inchoative) verbs in (28) should be interpreted in two ways: (i) as directed motion verbs, and (ii) as inchoative counterparts of (transitive) putting verbs. That is, this is an instance of regular polysemy described above. As is clear with this list, the pattern is systematic: directed motion verbs, which are by nature intransitive, regularly exhibit the meaning of putting that implies change of location as a consequence, as long as they find their morphologically related transitive counterparts. If, however, directed motion verbs do not employ morphologically related transitive verbs, the polysemous situation is not obtained. These verbs include the following.

(29) iku 'go', kuru 'come', tuku 'arrive', noboru 'climb',…

The transitive and intransitive pairs in (28), as verbs of putting, are related not only morphologically but also semantically, and the semantic connection between the two may perhaps be most explicitly represented by the notion of causal chain advanced by Croft (1991). According to Croft, causative, inchoative and passive verbs can form a causal network, which is schematized below (pp.262–3).

(30) Causative: The rock broke the window.

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  rock          window
   CAUSE     BECOME BROKEN
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Inchoative: The window broke.

\[ \text{window} \rightarrow \text{BECOME BROKEN} \]

Stative: The window is broken.

\[ \text{window} \rightarrow \text{BROKEN} \]

Assuming that a causal chain like (30) is established between the causative and inchoative verb pairs in (28), the eventuality denoted by the inchoative verbs can readily be interpreted as resulting from the eventuality denoted by the causative verbs. For instance, the following causal network describes the causal chain between the causative verb, \textit{ireru}, and the inchoative verb, \textit{hairu}.

(31) Causative: Tarō-ga uma-o saku-no naka-ni ireta.
\[ \text{Taro} \rightarrow \text{horse} \rightarrow \text{CAUSE BECOME IN-FENCE} \]

\[ \text{'Taro put the horse inside the fence (enclosure).'} \]
\[ \text{‘lit. Taro entered the horse inside the fence (enclosure).’} \]

Inchoative: Uma-ga saku-no naka-ni haitta.
\[ \text{horse} \rightarrow \text{BECOME IN-FENCE} \]

\[ \text{‘The horse entered inside the fence (enclosure).’} \]

The inchoative (intransitive) sentence in (31), thus, expresses change of location with respect to the horse as a result of a causative action by Taro, for instance, of putting it inside the fence. Whether motion is involved in this case is not relevant; or, the question seems to be internal to a particular theory, an issue that does not concern us here. Crucially, the expression of change of location that does not necessarily assume motion is tightly connected to the fact that the intransitive verbs in these cases are intransitive (or inchoative) counterparts of verbs of putting. It suggests, then, that \textit{hairu ‘enter’} and \textit{deru ‘exit’} are either directed motion with motion conflated in them or intransitive counterparts
of verbs of putting whereby change of location is denoted but motion may or may not be figured as a part of verb meaning. Furthermore, this polysemous situation is not accidental or idiosyncratic, but rather should be attributed to a more general property observed with directed motion verbs that exhibit a particular morphological characteristic.

It should be clear by now that hairu/deru present a regular polysemy phenomenon, and that they do indeed encode motion as directed motion verb while as inchoative verbs of putting, they represent change of location. In the latter situation, whether motion should be represented as a part of the verbs’ lexical representation seems to be a separate issue. In order to fully understand what the semantic properties of hairu/deru are, it is necessary to approach them from a larger perspective, rather than simply calling them Enter/Exit verbs.

4. Conclusion

In this response I examined Kita’s argument that Japanese Enter/Exit verbs do not encode motion. I first evaluated the evidence that Kita provides to support lack of motion with these verbs, and concluded that his evidence does not show what he claims it does. That is, lack of motion is not successfully defended on the basis of the set of evidence Kita presents. Further, I pointed out that the verbs in question pattern with motion verbs in Japanese, i.e., directed motion verbs and manner of motion verbs. Finally, I partially agreed with Kita in that change of location (Kita’s change of state) is observed with hairu/deru, but made it more explicit in that the change of location is a consequence of a more general phenomenon, namely, regular polysemy, which holds of the class of directed motion verbs that meet a specific morphological constraint. It may be concluded that hairu/deru are more polysemous than their English counterparts, but as I hope to have shown above, these diverse senses do not undermine the relevance of the semantic primitives observed in various languages, nor do they necessarily motivate additional semantic primitives.

Notes

1. It is not clear to me why Kita singles out hairu ’enter’ and deru ’exit’ nor is it explicit what he means by “possibly other verbs” because he does not explain over which natural class he is trying to capture significant generalizations.
2. An anonymous reviewer commented that the following sentence with tokoro clearly shows the progressive reading.

(1) Uma-ga ima umagoya-kara de-te iru tokoro-da.
    ‘The horse is (in the process of) exiting from the barn right now.’

3. I find no problem with the following example, which is minimally different from (14).

(1) Taroo-ga noronoroto heya-ni haitta.
    ‘Taro entered the room slowly/lazily.’

Both nororoto ‘slowly, lazily’ and yokkusuroto ‘slowly’ modify the motion of entering.

4. I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for suggesting the examples in (16b) and (17b). This reviewer commented that these adverbs, although not satto, refer to “the process leading up to the entering event.” I believe that the reviewer’s interpretation is possible, presumably due to the fact that hairu and deru could be interpreted as achievement verbs; but, it does not exclude the interpretation in which the adverbs indeed modify the motion. Recall our discussion of (5) above: I argued that the progressive reading is available in this sentence. The addition of the adverb yokkusuroto ‘slowly’ to (5) clearly illustrates that the adverb modifies the entire duration of the exiting motion.

5. Some of the verbs such as oriru ‘descend’, noboru ‘climb’, and deru ‘exit’ allow the postposition/Accusative Case -o as well.

References


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