The realization of an extra argument in a two-character Sino-Japanese verb sentence
HASEGAWA Takuya (The University of Tokyo)

Abstract
This presentation aims at explaining why two-character Sino-Japanese verbs can take an extra argument (underlined in this abstract). In general, Sino-Japanese verbs cannot take an argument whose case marker is identical with the one that is supposed to appear when they are decomposed into a phrase. The verb *too-seki* (‘throw-stone’), for example, which is paraphrased into “*isi-o nageru*” (‘throw a stone’), cannot make an extra argument appear, as shown in (1).

(1) ?? Gunsyuu-ga keikan-ni ookii-isi-o too-seki si-ta.
crowd-NOM police-DAT big-stone-ACC throw-stone do-PAST
‘The crowd threw big stones to the police.’ (Kobayashi 2004)

However, the verb *too-yaku* (‘administer-medicine’), which is paraphrased into “*kusuri-o ataearu*” (‘administer medicine’), can in fact take an extra argument, as in (2). This phenomenon was pointed out in Kageyama (1980), Nitta (1980), Shimamura (1985), Kobayashi (2004), and other literature.

(2) Isya-ga kanzya-ni tintuuyaku-o too-yaku si-ta.
doctor-NOM patient-DAT painkiller-ACC administer-medicine do-PAST
‘The doctor administered painkillers to the patient.’

This presentation proposes that this difference between two-character Sino-Japanese verbs can be explained by the degree of specificity of their nominal component: on the one hand, when the nominal element of a verb expresses an abstract meaning, more specific information will be needed, and thus the verb will take an extra argument; on the other hand, when the meaning conveyed by the nominal element of a verb is specific, no additional information will be needed, and so the verb will not allow an extra argument to appear. The verb *too-seki* cannot take an extra argument as shown in (1) because its nominal component *-seki* (‘stone’) conveys a specific meaning, while the verb *too-yaku* can do so as in (2) because its nominal component *-yaku* (‘medicine’) expresses an abstract meaning. The level of specificity of nominal elements can be tested with the following diagnostics:

(3) ?? Taroo-ga Ziroo-ni isi-o nage-ta ga, gutaitekini
Taro-NOM Jiro-DAT stone-ACC throw-PAST but exactly
*nani-o* nage-ta ka wakar-anai.
what-ACC throw-PAST Q know-not
‘Taro threw a stone to Jiro, but I do not know what exactly.’

(4) Taroo-ga Ziroo-ni kusuri-o atae-ta ga, gutaitekini
Taro-NOM Jiro-DAT medicine-ACC give-PAST but exactly
nani-o atae-ta ka wakar-anai.
what-ACC give-PAST Q know-not
‘Taro gave medicine to Jiro, but I do not know what exactly.’

The difference mentioned above is reflected in the argument structure of their nominal component. Consider the two verbs too-yaku and too-seki again. The nominal element -yaku in too-yaku allows the hyponym of medicine to appear as the second argument in its argument structure as shown in (5), whereas the nominal element -seki in too-seki does not license the second argument as in (6). Notice that the Pustejovský’s (1995) way of description is adopted in this presentation.

(5) \[-yaku (‘medicine’) \]
\[
\text{ARGSTR} = \begin{cases} \text{ARG1} = x: \text{medicine} \\ \text{ARG2} = y: \text{hyponym of medicine} \end{cases}
\]

(6) \[-seki (‘stone’) \]
\[
\text{ARGSTR} = \begin{cases} \text{ARG1} = x: \text{stone} \end{cases}
\]

Because of these representations, the sentence in (2) will be acceptable, where the hyponym of medicine tintuuyaku appears, and conversely, the sentence in (1) will be unacceptable, which intends to make the extra argument ookii isi appear. To recapitulate, the conclusion is that whether or not two-character Sino-Japanese verbs can take an extra argument can be explained by the level of specificity of their nominal component, and that this difference between Sino-Japanese verbs is reflected in the argument structure of their nominal element.