Findings
– Based on semantic annotation of the Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese (BCCWJ)

1. Perspectives and aktionsarts of English words reflected in existing FrameNet (FN) semantic frames may be different from those of Japanese words
2. In most cases where Japanese FrameNet (JFN) defined new semantic frames for a word, the frame did not involve culture-specific scenes

The Japanese FrameNet project
– Compatibility with FrameNet
  • JFN databases and software: compatible with those of FN
  • JFN semantic frames: most imported from FN
  • Attention to contrasts between Japanese & English (cf. Ohara & Sato 2010)
– Background: Frame Semantics
  • JFN Semantic annotation: Identifying structure and knowledge necessary for producing and understanding sentences (semantic frames) and its semantic components (frame elements (FEs))
  • FEs: More fine-grained than often used semantic roles (e.g. Agent, Instrument, Object) based on so-called case frames
  • Lexical units (LUs) evoke semantic frames, related to one another through frame-to-frame relations

Existing semantic frames: Often assume English perspective & lexical aspects
– Many existing semantic frames have transitive perspective
– Many Japanese verbs: intransitive/inchoative perspective
  • Transitive counterparts: often derived by suffixing a causative morpheme
– Few cases in which FN semantic frames are defined from intransitive/inchoative and transitive perspectives
(1) a. sakura no hanabira ga tiru
    cherry.blossom GEN petals NOM be.scattered
    ‘Petals of cherry blossoms get scattered.’
    b. sakura no hanabira o tirasu
    cherry.blossom GEN petals ACC scatter
    ‘(Somebody) scatters petals of cherry blossoms.’

“Missing” semantic frames: Very few are culture-specific
– Existing FN semantic frames: Could be used for 87 % of Japanese LUs in Core Data of Book Genre in BCCWJ
– One-to-one correspondence between frames needed for Japanese & English words
  • muku.v ‘face’ vs. face.v
(2) a. minami o muku
    south ACC face
    ‘(somebody) faces south.’
  – One-to-many correspondence bet. frames for J & E
  • simeru.v vs. make up, take up
(3) a. Zyosei ga zinkoo no 40 paa sento o simeru
    women NOM population GEN per cent ACC make.up
    ‘Women make up 40 per cent of the population.’
    b. kankoo kyaku ga robii no tyuoo o simeru
    sightseeing guest NOM lobby GEN center ACC take.up
    ‘Tourists take up the center of the lobby.’
