



# Comparative Asian Research Network

## Monthly Lecture Series on Issues and Research in the Asian Region

Organized by the Department of Japanese Studies, CUHK

### *Tsukamatta or tsukamaerareta?*

## Unaccusative Verbs in Japanese and Their Acquisition by Native Chinese Speakers

Dr. LUK Pei Sui Zoe

Lecturer, Department of Linguistics and Modern Language Studies, Hong Kong Institute of Education

**Date:** 14 November, 2013 (Thursday)

**Time:** 14:30 – 16:15

**Venue:** G24 Arts and Humanities Hub,  
Fung King Hey Building, CUHK

**Language:** English

つかまった??

つかまえられた??

### Abstract:

If argument structures in a language emerge from usage (e.g., Goldberg, 1999) and constructions are language-specific (e.g., Croft, 2001), then it is a logical speculation that the transitive and intransitive constructions may have different meanings across languages. In fact, differences have been observed between English and Japanese in terms of preference for the intransitive construction (Ikegami, 1981) and the lexicalization patterns of intransitive verbs (c.f. Levin, 1993). The first half of the presentation reports a study that investigates the use of the transitive and intransitive constructions in English and Japanese by examining the frequencies of the two constructions in both languages. It argues that the Japanese intransitive construction is qualitatively different from that in English. The second half of the presentation outlines a study that examines the acquisition of Japanese transitive/intransitive verb alternation by Chinese learners, and in particular, how a ‘conceptualizable’ external cause (Ju, 2000) affects learners’ choice.

**Discussant:** Dr. HO Chi-Ming, Associate Professor, Department of Japanese Studies, CUHK

### Speaker Biography

Zoe Pei-sui Luk is a Lecturer at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. She received her MA and PhD in Linguistics at the University of Pittsburgh. She is interested in the relationship between language and cognition, and its role in language acquisition. She has published in *Language Learning* and *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Second Language Acquisition*.

**All are Welcome!!**

No registration necessary.

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