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On the Apparent Complementizer in Japanese

Abstract
This paper investigates clausal complementation in Japanese, focusing on the particle tte. While tte appears to work as a complementizer, it shows distributional differences from the unmarked complementizer to. Based on the etymology of tte (it has developed from the combination of the speech verb iw ‘say’ and the complementizer to) and the cross-linguistic observation that grammaticalization of speech verbs is robustly found in languages with serial verb constructions, I suggest that tte involves a compound verb structure which consists of the speech verb iw ‘say’ and a verb of saying or thinking. The proposed analysis enables us to analyze tte as a cross-linguistically common pattern of grammaticalization; tte is in the process of the grammaticalization of a speech verb derived from serial/compound verb constructions.

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On the Apparent Complementizer in Japanese

Hiroaki Saito*

1. Introduction

This paper investigates clausal complementation in Japanese, focusing on the particle *tte*. The particle *tte* and the regular complementizer *to* are often interchangeable, as in (1). Consequently, *tte* has been considered a stylistic and/or phonological variant of *to*.

(1) John-wa [Mary-ga kawaii {to/tte}] i-tta/omo-tta.
    John-TOP Mary-NOM cute C/TTE say-PST/think-PST

‘John said/thought that Mary is cute.’

However, regardless of this similarity between *tte* and *to*, they show distributional differences. In certain environments, *tte* and *to* are not in fact interchangeable, which indicates that they are not merely variants of the same complementizer. To explain the asymmetry between *tte* and *to*, this paper offers an analysis of *tte* that reflects the etymology of *tte* (it has developed from the combination of the speech verb *i* ‘say’ and the complementizer *to*). The analysis proposed in this paper also aims to connect the case of *tte* to a cross-linguistically well-attested pattern of language change: grammaticalization of speech verbs is robustly found in languages with serial verb constructions.

The organization of this paper is as follows. In the next section, I introduce the particle *tte*, comparing it to the unmarked complementizer *to*. I show that there are distributional differences between *tte* and *to*. In Section 3, I discuss the etymology of *tte* and a related cross-linguistic observation concerning serial verb constructions, which is an essential ingredient for an analysis of *tte* proposed in this paper. Building on the observations in Sections 2 and 3, I offer an analysis of *tte* in Section 4. Section 5 is the conclusion. It also discusses some remaining issues.

2. *Tte* in Japanese

In this section, I will discuss basic properties of the particle *tte* in Japanese. Comparing *tte* to the unmarked complementizer *to*, I will show that, despite their apparent similarities, *tte* and *to* do show different distributions, which indicates that *tte* is not merely a stylistic or phonological variant of *to*.

The particle *tte* is often used instead of the unmarked complementizer *to* in colloquial speech, as shown in (1), repeated below.

(2) John-wa [Mary-ga kawaii {to/tte}] i-tta/omo-tta.
    John-TOP Mary-NOM cute C/TTE say-PST/think-PST

‘John said/thought that Mary is cute.’

Due to this, *tte* has been typically assumed to be a phonological/stylistic variant of the complementizer *to* (e.g. Kawase 1992, Minegishi 1999, Kaiser et al. 2001 but see Hirose and Nawata 2016, Shimamura 2018 for exceptions).1 If *tte* is merely a variant of *to*, we would expect that *tte* and *to* should show the same syntactic distribution. However, this is not the case; there is a syntactic asymmetry between *tte* and *to*. Consider (3).

1*I would like to thank Hideharu Tanaka and especially Željko Bošković for their valuable comments. I am also grateful to anonymous reviewers and the audience of PLC46. This work has been supported by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) KAKENHI Grant Number JP20K13003. The particle *tte* is a multifunctional element that can be used as e.g. a topic marker and an evidential marker, in addition to its complementizer use (see e.g. Maki 1997a/b, Saegusa 1997, Kaiser et al. 2001, Ishii 2015, Hirose and Nawata 2016, Saito 2019). This paper focuses on the complementizer use of *tte* as in (2). Whether multiple functions of *tte* can be syntactically and/or semantically unified is beyond the scope of this paper. See Hirose and Nawata 2016 for an attempt to unify multiple functions of *tte*. But see also Saito (2019) for the claim that there are (at least) two syntactically and semantically distinct types of *tte*.
In (3), the additive particle *mo* ‘also’ and the topic marker *wa* appear between *to* and the matrix verb (note that the distribution of these particles is quite free in general). The particle *tte* behaves differently in this regard. As shown in (4), *mo* and *wa* cannot appear between *tte* and the matrix verb (see Hirose and Nawata 2016).

In complex NPs, the content clause modifying a noun like ‘ rumor’ can be introduced by *to-iw* ‘C-say’, as in (5) (see Kuno 1973, Nakau 1973, Song 1975, 1977).

There is a further difference between *tte* and *to*. In complex NPs, the content clause modifying a noun like ‘ rumor’ can be introduced by *to-iw* ‘C-say’, as in (5) (see Kuno 1973, Nakau 1973, Song 1975, 1977).

Without *iw*, *to* alone cannot appear in (5), as in (7a). In the same environment, however, *tte* is possible, as shown in (7b).

Therefore, *to* and *tte* show distributional differences despite their apparent similarities. The contrasts between *tte* and *to* we have observed above would be difficult to capture if *tte* were merely a colloquial variant of *to*. In this paper, I will suggest an analysis of *tte*, where it involves a different syntactic structure from *to*. In the next section, I will discuss the etymology of *tte*, which will be an important ingredient of the analysis proposed in this paper.

3. **Grammaticalization of Speech Verbs**

In this section, I will discuss the etymology of *tte* and related language change patterns found cross-linguistically. *Tte* has developed from the complementizer *to* and the verb of saying *iw* ‘say’. This pattern of language change is cross-linguistically fairly common. I will also discuss how this type of change occurs. The historical source of *tte* is considered a combination of the complementizer *to* and the verb
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of saying *iw ‘say’ (Shogakukan 2001 (Japanese dictionary), Hirose and Nawata 2016, see also Lord 1976, 1993). This kind of change is not cross-linguistically rare. In fact, the change, or grammaticalization, from speech verbs to complementizers (or complementizer-like elements) is one of the most well-attested changes in unrelated languages (e.g. Lord 1976, 1993, Klamer 2000, Heine and Kuteva 2002, Simpson and Wu 2002, Roberts and Roussou 2003, Saito 2021). Furthermore, it is also known that the combination of a speech verb and a complementizer has developed into a functional element in some languages (see e.g. Cruschina and Remberger 2008 for this kind of change in Romance languages). To illustrate the change from a speech verb to a complementizer, consider (8).

(8) Da prepa fene ringe mata haik.
   3.SG say FEN 3.SG die PERF
   ‘He said that he was already dead.’
   (Grimes 1991: 133)

In (8), *fen(e) in Buru (an Austronesian language) is originally a speech verb, but it can also be used as a complementizer now, co-occurring the matrix predicate of saying *prepa ‘say’ (Grimes 1991, Klamer 2000).

Let us then consider how the relevant change happens. In the literature, the change from speech verbs to complementizers has been argued to involve a reanalysis of a speech verb as a complementizer. The reanalysis in question is shown in (9) (given in English words).

(9) a. John tellV sayV [CP ... ]
   (serial verb)

b. John tellV [sayC ... ]
   (Adopted from Simpson and Wu 2002)

What is particularly important here is the nature of languages in which complementizers have developed from speech verbs; it has been observed that the change in question is robustly found in languages with serial verb constructions (Lord 1976, 1993, Klamer 2000, Simpson and Wu 2002, Roberts and Roussou 2003). (9a) schematically illustrates a serial verb construction taking a clausal complement (the first member of the serial verb is ‘tell’ and the second member is ‘say’). When language acquirers are exposed to an input like (9a), they reanalyze (9a) as (9b). In (9b), ‘say’, which was originally a speech verb in (9a), works as a complementizer. This reanalysis is possible because the position of ‘say’ is ambiguous to acquirers regarding syntactic parsing based on the phonological string; it can be a part of the serial verb, as in the original input (as intended by adults), or a complementizer of an embedded clause, ‘tell’ being a matrix predicate as in (9b). This way, a change from a speech verb to a complementizer is obtained. The derived complementizer is pronounced like the original speech verb due to the reanalysis described here.

It should be noted here that Japanese allows compound verbs (serial verbs/complex verbs, see e.g. Kageyama 1993). Therefore, from a cross-linguistic perspective, Japanese can be taken to belong to the language group that instantiates a change from speech verbs to complementizers (recall that the grammaticalization of speech verbs is robustly found in languages with serial verbs). This idea will be an essential ingredient of the analysis proposed in the next section.

4. Compound Verb Analysis

Building on the observations from the previous sections, in this section I will suggest that the complementizer use of *tte involves a compound verb (or serial verb) structure consisting of the speech verb *iw ‘say’ and a verb of saying or thinking. I will show that the proposed analysis can explain the asymmetries between *tte and the unmarked complementizer *to we have observed in Section 2. I will also discuss an alternative analysis of *tte.

In the previous section, we made the following observations.

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2 It should however be noted that the exact etymology of *tte is controversial. See e.g. Saegusa (1997), Maki (1997a, b) for relevant discussion.
(10) A. The particle *tte* has developed from the verb of saying *iwa* ‘say’ plus the complementizer *to*.

B. The change/grammaticalization from speech verbs to complementizers is robustly found in languages with serial verb constructions.

Based on these observations, I suggest that the complementizer-like element *tte*, like (2), repeated in (11) below, involves a compound verb (or a serial/complex verb), as in (12).

(11) John-wa [Mary-ga kawaii *tte*] i-tta/omo-tta.

John-TOP Mary-NOM cute TTE say-PST/think-PST

‘John said/thought that Mary is cute.’

(12) [[Subject [CP ... toC] *iwa*-V say/think T] C]

In (12), the embedded clause headed by the complementizer *to* is selected by a compound verb. The first member of this compound verb is the speech verb *iwa* ‘say’ and the second member needs to be a verb of saying or thinking. I further suggest that the combination of *to* and *iwa* is spelled out as the particle *tte*, as discussed in more detail below.

Let us consider the compound verb in (12). As briefly noted in the previous section, compound verbs are independently found in Japanese (Kageyama 1993). Thus the current proposal connects the cross-linguistic observation (10B) to the case of *tte*, which has developed from a speech verb (and a complementizer): the observation (10A). I assume that the first member (*iwa*) and the second member (the verb of saying/thinking) of this compound verb are lexically specified, just like other lexical compound verbs in Japanese. Notice here that compound/serial verbs with two verbs of communication (typically, one more specific, the other less specific, like ‘say’) are cross-linguistically common (see e.g. Simpson and Wu 2002, cf. Grimshaw 2015, Major 2021). It should also be noted that, independently, *iwa* ‘say’ can be the first member of compound verbs in Japanese, as exemplified in (13). Therefore, the compound verb in (12) can be seen as an instance of this type of compound verb.

(13) a. *ii-arawasi* ‘say-express’
    b. *ii-arasow* ‘say-fight’

I further argue that the combination of the complementizer *to* (= the head of the embedded clause) and *iwa* ‘say’ (= the first member of the compound verb) is realized as, or reduced into, *tte*, as illustrated in (14).

(14) [[Subject [CP ... to] *iwa*-V say/think T] C] → realized as *tte*

I suggest that this reduction, like other phonological reduction processes, applies under adjacency (via e.g. morphological merger, see Halle and Marantz 1993, Bobaljik 1995, Lasnik 1995). This reduction reflects the etymology of *tte*; it has developed from the complementizer *to* and the speech verb *iwa* (= the observation (10B) above). Therefore, if this analysis of *tte* is on the right track, *tte* is currently in the process of grammaticalization in that it is not completely a complementizer (yet), as it involves the speech verb *iwa*, but it is realized as morphologically one element due to the reduction, which makes *tte* look like a complementizer. I assume that this reduction is obligatory in (14), given that phonological reduction often precedes and in fact facilitates grammaticalization processes in general (see e.g. Hopper and Traugott 1993, Roberts and Roussou 2003, but also see Section 5).

Notice here that the suggested reduction process of *to* and *iwa* into *tte* is also independently found in Japanese. Thus, as in (15a), the combination of *to* and *iwa* can be realized as *tte* in a complex NP. Similarly, the reduction in question can also apply in a main clause, as shown in (15b). In these contexts, *to-iwa* and *tte* are interchangeable.

(15) a. [Mary-ga kawaii [to-iwa/tte]] uwasa

Mary-NOM cute C-say/TTE rumor

‘the rumor that Mary is cute’
b. Context: John looks very sad today.

John-ni
  genki-ka  kii-tara,  kare-wa  [aiken-ga
sin-da]  {to-iw/tte}.
John-to
  fine-Q  ask-when  he-TOP  pet.dog-NOM
die-PST  C-say/TTE

‘When I asked John if he is fine, he said that his dog died.’

Note, however, that the relevant reduction is optional in (15), while it is obligatory in (14), i.e. with the serial verb. I suggest that *tte is now undergoing grammaticalization starting from serial verb constructions, as cross-linguistically observed, so this is the only environment (yet) where the reduction in question applies obligatorily (see also Section 5).

Let us then return to the contrast between *tte and to we have seen above. As in (3), repeated below, the particles *mo ‘also’ and *wa ‘Topic’ can appear between to and the matrix predicate, as the distribution of these particles is quite free in general.

(16) a. John-wa [Mary-ga kawaii to]-mo i-tta.
  John-TOP Mary-NOM cute C-also say-PST
  ‘John also said that Mary is cute.’
b. John-wa [Mary-ga kawaii to]-wa i-tta.
  John-TOP Mary-NOM cute C-TOP say-PST
  ‘John (at least) said that Mary is cute.’

In contrast, this particle placement is not allowed with *tte; mo and wa cannot occur between *tte and the matrix verb, as shown in (4), repeated in (17).

(17) a.* John-wa [Mary-ga kawaii tte]-mo i-tta.
    John-TOP Mary-NOM cute TTE-also say-PST
    ‘John also said that Mary is cute.’
  b.* John-wa [Mary-ga kawaii tte]-wa i-tta.
    John-TOP Mary-NOM cute TTE-TOP say-PST
    ‘John (at least) said that Mary is cute.’

The ungrammaticality of (17a)/(17b) can be captured under the current analysis of *tte. With *tte, if we try to place a particle like *mo and *wa, the structure we would obtain is the following.

(18) a. [[Subject [cp ... to] {*mo*/wa} iw-Vsay/think T] C]
  b. [[Subject [cp ... to] iw-{*mo*/wa}-Vsay/think T] C]

The structures in (18a) and (18b) indicate potential positions for the particles *mo/*wa which would result in the word order *tte-mo/*wa-Vsay/think (notice that the apparent “matrix verb”, indicated by Vsay/think, is the second member of the compound verb under the current analysis). However, neither of these options is possible. First, consider (18a), where the particle appears between to, which is the head of the embedded clause, and iw ‘say’, which is the first member of the compound verb. It is impossible to place a particle in this position because it blocks the reduction of to and iw into *tte. It disrupts the adjacency of to and iw, which is a prerequisite for the reduction in question. It is also impossible to place a particle between the first member (iw) and the second member of the compound verb. In Japanese, it is impossible to place a particle inside lexical compound verbs, as shown in (19) (Kageyama 1993).

(19) a. *naki-{mo/wa}-sakeb  ‘cry-{also/TOP}-shout’
  b. *ii-{mo/wa}-arawas  ‘say-{also/TOP}-express’

We can therefore capture the ungrammaticality of (17) under the current analysis of *tte, where *tte
involves the complementizer to and (the first member of) the compound verb.3

We can capture another difference between to and tte. As (5)-(7) show, both tte and to can be used with iw ‘say’ in complex NPs (repeated in (20a)). However, without iw, only tte is possible, as in (20b).

(20) a. [Mary-ga kawaii {to/tte} iw] uwasa (= (5) and (6))
   Mary-NOM cute C/TTE say rumor
   ‘the rumor that Mary is cute’

   b. [Mary-ga kawaii {*to/tte}] uwasa (= (7))
   Mary-NOM cute C/TTE rumor
   ‘the rumor that Mary is cute’

Following Song (1975, 1977) and Saito (2020), I assume that complex NPs like (20a) involve a relative clause structure as in (21).

(21) [NP [relative clause e] [CP [Mary is cute (content clause)] to] iw] rumor]

In (21), e indicates a gap in the relative clause, which corresponds to the head noun ‘rumor’. Since the head noun ‘rumor’ is modified by the relative clause ‘(which) says that Mary is cute’, (21) is interpreted as ‘(the) rumor which says that Mary is cute’. The structure in (21) results in the word order to-iw, thus deriving the complex NP in (20a) with to. If the reduction of to-iw into tte applies here, we obtain (20b) with tte, as in (22).

(22) [NP [relative clause e] [CP [Mary is cute] to] iw] rumor]

   → tte

It is also possible to have the serial verb discussed above within a relative clause, as in (23). The serial verb in question consists of two instances of the speech verb iw ‘say’ (see Shimamura 2022 for independent evidence for the existence of such structures).

(23) [NP [relative clause e] [CP [Mary is cute (content clause)] to] iw-iw] rumor]

   → tte

When the reduction of to and iw applies in (22), we obtain the tte iw word order. This is (20b) with tte. However, there is no derivation that can yield (20b) with to, so this is ungrammatical.

Before concluding this section, a note regarding an alternative is in order. Hirose and Nawata

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3 It should however be noted that there are particles which can appear right after tte, unlike mo/wa, as in (i). The same holds for the particles sura/sae ‘even’ (Hirose and Nawata 2016, footnote 16).

(i) a.? John-wa [Mary-ga kawaii tte]-dake i-tta.
   John-TOP Mary-NOM cute TTE-only say-PST
   ‘John only said that Mary is cute.’

   b.? John-wa [Mary-ga kawaii tte]-bakari i-tei-ru.
   John-TOP Mary-NOM cute TTE-only s a y -
   PROG-PST
   ‘John is only saying that Mary is cute.’

Also, these particles cannot appear inside compound verbs (cf. (19) in the text). The grammaticality of (i) thus seems problematic for the current analysis ((i) is somewhat degraded though). However, Aoyagi (1998) claims that mo and wa and the particles dake/bakari/sura/sae belong to different categories of particles, showing that they have different distributions in general. Thus, there may be a position where only the latter group of particles can appear. I leave this issue open in this paper.
(2016) argue that *tte* is a complementizer with the feature [QUOTE]. They suggest that the complementizer use of *tte*, like (2), repeated below, involves a feature movement of [QUOTE] to the matrix verb, as illustrated in (25).

(24) John-wa Mary-ga kawaii tte i-tta/omo-tta.
    John-TOP Mary-NOM cute TTE say-PST/think-PST
    ‘John said/thought that Mary is cute.’

(25) \[[CP \ldots tte\text{\textsc{quote}}] V_{\text{quote}}\]

(Hirose and Nawata 2016: 12)

Hirose and Nawata (2016) treat the feature movement in question as head movement (see e.g. Bošković 1998). They suggest that the ungrammaticality of (17a) and (17b), where the particle *mo* or *wa* appears between *tte* and the matrix verb, is due to an intervention effect (more specifically, a Relativized Minimality effect, Rizzi 1990), assuming that the particles in question are X\(^0\) categories.

(26) \[[CP \ldots tte\text{\textsc{quote}}] mo/wa V_{\text{quote}}\]

(Hirose and Nawata 2016: 14)

Regarding *tte* in complex NPs observed in (20a)/(20b), they argue that there is a semantically and phonologically null verb selecting the CP headed by *tte*, as in (27).

(27) \[[NP [VP [CP \ldots tte\text{\textsc{quote}}]] \emptyset V_{\text{quote}}] N]\]

(Hirose and Nawata 2016: 16)

The structure in (27) corresponds to complex NPs like (28), i.e. ones with *tte* but without *iw*.

(28) Mary-ga kawaii tte uwasu (= (20b) with *tte*)
    Mary-NOM cute TTE rumor
    ‘the rumor that Mary is cute’

They also propose that the null verb in question can be phonated as *iw*, as a result of the movement of [QUOTE].

(29) a. \[[NP [VP [CP \ldots tte\text{\textsc{quote}}]] \emptyset V_{\text{quote}}] N]\] phonation of [QUOTE] →

b. \[[NP [VP [CP \ldots tte] iw] N]\]

(Hirose and Nawata 2016: 16)

The derivation in (29) results in the complex NP with *tte-*iw, like (30).

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4 To be more precise, Hirose and Nawata (2016) argue that the category of *tte* can be D or P, as well as C. But the use of *tte* as D/P is irrelevant to the current discussion.

5 Hirose and Nawata (2016) transcribe *iw* as *yuu*. These are notational variants—the choice of *iw* in this paper does not affect the discussion here.
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While Hirose and Nawata’s (2016) analysis is insightful, it does face some issues. They argue that the [QUOTE] feature on *tte* is “a “matrix” feature that enables embedding, rather than being embedded, [...] the V-feature [QUOTE] “clashes” with the [matrix verb] in regard to the embedding function” (p. 12). As a resolution to this “clash”, they argue for the [QUOTE] movement in (25) above. However, it is not clear what exactly the role of the “matrix” feature is. Also, they suggest that the [QUOTE] feature on *tte* comes from the etymology, i.e. the speech verb *iw*. However, they do not assume the [QUOTE] feature on verbs of saying or thinking, which makes the assignment of [QUOTE] look arbitrary.

Furthermore, when the phonation process in (29) is applicable to a null element is not entirely clear; while they suggest the phonation in (29), they also admit a case where it does not apply (Hirose and Nawata 2016: 18). Hirose and Nawata suggest that whether the phonation applies or not depends on the presence of the null V, but they also assume a null category $\emptyset _{\text{Pres}}$ (a functional category for the illocutionary force of presentation), which selects a phrase headed by *tte*, just like the null V. Thus, whether the phonation is applicable depends on which of the null V or $\emptyset _{\text{Pres}}$ is present in the structure. However, it is unclear how to distinguish the null V and $\emptyset _{\text{Pres}}$ independently from whether *iw* can appear in a relevant position, i.e. whether the phonation in their sense can apply or not. It is fair to mention that Hirose and Nawata note that sentences involving the null V “sounds less “presentational” than those with $\emptyset _{\text{Pres}}$ (footnote 21 in Hirose and Nawata 2016), but no clear way to distinguish the null V and $\emptyset _{\text{Pres}}$ is discussed. It should also be pointed out that the feature movement of [QUOTE] in Hirose and Nawata departs from the standard conception of feature movement, where feature movement takes place only in LF (Chomsky 1995). If feature movement only occurs in LF, however, it would not affect the pronunciation, unlike the mechanism of the phonation rule in (29).

To conclude this section, I have argued that the complementizer-like element *tte* is not merely a complementizer. I have suggested that it involves a compound verb. The first member of this compound verb is *iw* ‘say’ and the second member is a verb of saying or thinking. I have also argued for a reduction process of the complementizer *to* plus *iw* into *tte*, reflecting the etymology of *tte*. The proposed analysis enables us to analyze *tte* as a well-attested pattern of grammaticalization; *tte* is in the process of the grammaticalization of a speech verb resulting from serial verb constructions. I have demonstrated that the proposed analysis of *tte* can capture the difference between *tte* and the complementizer *to* we have observed in Section 2. I have also discussed an alternative analysis and some issues it faces.

5. Conclusion and Remaining Issues

In this paper, I have investigated the complementizer-like particle *tte* in Japanese. I have shown that, while *tte* appears to work as a complementizer, *tte* and the unmarked complementizer *to* show distributional differences. Based on the etymology of *tte* (it has developed from the combination of the speech verb *iw* ‘say’ and the complementizer *to*) and the cross-linguistic observation that grammaticalization of speech verbs is robustly found in languages with serial verb constructions, I have suggested that *tte* involves a compound verb structure consisting of the speech verb *iw* ‘say’ and a verb of saying or thinking, and this compound verb takes a clausal complement. I have shown that the proposed analysis enables us to capture differences between *tte* and *to*. Moreover, it enables us to analyze *tte* as a cross-linguistically common pattern of grammaticalization; *tte* is in the process of the grammaticalization of a speech verb resulting from serial/compound verb constructions.

In this paper, I have suggested that the complementizer-like *tte* involves the compound verb ‘say’+$V_{\text{say/think}}$. It is worth noting in this respect that a similar serial/compound verb structure to this compound verb has been independently proposed for regular clausal and quotative complementation by verbs (e.g. Grimshaw 2015, see also Shimamura 2022 for Japanese). Thus, under this type of approach, abstracting away details, the (light) verb ‘say’, which is a silent component of a wide range of communicative predicates, is involved in e.g. the clausal complementation by the verb *scream*, as shown in (31).
(31) a. John screamed that Mary left.
   b. John screamed [say that Mary left].

The “say”+-V\_communicative structure is strikingly similar to the compound verb structure (32) in I argued is involved in \textit{tte} in this paper. Thus, possibly, the proposed compound verb structure is more generally available in Japanese and clausal complementation in general may involve the structure like (32).

\[(32) \text{[[Subject [cp ... to] } \text{iw-V\_say/think} \text{T]} \text{C]} \]

I hypothesized that the reduction of \textit{to} and \textit{iw} into \textit{tte} is obligatory with the relevant compound verb but optional in other environments (Section 4). However, if the structure in (32) is generally available, it opens up the possibility that the reduction in question is always optional. When the reduction applies, we obtain the apparent complementizer \textit{tte}, as I have argued. What happens then when the reduction does not apply? Following Grimshaw (2015), it may be that the first member ‘say’ is phonologically null as a light verb (see also Shimamura 2018, Saito 2020 for suggestions that Japanese has a null speech verb). We then obtain the complementation with \textit{to}, which is the most typical clausal complementation in Japanese.

References


