

On Japanese verbs of finding and catching

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The Japanese intransitive verbs of finding and catching (*mitukeru* ‘be found’ and *tukameru* ‘be caught’) have the peculiar property that they allow an agent to be realized, marked with the oblique *ni*. Accordingly, the sentences with these intransitive verbs can have passive-like forms, which are generally not available for intransitive verbs. In this presentation, I argue that the passive-like forms can be constructed from these verbs, because their goal argument is interpreted as an agent by virtue of identifying the agent with the goal semantically. Evidence for this claim may be derived from the fact that the *ni*-marked agent displays semantic properties characteristic of goal arguments. It is also shown that the intransitive verb *mitukeru* ‘be found’ can be transitivized by virtue of possessor alternation, and that there are cases where a causer rather than an agent enters into the semantic identification with a goal.