

**Plotting Poetry 2025**

# **Transforming Poetic Thought into Waka:**

## **How to Pack the Skeleton into a 31-Syllable Closet**

- Bor Hodošček, [The University of Osaka](#)
- Hilofumi Yamamoto, [Institute of Science Tokyo](#)

thought2waka

# Project Goals

- Reverse-engineer modern interpretations into waka
- Identify compression patterns for poetic thought
- Explore constraints and expression in 31-mora form

## Poetic Rules may include:

- Omission of grammatical elements
- Inversion of word order
- Symbolic substitution
- Nominalization
- Manipulation of ambiguity
- Compression of meaning
- Expansion of meaning
- Reinterpretation of context
- ...

# Methodology

## Materials

- Kokinshu: a collection of 1000 waka poems
- Modern Japanese translations
- Parallel corpus of waka and modern Japanese translations
- Contemporary paraphrases

# Computer programmes

- Align waka with contemporary paraphrases
- Use phrase gloss and structured data
- Analyze rule types and transformation limits

# Challenges

- Literal vs. interpretive gaps
- Compression loss in reverse mapping
- Ambiguity in source expressions

# Toward a Model

- Create typology of transformation rules
- Visualize linguistic constraints
- Evaluate poetic fidelity and transformation cost

# Methods

- Using a parallel corpus of waka and modern Japanese translations
- Align waka with contemporary paraphrases
- Use phrase gloss and structured data
- Analyze rule types and transformation limits
- Identify compression patterns for poetic thought



# Results

- Identify and classify poetic strategies
- Analyze how poetic thought is transfigured
- Uncover underlying rules (overt and covert)
- Explore the implications of compression
- Simulate the transformation process:

# Discussion

- Explore poetic compression in modern Japanese
- Analyze constraints in poetic expression
- Discuss implications for translation and interpretation
- Consider cultural and linguistic factors

# Conclusion

- Waka as a lens for poetic thought
- Compression as a creative constraint
- Future research directions
- Implications for translation studies

## Conclusion

- Content of the work is impressive
- Author's skill is impressive as well