Plotting Poetry 2025

Transforming Poetic Thought into Waka:

How to Pack the Skeleton into a 31-Syllable Closet

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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 substitutionk
- Nominalization
- Manipulation of ambiguity
- Compression of meaning
- Expansion of meaning
- Reinterpretation of context

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Methodology

- 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