Translating Ise Monogatari through the Lens of Process Grammar Model
A Bilingual and Structured Approach to Classical Japanese Narratives

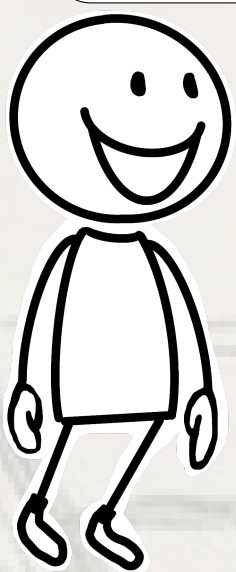## Hilofumi Yamamoto[1]   Bor Hodošček[2]   Xudong Chen[1]

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Introduction

- Ise Monogatari: A classic of Japanese literature established in CA. 10th century, Heian period.
- Process Grammar Model: A framework for understanding narrative structures
- Bilingual approach: Bridging classical Japanese and modern English

in JSON format

Ariwara no Narihira

63 dan, ID 6, Tsukumogami

```
"date": [20240721, 20250214, 20250508],
"id": 6,
"text": "狩しありきけるにいきあひて、道にて馬の口をとりて、「かうかうなむ思ふ」といひければ、あはれがりて、来て寝にけり。 ",
"kana (roman)": "karishi ari kikeru ni ikiahite, michi nite uma no kuchi wo torite, 'kaukau namu omofu' to ihikereba, aharegarite, kite ne nikeri",
"koutei": "...",
"honkoku": "...",
"translation-ja": "狩りをして歩いているときに出会って、道で馬の口をつかんで、「こうこうと思っています」と言ったので、同情して、来て寝た。 ",
"translation-en": "While out hunting, he encountered [him], and on the road took hold of the horse's bridle, saying, 'This is what I think.' Feeling moved, [he
    ] came and lay down [with her].",
"phrase-gloss": [
... (omitted for brevity and bravery) ...
{
    "phrase": "道にて馬の口をとりて ",
    "gloss": "on the road took hold of the horse's bridle",
    "words": [
        { "word": "道 ", "gloss": "road" },
        { "word": "にて ", "gloss": "LOC.CVB" },
        { "word": "馬 ", "gloss": "horse" },
        { "word": "の ", "gloss": "GEN" },
        { "word": "口 ", "gloss": "mouth / bridle" },
        { "word": "を ", "gloss": "ACC" },
        { "word": "とり ", "gloss": "take" },
        { "word": "て ", "gloss": "CVB" }
    ]
},
{
    "phrase": " 「かうかうなむ思ふ」といひければ ",
    "gloss": "saying, 'This is what I think'",
    "words": [
        { "word": "かうかう ", "gloss": "thus and thus" },
        { "word": "なむ ", "gloss": "FOC" },
        { "word": "思ふ ", "gloss": "think" },
        { "word": "と ", "gloss": "QUOT" },
        { "word": "いひ ", "gloss": "say" },
        { "word": "けれ ", "gloss": "PST" },
        { "word": "ば ", "gloss": "when" }
    ]
}
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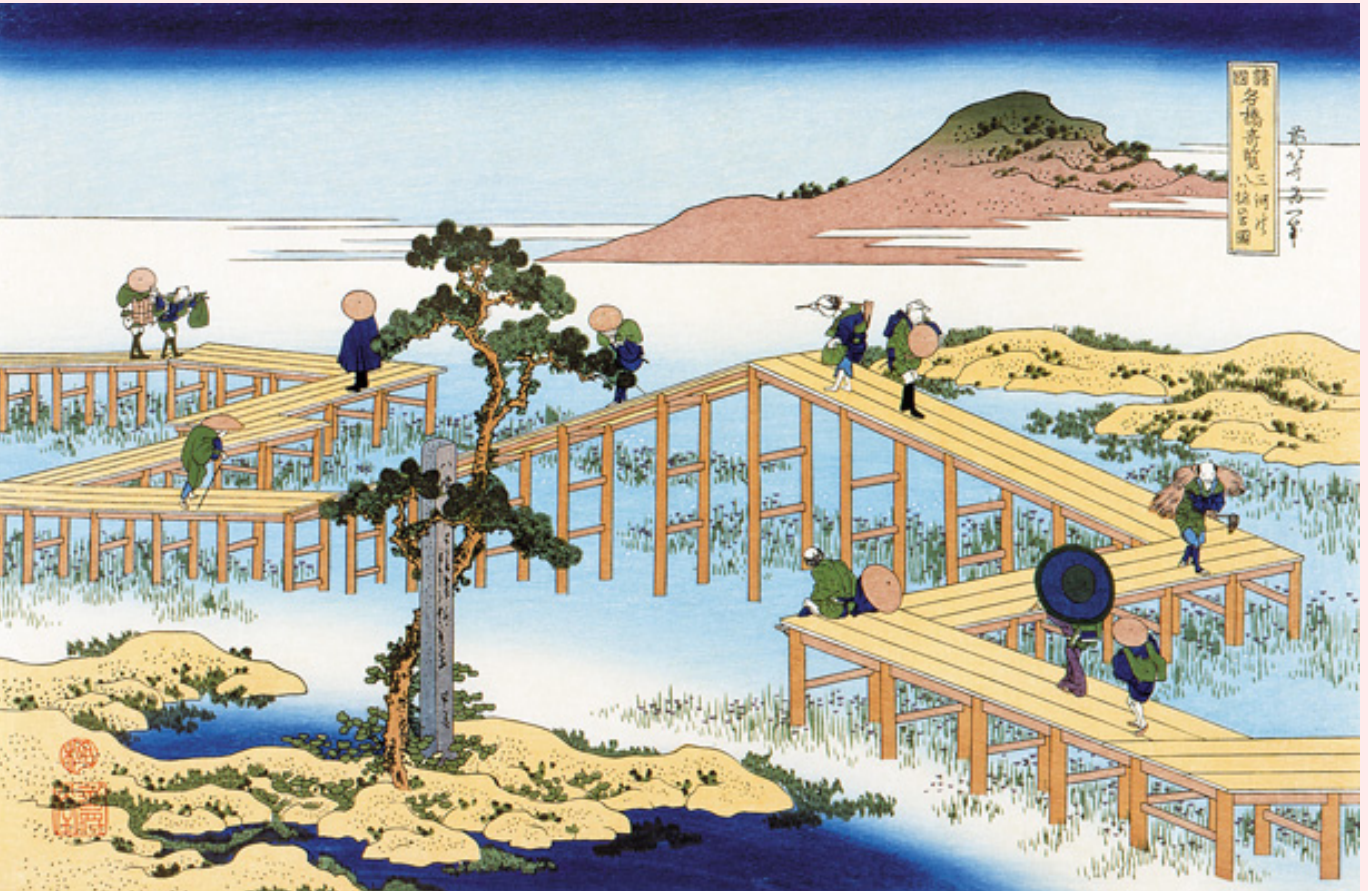
Phrase-gloss is intended to help understand the meaning and grammatical function of the original text.

Uma no kami ("Master of Horses") is actually Narihira himself.

Who took it?

Thus and thus..., what?

Yatsuhashi (Eight Bridges) is also connected to the present-day Kyoto confection "Yatsuhashi." Mainichi Art Publishing Co., Ltd., Public Domain / Mikawa no Yatsuhashi no Kozu (Ancient Map of Eight Bridges in Mikawa) by Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849)

Thought   A

31-syllable-poem

Imagination

G

F

D   E
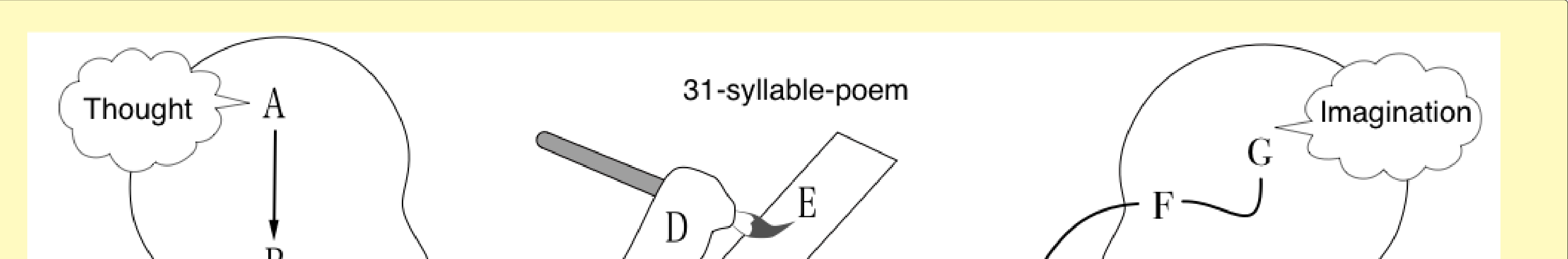
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    },
    {
      "phrase": "あはれがりて、来て寝にけり ",
      "gloss": "being moved, she came and lay with him",
      "words": [
        { "word": "あはれがり ", "gloss": "be.moved" },
        { "word": "て ", "gloss": "CONJ" },
        { "word": "来 ", "gloss": "come" },
        { "word": "て ", "gloss": "CONJ" },
        { "word": "寝 ", "gloss": "sleep " },
        { "word": "に ", "gloss": "PERF" },
        { "word": "けり ", "gloss": "PST" }
      ]
    @*)}
  ],
  "abbreviations": {
    "CONJ": "conjunctive",
    "PST": "past",
    "LOC": "locative",
    "GEN": "genitive",
    "ACC": "accusative",
    "FOC": "focus",
    "QUOT": "quotative",
    "PERF": "perfective"
  },
  "translation-ja-natural": "男が狩りに出かけていたとき、道で出会った三男が馬の口をつかみ、「こんなふうに思っています」と伝えた。
    男はそれを聞いて心を動かされ、ある女のもとへ行き、一夜を共にした。 ",
  "translation-en-natural": "While the man was out hunting, he met a young man on the road who took hold of his 'horses bridle and said, 'This is how I feel.'
    Moved by those words, the man went to a certain woman and spent the night with her.",
  "notes-ja": [....],
  "notes-en": [
    {
        "title": "The narrator and the 'man'",
        "note": "In the Ise Monogatari, the narrator refers to himself in the third person as 'the man.' This self-distancing technique allows the text to
          feel autobiographical while maintaining a poetic and narrative detachment. In this passage, the -narratorpresumed to be -Narihirais recounting his
          own experience in such terms."
    },
```

Sleep? With whom?

Gloss? LGR?

In the story, waka plays an important role. Waka is often used as a means to express the emotions and thoughts of the characters. Waka is sometimes placed to reflect the characters' feelings in line with the progression of the story. In a way, it is like a MUSICAL.

Compress with simple and basic words

symbolic skeleton in Waka closet?

Read and explore broader meaning of poetic world

The abstract of Tsukumogami Ise 63 dan ("a white-haired woman, nearly a hundred years old") A woman longing for kindness tells a false dream to three children, hoping to express her hidden feelings. Only one child, likely the youngest, responds warmly, bringing her joy. Meanwhile, a man meets a youth who declares his emotions boldly, inspiring the man to visit a woman and stay the night. When he doesn't return, she secretly visits his home, where he glimpses her aged form and wonders if she truly loves him. Touched, he later watches her silently grieving. Feeling pity, he sleeps beside her. Though the world loves selectively, this man shows compassion regardless of love returned or not.

Do not translate TOO MUCH!

If it is necessary, interpretation can be written in notes-ja/en.

Zenodo Tale of Ise

https://github.com/ yamagen/ise-translation

https://github.com/ yamagen/JADH2025-poster

Conclusion

- Created a complete bilingual literal and natural translation of all 125 sections of Ise Monogatari.
- Using the Process Grammar Model, we segmented the literal translation into phrases and added gloss to each phrase.
- On that basis, we combined phrases into a natural modern Japanese or English translation, considering the relationships between phrases.

References

- Yamamoto, H. (2025). Process Grammar Model (v1.0.11). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15613134 DOI 10.5281/zenodo.15613134
- Yamamoto, H. (2024). The Tales of Ise, Contemporary Japanese and English translation dataset (v1.0.1) [Data set]. Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13994483 DOI 10.5281/zenodo.13994483

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