

A Corpus Analysis of Japanese Mimetic Parts of Speech

▶ Joshua Caldwell – Brigham Young University



Ideophones, Mimetics & Onomatopoeia

- ▶ **Various definitions – often conflicting & overlapping**
 - ▶ Onomatopoeia - any word that imitates real sounds (Inose 2007, 98)
 - ▶ “Onomatopoetic words refer in one way or another to the senses” (Edstrom 1989, 37)
 - ▶ “Mimetic means the imitation of sounds or the depiction of situations or human feelings by the form of words” (Yamaguchi 2007, 63)
 - ▶ Ideophones - “words or phrases that do the work of representation by phonetic means” (Tedlock 1999, 118)
 - ▶ Ideophones – mimetic adverbs (Hirose 1981, 1)

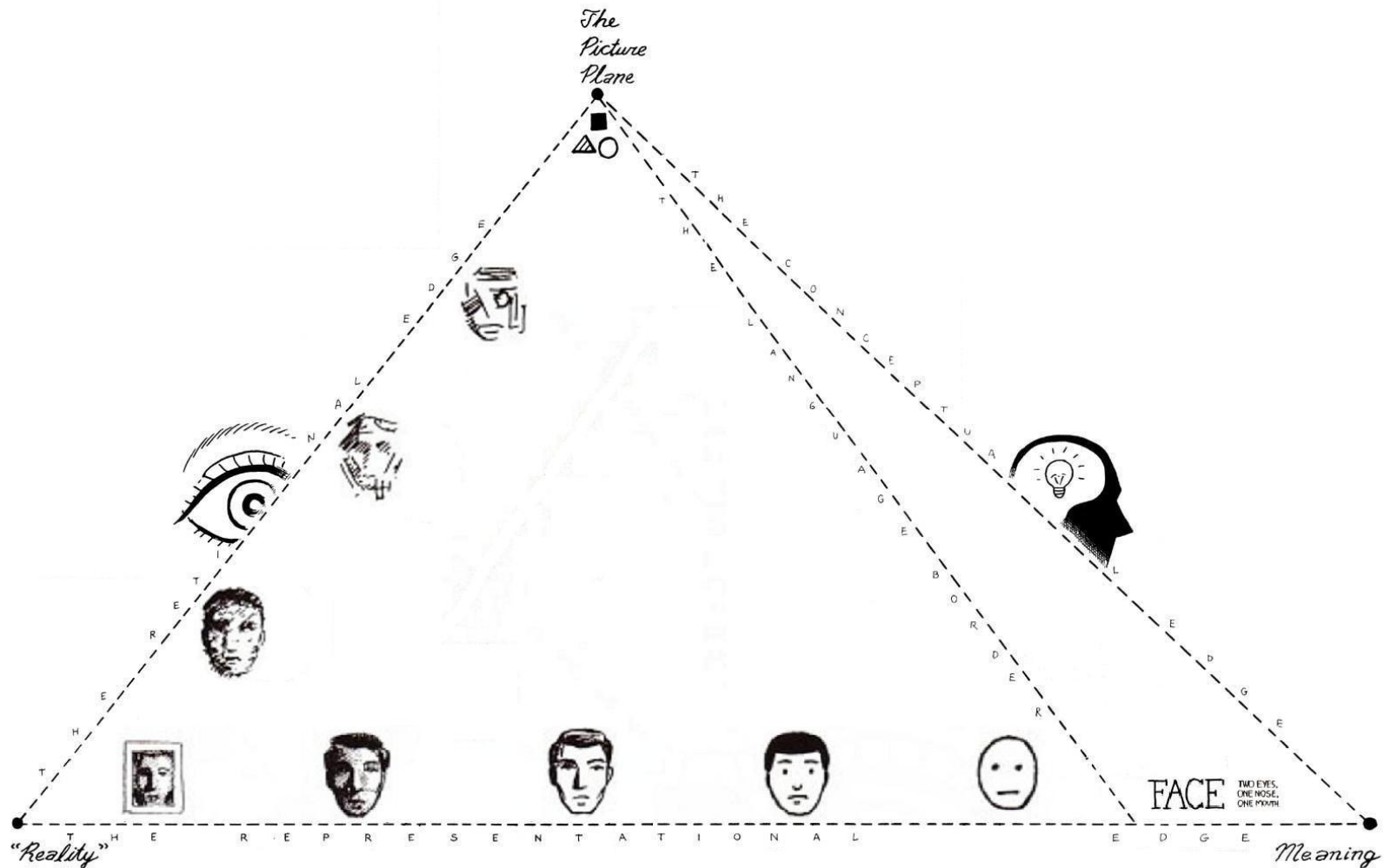


Sound Symbolism

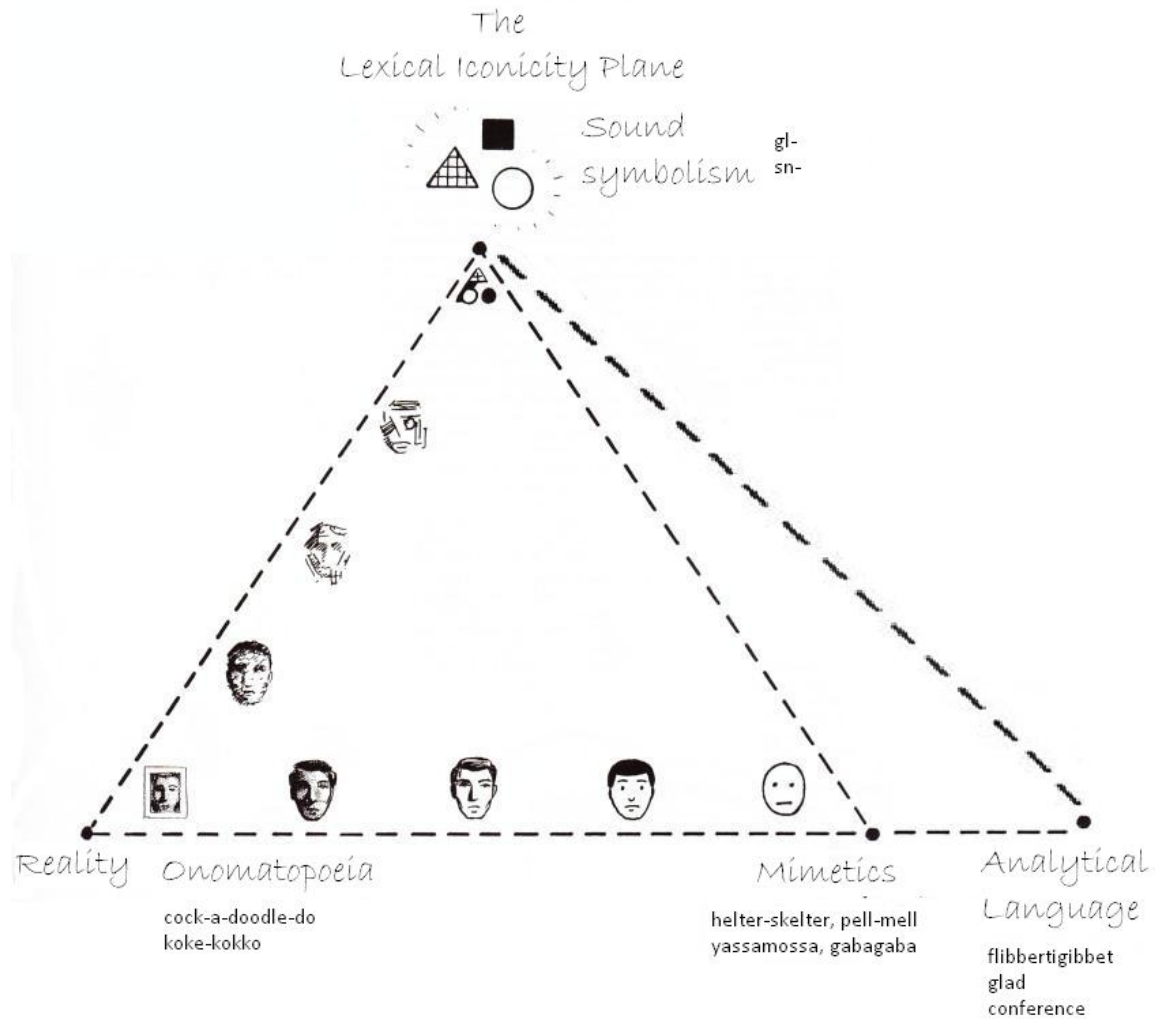
- ▶ In onomatopoeia, sound is imitated whereas in sound symbolism a connotation is attached to a phoneme or a string of phonemes without any obvious imitation, or various non-acoustic features are symbolized by acoustic means. Thus, imitation is not symbolic and symbolism is not mimicry. (Marttala 2009, 49)
- ▶ “Most [Japanese] mimetic words are sound symbolic rather than onomatopoetic” (Hamano 1998, 2)



Visual & Lexical Iconicity



Visual & Lexical Iconicity



Ideophones, Mimetics & Onomatopoeia

	English	Japanese
Onomatopoeia	Cock-a-doodle-do	Koke-kokko
	Kerplunk	Dosun
	Whimper	Susuri-naku
Mimetics	Murmur	Butsu-butsu, sara-sara
	Shilly-shally	Hena-hena, funya-funya
	Helter-skelter	Atafuta, yassamossa



Japanese Mimetics

- ▶ Extremely productive and ubiquitous (Tsujimura 2005a, 146)
- ▶ “are indispensable for enriching colloquial as well as literary expression in both spoken and written Japanese” (Baba 2003, 1862)
- ▶ “used very frequently in all levels of Japanese – from conversation to the quality newspaper” (Inose 2007, 97)



Japanese Mimetics

- ▶ often considered “the most important part of any sentence and they greatly enhance its effectiveness” (Tsunoda 1978, 158)
- ▶ “when a mimetic is used, Japanese speakers have a more concrete idea of what ... is being referred to” (Sugiyama 2005, 302)



Japanese Mimetic Examples - haiku

- ▶ Mizu-makura
- ▶ Gabari to
- ▶ Samui umi ga aru
- ▶ Saito Sanki
- ▶ Haru no umi
- ▶ Hinemosu
- ▶ Notari notari kana
- ▶ Bosun
- ▶ A water pillow
- ▶ Puctured becomes
- ▶ A frozen sea
- ▶ The spring sea
- ▶ Gently rising and falling
- ▶ The whole day long



Japanese Mimetic examples - manga



- ▶ *Nanka hisabisa ni suka-to haku kara*
 - ▶ Since it's been so long since I've worn a skirt ...
- ▶ *Pakapaka shitenna*
 - ▶ It feels so airy/open.

Japanese Mimetic examples - manga

▶ *Masaki*



▶ *Saikin ikiiki shiten ne-!*

- ▶ You've been full of energy, recently, haven't you!



Japanese Mimetic examples - manga



- ▶ **Gosogoso**
 - ▶ Searching, rummaging
- ▶ **...Are**
 - ▶ ...What
- ▶ **Kyorokuro**
 - ▶ Look around, spin
- ▶ **Nee...**
 - ▶ It's gone.



Japanese Mimetics

- ▶ Considered a separate class of words in Japanese Lexicon.
Due to differences in
 - ▶ Morphology
 - ▶ Phonotactics
 - ▶ Syntax
- ▶ Around 1600-1700
- ▶ English has approximately 350
- ▶ Korean over 2000+



Common Japanese Mimetics forms

- ▶ $C_1V_1:(N)$
 - ▶ Kyuu
 - ▶ Shiin
- ▶ $C_1V_1C_2V_2ri$
 - ▶ Bikuri
 - ▶ Pitari
- ▶ $C_1V_1C_2V_2N$
 - ▶ Gatan
 - ▶ Dosan
- ▶ $C_1V_1C_2V_2C_1V_1C_2V_2$
 - ▶ Meso-meso
 - ▶ Hiya-hiya



Japanese Mimetics & Lexical Categories

- ▶ “[mimetic] words function essentially as adverbs” (Inose 2007, 98)
- ▶ “[are] more closely related to the Japanese culture than standard adverbs” (Yang 1984, 147).
- ▶ Typically used as adverbs
- ▶ Many used to form combined verbs
- ▶ Few are used as nouns (Kakehi, et al, 1996, xxi-xxii)



Japanese Mimetics & Lexical Categories

Part of Speech	Sample Sentence
Noun	<i>Kodomo-no seiseki-ga waruku iraira-ga tamatta</i> Since my child's grades have been bad, my irritation has accumulated.
Adverb	<i>Ano hito-wa itsumo iraira(-to) hanasu</i> That person always speaks in an irritated manner.
Verb	<i>Otto no kudaranai hanasi-ni iraira shita.</i> I got irritated by my husband's silly talk.

(Tsuji-mura 2005b, 374-375, Tsuji-mura 2005a, 144)



Corpora

▶ JpWaC

- ▶ <http://corpus.leeds.ac.uk/internet.html>
- ▶ 400 million words of Japanese web text

▶ Kotonoha

- ▶ http://www.kotonoha.gr.jp/cgi-bin/search_form.cgi
- ▶ 100+ million words from novels, magazines, newspapers, Yahoo! bulletin boards, Diet proceedings, etc
- ▶ Unfinished, new categories periodically added



Mimetic Sources

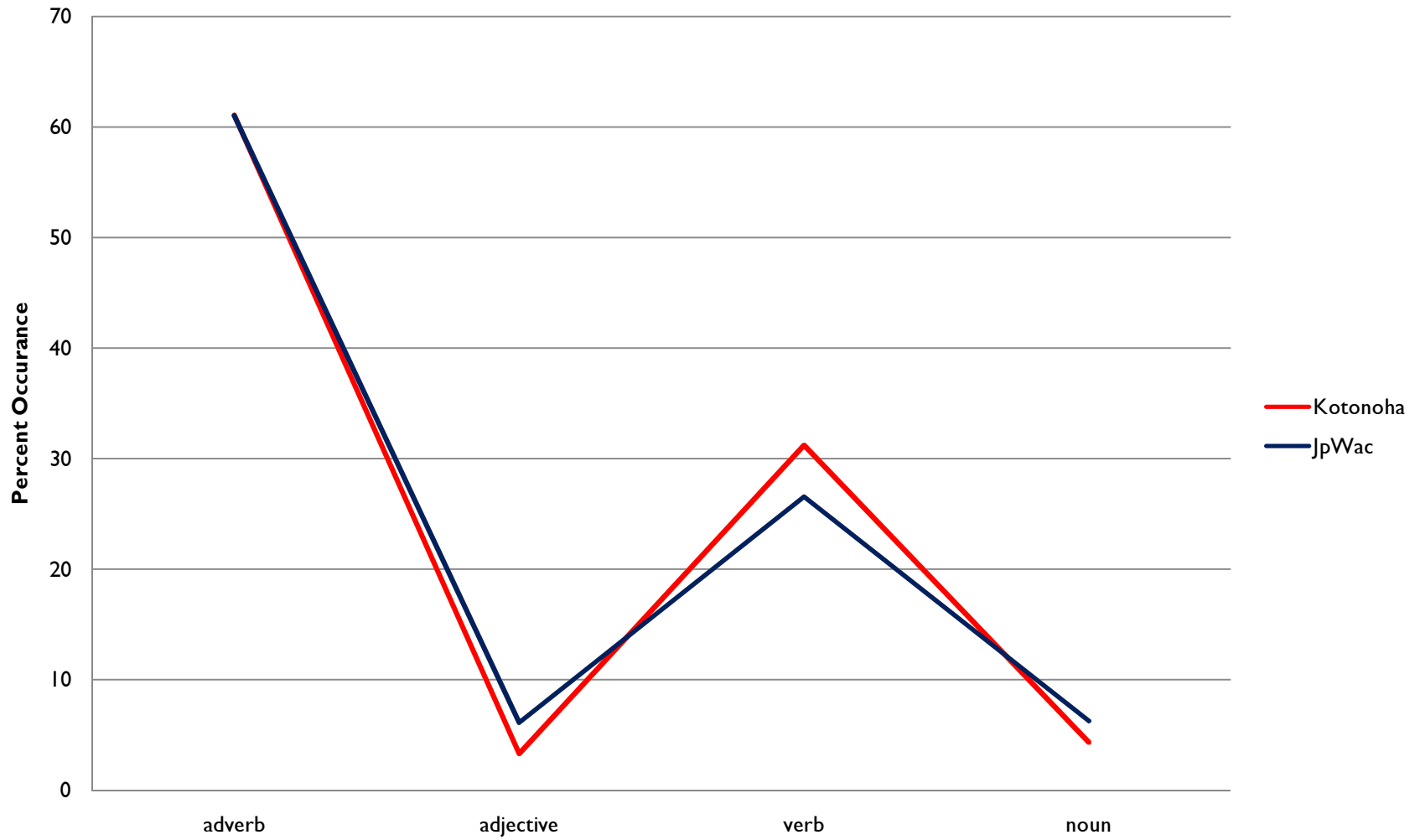
- ▶ *Usage Guide to Japanese Onomatopoeias* by Atoda & Hoshino. (1993)
 - ▶ About 1700 mimetics
- ▶ *Dictionary of Iconic Expressions in Japanese* by Kakehi, Tamori & Schourup.(1996)
 - ▶ About 1600 mimetics



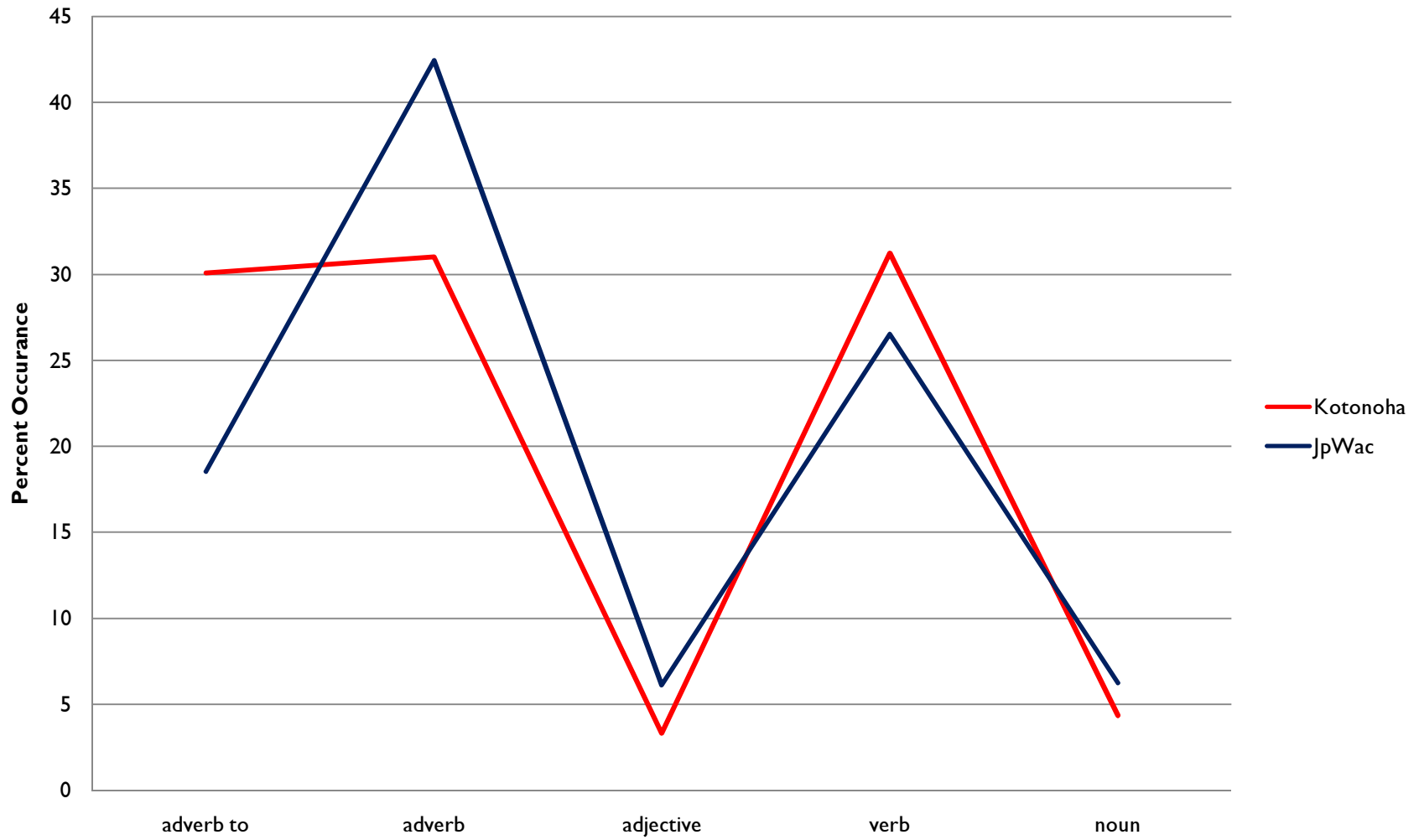
Results

mimetic	Kotonoha					JpWaC				
	adverb	adj	verb	noun	total	adverb	adj	verb	noun	total
bi'kuri	127	60	382	6	575	75	321	567	14	977
burabura	98	9	72	1	180	445	50	566	11	1072
noronoro	82	1	12	1	96	131	52	52	10	245
iraira	9	0	57	10	76	67	8	359	27	461
guchagucha	51	2	2	17	72	267	33	60	97	457
porori	24	0	1	0	25	49	17	44	24	134
fuufuu	16	0	3	1	20	15	0	17	1	33
pechanko	2	0	0	10	12	7	1	0	18	26
pechakucha	5	3	0	0	8	31	10	8	0	49
bura'	6	0	0	1	7	21	0	0	0	21
seisei	2	0	3	0	5	13	0	29	0	42
gubiri	4	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
gebogebo	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1

Results



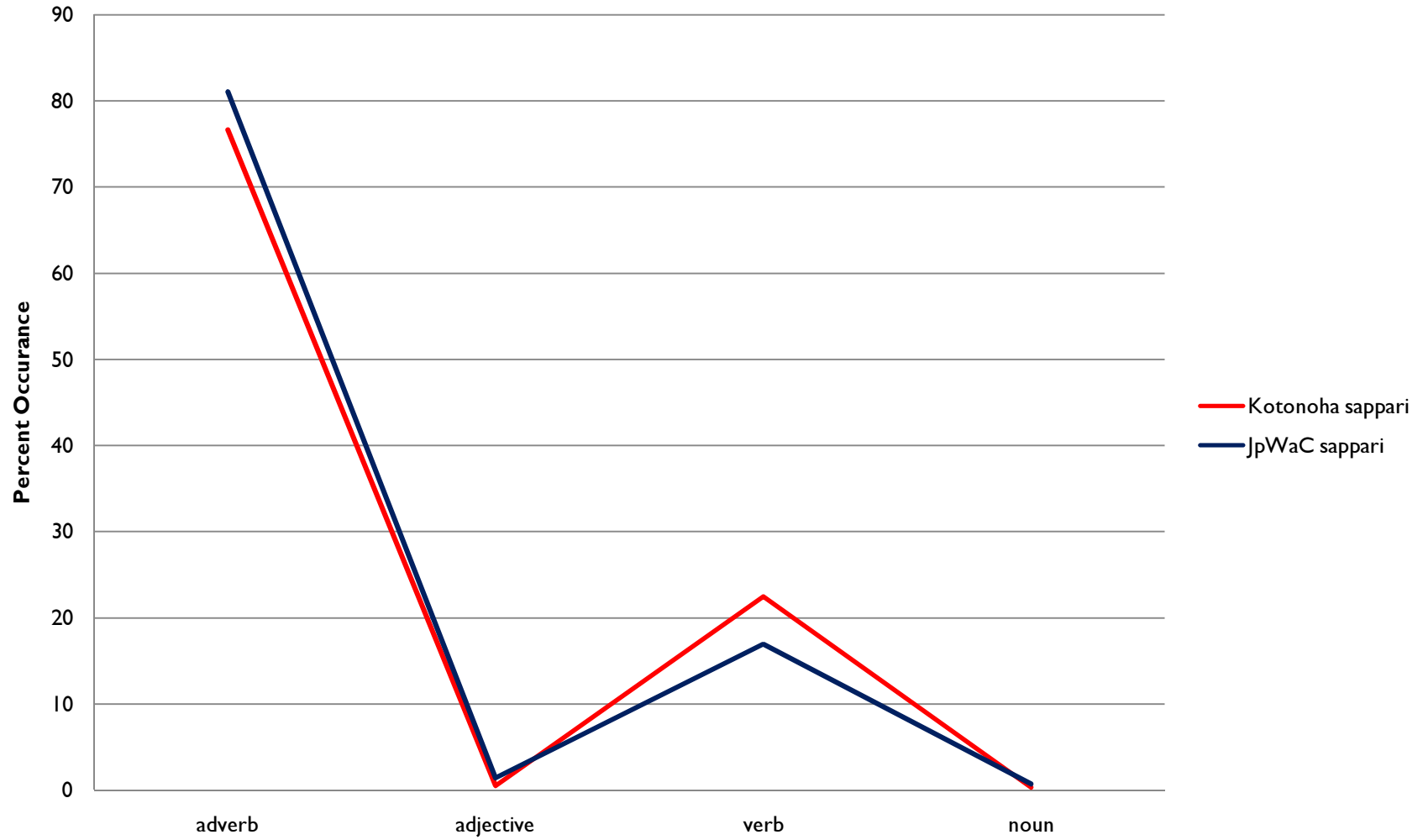
Results



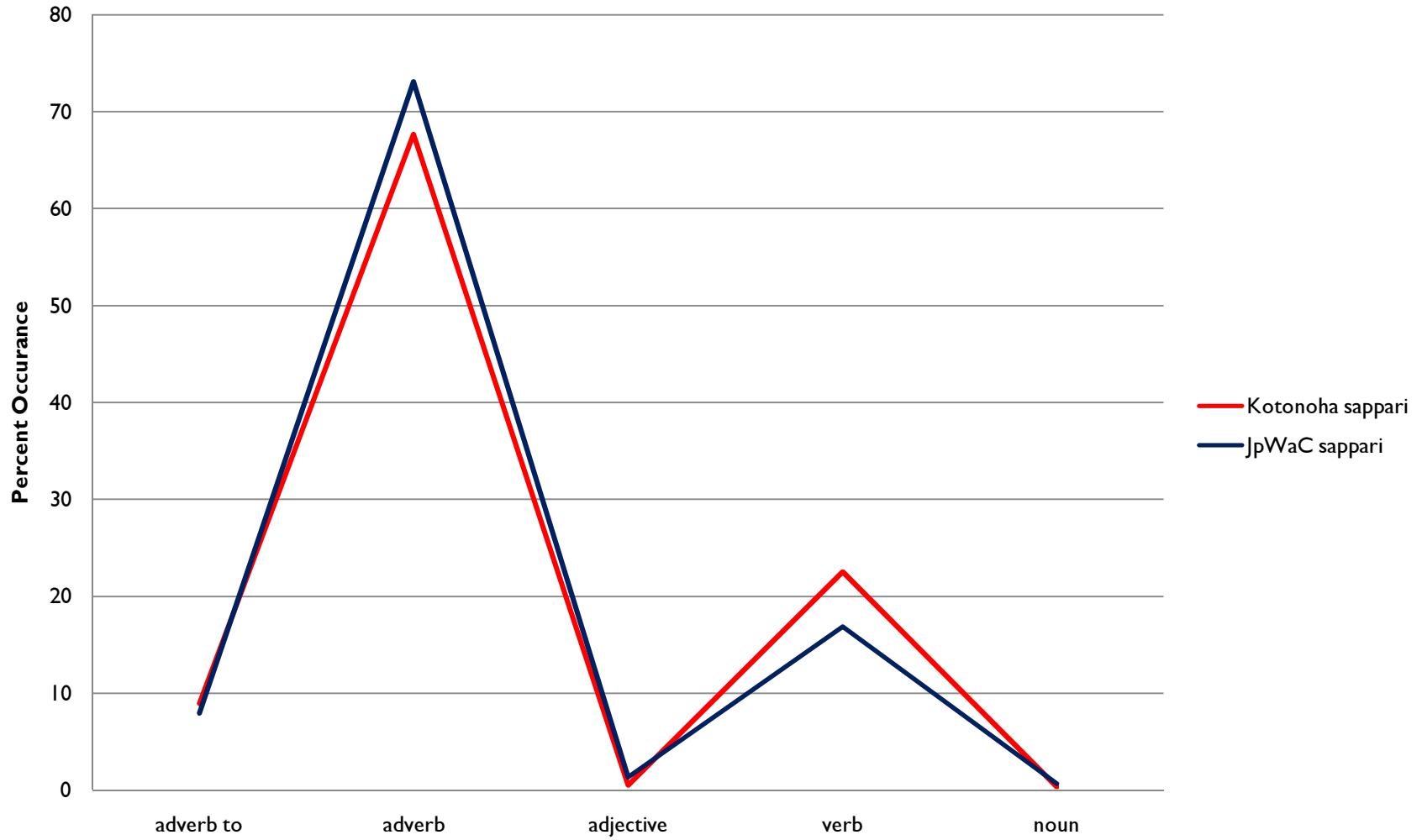
Results - reviewed

mimetic	Kotonoha						JpWaC					
	adv to	adv	adj	verb	noun	total	adv to	adv	adj	verb	noun	total
bi(')kuri	17	79	62	1432	17	1607	4	63	142	1037	30	1276
iraira	27	50	4	433	67	581	23	131	11	1011	159	1335
burabura	34	64	9	72	1	180	182	263	50	566	11	1072
noronoro	69	13	1	12	1	96	75	56	52	52	10	245
gucha- gucha	5	46	2	2	17	72	14	253	33	60	97	457
seisei	1	7	0	24	0	32	4	13	0	45	0	62
porori	21	3	0	1	0	25	37	12	17	44	24	134
fuufuu	4	14	0	6	1	25	7	17	1	32	3	60
pechanko	0	2	0	0	10	12	0	7	1	0	18	26
pechakuc ha	1	4	3	0	0	8	6	25	10	8	0	49
bura'	6	0	0	0	1	7	21	0	0	0	0	21
gubiri	4	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
gebogobo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1

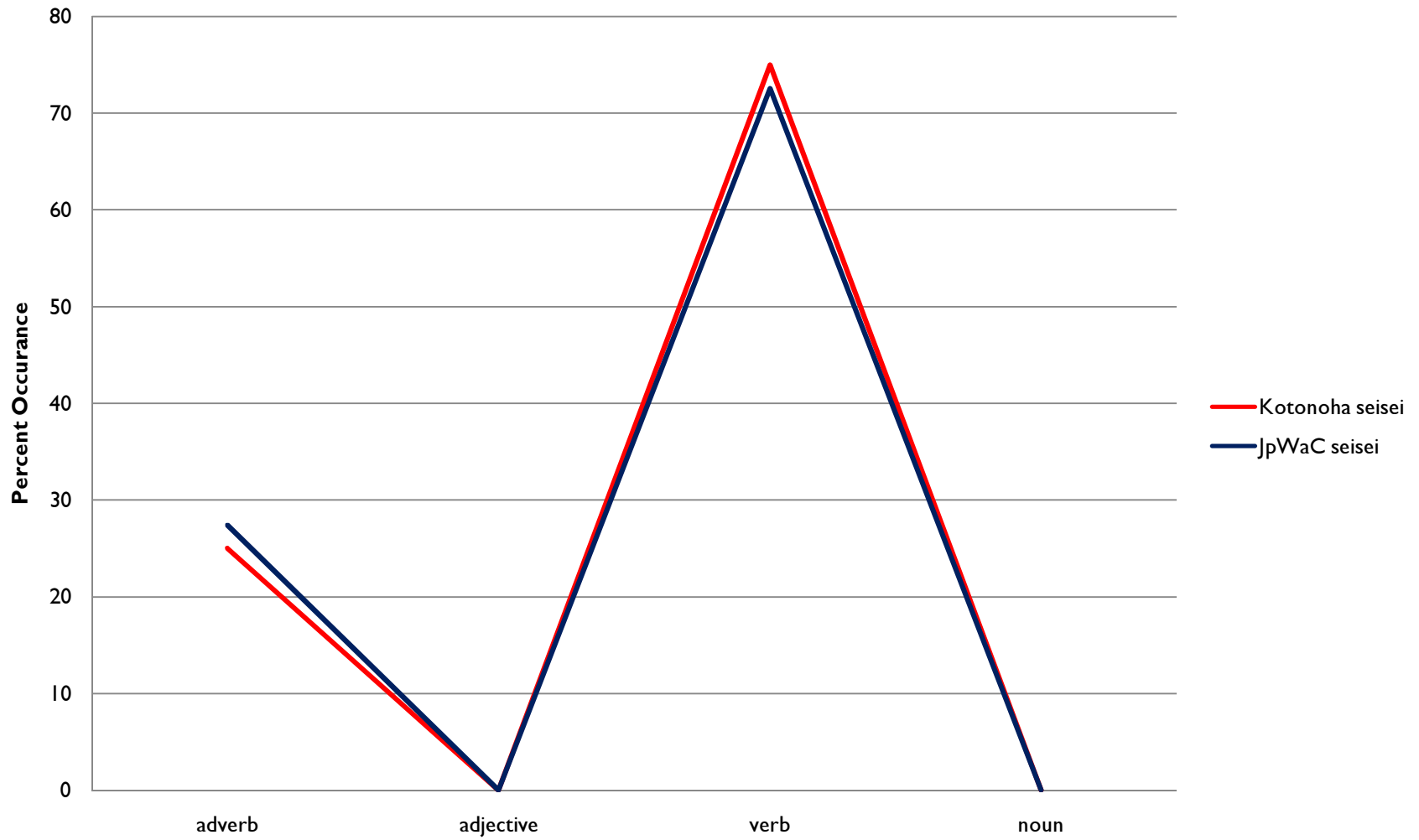
Results – sappari



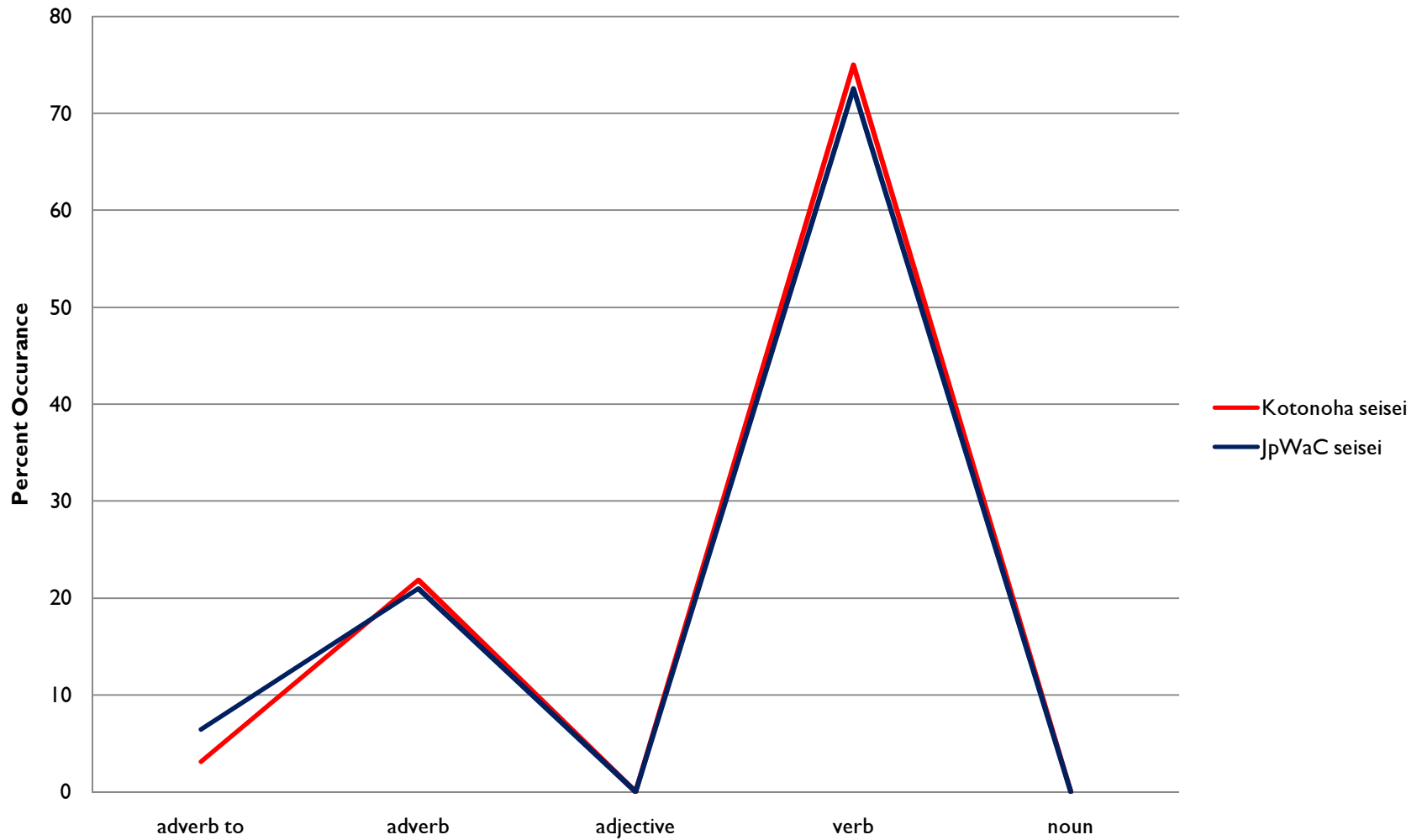
Results – sappari



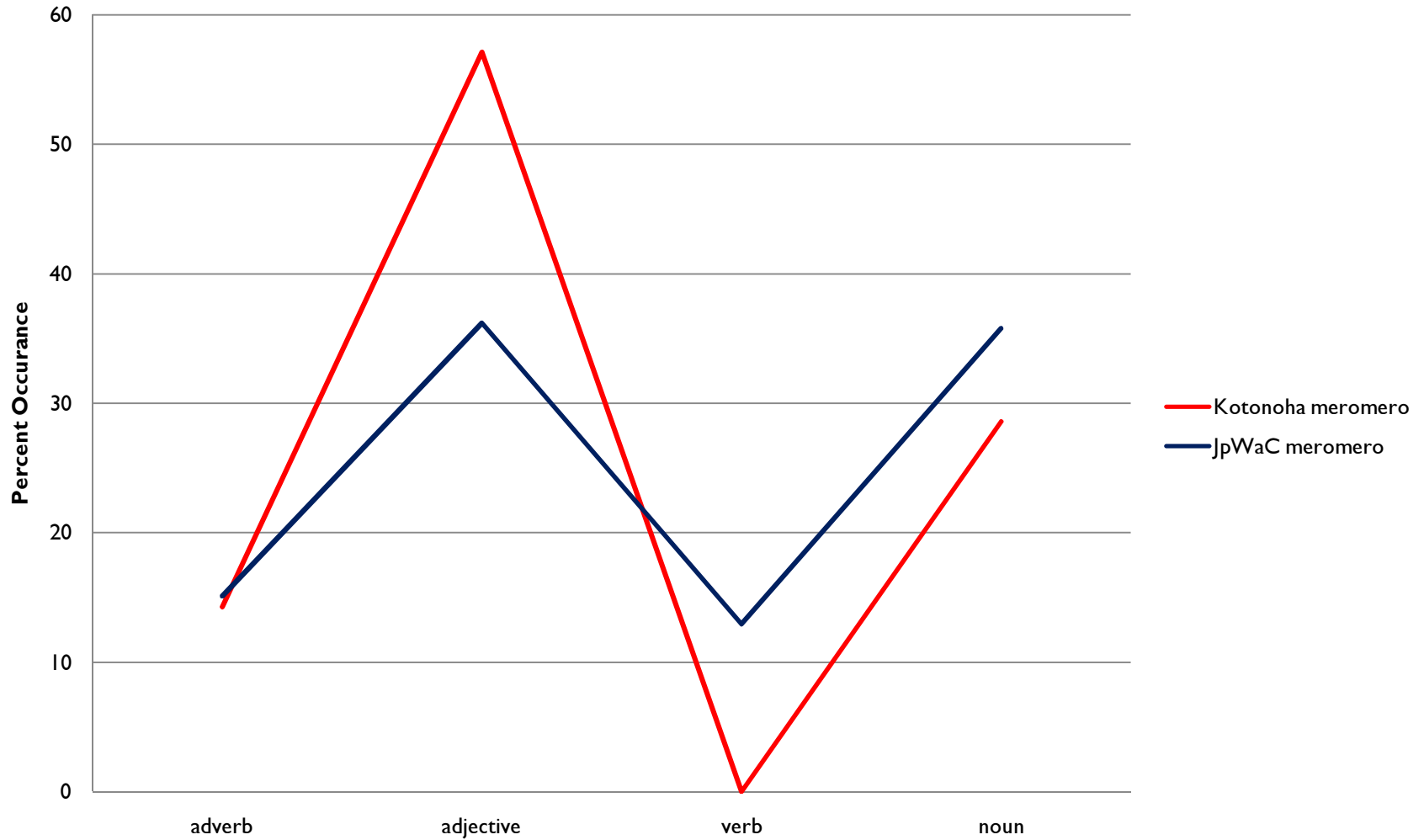
Results - seisei



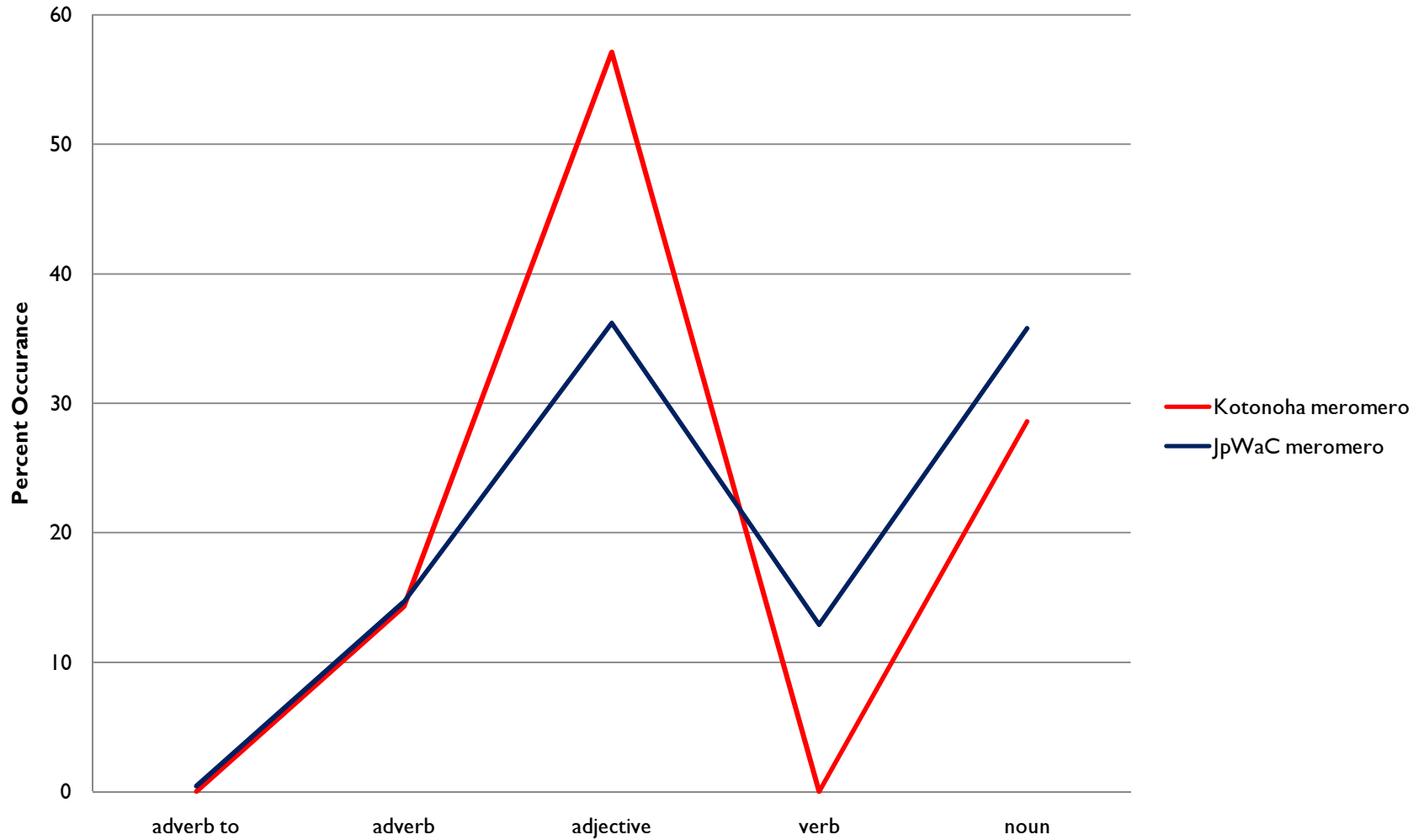
Results - seisei



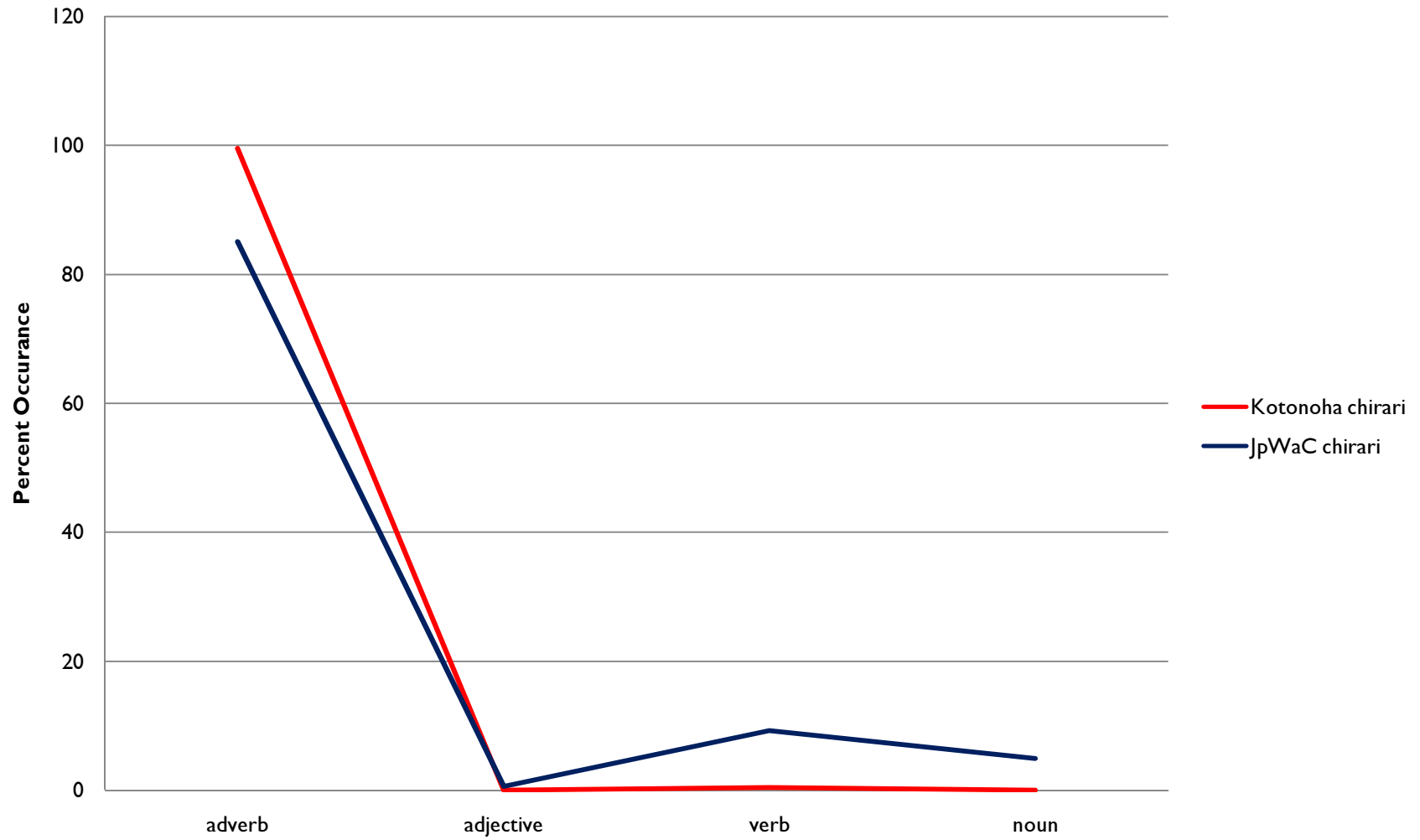
Results - meromero



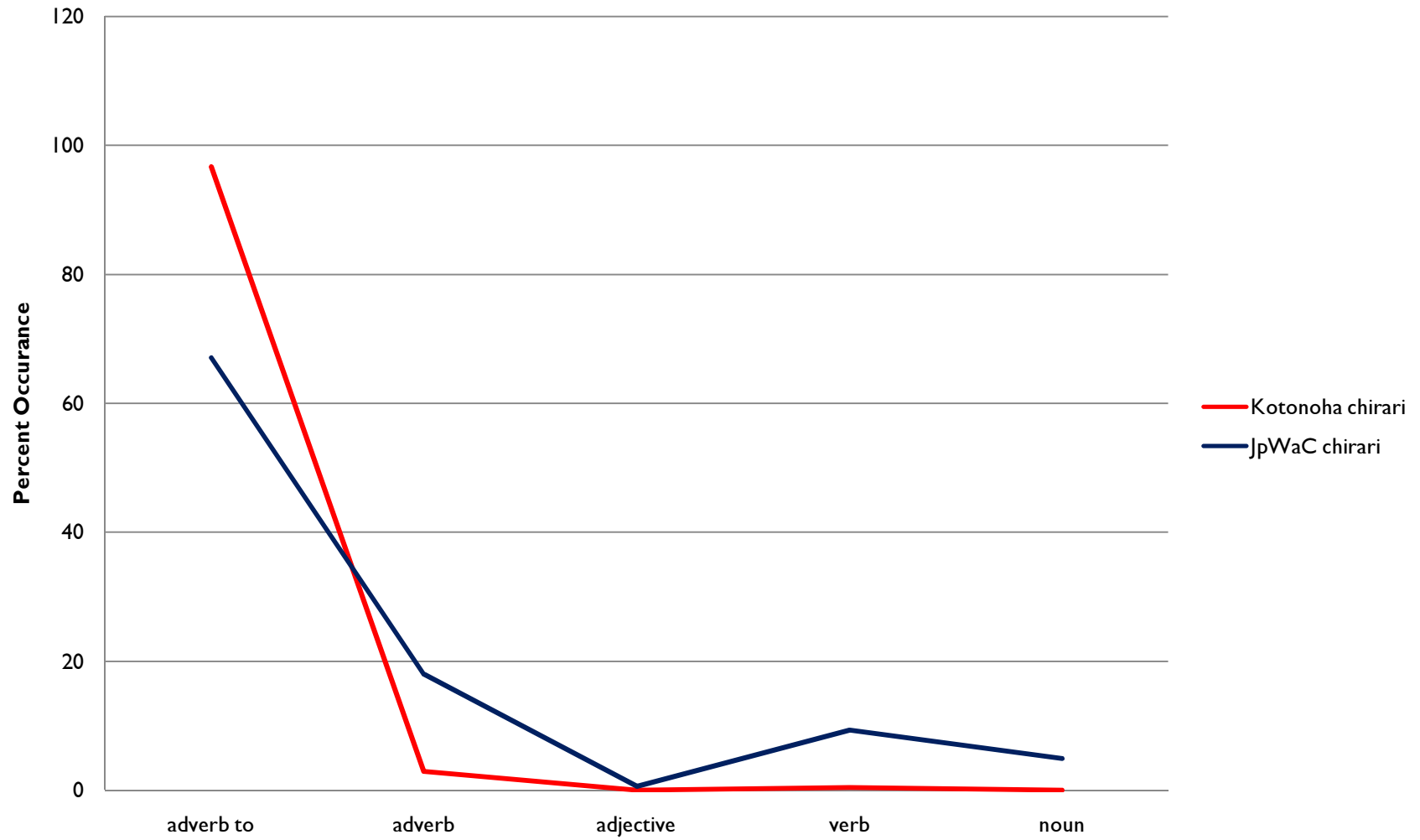
Results - meromero



Results – charari



Results – charari



Where from here

- ▶ Japanese teaching applications
- ▶ Semantic analysis
- ▶ Comparison with non-mimetic adverbs

