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Exploring the scope of nuclear subordination: The case of restructuring and syntactic compound verbs

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1. Introduction

The notion of “nuclear subordination” is one of the 12 juncture-nexus types proposed by Van Valin (2005), although its precise characterization has remained somewhat unstable in the literature. The aim of this paper is to delineate its scope through two specific goals: first, to reaffirm the original definition of nuclear subordination as proposed by Van Valin (1993) and Van Valin and LaPolla (1997) by establishing a principled distinction between nuclear subordination and “ad-nuclear subordination”; and second, to demonstrate its analytical utility in the typology of “syntactic compound verbs [SCVs]” in Japanese.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 examines purposive constructions in Japanese and argues that they can be analyzed as instances of ad-nuclear subordination and that nuclear and ad-nuclear subordination can be distinguished in terms of whether the dependent (or subordinate) nucleus is predicative or not. Section 3 emphasizes the importance of nuclear subordination (as well as “nuclear cosubordination”) in accounting for the structural-functional classification of SCVs. Section 4 concludes the paper.

Before turning to these issues, it is useful to review the status of nuclear subordination in “Role and Reference Grammar [RRG]” (Van Valin 1993, 2005; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997). Together with other types of clause linkage, nuclear subordination constitutes part of the typology of complex sentences. Van Valin (1993) characterizes nuclear subordination as involving two nuclei: a matrix nucleus with predicative function and a dependent nucleus lacking it, which modifies the former. The primary role of the dependent nucleus is to determine the aspectual value of the matrix one, and it is structurally subordinated to it. Van Valin (1993) and Van Valin and LaPolla (1997) identify 9 types of complex sentences, to which Van Valin (2005) adds the notions of “ad-nuclear”, “ad-core”, and “ad-clausal subordination”, in which a dependent nucleus, dependent core, and dependent clause, respectively, function adverbially.

However, the distinction between nuclear and ad-nuclear subordination is not always straightforward. For instance, Van Valin (2005: 196) analyzes the Lakhota verb meaning ‘stand’, when used as a continuative aspect marker, as a modifier of the matrix nucleus and treats it as an instance of ad-nuclear subordination. However, the same construction can also be analyzed as an instance of nuclear subordination, according to the two criteria proposed by Van Valin and LaPolla (1997: 506): the dependent nucleus lacks predicative function and carries aspectual meaning (see also Hasegawa 1996 for an application of these criteria to *te*-constructions in Japanese). Van Valin’s (2005) reanalysis gives the impression that examples previously interpreted as typical cases of nuclear subordination in Van Valin (1993: 114-115) and Van Valin and LaPolla (1997: 506) were reanalyzed as instances of ad-nuclear subordination. Since no clear example of nuclear subordination is cited in Van Valin (2005), this move seems to have blurred, if not effectively eliminated, the distinction between nuclear and ad-nuclear subordination, even though both continue to be distinguished in the “interclausal relations hierarchy”.

2. Distinction between nuclear and ad-nuclear subordination

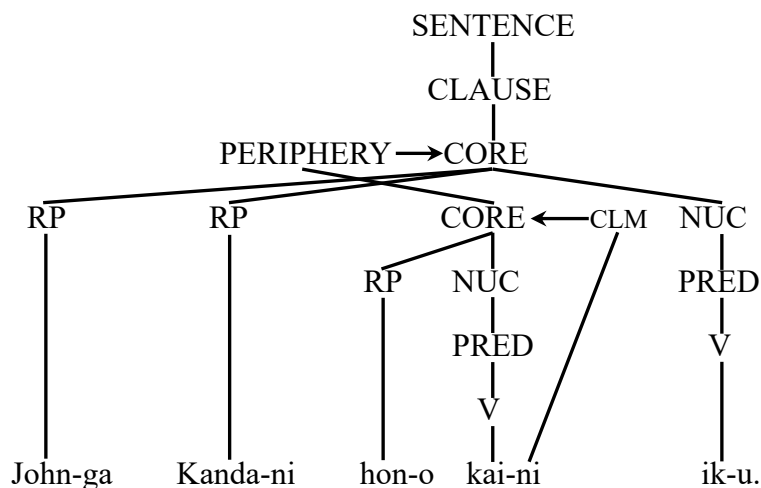
This section investigates Japanese purposive constructions illustrated by example (1), applying Miyagawa's (1987) diagnostics for monoclausality recast in RRG terms, and proposes a principled distinction between ad-nuclear subordination (illustrated by (1)) and nuclear subordination, with direct implications for the classification of SCVs.

- (1) *John-ga Kanda-ni hon-o kai-ni ik-u.*
 John-NOM Kanda-ALL book-ACC buy-PURP go-NPST
 'John goes to Kanda to buy a book.'

As demonstrated in Miyagawa (1987), (1) is syntactically ambiguous, depending on whether the purposive element *kai-ni* '(in order) to buy' combines first with the motion verb *ik-* 'go' or with the undergoer argument *hon-o* 'book'. The former interpretation combines the purposive element *kai-ni* with the motion verb to yield a complex predicate *kai-ni ik-* 'go to buy', which jointly selects an agent argument (e.g., *John-ga*), a goal argument (e.g., *Kanda-ni*), and a theme argument (e.g., *hon-o*). In contrast, the latter interpretation, shown in Figure 1 below, combines the purposive element *kai-ni* '(in order) to buy' with the undergoer argument *hon-o* to yield a purposive expression that serves as a modifier of the core and constitutes an instance of "ad-core subordination". The former and latter interpretations are shown in (2a,b), respectively.

- (2) **Restructuring predicate**
 a. *John-ga Kanda-ni hon-o [kai-ni ik]-u.*
 John-NOM Kanda-ALL book-ACC buy-PURP go-NPST
 'John goes to Kanda to buy a book.'
- Ad-core subordination**
 b. *John-ga Kanda-ni [hon-o kai-ni] ik-u.*
 John-NOM Kanda-ALL book-ACC buy-PURP go-NPST
 'John goes to Kanda in order to buy a book.'

Figure 1: Constituent structure of (2b) (ad-core subordination)



Miyagawa (1987) used a few diagnostics for monoclausality to distinguish these two interpretations. Although he couched these diagnostics within the generative framework, I will reinterpret two of them here in RRG terms. The first diagnostic involves the NPI

element *shika* ‘only,’ which requires a negative element within the same core. If *shika* can attach to either *Kanda-ni* or *hon-o* while the negative marker *nai* attaches to the motion verb *ik-*, then the construction can be diagnosed as monoclausal (given that the scope relation between *nai* and *shika* indicates that they belong to the same core).

- (3) a. *John-ga Kanda-ni-shika hon-o kai-ni ika-na-i.*
 John-NOM Kanda-ALL-only book-ACC buy-PURP go-NEG-NPST
 ‘John goes only to Kanda to buy a book.’
 b. *John-ga Kanda-ni hon-shika kai-ni ika-na-i.*
 John-NOM Kanda-ALL book-only buy-PURP go-NEG-NPST
 ‘John goes to Kanda to buy only a book.’

The second diagnostic involves the potential suffix *(rar)e-* ‘can’, which allows both nominative-accusative and dative/nominative-nominative case frames when it attaches to macrorole-transitive verbs, as illustrated by (4a,b).

- (4) a. *John-ga eigo-o hanas-e-ru.*
 John-NOM English-ACC speak-can-NPST
 b. *John-ni/ga eigo-ga hanas-e-ru.*
 John-DAT/NOM English-NOM speak-can-NPST
 ‘John can speak English.’

When the potential suffix *(rar)e-* attaches to the complex predicate *kai-ni ik-* ‘go to buy’ in (1), the undergoer argument *hon* can show up with either nominative or accusative case, as illustrated by (5).

- (5) *John-ga Kanda-ni hon-ga/o kai-ni*
 John-NOM Kanda-ALL book-NOM/ACC buy-PURP
ik-e-ru.
 go-can-NPST
 ‘John can go to Kanda to buy a book.’

These facts confirm that *kai-ni ik-* ‘go to buy’ serves as a monoclausal complex predicate in which the matrix nucleus is the motion verb *ik-* ‘go,’ and the dependent nucleus is the verb stem *kai-* ‘buy,’ which specifies the purpose of *ik-* at the nuclear level. Since a wide range of verbs can productively combine with *V-ni ik-* to yield similar purposive predicates (e.g., *tori/ai/asobi/tabe/nomi-ni ik-* ‘go to get/see/play/eat/drink’), this pattern represents a productive construction rather than an idiosyncratic collocation.¹

The remaining question is what nuclear juncture *kai-ni ik-* instantiates. Since *kai-ni* functions as a purposive modifier of the matrix nucleus, the construction cannot be classified as a non-subordinate type of nuclear juncture (i.e., nuclear cosubordination or coordination). I propose that it should be analyzed as an instance of ad-nuclear subordination. Figure 2 diagrams the constituent structure and operator projections of (2a), i.e., example (1) interpreted as involving ad-nuclear subordination:

¹ English has analogous purposive constructions (e.g., *go get/eat/drink/see/shop/dance, come get/eat/see/join/help/play*), but the matrix verbs in these constructions are typically restricted to motion verbs and they combine with a moderately constrained set of verbs, many of which denote physical activities.

Figure 2: Constituent structure and operator projection of (2a)

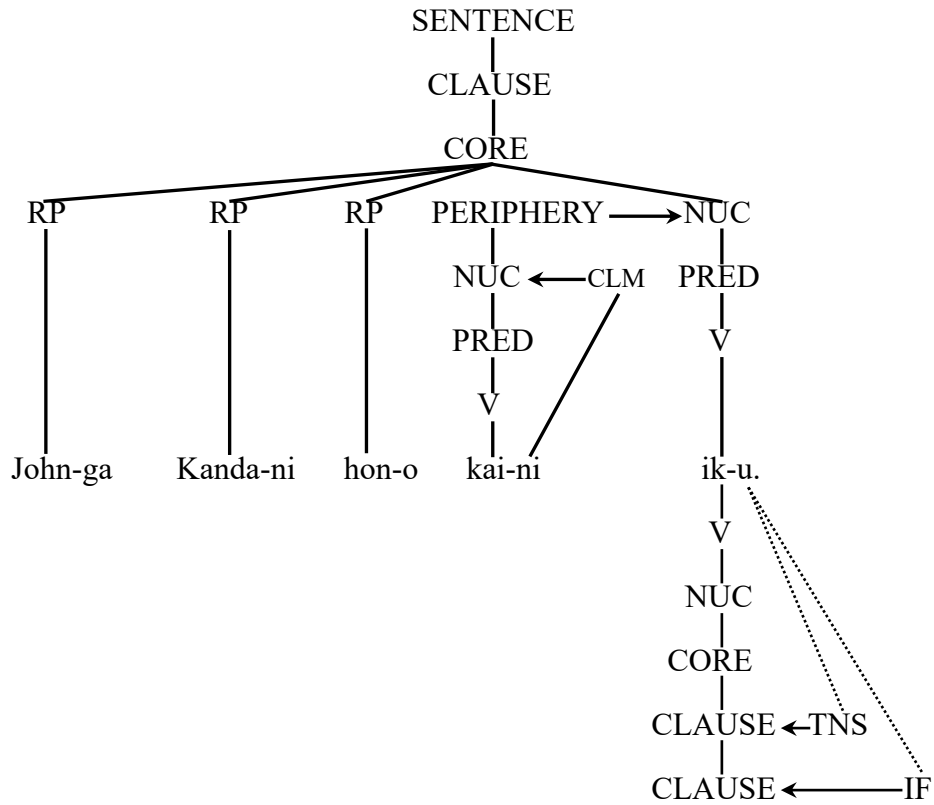
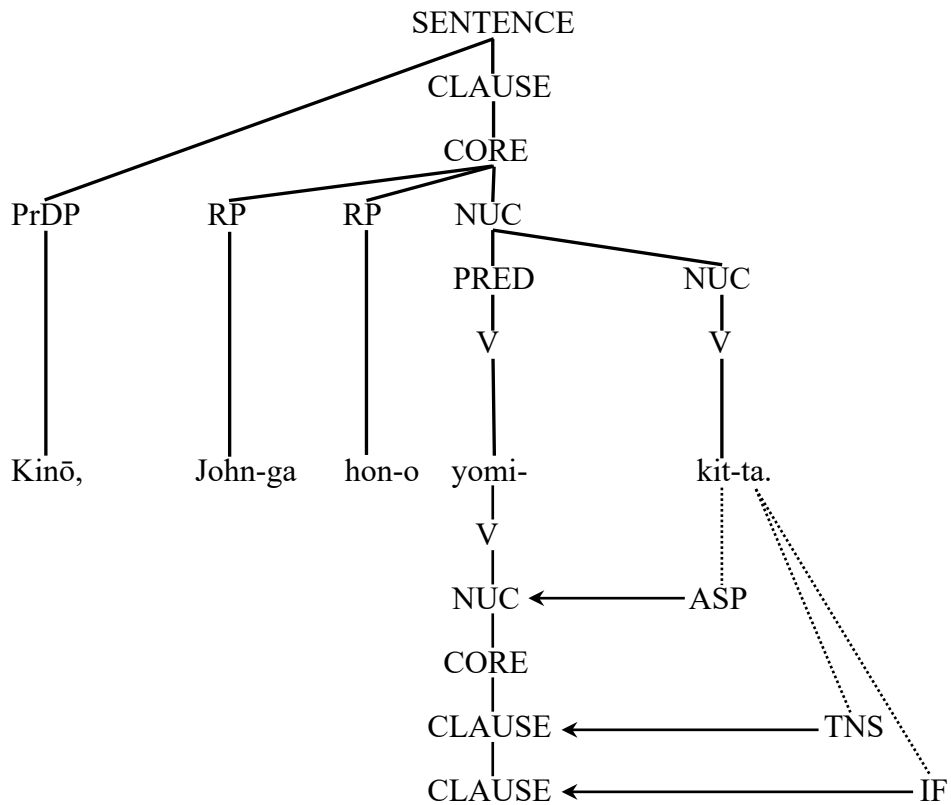


Figure 3: Constituent structure and operator projection of (6) (nuclear subordination)



Let us compare (2a) with (6), in which the matrix nucleus *yom-* ‘read’ combines with the completive verb *kir-* ‘finish’ to yield a complex nucleus *yomi-kir-*. (6) can be analyzed as an instance of “nuclear subordination”, according to the two criteria in Van Valin and LaPolla (1997): the completive verb *kir-* lacks predicative function and carries aspectual meaning. Figure 3 diagrams the constituent structure and operator projection of (6).

- (6) *Kinō, John-ga hon-o yomi-kit-ta.*
 yesterday John-NOM book-ACC read-COMPL-PST
 ‘Yesterday, John read the book through to the end.’

One might wonder why the completive verb *kir-* is construed as non-predicative. The reason is that it can occur with a transitive or an unaccusative verb and imposes no macrorole restriction on the verb it combines with.

The contrast between Figure 2 and Figure 3 comes down to whether the subordinate nucleus is predicative or not: the subordinate nucleus in Figure 2 is predicative, while the one in Figure 3 is not. From this, I propose to establish a distinction between nuclear subordination and ad-nuclear subordination, as summarized in (7).

- (7) a. **Nuclear subordination**
 A juncture-nexus type in which the subordinate nucleus lacks predicative function (e.g., the continuative aspect marker in Lakhota)
 b. **Ad-nuclear subordination**
 A juncture-nexus type in which the subordinate nucleus retains predicative function (e.g., the purposive restructuring predicate in Japanese)

This proposal essentially revives the definition of nuclear subordination in Van Valin and LaPolla (1997) (i.e., a juncture-nexus type that involves a non-predicative, typically aspectual nucleus), while extending the analysis to cases in which a predicative dependent nucleus modifies the matrix nucleus adverbially. By considering whether the dependent nucleus retains predicative function, nuclear subordination can be distinguished from ad-nuclear subordination, rather than being collapsed into it. This move enables the notion of nuclear subordination, together with other types of nuclear juncture, to be applied more productively to the classification of SCVs, as the following section will demonstrate.

3. Syntactic compound verbs in Japanese

Compound verbs (i.e. V_1 - V_2) in Japanese and their classification have attracted much attention in the Japanese linguistics literature (Kageyama 1993, Yumoto 2005, Kishimoto 2021). They are first divided into “lexical compound verbs [LCVs]” and SCVs on syntactic grounds (Kageyama 1993, 2021).² The first verb (V_1) of the SCV expresses the main lexical content of the whole predicate, while its second verb (V_2) contributes aspectual, negative, modal, and/or evaluative meaning. In other words, V_2 functions as a modifier that indicates how the event unfolds in time, specifically whether it is initiated,

² For example, one can apply the *sō-suru* (‘do so’) substitution to the V_1 of the SCV, but not to the V_1 of the LCV. This is illustrated by *tabe-hajime-* ‘begin eating’ (an SCV), which can be replaced with *sō-shi-hajime-* ‘begin doing so’, while the same substitution is not possible for LCVs (as illustrated by *tataki-kowas-* ‘break by hitting’, which can’t be replaced by **sō-shi-kowas-*).

continued, completed, repeated, negated, or evaluated. (7a,b) are a partial list of verbs used to form SCVs (Kageyama 1993, 2021, Toratani 2002, Yumoto 2005, Fukuda 2012, Kishimoto 2021).

- (8) a. Aspectual verbs
 Inception (e.g., *hajime-* ‘begin’, *das-* ‘start’, *kake-* ‘start but not complete’)
 Continuation (e.g., *tsuzuke-* ‘continue’),
 Termination (e.g., *owar-* ‘end’, *oe-* ‘finish’, *kir-* ‘finish’)
 b. Non-aspectual verbs
 Habit (e.g., *nare-* ‘get used to’, *tsuke-* ‘have a habit of’)
 Excessiveness (e.g., *sugi-* ‘exceed’)
 Reparation (e.g., *naos-* ‘redo’)
 Repetition (e.g., *makur-* ‘repeat excessively’)
 (In)ability (e.g., (*rar*)*e-* ‘can do’, *kane-* ‘cannot do’)
 Failure (e.g., *sokonaw-* ‘miss’, *wasure-* ‘forget’)

(9a) is an example of an LCV and describes the manner of collapsing, while (9b) is an example of an SCV that marks the completive aspect of the event and (9c) illustrates another type of SCV in which the verb *naos-* adds a reparative meaning to a transitive verb. What is peculiar about *oe-* and *naos-* is that they select telic transitive verbs with an agent argument, in contrast to (9d), which imposes no such thematic restriction; the verb *kir-* can combine with either a transitive or an unaccusative verb:

- (9) LCV
 a. *John-ga naki-kuzure-ta.*
 John-NOM cry-collapse-PST
 ‘John collapsed in tears.’
 Control-type SCV
 b. *John-ga e-o kaki-oe-ta.*
 John-NOM picture-ACC draw-finish-PST
 ‘John finished drawing a picture.’
 c. *John-ga tegami-o kaki-naoshi-ta.*
 John-NOM letter-ACC draw-redo-PST
 ‘John wrote the letter again.’
 Raising-type SCV
 d. *John-ga piza-o tabe-kit-ta.*
 John-NOM pizza-ACC eat-COMPL-PST
 ‘John finished eating the pizza/John ate up the pizza.’
 e. *Aisu-ga toke-kit-ta.*
 ice.cream-NOM melt-COMPL-PST
 ‘The ice cream has completely melted.’

Kageyama (1993) characterized SCVs such as (9b) as “control-type”, contrasting them with those in (9c,d), which he described as “raising-type”. The control-type SCVs impose semantic restrictions on their V_1 ; *oe-* ‘finish’ selects a telic transitive verb with an agent argument, while verbs such as *naos-* ‘redo’, *sokonaw-* ‘miss’, and *wasure-* ‘forget’ also require their V_1 to denote an agentive action. In contrast, the raising-type SCVs allow either an actor or undergoer argument to serve as the subject of their V_1 . For instance, *kir-*

‘finish’ can combine with an agentive transitive verb (as in (9c)) or an unaccusative verb whose subject is a patient argument (as in (9d)). In other words, the V₂ of control-type SVCs is predicative, while the V₂ of raising-type SVCs is non-predicative.

In addition to these two types, some SCVs (e.g., those formed with *hajime*- ‘begin’, *tsuzuke*- ‘continue’, *nare*- ‘get used to’, *sugi*- ‘exceed’, *makur*- ‘repeat excessively’) allow passivized verbs to occur as the complement of their V₂, as illustrated in (10).

- (10) Examples of SCVs formed with *hajime*- ‘begin’
- | | | | |
|----|---|----------------|-----------------------------|
| a. | <i>John-ga</i> | <i>Tom-o</i> | <i>naguri-hajime-ta.</i> |
| | John-NOM | Tom-ACC | hit-begin-PST |
| | ‘John began to hit Tom.’ (Transitive) | | |
| b. | <i>Kabe-ga</i> | <i>totuzen</i> | <i>taore-hajime-ta.</i> |
| | wall-NOM | suddenly | fall-begin-PST |
| | ‘The wall suddenly began to fall.’ (Unaccusative) | | |
| c. | <i>Tom-ga</i> | <i>John-ni</i> | <i>nagur-are-hajime-ta.</i> |
| | Tom-NOM | John-by | punch-PASS-begin-PST |
| | ‘Tom began to be punched by John.’ (Passive) | | |

The same alternation is observed with *tsuzuke*-, *nare*-, *sugi*-, and *makur*-.

Given that application of passivization presupposes the syntactic domain of the core and requires the presence of both an actor and an undergoer argument, it follows that the subject argument (*Tom-ga*) and the passivized verb *nagur-are* together constitute a single core. The next question, then, is how the aspectual verb *hajime*- ‘begin’ is related to this core. It would be misleading to regard *nagur-are* as part of the embedded core, since in genuine cases of core subordination, the embedded core functions syntactically as an argument within the matrix core, as illustrated by (11a,b).

- (11) English examples of core subordination
- | | |
|----|---|
| a. | John gave up [leaving the town] _{CORE} . |
| b. | [Washing the car] _{CORE} takes time. |

In contrast, *nagur-are-hajime*- in (10c) shows no such structural dependence: the two verbs share the same subject and form a morphologically and prosodically unified complex, despite the loss of their nuclear-level integration. Furthermore, *hajime*- does not subcategorize for any argument, but merely specifies the aspectual contour of the event denoted by *nagur-are*- ‘be punched’. These considerations suggest that *hajime*- does not take a subordinate core as its complement (cf. Toratani 2002), but rather functions as a grammaticalized aspectual operator within the same core (cf. Fukuda 2012, Nishiyama and Ogawa 2014: 79-88, Kageyama 2021: 37-43, Kishimoto 2021: 130-137).

We are now in a position to recast the three types of SCVs in RRG terms. First, control-type SCVs (as illustrated by those formed with *oe*- ‘finish’) instantiate nuclear cosubordination, since both V₁ and V₂ are predicative. Second, raising-type SCVs (as exemplified by those formed with *kir*- ‘finish’) embody nuclear subordination, since the dependent nucleus (V₂) is non-predicative. Finally, in “auxiliary-type SCVs”, the dependent nucleus (V₂) has been reanalyzed as a grammatical operator, and the nuclear-level integration of V₁ and V₂ has been lost, even though the reanalyzed verb retains the complete paradigm of verbal conjugation (despite the functional reanalysis it has undergone). (12) is a summary of the classification of SCVs in Japanese.

- (12) Three subtypes of SCVs in Japanese
- | | | |
|----|---------------------|---|
| a. | Control-type SCVs | Nuclear Cosubordination |
| b. | Raising-type SCVs | Nuclear Subordination |
| c. | Auxiliary-type SCVs | Reanalysis of V ₂ as an Operator |

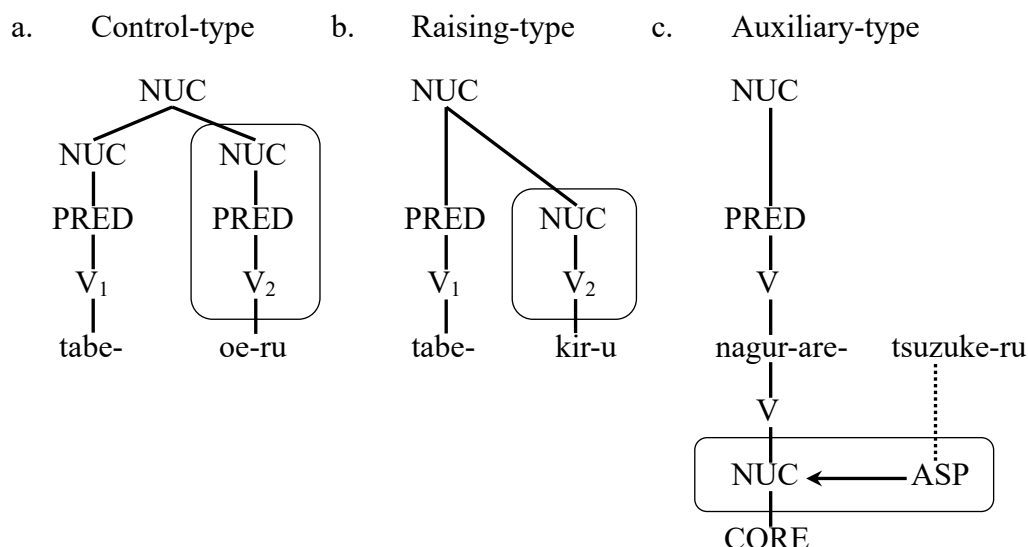
These three subtypes of SCVs can be operationally defined as in (13):

- (13) Operational definitions of control-, raising-, and auxiliary-type SCVs
- Control-type SCVs constrain the choice of the complement verb (V₁) with respect to its macrorole selection. For example, *oe-* ‘finish’ can only combine with macrorole-transitive verbs with agentive arguments.
 - Raising-type SCVs neutralize the macrorole distinction, allowing the subject of the complement verb (V₁) to correspond to either an actor or an undergoer argument. For example, *kir-* ‘finish’ can combine with either a transitive or an unaccusative verb, but crucially it cannot occur with passivized verbs.
 - Auxiliary-type SCVs allow the complement verb to undergo passivization. This process destroys the nuclear-level integration between V₁ and V₂, indicating that V₂ behaves as an auxiliary rather than as a lexical verb.

In short, dependent verbs in control-type SCVs impose macrorole restriction, those in raising-type SCVs neutralize the macrorole distinction, while auxiliary-type SCVs exhibit the loss of nuclear-level integration between the two verbs.

The three subtypes of SCVs defined in (13) are structurally distinct, but they can be viewed as forming a functional continuum. This continuum can be interpreted as reflecting a pathway of grammaticalization: the dependent nucleus (V₂) within the compound gradually loses its predicative function (marked as PRED in the constituent structure), followed by the loss of its status as a lexical verb. Finally, the nuclear-level integration between the two verbs is dissolved, leading to the reanalysis of the dependent nucleus as an auxiliary (operator) within the operator projection. Figure 4 highlights only the portions of the sentence structure that are directly relevant to the grammaticalization path leading from control-type through raising-type to auxiliary-type SCVs:

Figure 4: Grammaticalization from control-type through raising-type to auxiliary type



Before concluding this section, I briefly examine the contrast between SCVs formed with *oe-* ‘finish’ and those formed with *owar-* ‘end’. Both can reasonably be regarded as instantiating nuclear juncture, since each encodes an aspectual relation between two verbs in SCVs. However, they differ crucially in their event-structural integration, which, in turn, accounts for the contrast in their interpretive properties.

The contrast in semantic integration can be characterized as follows: SCVs formed with *oe-* adopt an “internal viewpoint” and allow access to the internal phases of the embedded event, while SCVs formed with *owar-* adopt an “external viewpoint” and refer only to the terminal boundary of the embedded event with no attention paid to the internal structure of the event. This perspectival difference systematically correlates with the range of compatible adverbial expressions, as illustrated in (14)-(16):

- (14) Compatibility of process adverbs with SCVs formed with *oe-/owar-*
- | | | | | |
|----|------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| a. | <i>John-ga</i> | <i>nijuppun-kakete</i> | <i>piza-o</i> | <i>yaki-oe-ta.</i> |
| | John-NOM | twenty.minutes-spending | pizza-ACC | bake-finish-PST |
| b. | ? <i>John-ga</i> | <i>nijuppun-kakete</i> | <i>piza-o</i> | <i>yaki-owat-ta.</i> |
| | John-NOM | twenty.minutes-spending | pizza-ACC | bake-end-PST |
- ‘John finished baking the pizza after spending 20 minutes on it.’
- (15) Compatibility of adverbs expressing partial completion with SCVs formed with *oe-/owar-*
- | | | | | |
|----|------------------|---------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| a. | <i>John-ga</i> | <i>hanbun-dake</i> | <i>piza-o</i> | <i>yaki-oe-ta.</i> |
| | John-NOM | half-only | pizza-ACC | bake-finish-PST |
| b. | ? <i>John-ga</i> | <i>hanbun-dake</i> | <i>piza-o</i> | <i>yaki-owat-ta.</i> |
| | John-NOM | half-only | pizza-ACC | bake-end-PST |
- ‘John finished baking half of the pizza.’
- (16) Compatibility of iterative adverbs with SCVs formed with *oe-/owar-*
- | | | | | |
|----|------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| a. | <i>John-ga</i> | <i>san-mai-no</i> | <i>piza-o</i> | <i>tsugitsugini</i> |
| | John-NOM | three-CLF-GEN | pizza-ACC | one.after.another |
| | | | | <i>yaki-oe-ta.</i> |
| | | | | bake-finish-PST |
| b. | ? <i>John-ga</i> | <i>san-mai-no</i> | <i>piza-o</i> | <i>tsugitsugini</i> |
| | John-NOM | three-CLF-GEN | pizza-ACC | one.after.another |
| | | | | <i>yaki-owa-ta.</i> |
| | | | | bake-end-PST |
- ‘John finished baking three pizzas one after another.’

These contrasts demonstrate that SCVs formed with *oe-*, which adopt an event-internal viewpoint, permit adverbial modification referring to processual or subeventive phases of the event, such as durative, partial-completion, and successive adverbial expressions, while SCVs formed with *owar-*, which encodes an external viewpoint, are incompatible with such modifiers, since they denote only the terminal boundary of the event. In other words, SCVs formed with *oe-* allow semantic access to the internal constitution of the event structure of the embedded verb, while SCVs formed with *owar-* merely assert that the event as a whole has reached completion, without reference to its internal progression. This asymmetry in adverbial compatibility, therefore, provides independent semantic evidence that the two types of SCVs do not differ in juncture level (i.e., nuclear vs. core juncture), but rather in event-viewpoint orientation (i.e., internal vs. external aspectual viewpoint) within the domain of nuclear juncture.

Furthermore, there is another related contrast between the two (Matsumoto 1996: 179-180, Fukuda 2012: 692-693), concerning how *oe-* ‘finish’ and *owar-* ‘end’ behave in subject-honorific constructions, as illustrated in (17).

- (17) Subject-honorific constructions
- | | | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. | <i>Sensei-ga</i> | <i>tegami-o</i> | <i>o-kaki-ni</i> | <i>nari-owari-mashi-ta.</i> |
| | teacher-NOM | letter-ACC | HON-write-HON | become-end-POL-PST |
| b. | * <i>Sensei-ga</i> | <i>tegami-o</i> | <i>o-kaki-owari-ni</i> | <i>nari-mashi-ta.</i> |
| | teacher-NOM | letter-ACC | HON-write-end-HON | become-POL-PST |
| c. | * <i>Sensei-ga</i> | <i>tegami-o</i> | <i>o-kaki-ni</i> | <i>nari-oe-mashi-ta.</i> |
| | teacher-NOM | letter-ACC | HON-write-HON | become-finish-POL-PST |
| d. | <i>Sensei-ga</i> | <i>tegami-o</i> | <i>o-kaki-oe-ni</i> | <i>nari-mashi-ta.</i> |
| | teacher-NOM | letter-ACC | HON-write-finish-HON | become-POL-PST |
- ‘The teacher finished writing a letter.’

In the *o-V-ni-naru* construction, the subject-honorific marking is realized through a periphrastic form in which the main predicate is nominalized and embedded under the honorific auxiliary *nar-*. The honorific prefix *o-* attaches to the verb stem, and *nar-* agrees with the PSA in terms of honorification. The two verbs, *oe-* and *owar-*, are in contrast, in that *oe-* can combine directly with a stem of a transitive verb, while *owar-* cannot.

Although both *oe-* ‘finish’ and *owar-* ‘end’ can form nuclear junctures, they differ fundamentally in their event-viewpoint structure, and this difference determines whether the predicate can occur in subject-honorific constructions illustrated in (17). Specifically, *oe-* encodes an internal viewpoint, construing the event from within the sphere of action and presupposing deliberate control by the agent/actor. In such constructions, the agent/actor emerges as the controller who brings the event to completion. Therefore, an honorific expression such as *o-kaki-oe-ni naru* in (17d) sounds natural: it depicts the respected subject as having volitionally completed the action. The internally-oriented construal of *oe-* aligns with the agent/actor-centered event structure that the Japanese honorific system, in particular forms like *o-V-ni naru*, is designed to encode. In contrast, *owar-* adopts an external viewpoint that conceptualizes the event as completed from an observer’s perspective. The PSA is thereby objectified, serving as merely one component of a finished event, rather than as its controlling participant. Consequently, *owar-* denotes a natural termination that does not reflect the PSA’s volition or effort, and the PSA’s active involvement is pragmatically backgrounded. Because of this external perspective, *owar-* resists combination with honorific morphology such as *o-V-ni naru* (as shown by the infelicity of (17b)), which presupposes a socially prominent, agentive participant.³

³ It is worth considering whether the different degrees of semantic integration in SCVs formed with *oe-* and *owar-* also manifest themselves in syntax. A relevant diagnostic is “long distance passivization [LDP]”.

- (i) *John-ga* *piza-o* *tabe-oe/owat-ta.*
 John-nom pizza-acc eat-finish/end-PST
 ‘John finished eating the pizza.’

LDP is possible with *oe-* (as in *tabe-oe-rare-ta*), but not with *owar-* (**tabe-owar-are-ta*), even though both completive verbs form nuclear junctures when used in SCVs. I propose that this contrast follows from the difference in event perspective: *oe-* adopts an internal viewpoint, referring to the inner phases of the event and achieving the tighter integration,

To summarize this section, I have proposed the three-way classification of SCVs in RRG terms, (i) control-type, (ii) raising-type, and (iii) auxiliary-type SCVs, which are, respectively, instantiated by nuclear cosubordination, nuclear subordination, and the combination of a simple verb and an auxiliary. I have also shown that the notion of nuclear subordination (realized by raising-type SCVs) is indispensable for establishing this three-way typology and distinguishing SCVs from restructuring constructions as illustrated by (1) that instantiate ad-nuclear subordination and demonstrated, through the contrast between *oe-* and *owar-*, that even among SCVs involving nuclear juncture, the degree of semantic integration varies systematically with the event perspective expressed by the aspectual verb (i.e., internal in the case of *oe-* and external in the case of *owar-*).⁴

4. Conclusion

This paper has pursued two specific objectives, in order to delineate the scope of nuclear subordination in RRG. First, I have analyzed purposive constructions as illustrated by (1) as instances of ad-nuclear subordination, in which the matrix nucleus is adverbially modified by a predicative dependent nucleus. I have further argued that SCVs with a non-predicative aspectual nucleus instantiate nuclear subordination and that the distinction between nuclear subordination and ad-nuclear subordination lies in whether the dependent nucleus is predicative or not.⁵

Second, I have proposed the three-way classification of SCVs in RRG terms, (i) control-type, (ii) raising-type, and (iii) auxiliary-type, which correspond, respectively, to nuclear cosubordination, nuclear subordination, and the combination of a simple verb and an auxiliary. In proposing this three-way typology, I have shown that the notion of nuclear subordination (as originally formulated by Van Valin (1993) and Van Valin and LaPolla (1997)), exemplified by raising-type SCVs, is indispensable for establishing this typology and for distinguishing such SCVs with a non-predicative, (typically) aspectual nucleus from purposive constructions illustrated by (1), which embody ad-nuclear subordination.

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while *owar-* adopts an external viewpoint, referring only to the event boundary and yielding a (semantically) looser type of nuclear juncture that lacks internal event access. A detailed examination of whether this account extends to other control-type and raising-type SCVs must be left for future research.

⁴ Both nuclear and ad-nuclear subordination involve modification: the former represents grammatical modification, while the latter represents lexical (or adverbial) one.

⁵ See Paris (2018) and Fujinaga-Gordon (2024) for further illustrations of ad-nuclear subordination in Spanish gerund constructions and Japanese benefactive constructions. Special thanks are due to Luis Paris and Mitsuaki Shimojo for bringing these works to my attention.

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