

Tripartite Verbal Structure and Extended Predicate Formation: Arguments from Japanese

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In this talk, I will advance two proposals on the syntax of predication. One is concerned with verbal projections and the other with the locus of agreement (ϕ -feature agreement) which determines where arguments are placed in overt syntax.

As the first point, I argue for a three-layered verbal structure for verbal projections. Specifically, on the basis of the morphological facts of denominal/deadjectival verbs (Oseki 2017, Kishimoto 2023), I will argue that the verbal structure should consist of the head sequences of v - V - R , where R is a predicate root, v and V are functional projections fixing the transitivity and the category of R , respectively (cf. Embick and Marantz 2008).

After confirming the presence of the three-layered verbal structure in Japanese, I proceed to argue that while ordinary arguments are merged with vP or VP , the lowest DP or adverbial selected by non-agentive *suru* is merged with R to derive an “extended” predicate (i.e. RP). While Chomsky (2015) claims that R does not project universally, I show that R can project to RP when the root does not have a sufficient semantic content to qualify as a full-fledged predicate, and that the phrasal expression contributing to the formation of the extended predicate RP does not move out of it.

As for arguments merged with the projections above $R(P)$, it is argued that they are displaced from their merger position if the head of the functional projection does not enter into agreement with them (for the purpose of labeling according to Chomsky 2013), but that if they have agreement with the arguments, they are allowed to stay in situ. I show that the functional projections of V , v , and T may or may not induce agreement with arguments.