

Mysteries of Verb-Verb complexes in Japanese

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By way of providing the common background for the individual papers dealing with Japanese and Ryukyuan to be presented on the first day and thereby explicating the nature of the “mysteries” stated in the position paper, this talk surveys the core properties of Verb-Verb complexes that are available in contemporary Japanese, on the basis of the four-way classification: Type 1 (lexical compound verbs like *keri-dasu* (kick-put.out) ‘kick out’ whose first verb (V1) semantically modifies the second verb (V2) that serves as the head of a whole compound), Type 2 (lexical compound verbs like *more-dasu* (leak-start.abruptly) ‘leak out’ whose V2 supplies a variety of aspectual meanings to V1, which determines the thematic and case relations of a whole compound), Type 3 (syntactic compound verbs like *huri-dasu* (rain-begin) ‘begin to rain’ whose V2, traditionally referred to as an auxiliary verb, takes in its scope the complement clause headed by V1), and Type 4 (syntactically complex verbs like *kai-te oku* (write-leave) ‘write down and leave (a memo)’ whose V1 takes the gerundive *-te* form). Given the distinction between Types 1 and 2 as lexical compounds and Types 3 and 4 as syntactic Verb-Auxiliary combinations, the question arises as to how the four types are related with each other. Although Types 1, 3, and 4 are well known, the existence of Type 2 compounds has gone unnoticed in the literature. It will be argued that Types 2 and 3 are contiguous not only in the aspectual meanings of their V2s but also in their morphological behavior, and that the Type 2 compound verbs hold the key to understanding the nature of the puzzles surrounding V-V complexes in Japanese and in other Asian languages.