

What the V-te V complex predicates can say that V-V compound verbs cannot

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Japanese has an interesting situation of possessing two kinds of complex predicates involving two verbs: V-te V complex predicates and V-V compound verbs. In this talk I will compare the former with the latter in order to see why the former is selected rather than the latter to express certain notions. Two subtypes are recognized in both kinds of predicates. Similarly to V-V compound verbs which are categorized into “syntactic” compounds (e.g., *yomi-hazimeru* (read-begin ‘begin to read’)) and “lexical” compounds (e.g., *osi-taosu* (push-topple) ‘push down’), V-te V complex predicates can also be classified into those which involve syntactic complementation (e.g., *itte moraw-u* (go receive) ‘receive the benefit of someone going’) and those which do not (e.g., *motte iku* (have go), ‘bring’), though the latter is quite restricted. Comparisons are made between V-te V complex predicates and V-V compounds in each of these subcategories. The two kinds of predicates are found to differ in such respects as 1) patterns of argument sharing, 2) the temporal relationship between the two member verbs, and 3) semantic restrictions on V2. These account for why some complex notions are or are not realized in V-te V complex predicates.