

The Syntax of Japanese Aspectual Verbs^{*}

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In previous analyses of Japanese aspectual verbs, their syntactic differences were attributed to the control/raising distinction (Shibatani 1973, 1978, Kuno 1987, Nishigauchi 1993, Kageyama 1993, 1999, Koizumi 1995, 1998, Matsumoto 1996). I argue that the control/raising analysis is inadequately motivated and fails to account for the full range of empirical data. As an alternative analysis, I propose that Japanese aspectual verbs may occupy two different positions in a clause, either above or below *vP*, where they provide aspectual specifications to an event (*vP*) or subpart of it (*VP*). The syntactic differences among the aspectual verbs are argued to derive from their differing compatibility with these two positions.

1. Introduction

Japanese aspectual verbs, *hajime* ‘begin’, *tsuzuke* ‘continue’, *owar* ‘finish₁’, and *oe* ‘finish₂’, all take clausal complement, with some interesting syntactic differences among them with respect to three sets of data: (i) selectional restrictions, (ii) passives, and (iii) subject honorification.¹ Previously, these syntactic differences among Japanese aspectual verbs have been attributed to the control/raising distinction among them (Shibatani 1973, 1978, Kuno 1987, Nishigauchi 1993, Kageyama 1993, 1999, Koizumi 1995, 1998, Matsumoto 1996). In this paper, I first argue that the control/raising analysis of Japanese aspectual verbs is not adequately motivated, nor is it able to account for the full range of empirical data. As an alternative analysis, I argue that Japanese aspectual verbs may occupy two different positions in a clause, either below or above a projection of *v*, where they provide aspectual specifications to a complete event (*vP*) or subpart of it excluding an external argument (*VP*). The proposed analysis derives the different syntactic distributions of Japanese aspectual verbs with respect to the three sets of data from their differing compatibility with these two positions. As such, it accounts for the syntactic and semantic differences among Japanese aspectual verbs without the control/raising distinction. It also suggests reexamination of aspectual verbs crosslinguistically, with a closer attention to differences among aspectual verbs in terms of their syntactic distributions and semantic properties, as argued in studies such as Newmeyer (1975), Lamiroy (1987), Rochette (1999), and Cinque (2003).

^{*} I would like to thank the following people for their comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this paper: Chris Barker, Ivano Caponigro, Mark Gawron, Grant Goodall, John Moore, Maria Polinsky, Asako Uchibori, and the audience at 3rd Workshop on Altaic in Formal Linguistics at Moscow State University. Needless to say, all the remaining errors are my responsibility. The work on this project was supported in part by NSF grants BCS-0131993 and BCS-0131946.

¹ Although there are other verbs that also show the similar characteristics, we focus on these four aspectual verbs because (i) they are some of the most frequently discussed Japanese aspectual verbs in the literature and (ii) they represent three basic aspectual specifications: inception, continuation, and completion.

2. The data

2.1. Selectional restrictions

The first set of data, selectional restrictions, singles out *oe* ‘finish₂’ as different from other three aspectual verbs. First, only *oe* ‘finish₂’ imposes selectional restrictions on its subject (Shibatani 1973).

- (1) Buranko-ga yure hajime/tsuzuke/owar/***oe** -ta.
 swing-NOM swing begin/continue/finish₁/***finish₂** -PERF
 ‘The swing began/continued/finished₁/*finished₂ ringing.’

Moreover, *oe* ‘finish₂’ appears to select its complement as well, as it is incompatible with an intransitive verb such as *aruk* ‘walk’ as its embedded verb.

- (2) Kodomo-ga aruki hajime/tsuzuke/owar/***oe** -ta
 child-NOM walk begin/continue/finish₁/***finish₂** -PERF
 ‘The child began/continued/finished₁/*finished₂ walking.’

The same verb *aruk* can be embedded under *oe* ‘finish₂’ however, if it has a path argument, i.e. *sakamichi* ‘hill’, which makes it a transitive accomplishment event (Nishigauchi 1993: 88).

- (3) Kodomo-tachi-ga sakamichi-o aruki oe -ta
 child-PL-NOM hill-ACC walk finish₂ -PERF
 ‘The children finished walking (up) a hill.’

2.2. Passive

These four aspectual verbs allow two types of passive. First, *hajime* ‘begin’, *tsuzuke* ‘continue’, and *oe* ‘finish₂’ all allow what is often called *long passive*, or passivization of an embedded object with the passive morpheme attached to the aspectual verbs (Shibatani 1973, 1978, Nishigauchi 1993).

- (4) Rombun_i-ga t_i yomi hajime/tsuzuke/oe **rare** -ta
 paper_i-NOM t_i read begin/continue/finish₂ **PASS** -PERF
 ‘The paper began/continued/finished to be read.’

In addition to *long passive*, *hajime* ‘begin’ and *tsuzuke* ‘continue’ also allow passivization within their complement, or *short passive* (5a) (Shibatani 1973: 85). However, *short passive* is ungrammatical with *oe* ‘finish₂’ (5b) (Shibatani 1978: 152).

- (5) a. Kono-hon_i-ga t_i yom **are** hajime/tsuzuke -ta
 this-book_i-NOM t_i read PASS begin/continue -PERF
 ‘This book began/continued to be read.’
 b. *Rombun-ga t_i yom **are** oe -ta
 paper-NOM t_i write PASS finish₂ -PERF
 ‘The paper finished being read.’

Finally, *owar* ‘finish₁’ only allows *short passive* (6a) and *long passive* is ungrammatical with *owar* ‘finish₁’ (6b) (Matsumoto 1996: 176).

- (6) a. Kekka-ga hyojis **are** owar -ta
 result-NOM indicate PASS finish₁ -PERF
- b. *Kekka-ga hyojis owar **are** -ta
 result-NOM indicate finish₁ PASS -PERF
 ‘The results finished being posted.’

Thus, passive data classify the four aspectual verbs into three groups: *oe* ‘finish₂’ only allows *long passive*, *owar* ‘finish₁’ only allows *short passive*, and *hajime* ‘begin’ and *tsuzuke* ‘continue’ allow both.

2.3 Subject honorification

Subject honorification (SH) is used to express the speaker’s respect toward the subject. It involves a complex morphosyntactic process, in which a verb is framed between to particles, ‘*o*’ and ‘*ni*’, and this complex is followed by another verb, *nar* ‘become’ (Suzuki 1989, Toribio 1990).

- (7) Sensei-ga **o**-hanashi-**ni** **nar** -ta
 teacher-NOM H-talk-H become -PERF
 ‘The teacher talked.’

The SH data classify the four aspectual verbs in the same way as the passive data do. First, with *hajime* ‘begin’ or *tsuzuke* ‘continue’, SH markers may frame the embedded verb alone (*embedded SH*) (8a), or the aspectual verb and embedded verb together (*combined SH*) (8b) (Shibatani 1978).

- (8) a. Sensei-ga tegami-o **o**-kaki-hajime/tsuzuke-**ni** **nar** -ta
 teacher-NOM letter-ACC H-write-begin/continue-H become -PERF
- b. Sensei-ga tegami-o **o**-kaki-hajime/tsuzuke-**ni** **nar** -ta
 teacher-NOM letter-ACC H-write-begin/continue-H become -PERF
 ‘The teacher began/continued writing the letter.’

With *owar* ‘finish₁’, only *embedded SH* is grammatical (Matsumoto 1996: 179) (9). On the other hand, for *oe* ‘finish₂’, *combined SH* is the only option (Kuno 1987: 104) (10).

- (9) a. *Sensei-ga tegami-o **o**-kaki-owari-**ni** **nar** -ta
 teacher-NOM letter-ACC H-write-finish₁-H become -PERF
- b. Sensei-ga tegami-o **o**-kaki-**ni** **nar** owar -ta
 teacher-NOM letter-ACC H-write-H become finish₁ -PERF
 ‘The teacher finished writing the letter.’
- (10) a. Sensei-ga tegami-o **o**-kaki-oe-**ni** **nar** -ta
 teacher-NOM letter-ACC H-write-finish₂-H become -PERF

b.*Sensei-ga tegami-o o-kaki-ni nari oe -ta
 teacher-NOM letter-ACC H-write-H become finish₂ -PERF
 ‘The teacher finished writing the letter.’

Once again, the four aspectual verbs are classified into three groups. While *oe* ‘finish₂’ only allows *combined* SH, *owar* ‘finish₁’ only allows *embedded* SH. Unlike these two, *hajime* ‘begin’ and *tsuzuke* ‘continue’ allow both configurations of SH.

2.4. Summary

We have reviewed three sets of data, (i) selectional restrictions, (ii) passive, and (iii) subject honorification, as summarized below.

Table 1: Summary of the data

	<i>oe</i> ‘finish ₂ ’	<i>owar</i> ‘finish ₁ ’	<i>hajime</i> ‘begin’ & <i>tsuzuke</i> ‘continue’
Non-volitional subject	×	✓	✓
Intransitive/non-accomplishment complement	×	✓	✓
<i>Long passive</i>	✓	×	✓
<i>Short passive</i>	×	✓	✓
<i>Combined</i> SH	✓	×	✓
<i>Embedded</i> SH	×	✓	✓

Previously, this tripartite distinction among the four aspectual verbs have been attributed to the control/raising distinction among them. While *oe* ‘finish₂’ and *owar* ‘finish₁’ are unambiguously control and raising, respectively, *hajime* ‘begin’ and *tsuzuke* ‘continue’ are ambiguous. In what follows, I review the control/raising approach to Japanese aspectual verbs, and argue that (i) the control/raising approach is not adequately motivated, as typical diagnostics for the control/raising distinction fail to differentiate these aspectual verbs, and (ii) it fails to account the full range of the empirical data.

3. Previous analyses

Previously, these four Japanese aspectual verbs have been analyzed as either control (*oe* ‘finish₂’), raising (*owar* ‘finish₁’), or ambiguous between them (*hajime* ‘begin’ and *tsuzuke* ‘continue’) (Shibatani 1973, 1978, Kuno 1987, Nishigauchi 1993, Kageyama 1993, 1999, Koizumi 1995, 1998, Matsumoto 1996). The control/raising analysis of Japanese aspectual verbs is *a priori* plausible, given that, since Perlmutter (1970)’s influential work, the control/raising ambiguity with aspectual verbs has been argued or assumed to hold crosslinguistically.² However, a closer examination of the control/raising analysis of Japanese aspectual verbs shows that (i) the diagnostics applied to distinguish control and raising verbs do not convincingly show that these aspectual verbs are control or raising and (ii) the control/raising analysis leaves some of the data unaccounted for.

² See, for example, Ruwet (1991) for French, Wurmbrand (2001) for German, Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (1999) for Greek, Landau (2003) for Hebrew, Rizzi (1982) for Italian, and Moore (1996) for Spanish.

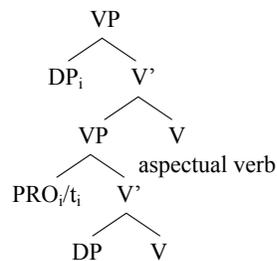
3.1. Japanese aspectual verbs as control/raising verbs

Since Shibatani (1973), the fact that only *oe* ‘finish₂’ among the four aspectual verbs imposes selectional restrictions on its subject has been argued to follow from the control/raising analysis of the aspectual verbs. Nishigauchi (1993), for instance, argues that idiomatic expressions such as ‘*uwasa-ga uwasa-o yobu* ‘rumors create more rumors (lit. rumors call rumors)’ can preserve their idiomatic meaning with *hajime* ‘begin’, but not with *oe* ‘finish₂’, suggesting that *oe* ‘finish₂’ is a control verb (Nishigauchi 1993: 89)³.

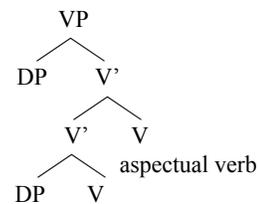
- (11) Usawa-ga uwasa-o yobi hajime/*oe -ta
 rumor-NOM rumor-ACC call begin/*finish₂ -PERF
 ‘Rumors began/*finished to call rumors.’ (Rumors began to spread in various directions.)

However, the control/raising dichotomy alone does not account for all the data. Kageyama (1993, 1999), while adopting the control/raising analysis, proposes that some aspectual verbs take complement without an embedded subject (*reduced complement*) or complement with an embedded subject (*full complement*), while others can take either (Kageyama 1999: 305).

- (12) a. full complement (i.e. VP)



- b. reduced complement (i.e. V')



Under Kageyama’s analysis, *owar* ‘finish₁’ is analyzed as a raising verb which only takes full complement (12a). With full complement, *owar* ‘finish₁’ is predicated to disallow *long passive*, since movement of an embedded object over the embedded subject would yield a minimality violation, while *short passive* is also correctly predicted to be grammatical. In contrast, *oe* ‘finish₂’ is analyzed as a control verb (i.e. it selects a thematic subject) which only takes reduced complement (12b). Since there is no embedded subject which would prevent the movement of an embedded object, *long passive* is predicated to be grammatical with *oe* ‘finish₂’. However, *short passive* should be ungrammatical, since there is no embedded external argument for passive to ‘suppress’.⁴ Moreover, *hajime* ‘begin’ and *tsuzuke* ‘continue’ are analyzed to take either type of complement; they allow both *short* and *long passive*.⁵ Kageyama maintains that the control/raising analysis with the full/reduced complement distinction can also account for the subject honorific (SH) facts. Assuming that SH requires an external argument, *embedded* SH is grammatical only with an aspectual verb with full complement, i.e. *owar*

³ Nishigauchi (1993) also uses imperative formation as a diagnostic, which is discussed in section 3.2.

⁴ assuming the ‘external argument suppression’ analysis of passive (Chomsky 1981).

⁵ Koizumi (1995, 1998) accounts for the mono-clausal properties of some aspectual verbs, such as *long passive*, by assuming that some aspectual verbs induce *restructuring* (Koizumi 1998: 17).

‘finish₁’, since full complement has its own subject. With reduced complement, i.e. *oe* ‘finish₂’, *combined* SH is the only option, since there is no embedded subject (Kageyama 1993: 164).

3.2. Problems with the control/raising analysis

Although the control/raising analysis is quite successful as it is able to cover an impressive range of the data, it is problematic for two reasons. First, the control/raising distinction among aspectual verbs is not adequately motivated, as the typical diagnostics for control/raising do not clearly show the presumed control/raising distinction among Japanese aspectual verbs. Although Nishigauchi (1993) argues that the differences in their compatibility with idiomatic expressions motivate the control/raising distinction among the aspectual verbs (example (11)), the different compatibility of the aspectual verbs with idiomatic expressions does not appear to depend on whether a given aspectual verb selects its subject or not. There are a handful of idiomatic expressions involving subjects that are compatible with *hajime* ‘begin’ and *tsuzuke* ‘continue’, but incompatible *owar* ‘finish₁’, a presumed unambiguous raising verb.

- (13) a. Tonbi-ga taka-o um -u
kite-NOM hawk-ACC give_birth_to -IMP
‘A kite gives birth to a hawk. (a case of an ordinary parent producing a superior child.)’
- b. Tonbi-ga taka-o umi hajime/tsuzuke/*owar/*oe -ta
kite-NOM hawk-ACC give_birth_to begin/continue/*finish₁/*finish₂ -PERF
‘A kite began to/continued to give birth to hawks.’
- (14) a. Rui-wa tomo-o yob -u
kind-TOP friend-ACC call -IMP
‘A kind calls for its friends.’ (≈ Birds of a feather flock together.)
- b. Rui-ga tomo-o yobi hajime/tsuzuke/*owar/*oe -ta
kind-NOM friend-ACC call begin/continue/*finish₁/*finish₂ -PERF
‘A kind began/continued to call for its friends.’

What these examples suggest instead is that the acceptability of idiomatic expressions with aspectual verbs is determined by their compatibility with certain aspectual specifications, i.e. completive aspect.

Another common diagnostic for the control/raising distinction is imperative formation, which has been applied to Japanese aspectual verbs to argue for the control/raising distinction (Shibatani 1973, Nishigauchi 1993). However, like idiomatic expressions, imperative formation also fails to motivate the control/raising distinction among Japanese aspectual verbs. As can be seen in (15) below, a presumed raising aspectual verb *owar* ‘finish₁’ is just as compatible with imperative formation as a presumed control aspectual verb *oe* ‘finish₂’ is (Shibatani 1973: 78).

- (15) Asu-madeni hon-o yomi owar -e!/oe -ro!
tomorrow-till book-ACC read finish₁ -IMP/finish₂ -IMP
‘Finish reading the book by tomorrow.’

With these diagnostics failing to motivate the control/raising distinction, any analysis of Japanese aspectual verbs based on the control/raising distinction seems to lose its ground.

Another problem for the control/raising analysis is that it fails to account for the full range of data. First, as noted by Shibatani (1973), the ‘ambiguous’ aspectual verbs, *hajime* ‘begin’ and *tsuzuke* ‘continue’, do not allow the *combined* SH with intransitive verbs.

- (16) a. Okyakusan-ga o-tsuki-(*hajime)-ni nari hajime -ta
 guest-NOM H-arrive-(*begin)-H become begin -PERF
 ‘The guests began to arrive.’ (Shibatani 1973: 155).
- b. Smith-sensei-ga nihongo-ga o-wakari-(*hajime)-ni nari hajime -ta
 Smith-teacher-NOM Japanese-NOM H-understand-(*begin)-H become begin -PERF
 ‘Teacher Smith began to understand Japanese.’ (Kuno 1987: 103).
- c. Sensei-ga o-hashiri-(*hajime)-ni nari hajime -ta
 teacher-NOM H-run-(*begin)-H become begin -PERF
 ‘The teacher started running.’

Under the control/raising analysis, the ungrammaticality of (16a) and (16b) can be analyzed to be due to a clash between non-agentive embedded verbs and the ‘control’ aspectual verb (Kuno 1987). However, the ungrammaticality of (16c), whose subject can be agentive, remains problematic.

Finally, within the control/raising analyses of Japanese aspectual verbs, selectional restrictions imposed by *oe* ‘finish₂’ on its complement (example (3)) are either not addressed at all or set aside as non-syntactic problems and do not play an important role in their analyses of these aspectual verbs (i.e. Kageyama 1993, Nishigauchi 1993). In the proposed analysis presented in the following section, however, it plays a vital role in accounting for the unique syntactic distribution of *oe* ‘finish₂’

4. The proposal

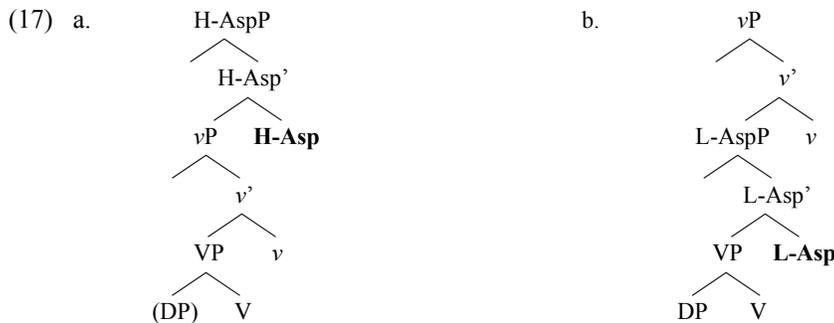
As an alternative to the control/raising analysis, I propose an analysis of Japanese aspectual verbs based on an assumption that there is a correspondence between event structure and syntax. Assuming that events are represented as *v*Ps in syntax, with some events, ones that are complex, can further be decomposed into its subparts, i.e. a projection of *v* and VP, I argue that aspectual verbs provide their aspectual specifications to two different levels of event structure: a *complete event* (*v*P) and a *subpart* of an event (VP). According to the proposed analysis, therefore, aspectual verbs may appear in two different positions in a clause, either above or below a projection of *v*, depending on their compatibility with these two levels of event structure. The proposed analysis makes predictions about (i) what types of event allow aspectual verbs to appear in these two positions, (ii) the interpretation of aspectual verbs depending on their positions, and (iii) what syntactic operations are possible with aspectual verbs in these two positions. In what follows, I argue that these predictions account for the data in question.

4.1 Event structure and two positions for the aspectual verbs

In the literature on lexical semantics, it has been argued that some events have a complex internal structure and are decomposable into their subparts, while others are simplex and cannot be decomposed any further (van Voorst 1988, Pustejovsky 1991). For instance, an event of someone burning a house is a *complex event*, which consists of a causing event, where someone causes a house-burning event to take place, and a house-burning event itself, which is *simplex* and cannot be decomposed into any

smaller subparts. Although the decomposition of events are meant to represent how we conceptualize events in the mental lexicon (i.e. Jackendoff 1983 and the references above), with the current assumptions about phrase structure within Minimalist Program, a direct mapping of the *event structure* into syntax is easily conceivable.⁶ Events can be assumed to be represented in syntax as *v*Ps. While simplex events, such as the house-burning event above, cannot be decomposed any further, complex events, such as the event of someone burning a house, are decomposed into its subparts, with a projection of *v* representing the external subpart and VP representing the internal subpart.

Aspectual verbs, on the other hand, can be analyzed to provide aspectual specifications to events (i.e. that it begins, continues, and completes). Trivially, with a simplex event, an aspectual verb can provide its aspectual specification to an entire event only. In this case, an aspectual verb takes *v*P as its complement in syntax. On the other hand, with a complex event with its subparts, I argue that there are two ways in which an aspectual verb can provide its aspectual specification: it can provide an aspectual specification to an entire event (*v*P) or to a subpart of an event (VP). Let us call the former instance of an aspectual verb a *high-aspect* (17a), and the latter, a *low-aspect* (17b).



The proposed event structure-syntax interface analysis of aspectual verbs thus places aspectual verbs in two different positions in a clause: either above or below a projection of *v*. Furthermore, as I argue in the subsequent sections, it predicts that aspectual verbs are interpreted differently in these two positions, because these two positions have different structural relationships to other elements in a clause. It also predicts that different sets of syntactic operations are permitted by aspectual verbs in two different positions. Consequently, I argue, not all aspectual verbs are compatible with these two positions and some syntactic operations are only possible with an aspectual verb in one of the two positions. In the rest of this paper, I argue that these predictions account for the three sets of data.

4.2. Selectional restrictions

First of all, under the proposed analysis, the fact that *oe* ‘finish₂’ always selects a complement with an internal argument can be interpreted as *oe* ‘finish₂’ is restricted to provide its aspectual specification to a subpart of an event (VP) only. Under this analysis, *oe* ‘finish₂’ is incompatible with intransitive verbs (example (2)) because intransitive verbs, with only one participant, do not represent complex events. Thus, they do not have a subpart to which *oe* ‘finish₂’ can provide its aspectual specification. On the

⁶ See Rosen (2003) and references therein for discussions of the event structure-syntax interface.

other hand, the fact that other three aspectual verbs do not impose selectional restrictions on their complement suggests that they can be, at least in some cases, *high-aspect*.

The analysis of *oe* ‘finish₂’ being restricted to be *low-aspect* can also account for the fact that *oe* ‘finish₂’ is incompatible with an inanimate subject (example (1)). Because *oe* ‘finish₂’ must be *low-aspect*, it always comes under *v* that introduces an external argument (18a). In other words, the aspectual specification that *oe* ‘finish₂’ provides is always interpreted to be brought about by, or under control of, an external argument. In contrast, if other three aspectual verbs can appear as *high-aspect*, then the lack of selectional restrictions on subjects with these aspectual verbs is expected, as *high-aspect* takes an entire event and never comes under scope of an external argument (18b).

- (18) a. [_{VP} **External argument** [_{v'} [_{L-AspP} [_{VP} NP V] *oe* ‘finish₂’ *v*]]]
- b. [_{H-AspP} [_{VP} **External argument** [_{v'} [_{VP} NP V] *v*]]] **H-Asp]**

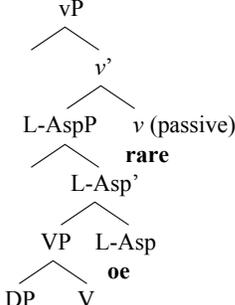
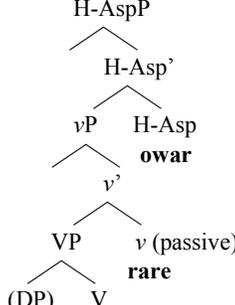
Finally, among these three aspectual verbs which are analyzed to occur as *high-aspect*, only *owar* ‘finish₁’ is incompatible with an adverb of intention.

- (20) Keiko-ga **wazato** terebi-o mi hajime/tsuzuke/*owar -ta
 K-NOM on_purpose TV-ACC watch begin/continue/*finish₁ -PERF
 ‘Keiko began/continued/*finished₁ watching TV on purpose.’

This suggests that, unlike *hajime* ‘begin’ and *tsuzuk* ‘continue’, *owar* ‘finish₁’ cannot be under scope of an external argument, i.e. it can only be a *high-aspect*.

4.3 Passive

Let us now reexamine the passive data. Under the proposed analysis, the passive data can be accounted for rather straightforwardly, by adopting the analysis of passive that it is an inactive *v* (Kratzer 1994, 1996, Chomsky 1995). The proposed analysis places *oe* ‘finish₂’ immediately under *v*, since it can only be a *low-aspect*. If passive occupies in *v*, then it follows that *long passive* is the only option for *oe* ‘finish₂’ (21a). In contrast, *owar* ‘finish₁’ can only allow *short passive*. This restriction follows from our analysis that *owar* ‘finish₁’ can only occur as a *high-aspect* (21b).

- (21) a. 
- b. 

On the other hand, the fact that *hajime* ‘begin’ and *tsuzuk* ‘continue’ are compatible with both *long* and *short passive* can be accounted for, if these aspectual verbs can occur either as a *low-* or *high-aspect*.

However, the proposed analysis predicts that passives can help us disambiguate some of the cases of the ambiguous aspectual verbs. According to the proposed analysis, *long passive* is only grammatical with an aspectual verb in *low-aspect*, which is accompanied by the ‘caused’ interpretation of the aspectual specification, which in turn accounts for the selectional restrictions effects with *oe* ‘finish₂’. Therefore, with *hajime* ‘begin’ and *tsuzuk* ‘continue’, *long passive* should only be compatible with a subject that can be interpreted as a causer/agent. Indeed, the ambiguous verbs allow *long passive* only with a subject that is compatible with being an agent/causer. With an inanimate subject such as *ame* ‘rain’, *long passive* is ungrammatical (22) (Matsumoto 1996:177).

- (22) a. *Konoha_i-ga (Ame-niyotte) t_i uchi tsuzuke rare -ta
 leave_i-NOM (rain-BY) t_i beat continue PASS -PERF
 ‘The leaves continued to have rain fall on them.’ (intended)
- b. Pisutoru_i-ga (John-niyotte) t_i uchi tsuzuke rare -ta
 pistol_i-NOM (J-BY) t_i shoot continue PASS -PERF
 ‘The pistol continued to be fired by John.’

4.4. Subject honorification

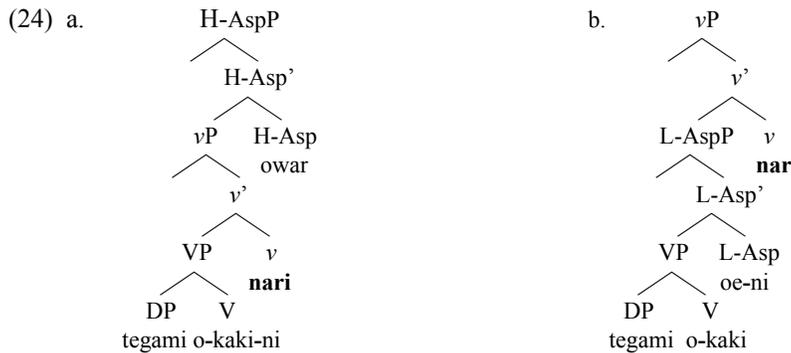
The subject honorification (SH) facts also receive a similar explanation under the proposed analysis, with an assumption that the verb *nar* ‘become’ in SH occupies *v*, just like passive. Although a detailed discussion of SH is beyond the scope of this paper, I briefly discuss a motivation for such an analysis. Previous studies on SH have argued that the complex created by the two SH markers, *o-* and *-ni*, is a nominalized verbal projection, with *-ni* analyzed as a case marker (Suzuki 1989, Toribio 1990, Bobaljik and Yatsushiro 2006, Takita 2006). One of the arguments for the nominal status of the complex is that it can be a subject of a sentence, as in (23) (Takita 2006).

- (23) [Sensei-no nimotsu-no o-okuri]-ga okure -ta
 [teacher-GEN package-GEN H-send]-NOM delay -PERF
 ‘The teacher’s sending a package delayed.’

However, it is important to note that the object of the nominalized verb *okur* ‘send’, *nimotsu* ‘package’, must be marked with genitive case in (23). It can be accusative case marked only when the complex is followed by *nar* ‘become’. This observation can be accounted for if it is *nar* ‘become’ that provides the object accusative case. One way to implement such an analysis is to analyze that *nar* ‘become’ is a type of *v*.⁷ With the analysis of *nar* ‘become’ as *v*, the SH facts receives the following account. First, *owar* ‘finish₁’, being a *high-aspect*, can only occupy the position that is above *v*. Thus, it allows a sequence of the main verb, the honorific *v*, and the aspectual verb itself, but it cannot intervene between the main verb and the honorific *v*. On the other hand, being a *low-aspect*, *oe* ‘finish₂’ only allows the latter sequence, in which it intervenes between the main verb and the honorific *v*. These analyses account for the facts that only the *embedded* SH is grammatical with *owar* ‘finish₁’ (24a), while only the *combined* SH is possible with *oe* ‘finish₂’ (24b)⁸.

⁷ Boeckx (2006) also analyzes *nar* ‘become’ as *v* for different motivations.

⁸ These tree diagrams omit some important details that are not directly relevant to our discussion, i.e. the exact structure of the *o-verb-ni* complex.



Just like the case with passive, assuming that *hajime* ‘begin’ and *tsuzuke* ‘continue’ can be either *low-* or *high-aspect* accounts for the fact that they are compatible with both *combined* and *embedded* SH.

Finally, the proposed analysis also provides an account for the restriction with the *combined* SH that it is ungrammatical with intransitive verbs (example (16)). Since *combined* SH involves *low-aspect* (24b), and *low-aspect* is only possible with an event that has a subpart, it follows that *combined* SH can only be possible with a complex event, i.e. a transitive event. Therefore, the proposed analysis predicts that intransitive verbs are ungrammatical with *combined* SH.⁹

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued against the control/raising analysis of Japanese aspectual verbs and presented an alternative analysis, in which they are analyzed to provide their aspectual specifications to two different levels of event structure, a *complete event* and a *subpart* of an event. Consequently, they may occupy two different positions in a clause, below or above a projection of *v*. I have shown that the analysis derives the different syntactic distributions of these aspectual verbs based on their compatibility with these two levels of event structure.

If the proposed analysis of Japanese aspectual verbs is on the right track, it suggests reexamination of analyses of aspectual verbs crosslinguistically, with a closer attention to differences among aspectual verbs, in terms of their syntactic distributions and aspectual specifications that they provide. Such an approach has already been suggested by the studies such as Newmayer (1975), Lamiroy (1987), Rochette (1999), and Cinque (2003). Needless to say, more research is necessary in order to conclude whether the approach advocated in this study is the right one. I hope that the analysis of Japanese aspectual verbs proposed here is a step toward a better understanding of the syntax of aspectual verbs.

⁹ The proposed analysis thus predicts that (16c) would improve its grammaticality with a path argument, which may create a complex event. Although the acceptability does seem to improve, (i) below is still quite marginal.

- (i) ?Sensei-ga otaku-kara gakko-made-o o-hashiri-hajime-ni nar -ta
 teacher-NOM home-from school-till-ACC H-run-begin-HI become -PERF
 ‘The teacher began running from his house to school.’

I must leave an account for the marginality of (i) for future research.

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