

## Case-marking and the nexus-juncture type of the *TE aru* predicate in Japanese

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Japanese has a complex predicate consisting of a transitive base verb (e.g. *kazaru* ‘decorate’), *TE* (linker) and *aru* ‘(lit.) exist’. The predicate permits alternative case-markings of the undergoer of the transitive verb: either *o* ‘accusative’ as in (1), or *ga* nominative as in (2). Here, the two sentence types will be called “Valence-Maintaining” (VM) and “Valence-Changing” (VC), following Hasegawa (1996).

- (1) *Naomi ga hana o kazat-te aru.* [Valence-Maintaining (VM)]  
Naomi NOM flower ACC decorate-TE exist.NPST  
‘Naomi has decorated the flowers (there).’
- (2) *Hana ga kazat-te aru.* [Valence-Changing (VC)]  
flower NOM decorate-TE exist.NPST  
‘(Some) flowers are decorated (there).’

While most syntactic analyses are implicit about how to distinguish between the two types, Miyagawa and Babyonyshev [M&B, henceforth] (2004) clearly use the coding of the undergoer as the criterion: if the undergoer is accusative-marked, the sentence belongs to the VM-type; if the undergoer is nominative-marked, the VC-type, although M&B use a different name for each structure. This includes an example like (3), in which the undergoer is marked by *ga* ‘nominative’.

- (3) *Boku wa yado ga yoyaku.shi-te aru.*  
I TOP hotel NOM book-TE exist.NPST  
‘I have (already) booked a hotel (room).’ (modified from M&B (2004: 273))

The goal of this paper is two-fold: to argue that (i) the (3)-type sentences belongs to the VM-type, contra M&B (2004), and (ii) the VM-type is an instance of “core subordination”, contra “nuclear subordination” (Hasegawa 1996).

First, example (3) has characteristics of the VM-type sentences. For one thing, both (1) and (3) contain an actor (‘Naomi’ and ‘I’), but in (2), the actor cannot be realized even if it is marked by a *by*-phrase, as shown by (4).

- (4) \* *Naomi niyotte hana ga kazat-te aru.*  
Naomi by flower NOM decorate-TE exist.NPST  
‘(intended) ‘(Some) flowers are decorated by Naomi.’

For another, (2) yields a stative reading, portraying the current state of the flowers. In contrast, both (1) and (3) yield an aspectual meaning, where the state brought about by the actor remains until the utterance time. The logical structure [LS] of *aru* in (1) and (3) is posited to be: **remain’** (x), where x is the base verb’s LS. These two points suggest that (3) belongs to the VM-type, implying that the undergoer in the VM-type sentences can have two case realizations: accusative as in (1), and nominative as in (3). In (3), the nominative case on the undergoer is argued to be a morphological case (Kishimoto 2004) assigned to the “pragmatic peak”, a Japanese-specific rule (Imai 2005), added to the canonical nominative case assignment rule (Van Valin 2005: 108).

Second, the VM-type sentences must be an instance of ad-core subordination. I agree with Hasegawa (1996) in that the nexus relation is subordination, as *aru* does not contribute any argument. However, the linkage type cannot be nuclear juncture because the VM-type sentences can take passive. (5) shows the passivized counterpart of (1), in which the actor, *Naomi*, appears in a *by*-phrase.

- (5) *Naomi niyotte hana ga kaza-rare-te aru.*  
 Naomi by flower NOM decorate-PASS-TE exist.NPST  
 ‘The flowers have been decorated by Naomi.’

In (5), *kaza-rare* [decorate-PASSIVE] must constitute a core of its own, as the passive affects the linking of the arguments. Since *aru* occurs outside of the sequence with *rare* ‘passive’, it must be housed in a core, separate from the passivized unit. Assuming the VM-type is an instance of ad-core subordination, the linking from semantics to syntax for (3) is diagrammed in Figure 1.

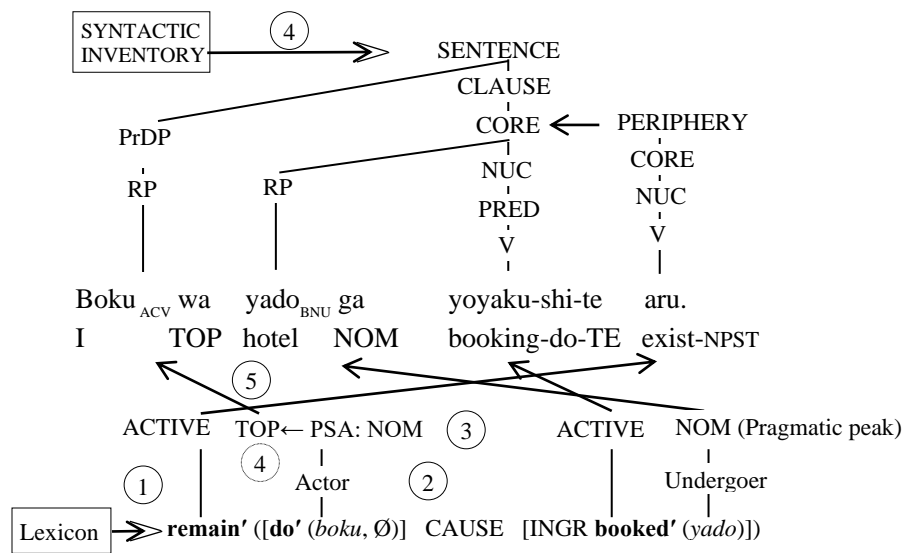


Figure 1: Ad-core subordination with *TE aru*

Case marking provides an important clue to the function of the argument. With the *TE aru* predicate, *ga* can be a morphological case, distinct from the structural nominative case. This case-marking pattern is consistent with that found in the “ergative-case-marking predicate” (Kishimoto 2004) instantiated in simplex stative predicates in Japanese, including *aru*.

## References:

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