

## Verb Verb Complex Predicates in Old Japanese

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Old Japanese (the earliest attested stage of Japanese, largely 8<sup>th</sup> century) is, like modern Japanese, considered a typical SOV language. Also like modern Japanese, Old Japanese has a complex predicate construction consisting of two adjacent verbs,  $V_1 V_2$ , of which  $V_2$  has some grammatical function, often referred to as an ‘auxiliary’ or ‘vector’ verb, depending on terminological tradition:  $V_1 V_2$ [VECT], e.g. modern Japanese *tukai-kiru* (lit. ‘use-cut’) ‘use up’. This ordering of the two verbs in the complex predicate seems consistent with a typical SOV language.

Old Japanese, however, has a competing complex predicate construction, not found to any significant extent in modern Japanese and not usually recognized or described for Old Japanese either, in which  $V_1$  is grammatical and  $V_2$  is the main verb:  $V_1$ [VECT]  $V_2$ . Using the material in the *Oxford Corpus of Old Japanese* (<http://vsarpj.orinst.ox.ac.uk/corpus/>), I will discuss the Old Japanese  $V_1$ [VECT]  $V_2$  complex predicate construction and possible hypotheses about its origin, development and demise.