A syntactic account of light verb phenomena in Japanese is proposed in preference to Grimshaw and Mester's (1988) argument transfer account. A close examination of the suru construction (in which the light verb suru occurs with a verbal noun) suggests that the argument transfer account cannot explain certain facts of this construction (e.g., "transfer" of adjuncts). In addition, contrary to a previous assumption, many verbs other than suru—all raising or control verbs—exhibit the crucial properties of a light verb. Light verb properties of these raising and control verbs can be explained once these light verb constructions are recognized as raising or control constructions, in which the verbal noun heads a syntactic predicative complement of these verbs. In the proposed analysis, "transferred" arguments are syntactically displaced out of the predicative complement, as is generally possible with raising/control constructions. This view, together with independently motivated Japanese phrase structure rules, accounts for all the light verb properties of those verbs without any special mechanism such as Argument Transfer. This analysis can also be extended to suru, which can function as a control verb. An LFG analysis incorporating this idea is proposed, utilizing the notion of Functional Uncertainty.

1. Introduction

In this paper, I will discuss light verb phenomena in Japanese. The Japanese suru light verb construction has attracted much attention in the recent literature in relation to the theory of argument structure (Grimshaw and Mester (1988), Sells (1989), Miyagawa (1989), Tsujimura (1990), Dubinsky (1990), Terada (1990), Ahn (1990), Isoda (1991), Kageyama (1991), Uchida and Nakayama (1993), cf. Kageyama (1980), Dubinsky (1985)). This construction involves the verb suru 'do' and a certain kind of argument-taking noun called the verbal noun, which is marked in the accusative. One peculiar property of this construction is that the arguments of the verbal noun appear outside the NP headed by the verbal noun, as if they were arguments of the light verb. To account for this, Grimshaw and Mester (1988) (hereafter G&M) have proposed an operation on the argument structures called "argument transfer". This idea is further elaborated by Miyagawa (1989) and Tsujimura (1990).

In this paper, I will argue for an alternative account of light verb phenomena in Japanese. I will first point out that the argument transfer account cannot explain certain facts of the suru construction (section 1). In addition, contrary to G&M's claim, many raising and control verbs, such as hajimeru 'begin', kokoromiru 'try', and meejiru 'order', also show
essentially the same properties as the light verb *suru* (section 2). I will argue that those light verb properties of raising and control verbs can be explained once we recognize that those light verb constructions are in fact raising and control constructions with the verbal noun representing the head of a syntactic predicative complement (i.e., a complement with a missing subject) of raising and control verbs (section 3). In the proposed analysis, there is no transfer of arguments or any operation on the argument structure of a verbal noun or a light verb; arguments of a verbal noun are syntactically allowed to occur outside the NP, just as phrases in a clausal predicative complement are allowed to occur outside the clause (cf. Saito (1985, to appear)). I will show that this syntactic analysis, together with some independently motivated rules of Japanese grammar, accounts for all the light verb properties of raising and control verbs without appealing to any special mechanism such as argument transfer. I will also argue that this analysis can be extended to the *suru* construction, solving some problems unexplained in the argument transfer account. I will present a formal account incorporating this idea in the framework of Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG), utilizing the notion of Functional Uncertainty. An alternative account is also discussed (section 4).

2. THE SURU CONSTRUCTION AND THE ARGUMENT TRANSFER ACCOUNT

2.1. Case Marking in the Suru Construction

The *suru* light verb construction is illustrated in (1).

\[(1) \text{Seehu-wa koogai-e [NP honbu-no idoo]-o} \]
\n\[\text{gov't-Top suburb-Goal headquarters-Gen movement-Acc} \]
\[\text{shita.} \]
\[\text{did} \]
\[\text{‘The government moved the headquarters to a suburb.’} \]

In (1), the past-tense form of the verb *suru* appears with the accusative-marked verbal noun *idoo* ‘movement’. The NP headed by the verbal noun in this construction is called the *(theta-)*transparent NP by G&M, for a reason that will become apparent below.

The most crucial property of this light verb construction is that the arguments of the verbal noun can occur outside the transparent NP under certain circumstances. In (1) above, the phrase *koogai-e* appears outside the transparent NP headed by *idoo*. This positioning is evidenced by the case marking of this argument. Two somewhat different patterns of case