How Linguistics can Contribute to Language Learning: The Structure of Japanese in Comparative Perspective

日本語教育のための言語学：日本語の言語構造と日英対照の視点から

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Japanese as an SOV language

A. Predicate (verb) comes at the end

(1)   太郎は駅前のレストランで花子と食事をした.
  Taroo wa ekimae no resutoran de Hanako to shokuji o shita.
  'Taro had dinner with Hanako at the restaurant in front of the station.'

Japanese as an SOV language

A. Predicate (verb) comes at the end
B. Has postpositions ('particles') rather than prepositions.

(2)   *太郎<u>は</u> 駅前のレストラン<u>で</u> 花子<u>と</u> 食事をした.*
 Taroo WA ekimae no resutoran DE Hanako TO shokuji o shita.
 'Taro had dinner WITH Hanako AT the restaurant in front of the station.'

Japanese as an SOV language

A. Predicate (verb) comes at the end
B. Has postpositions ('particles') rather than prepositions.
C. Modifiers precede what is modified.

(3) [おもしろい]本を 読んだ. 'I read [an interesting] book.'
[Omoshiroi] hon o yonda.

(4) [友達が紹介してくれた]本を 読んだ. 'I read a book
[that a friend introduced to me].'
[Tomodachi ga shookai shite kureta] hon o yonda.

Japanese as an SOV language

A. Predicate (verb) comes at the end
B. Has postpositions ('particles') rather than prepositions.
C. Modifiers precede what is modified.
D. Auxiliary verb follows the main verb.

(5) 今朝はなかなか起き<u>られなかった</u>.
    Kesa wa nakanaka oki-<u>rare-na-katta</u>.
    'I just <u>couldn't </u>get up this morning.'

(6)   僕はそのケーキを食べ<u>させられたくなかった</u>.
    Boku wa sono keeki o tabe-<u>sase-rare-taku-na-katta</u>.
    'I <u>did not want to be made to</u> eat that cake.'

Structure type 1:
How many nouns does a verb need?

Verbs can be put in classes according to how many nouns they take.

Every verb has a <u>hidden</u> structure formed by the pattern of nouns it takes, whether you see the nouns or not.

This pattern is called <u>argument structure</u>.

Structure type 1: Argument structure

One-place predicates: Xが 走る "X runs" (n=1)

              X ga hashiru

Two-place predicates: Xが Yを 食べる "X eats Y" (n=2)

              X ga Y o taberu

Three-place predicates:

      Xが Yを Zに あげる "X gives Y to Z" (n=3)

      X ga Y o Z ni ageru

Structure type 1:
Argument structure

In natural conversation, most clauses come with only one noun

(7) 仕事の帰りに夕刊を買って、一面を見ると、駅前デパート倒産の記事が出ていた。家に帰って 妻に見せると、困った顔をした。

Shigoto no kaeri ni yuukan o katte, ichimen o miru to, ekimae depaato toosan no kiji ga deteita. Uchi ni kaette tsuma ni miseru to, komatta kao o shita.

'On my way home from work I bought the evening paper and when I looked on the front page there was an article about the department store in front of the station going bankrupt. When I went home and showed it to my wife, she made an unhappy face.'

But every hidden slot in the argument structure has to be filled in to make sense of the meaning.

(8) … 妻に<u>見せる</u>と、…

 …*tsuma-ni <u>miseru</u>-to, …*

 '…when (I) <u>showed</u> (it) to my wife, ...'

 … X-ga Y-ni Z-o miseru to … →

 … X-ga tsuma-ni Z-o miseru to … →

 …(watashi-ga) tsuma-ni (shinbun-o) miseru to …

Structure type 1: Argument structure

Transitive/intransitive verbs:

$n(Vin) = n(Vtr) - 1$

n=1 (intransitive)   n=2 (transitive)   n=3

あく aku "open"   あける akeru "open"

直る naoru   "be fixed"   直す naosu "fix"

上がる agaru "rise"   上げる ageru "raise"

Structure type 1:
Argument structure

Some verbs have no partners

n=1 (intransitive)	n=2 (transitive)	n=3
泣く naku "cry"	Ø	
歩く aruku "walk"	Ø	
Ø	殴る naguru "hit"	
Ø	食べる taberu "eat"	

In such cases the causative SASE form and passive RARE form step in to fill in the blank.

Structure type 1: Argument structure

Some verbs have no partners

n=1 (intransitive)	n=2 (transitive)	n=3
泣く naku "cry"	Ø --> 泣かせる nakaseru "make cry"	
歩く aruku "walk"	Ø --> 歩かせる arukaseru "walk"	
Ø -->殴られる nagurareru "be hit"	殴る naguru "hit"	
Ø -->食べられる taberareru "be eaten"	食べる taberu "eat"	

SASE acts to INCREASE the number of noun slots, and RARE acts to DECREASE the number of noun slots in argument structure:

$n(V_{sase}) = n(V) + 1$

$n(V_{rare}) = n(V) - 1$

Structure type 1: Argument structure

What happens when SASE and RARE are combined?

$n((Vsase)rare) = n(Vsase) - 1 = (n(V) + 1) - 1 = n(V) + 0 = n(V)$

(8) 子供が納豆を食べる

   Kodomo ga nattoo o taberu "The child eats *nattoo*"

 --> 母親が子供に納豆を食べさせる

   Hahaoya ga kodomo ni nattoo o tabe-SASEru "The mother makes the child eat *nattoo*"

 --> 子供が（母親に）納豆を食べさせられる

   Kodomo ga (hahaoya ni) nattoo o tabe-SASE-RAREru "The child is made to eat *nattoo* (by the mother)."

Structure type 2: Information structure

Old information: information that both the speaker and hearer know of or are able to deduce from previous context

New information: information that either the speaker or hearer does not know of or is unable to deduce from previous context

Patterns of interaction between these two types of information in text or discourse are referred to as <u>information structure</u>.

Structure type 2: Information structure

WA and GA and information structure (Kuno 1973):

A. Topic WA

あの白い建物は図書館です。 "That white building is the library."

Ano shiroi tatemono WA toshokan desu.

B. Contrastive WA

この町には本屋はたくさんありますが図書館は一つもありません。

Kono machi ni wa honya WA takusan arimasu ga toshokan WA hitotsu mo arimasen. "In this town there are many bookstores, but there isn't one library."

C. GA of neutral description

大学のキャンパスの真ん中に図書館があります。

Daigaku no kyanpasu no mannaka ni toshokan GA arimasu.
" In the very middle of the college campus is a library ."

D. GA of exhaustive listing

あの白い建物が図書館です。 " That white building is the library."

Ano shiroi tatemono GA toshokan desu.

Structure type 2: Information structure

A basic pattern involving GA of neutral description and topic WA:

(9)　昔々あるところにおじいさんとおばあさん<u>が</u>いました。
　　　ある日おじいさん<u>は</u>山の方へ芝刈りに出かけました。

Mukashi mukashi aru tokoro ni ojiisan to obaasan GA imashita.

Aru hi, ojiisan WA yama no hoo e shibakari ni dekakemashita.

'Once upon a time there was AN old man and old woman. One day, THE old man set off for the mountains to gather firewood.'

Structure type 2: Information structure

How is exhaustive listing GA different from neutral description GA?
The key lies in looking at question patterns.

Exhaustive-listing GA:

(10) あの白い建物が図書館です。"That white building is the library."

Ano shiroi tatemono ga toshokan desu.

<--> どの建物が図書館ですか。"Which building is the library?"

Dono tatemono ga toshokan desu ka.

<--> 図書館であるのはどの建物ですか。

Toshokan de aru no wa dono tatemono desu ka.

" Which building is it that is the library?."

<--> 図書館であるのはあの白い建物です。

Toshokan de aru no wa ano shiroi tatemono desu.

" It is the white building that is the library"

With exhaustive listing GA, the noun marked by GA is new information, but the rest of the sentence is old information.

Structure type 2: Information structure

How is exhaustive listing GA different from neutral description GA?

The key lies in looking at question and answer patterns.

Neutral-description GA:
(11) 大学のキャンパスの真ん中に図書館があります。
　　Daigaku no kyanpasu no mannaka ni toshokan ga arimasu.
　　" In the very middle of the college campus is a library ."

　≠大学のキャンパスの真ん中にあるのは図書館です。
　　Daigaku no kyanpasu no mannaka ni toshokan ga arimasu.
　　"What is in the very middle of the campus is the library."

With neutral description GA, the noun marked by GA is new information, but is not new relative to the rest of the sentence.

Structure type 2: Information structure

How about contrastive WA--how is it different from topic WA?

Topic WA:
(12) 太郎は学生だ。 " Taroo is a student."
Taroo wa gakusei da.

Contrastive WA:
(13) 太郎は学生だ（けど、花子は学生じゃない）。
Taroo wa gakusei da (kedo Hanako wa gakusei ja nai).
" Taroo is a student, but Hanako is not (a student)."

When a noun X is marked with contrastive WA, the implication is that there is another specific noun Y and the property that X is said to have is NOT true of Y.

Structure type 2: Information structure

What kind of context is contrastive WA used in?

(14) 太郎は学生だ[けど、花子は学生じゃない]。
Taroo wa gakusei da [kedo Hanako wa gakusei ja nai].
"Taroo is a student, [but Hanako is not (a student)]."

--> assumes that both speakers know who both Taro and Hanako are AND that the matter of "being a student" or "not being a student" has already been mentioned.

--> With contrastive WA, BOTH the noun marked with WA AND the information in the rest of the sentence are old information (information mentioned before)--the entire sentence is old information!

Structure type 2: Information structure

Information structure and Kuno's 4 uses of WA and GA

	GA-marked noun	Rest of the sentence
Neutral-description GA	New	New
Exhaustive-listing GA	New	Old

	WA-marked noun	Rest of the sentence
Topic WA	Old	New
Contrastive WA	Old	Old

Understanding WA and GA requires thinking not only in terms of the noun itself that takes WA or GA, but its informational relationship to the rest of the sentence.

Structure type 3: Sentences are trees

(15)　太郎は花子からもらったチョコレートを次郎にあげた。

Taroo wa Hanako kara moratta chokoreeto o Jiroo ni ageta.

'Taro gave to Jiro the chocolate he got from Hanako.'

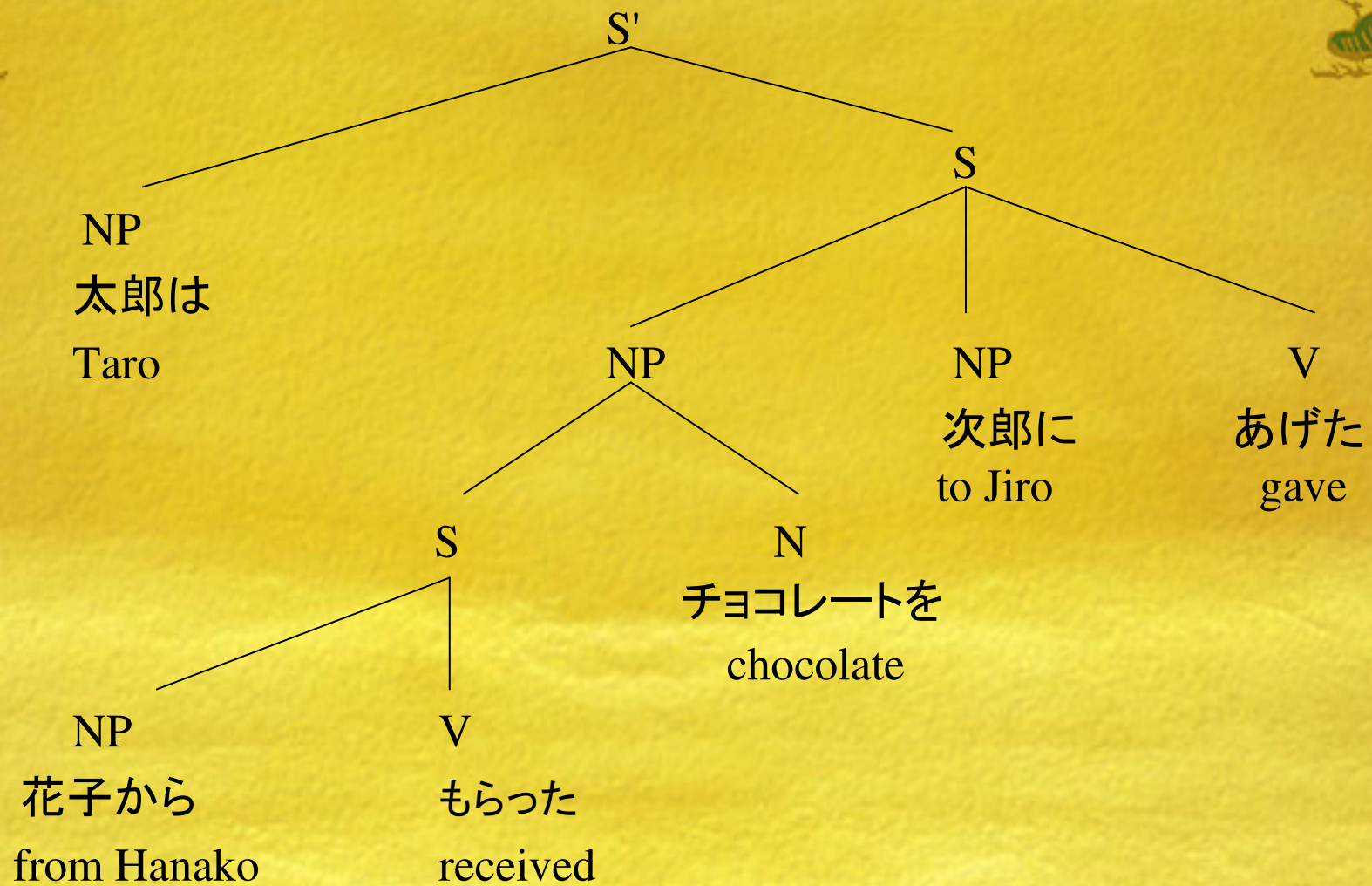［太郎］［は］［花子］［から］［もらった］［チョコレート］［を］
　　［次郎］［に］［あげた］。

[Taroo] [wa] [Hanako] [kara] [moratta] [chokoreeto] [o]
　　[Jiroo] [ni] [ageta].

［太郎は］［花子から］［もらった］［チョコレートを］
　　［次郎に］［あげた］。

[Taroo wa] [Hanako kara] [moratta] [chokoreeto o]
　　[Jiroo ni] [ageta].

［太郎は］［花子からもらった］［チョコレートを］［次郎に］［あげた］
[Taroo wa] [Hanako kara moratta] [chokoreeto o] [Jiroo ni] [ageta].

S'

NP
太郎は
Taro

S

NP

S

NP
花子から
from Hanako

V
もらった
received

N
チョコレートを
chocolate

NP
次郎に
to Jiro

V
あげた
gave

Sentences, like trees, have both vertical and horizontal structure!

Structure type 3: Sentences are trees

Thinking about WA and GA in terms of trees:

(16) 花子は食事をしている間に家を出た。

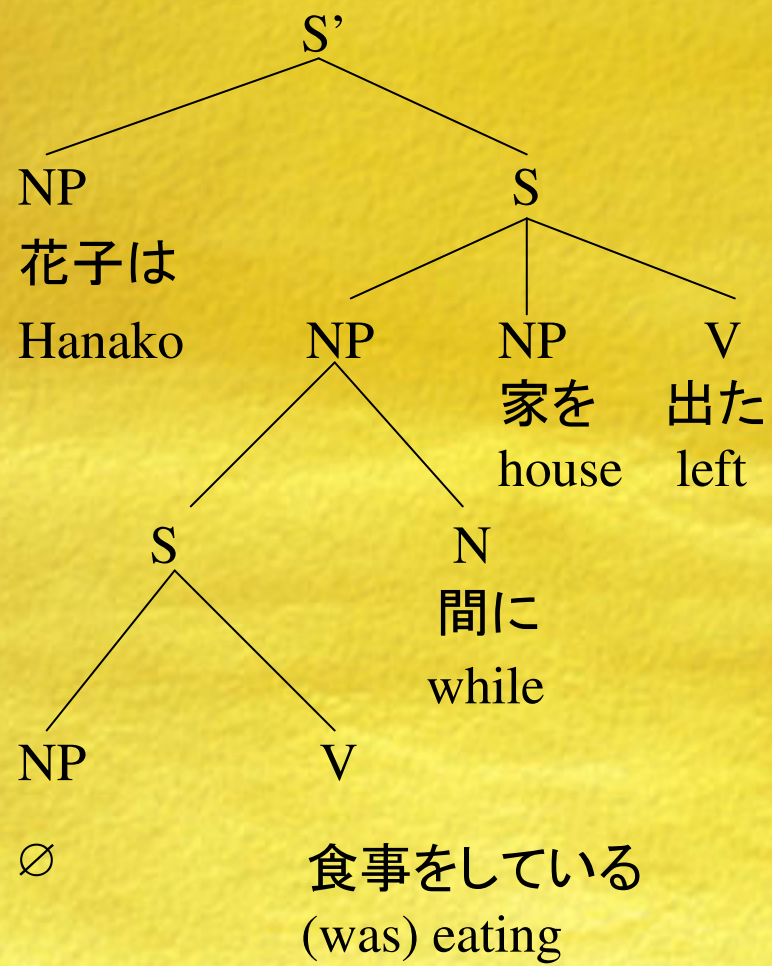*Hanako wa shokuji o shiteiru aida ni uchi o deta.*

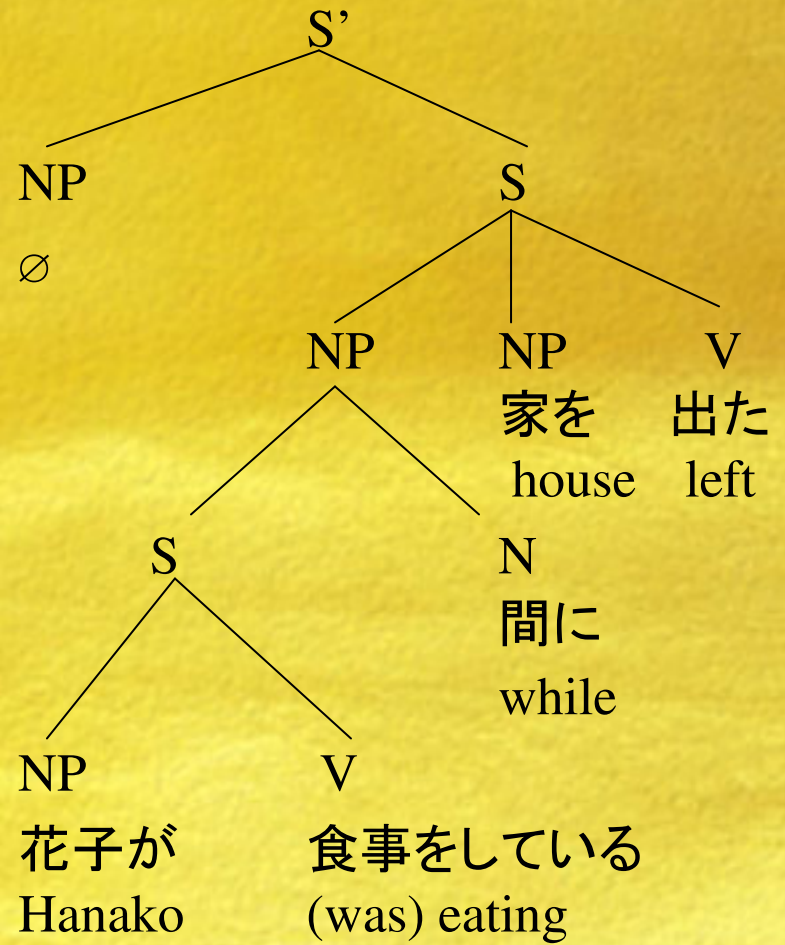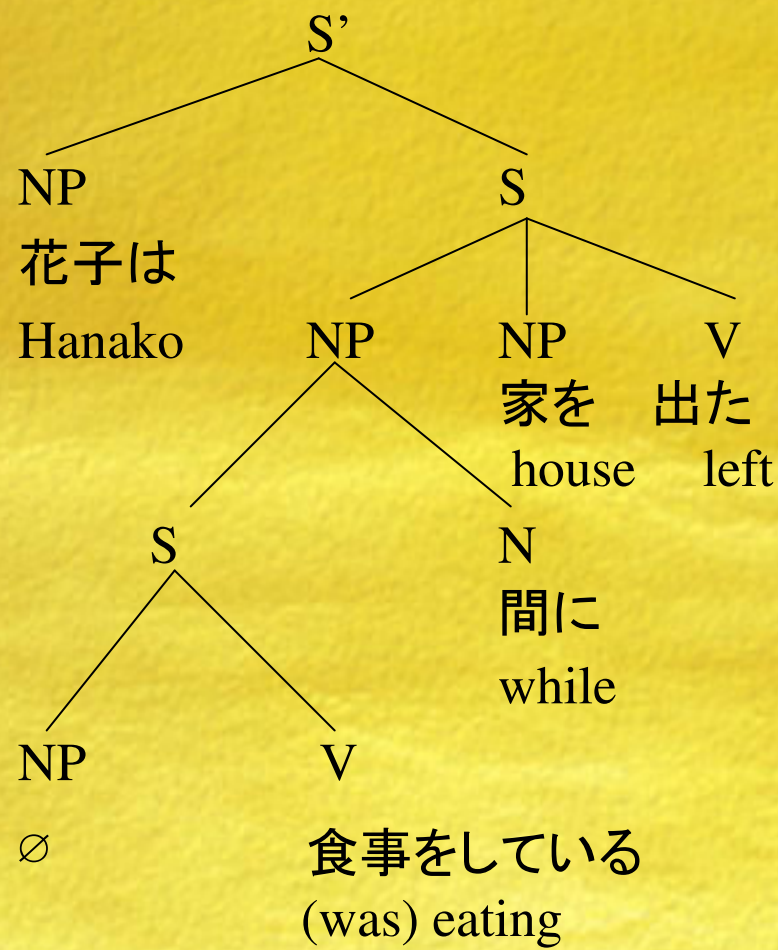Hanako left the house while (we) were eating.

(17) 花子が食事をしている間に家を出た。

Hanako ga shokuji o shiteiru aida ni uchi o deta.
While Hanako was eating, (we) left the house.

S'
NP S
花子は
Hanako NP NP V
家を 出た
house left
S N
間に
while
NP V
∅ 食事をしている
(was) eating

Left tree:

S'
NP 花子は Hanako
S
NP
NP 家を house
V 出た left
N 間に while
S
NP ∅
V 食事をしている (was) eating

Right tree:

S'
NP ∅
S
NP
NP 家を house
V 出た left
N 間に while
S
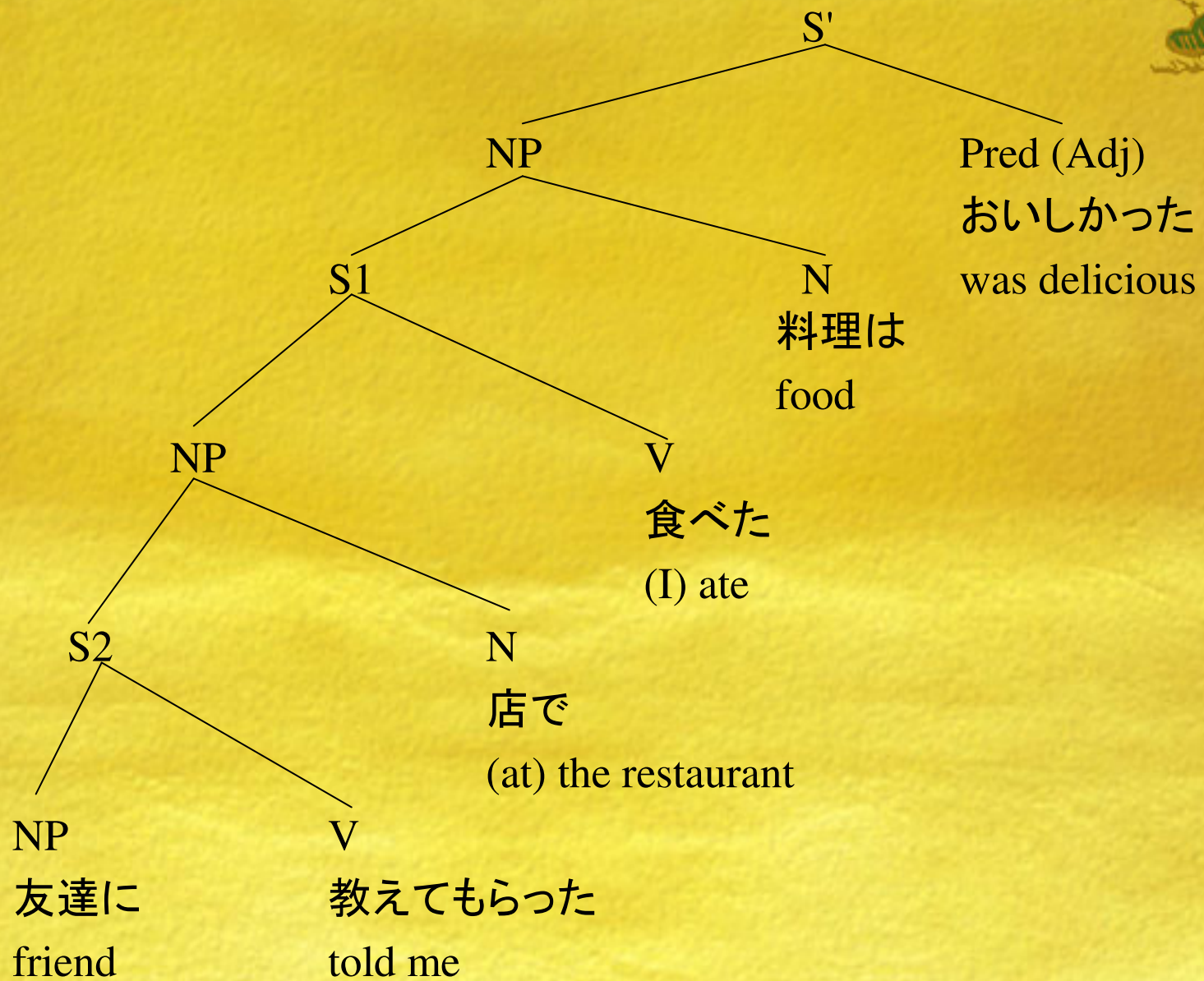NP 花子が Hanako
V 食事をしている (was) eating

Structure type 3: Sentences are trees
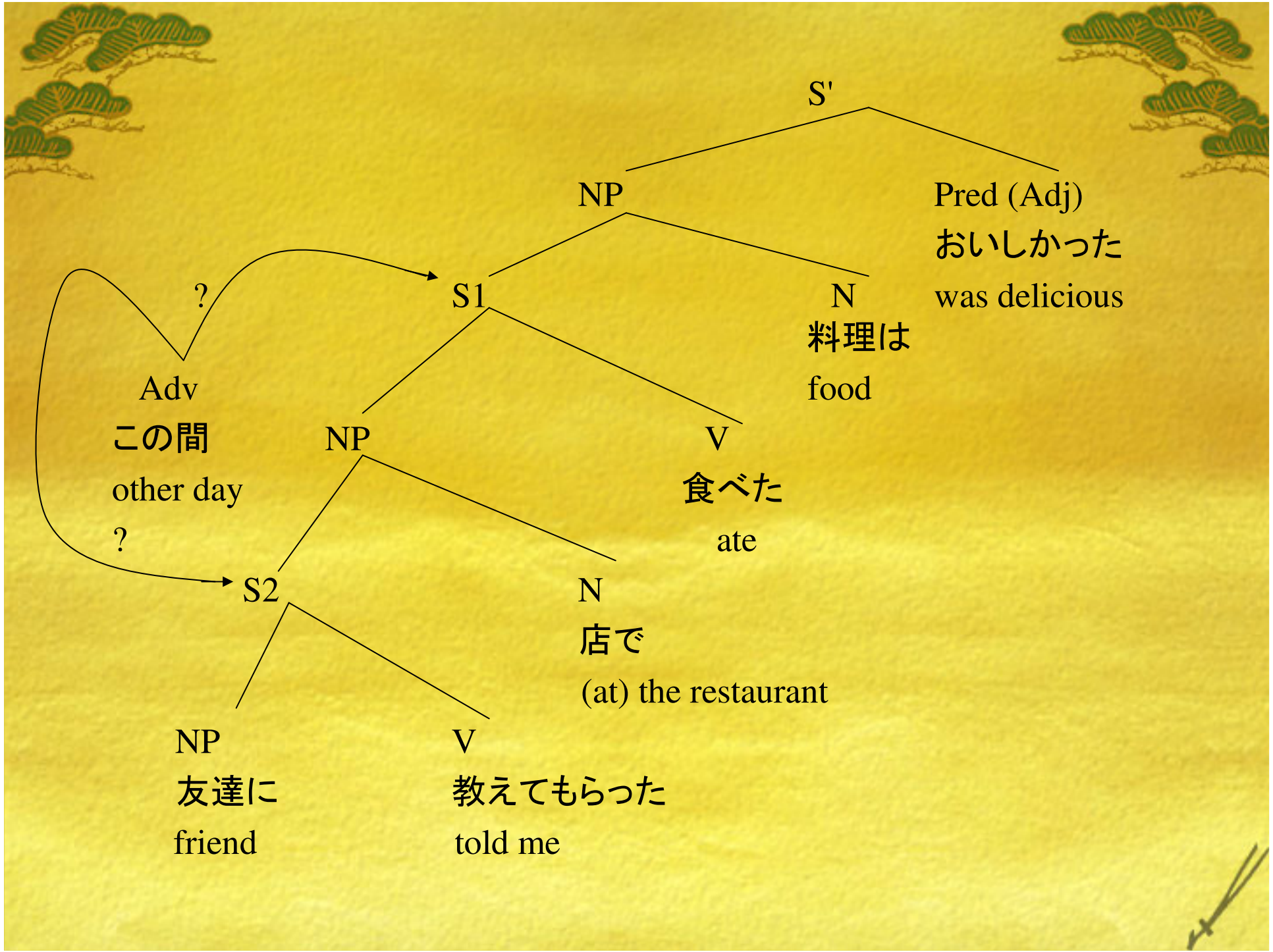
Adverbs and trees:
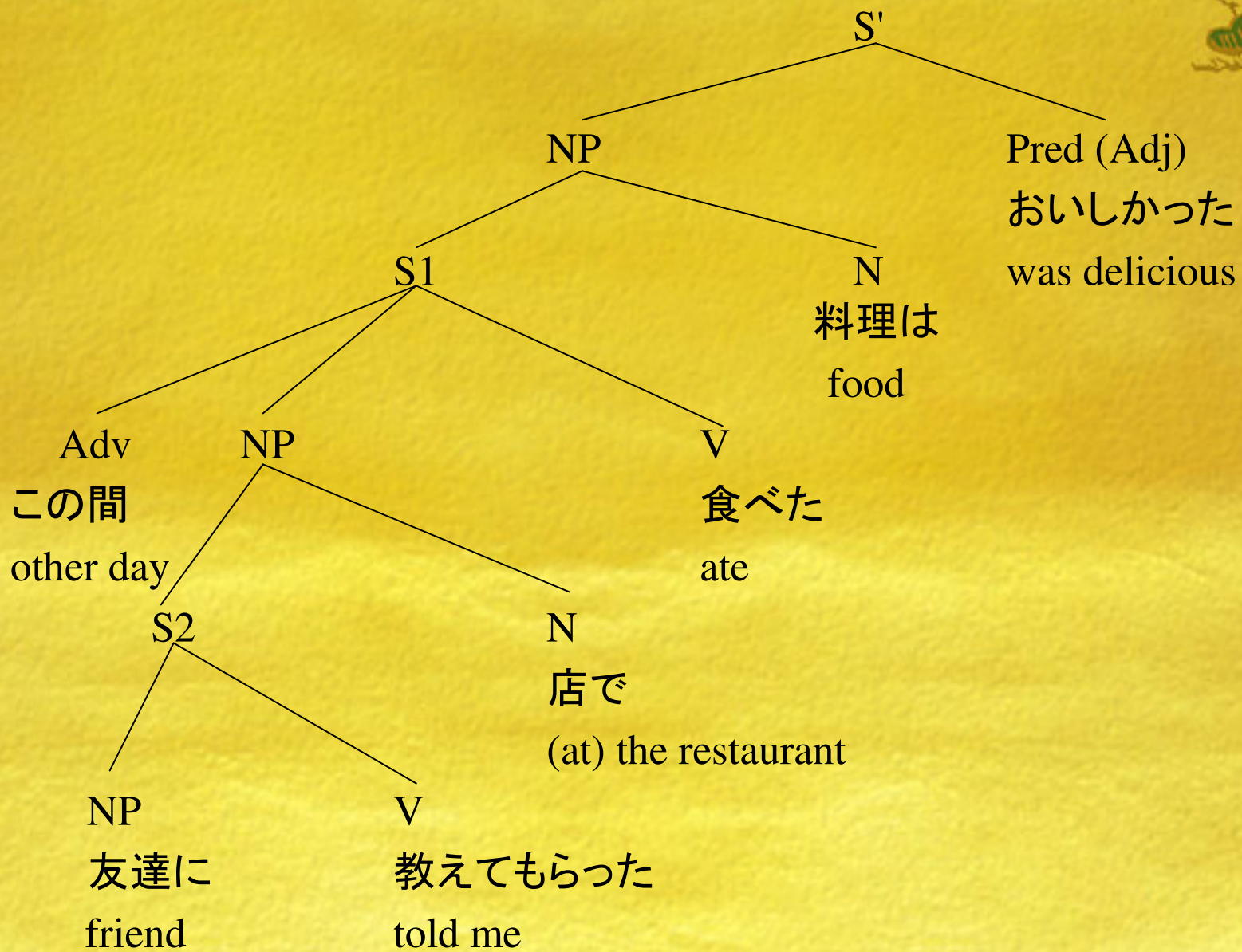
(18) この間友達に教えてもらった店で食べた料理はおいしかった。

Kono aida tomodachi ni oshiete-moratta mise de tabeta ryoori wa oishikatta.

"The food I ate at the restaurant that my friend told me about the other day was delicious."

S'
- NP
  - S1
    - NP
      - S2
        - NP 友達に friend
        - V 教えてもらった told me
      - N 店で (at) the restaurant
    - V 食べた (I) ate
  - N 料理は food
- Pred (Adj) おいしかった was delicious

S'

NP   Pred (Adj)
おいしかった
was delicious

?   S1

N
料理は
food

Adv
この間
other day
?

NP   V
食べた
ate

S2

N
店で
(at) the restaurant

NP   V
友達に   教えてもらった
friend   told me

S'

NP

Pred (Adj)
おいしかった
was delicious

S1

N
料理は
food

Adv
この間
other day

NP

V
食べた
ate

S2

N
店で
(at) the restaurant

NP
友達に
friend

V
教えてもらった
told me

S'
├── NP
│   ├── S1
│   │   ├── NP
│   │   │   ├── S2
│   │   │   │   ├── Adv この間 other day
│   │   │   │   ├── NP 友達に friend
│   │   │   │   └── V 教えてもらった told me
│   │   │   └── N 店で (at) the restaurant
│   │   └── V 食べた ate
│   └── N 料理は food
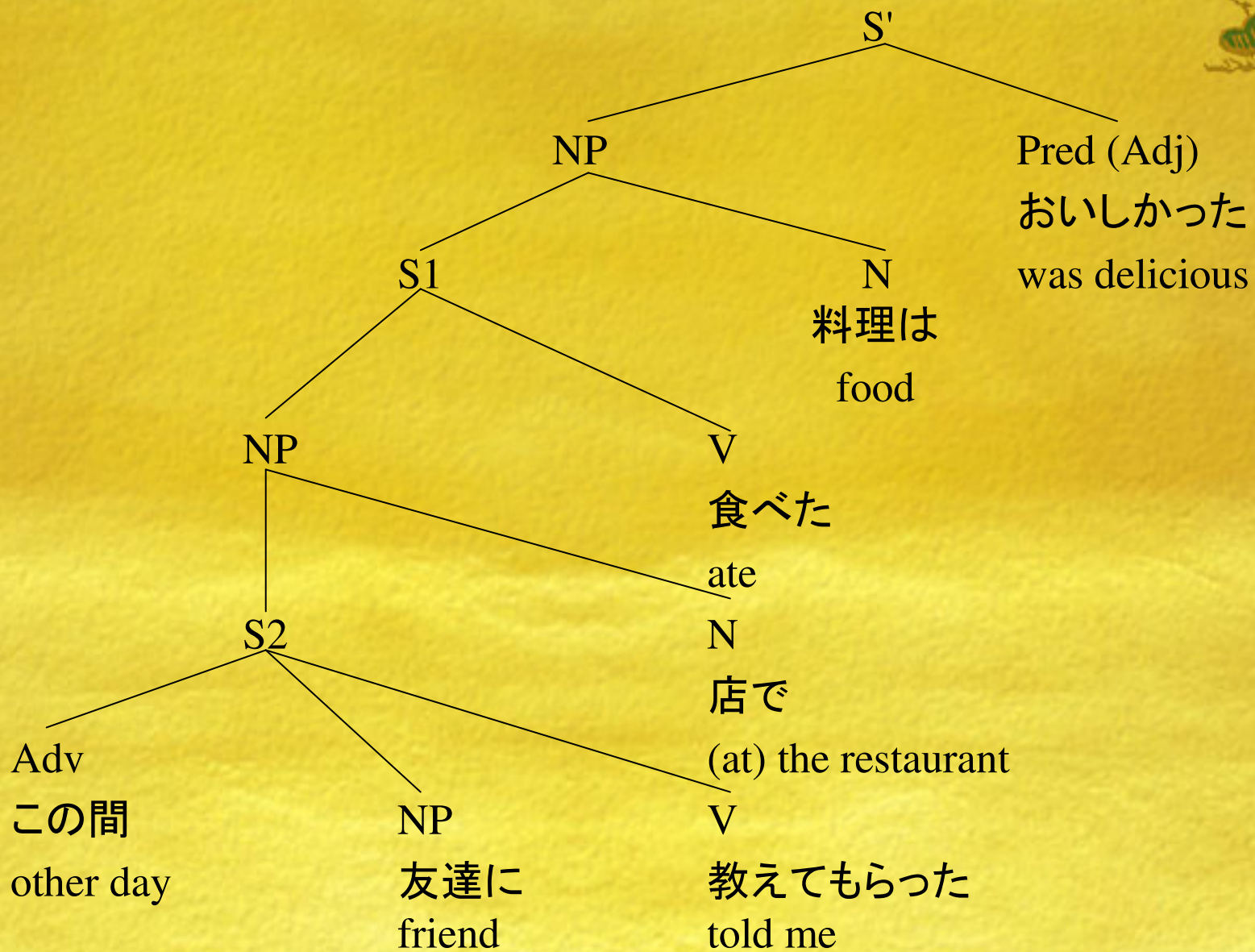└── Pred (Adj) おいしかった was delicious

Structure type 3: Sentences are trees

Thinking in terms of trees when the going gets tough:

(19) 異なった学説もしくは思想を持つ者たちが、一つの一致点に<u>到達し</u>、もしくは一定の政策を全体の決定として<u>承認する</u>ためには、国家もしくは団体の意思を分裂させることが討論の目的であるのではなく、よりよき一致を目ざせばこその討論であり批判であることを<u>認識し</u>、討論・批判の精神および方法についての思想的ならびに技術的訓練を<u>積まねばならない</u>。

（矢内原忠雄著「言論自由の思想的根拠」より）

SUMMARY

- Paying attention to the hidden slots that have to be filled with EVERY verb and predicate and understanding how those slot patterns change with different verb forms.

- Noticing the interaction between what is already known and what is new or unknown in Japanese discourse, and letting WA and GA be your guide to that.

- Thinking in terms of up and down, not just left to right, as sentences become more complex.

ご清聴ありがとうございました。

Thank you for your kind attention!

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