

# Nouniness and Verbiness of *V-ing*

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## ABSTRACT

従来の文法の考え方では、英語の単語は8品詞に分類されてきた。しかしながら、全ての単語がいずれか一つの品詞分類に当てはまるというわけではなく、その線引きは曖昧である。

本論文ではその曖昧性を立証するために、*V-ing* を例に、「動名詞」と「(現在)分詞」の二つに分ける従来の二分法ではなく、一つの共通する“*V-ing construction*”として捉え、それらが動詞と名詞の間に位置するものであり、名詞性の高いものから動詞性の高いものまで連続体を成していることを説明する。

動詞性の高い *V-ing* は、一連の *V* の動作の1ショットを抜き出しているものの、背景にはその動作全体が示唆されている。一方名詞性の高いものは、出来事を指し示す機能が高く、通常は質量名詞と捉えられるが、さらに名詞性が高くなると可算名詞化するものもある。その中間に位置する形容詞的な *V-ing* は話者の判断を含む語である場合が多い。

## 1. Introduction and Literature Review

For a long period from Classic Latin Grammar, word classes, or parts of speech, are one of the main subjects for linguists. The distinction of word classes has been also an important issue from a view of language learning.

Many linguists in the past such as formalists thought of word classes as a source; sentences and stories are emerged from them. They adopted the

classification of Latin Grammar, which is based on the forms of words, i.e. inflection, agreement, or cases. Unfortunately, it is not perfectly fit for the English language. They explain that lexical categories “are distinguished by having different values for the two binary distinctive features  $\pm N / \pm V$ ” (Chomsky 1970, cf. Baker 2003: 1). Their analysis is based on the “syntactic categories as structural concepts without a necessary connection with semantic or other extralinguistic factors” (Croft 1991: 42).

On the contrary, a functionalist approach regards sentences or discourse as being primary, seeing them as gestalt, and word classes are to be defined only through the use of a word in a sentence (or larger, discourse) or pragmatic function. Cognitive Grammar does not take the binary (oppositional) understanding of word classes as  $[\pm N]$  or  $[\pm V]$ . Rather, it positively admits there exists gradience between nouns and verbs.

English has many expressions which lie between nouns and verbs, for example, participles (present and past), gerunds, *to*-infinitives, and derivational expressions. They are somewhat nouns, and somewhat verbs at the same time. Form such as word-form, inflection, or word order does not answer the question what the definition of nouns is or what makes such-and-such a conjunction, for just putting words in line does not make a sentence or a story.

This thesis aims to present a revised division of word classes focused on *V-ing* words from a functional view of language, especially centering on their nouniness and verbiness, with the aid of Croft’s (1991, 2001) semantic map.

Traditionally, the English language has been classified into eight “parts of speech,” i.e. nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. This classification depends on syntactic characteristics and the division is after Classic Greek Grammar or Latin Grammar. The criteria on which the division relies are inflections and cases.

Jespersen casts a doubt on the value of classical eight parts of speech and develops his own classification. His classification was not just a syntactic one, thinking “we take into consideration its meaning and function in the sentence” and “everything should be kept in view, form, function, and meaning” (Jespersen 1965: 60). At the

same time, he admits that all words, phrases, or any size of verbal expressions are to be interpreted in context.

If I am asked to give the meaning of *jar* or *sound* or *palm* or *tract*, the only honest answer is, Show me the context, and I will tell you the meaning. In one connexion [*sic*] *pipe* is understood to mean a tobacco-pipe, in another, a water-pipe, in a third a boatswain's whistle, in another one of the tubes of an organ.

(Jespersen 1965: 66)

In this way, even autonomous words cannot make sense without context. Language is neither a series of sounds nor an arrangement of words and morphemes, but a speaker uses them with some intention. A hearer usually grasps it and responds to it. In this respect, language is a matter of function rather than form. So it is necessary to focus on its semantic and pragmatic features to figure out an appropriate division of word classes.

One of the discourse-based categorizations of word classes are of Hopper and Thompson (1984). They “substitute the pragmatic basis of discourse function as the chief factor conditioning categoriality” instead of morphological or syntactic and semantic criteria (Hopper and Thompson 1984). What they insist is that “prototypicality in linguistic categories depends not only on independently verifiable semantic properties, but also — and perhaps more crucially — on linguistic function in the discourse” and the necessity to understand words as something to “play a certain role in the discourse in which it figures” (*ibid*).

They place nouns (Ns) and verbs (Vs) at each extremity of word classes and start their discussion from prototypicality of each category, then shift to peripherality or intermediacy.<sup>1</sup> The function of prototypical Ns is to introduce participants of the discourse and props, whereas prototypical Vs report an actual event in discourse. So, the function of an N in a discourse is reference, but when it is used as one which has “lower” categoriality, it lacks the prototypical form as well as its referential function.

They claim that the full prototypical form for nouns is with determiners and the possibility of modifiers. Prototypical verbs, quite the contrary, denote actions or events which lack time-stability. Consequently, stative Vs, which report states, not events, show less categoriality of Vs. Hopper and Thompson argue that in many languages such stative-meanings are conveyed in adjectives. They explain the difference between predicate adjectives and Vs like this:

In English, for example, adjectives show NONE of the oppositions found on prototypical Vs: they are not marked for subject number, nor do they occur with tense / aspect or modal morphology. Instead, they must occur with a lexically empty copula whose only function is to carry those oppositions. (*ibid*)

Then they show how adjectives swing back and forth between Ns and Vs from a standpoint of their properties concerning time-stability, especially when they are used attributively.

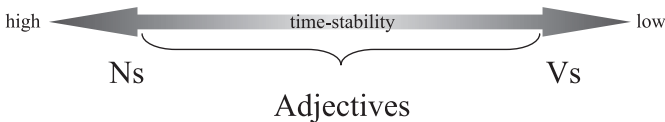


Figure 1: The range adjectives take

In this vein, it is apparent that they treat *V-ing* words as adjectives. In their argumentation, lexical items with inherently stative meanings can easily give up their predicate role as in (1a). *V-ing* words in (1b) with stative properties have the same function as (1a), which is applied to past participles in (1c).

- (1) a. *the black sheep*  
 b. *the gazing sheep*  
 c. *the stolen sheep*

(*ibid*)

However, *V-ing* words with active properties are difficult to be used attributively as in (2b), and moreover, adjectival expressions which are exclusively used as predicative are quite similar to Vs, both in meaning (representing temporary states) and in syntactic features as in (2d) and (2f).

- (2) a. swinging cable  
 b. ??snapping cable  
 c. The dinner is ready.  
 d. \*the ready dinner  
 e. My daughter is afraid.  
 f. \*my afraid daughter (ibid)

In this way, Vs and verby expressions have a role to report some event in the discourse. Otherwise, the expression would be nearer to Ns. In reality, Hopper and Thompson give imperatives, nominalization (of verbs), Vs in purpose clauses, and Vs (or *V-ings*) in the participial constructions as examples of non-reporting expressions. All of them are deprived of reporting function in discourse.

Croft (2001) introduces Radical Construction Grammar, which explains that “syntactic categories are derivative of — in fact epiphenomenal to — the representation of grammatical knowledge” and defines “the grammatical knowledge of a speaker is knowledge of constructions (as form-meaning pairings), words (also as form-meaning pairings), and mapping between words and the constructions they fit in” (Croft 2001: 46). Constructions are any size of verbal expressions seen as united. His theory is based on and aims for universal grammar and a semantic categorization of word classes.

Croft (1991) seeks for universally-valid criteria for word classes such as nouns or adjectives, or grammatical properties such as subject or topic. He tries to figure out how grammatical factors play a role in defining grammatical relations cross-linguistically because distinguishing word classes “is at the very heart of grammar”

(Croft 1991: 36). He does so from a functionalist point of view, bringing in the benefit of formalists. In presenting his syntactic categorization, Croft seems to have these two points in mind: to see language as a manifestation of human cognition, and to focus on the function of language admitting the basic correctness of definition by behavioral (of morphological) features.

Croft refers to Hopper and Thompson (1984) and uses categoriality of prototypes and the different presentations of non-prototypical cases. “A form which is prototypical of its category will tend to display all those characteristics which are representative of the category, and none which are representative of another” (Hopper and Thompson, 1984). For example, a noun which serves as a predication has some syntactic behavior added, and at the same time, some meaning is also added (Croft 1991). So, the simpler or more basic an expression is, the more strong property of the categoriality the expression serves. It is because “every language has roots whose semantic content makes them more likely to be realized as N’s than V’s, and other roots for which the reverse is true” (Hopper and Thompson, 1984). Croft uses the notion of markedness; so the most basic manifestation is the most unmarked, and *destroying* is more marked than *destroy*, for instance.

	Reference	Modification	Predication
Objects	number <i>vehicle(s)</i>	's; Prep; Inflex <i>vehicle's; of vehicle; vehicular</i>	COP + ART <i>be a vehicle</i>
Properties	-NR <i>whiteness</i>	degree <i>white(er); est</i>	COP <i>be white</i>
Actions	COMP that; <i>-ing</i> <i>that he destroys; destroying</i>	WH-Rel; <i>-ing</i> <i>which he destroyed; destroying</i>	tense <i>destroy(-ed)</i>

(based on Croft 1991, 2001)

Table 1: Semantic map of English word classes

Now Croft sets two axes, vertical and horizontal, for the semantic map. The horizontal axis consists of three parameters, reference, modification, and predication. They are defined on external (cross-linguistic) basis of pragmatic (discourse) function. Reference is the cross-linguistically defined function of a nominal form. It is “to get the hearer to identify an entity as what the speaker is talking about” (Croft 1991: 52). Predication is the function of what the speaker intends to say about the reference, and it is verbalized as a verb in English. Modification is the function carried on by adjectives in English, and it is “an accessory function to reference and predication” (*ibid*).

Croft’s semantic map is an example for English syntactic categories of prototypical members. In it, he gives a precise definition for semantic prototypes of three classes. The major semantic properties of each semantic class he thinks are valency, stativity, persistence, and gradability. Valency is inherent relationality of a word, which requires another entity (or entities, called argument(s)) to exist.

On this account, ...man is not relational: the existence of a man does not imply the existence of another entity. ...Thus, in terms of relationality, the valency of common nouns is zero. ...The lexical semantic class used to define prototypical adjectives consists of valency one.... Verbs, on the other hand, are represented by concepts possessing a valency of one, two, or more. (Croft 1991: 63)

Stativity is an aspectual matter, which varies in states and processes. It has a lot to do with the presence or absence of change over time. Prototypical adjectives and verbs do not exhibit any difference in terms of valency, but they are different in the stativity: the former is states and the latter processes (with no stativity). Another property is persistence, which shows how long the state or process lasts over time. It can be tested by iterability.

[I]teration is incompatible with the description of a persisting concept but acceptable with a transitory one since the transitory one can reasonably be

expected to occur again.

(Croft 1991: 64)

The final property Croft uses is gradability. It is a unique property for adjectives, which nouns and verbs do not have.

	Objects	Properties	Actions
Valency	0	1	$\geq 1$
Stativity	state	state	process
Persistence	persistent	persistent	transitory
Gradability	nongradable	gradable	nongradable

(Croft 1991: 65)

Table 2: Semantic properties of prototypical lexical classes

Croft, using the semantic map, succeeds in presenting a cross-linguistic definition of major word classes of nouns, adjectives, and verbs, especially in their prototypical representations.

Now, two major functional theories of word classes are correlated with each other and can be summed up as in Figure 2 below:

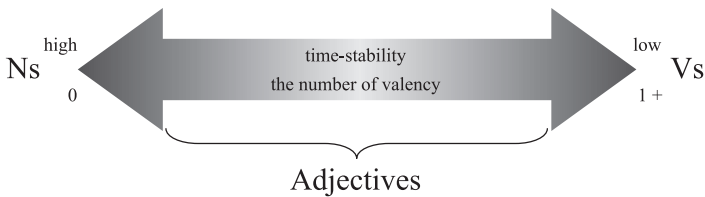


Figure 2: A summarized functional view between nouns and verbs

The arrow shows both degrees of time-stability and the number of valency. Time-stability is the highest at the left extremity and the lowest at the opposite. The number of valency is the smallest at the left and the biggest at the right. All the intermediate is covered by a word class called adjectives.



## 2. THING / RELATION Construals in Cognitive Grammar<sup>2</sup>

About the meaning of any expression, Langacker thinks that meaning should be sought in cognitive processing.

It does not reside in objective reality, nor is the problem semantic description revealingly formulated in terms of truth conditions. Even expressions describing an objective situation may differ in meaning depending on how the situation is construed. (Langacker 2002: 61)

When a situation is “characterized by the elevation of some entity to a special level of prominence within a predication” through cognitive processing, the manifestation can be divided into two fundamental classes: THING and RELATION (Langacker 1987: 183).<sup>3</sup> THING is designated by a nominal, and RELATION is designated by an atemporal relation or a process. Regarding word classes, a nominal is normally conveyed by a noun, an atemporal relation is typically an adjective, and a process is manifested by a verb.

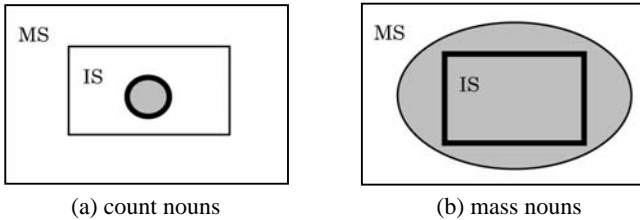
In Cognitive Grammar, both nouns and verbs are “divided” into two subcategories: nouns are divided into count nouns and mass nouns, and verbs into perfective uses of verbs and imperfective uses. However, the distinction is not determined by the lexical item itself.

- (3) a. *Birds fly and sing.*  
b. *I made him sing a song in front of the class.*

The use of *sing* in (3a) is imperfective, which is used as a generic statement of birds’ inherent characteristic. *Sing* in (3b), in contrast, can be interpreted as perfective because to sing a song has its beginning and ending.

The distinction between count and mass nouns, and that of between perfective uses of verbs and imperfective ones, greatly depends on conceptualization. In the case of nouns, a conceptualizer can use a count noun as a mass noun by shifting her focus.

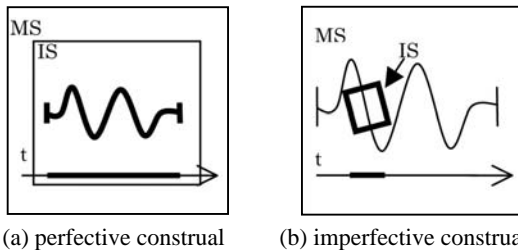
It is the conceptualizer who sees its boundary or ignores it as shown in Figure 2.2 and judges it as a count noun or a mass noun.



(Langacker 2008: 133)

Figure 3: Conceptual differences in count and mass nouns

Correspondingly, when the conceptualizer includes the beginning and ending of an event in her immediate scope, the event is bounded, and therefore, the process is construed as perfective as in Figure 4(a). But when the boundary is out of the immediate scope, as in Figure 4(b), the same event is construed as unbounded, thus, imperfective.



(based on Langacker 2008: 153)

Figure 4: Conceptual difference in perfective and imperfective uses of verbs

Langacker calls this type of conceptual shift, diagrammed in Figure 4 (b), imperfectivization. Langacker (2002) explains that adding the suffix *-ing* is to imperfectivize a perfective process, which causes the process atemporal. It is true that

the interlocutors defocus the sense of time included in the event. Nevertheless, there surely is time flowing in the event. They are just defocused, not disappeared. When imperfectivized, the process is viewed internally (Langacker 2002). But since *V-ing* words are in-betweeners of nouns (with zero valency) and verbs (with one valency or more), they ought to have more than one valency and at the same time, and the wholeness is foregrounded. There ought to be gradience in focusing.

### 3. Nouniness and Verbiness of *V-ing*

As seen, imperfectivized words (*V-ing* words) are said to be intermediate between nouns and verbs. In actuality, even items classified in the category of *V-ing* forms exhibit their gradience from “verby” *V-ing* words to “nouny” *V-ing* words. Just as Ross’s (1972) category squish reveals (see (12)), words classes do not display its discrete position but they have ambiguous property which cannot be determined where to belong.

- (4) a. *He accused her of crying wolf and prepared to go riding on the Sandringham estate.*
- b. *I went riding through the streets, smiling and talking to everybody.* (BNC)

The syntactic behaviors in two instances in (4) are quite similar. Both *ridings* follow the verb *go* and precede prepositions, *on* in (4a) and *through* in (4b). Two *ridings* here, however, are usually categorized to different classification; riding in (4a) is categorized in a gerund and that in (4b) is as a present participle. Since every category includes its prototypes and peripheral instances, this section aims to disclose the existence of the intermediate status of *V-ing* words which are difficult to determine their appropriate categories as traditional classifications did. This thesis does not mean to present the distinctness of, say, gerund and present participle, but to recognize the blurriness, the indistinctness of *V-ing* words. *V-ing* words have possibilities to denote rather processual (verby) properties or quite referential (nouny) properties.

### 3.1 V-ing Words with High Verbiness (V-ing Words as RELATION 1)

As we seen in the previous section, perfective uses of verbs carry the potential for imperfectivization. That realizes a construal for a conceptualizer to see the event internally, ignoring the heterogeneity of the event. However, the conceptualizer does not totally put all the actions out of her perception in order to focus on the internal action expressed in a V-ing word. How can one say *he is kicking a ball* without recognizing actions outside the immediate scope?



Figure 5: Imperfectivization realized by recognizing whole series of action

Imperfectivization is a cognition of just one scene out of the total actions from (1) to (4) in Figure 5. Just looking at one of the internal actions evokes several interpretations of the whole action. Anyone who sees only the picture in Figure 5 (3) might think he is dancing, or this action might be his unique courtship behavior. How can one tell Figure 5 (3) from the picture below?



But a usual conceptualizer should include all the actions (a series of action of kicking) in her perception, and then, or at the same time, she can focus on one of the action Figure 5(3).<sup>4</sup>

In this sense, present participles assume a very strong processual property. So it can be said that this usage is with high verbiness. It is regarded as adjectival simultaneously by implication that the *V-ing* words function as modifiers. They are adjectival in the following three features. First, they do not specify time. A *RELATION* denoting a process (verb) is inherently temporal (potentially grounded in temporal axis in a clausal level) but imperfectivization is an operation of ignoring the time flowing, which is called to atemporalization by Langacker (2002). An attention must be paid here: atemporalization does not mean complete loss of time speculation. Time axis is included in the immediate scope of a conceptualizer who narrows her field of view, and moreover, she is just defocusing neighboring elements to profile the inner one motion.

Second, they denote properties of nouns, i.e., they are modifiers.

- (5) a. *That idea would be very nice.*  
 b. *I have a nice idea.*
- (6) a. *The parents are smiling.*  
 b. *Kids are drawing pictures of their smiling parents.*

The two instances of *nice* in (5) naturally modify the noun *idea* because *nice* is a plain adjective. To compare them with *V-ing* words in (6), a similar nature emerges. Both when put in the predicative position (after the copula verb) and the attributive position (just before the noun), *V-ing* words (*smiling*) as well as adjectives (*nice*) consistently have function of modifying nouns.

The third feature of making present participles adjectival is that they do not need any preposition between them and their modifying nouns but these two elements are combined by copula verbs with no article between them.<sup>5</sup> *Nice* in (5a) can be used in a complement position with a copula verb and no article. *V-ing* words normally categorized as present participles exhibit indistinguishable syntactic behaviors as in (6) examples. These *V-ing* words after *be* verbs show the same usage as plain adjectives. The only difference between these *V-ing* words and plain adjectives is that *V-ing* words

can take their objects after them if the verb stems are transitive as *drawing* in (6b).

In this perspective, in these semantic and syntactic features, *V-ing* words normally categorized as present participles are said to be verby adjectives which take on both properties of verbs and adjectives.

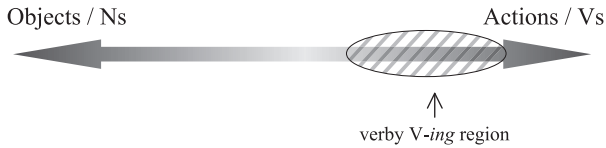


Figure 6: The range verby *V-ing* take

### 3.2 Adjectival *V-ing* Words (*V-ing* Words as RELATION 2)

As the previous subsection reveals, *V-ing* words themselves exhibit an adjectival property. They are noun modifiers. This subsection, aims at the clarification on adjectival *V-ing* words as an in-between of verby and nouny *V-ing* words.

Adjectival *V-ing* words, or *V-ing* adjectives show their high categoriality as adjectives. Quirk *et al.* (1985) establish four criteria for adjectives.

- (7) a. free occurrence in attributive function
- b. free occurrence in predicative function
- c. ability to be premodified by the intensifier *very*<sup>6</sup>
- d. ability to take comparative and superlative forms

According to the definition by Croft's semantic map (1991), prototypical adjectives take on modifying function and semantically show property of nouns. Outside of prototypical are modification by objects (with genitive's, with derivational morphology, and with prepositions like *of*, *in*, etc.) and by actions (participles). In any semantic class, adjectival expressions have a function of modifying.

Modifying nouns is the main function of adjectives, so something used to denote a property of nouns should be adjectives. In this respect, Dixon (1977) classifies seven types of adjectives. His criteria is “semantic, syntactic, and morphological” (Dixon 1977: 15-16), but the perspective he takes is truly semantic as the names of the types conveys.

In fact, something gradable is realized in adjectival representations and that is the peculiar property of adjectives. *V-ing* adjectives also present this property.

Truly adjectival *V-ing* adjectives are registered in the lexicon. *OED* includes almost all the *V-ing* words which are used as a present participle, either after *be* verbs or before nouns. But handy dictionaries do not register all the *V-ing* participles as adjectives. When they are registered, it seems all the four criteria presented by Quirk *et al.* (1985) are fulfilled. Again, they are truly the syntactic criteria of adjectives, so lexicalization is said to be realized when all the criteria of the word class are satisfied. That is, at the same time, semantic feature(s) of prototypical adjectives is(are) satisfied.

It is possible that these *V-ing* words have been used so often that people assume their adjectival properties. One of the factors that they are recognized as adjectives are their textual frequency because “the more frequently a form occurs in texts, the more grammatical it is assumed to be” (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 106). Their adjectival usage is also supported by Corpus data. Another factor might be their intrinsic characteristics of gradability, which fit the adjectival usage perfectly.

I have argued that *V-ing* words are used to modify nouns, whether they are normally classified as present participles in progressives or as adjectives. Prototypical adjectives represent static properties, and on the other hand, peripheral ones show more dynamic and processual ones. In this sense, *V-ing* adjectives in the lexicon have more nouny property and modify nouns directly and statically.

### 3.3 *V-ing* Words with High Nouniness (*V-ing* Words as THING)

#### 3.3.1 *V-ing* Nouns as the Results of Syntactic Operations

English has four cases in which verbs need to be changed into *V-ing* forms: in the

subject position of a finite clause, in the object position, in the complement position, and in the object position of a preposition.<sup>8,9</sup> They are all changed through syntactic operations.

- (8) *Driving my new Fiat 500 is a lot of fun.* (subject)  
(9) *I don't hate washing my Copen because it's so small.* (object)  
(10) *My favorite pastime is watching car catalogues.* (complement)  
(11) *I checked the pressure of the tires by pushing my finger against them.*  
(prepositional object)

Making a verb into a V-ing form, however, does not simply mean it is done through a syntactic operation. It also coerces (Langacker, 1987a, 1987b, cf. Croft (1991)) the conceptualizer (the hearer, this time) into capturing it as a noun.

The continuum in (12) is introduced by Ross (1972), which is called 'the category squish.'<sup>10</sup>

- (12) Verb > Present Participle > Perfect Participle > Passive Participle > Adjective > Preposition (?) > "adjectival noun" (e.g., *fun, snap*) > Noun (*ibid:* 316)

This is just the same as Croft's (1991) 'cognitive file.' He tells that being about something, i.e. something expressed in the form of a noun, involves creating a cognitive file for the noun, and this is not the case with adjectives (modifying expressions) or verbs (predicating expressions). A cognitive file, he explains, is a kind of cognitive operation in which something retains for a while (for communication to go on successfully). This hypothesis is supported from a discourse functional point of view, 'topic continuity,' because topic is designated by a reference, that is to say, a noun. This is also corresponding to time-stability in nouns by Hopper and Thompson.

Thus, a noun has its own status, as a stable phenomenon in cognitive processing. And when a speaker uses a nominal expression instead of a predicative one, that



coerces the hearer into conceptualizing the situation or an event as a noun, a stable one opening a cognitive file.

- (13) *The fall from the ledge broke his leg.*

The nominal example in (13) shows the case of coercion for a nominal, stable interpretation of the event. It has the effect of informing the hearer of the event as a kind of news which is reported afterwards. This evokes a different conceptualization in the hearer when she would get the information in this form:

- (14) *He fell from the ledge and broke his leg.*

Langacker explains verbal nominalization using the notion of scanning (Langacker, 2002). He “divides” the way of conceptualization of our world into two ways; THING and RELATION. THING is basically a noun in terms of a word class. A conceptualizer sees it and as a result of conceptualization she put it into words.



Figure 7: The difference of the number of valency between plain nouns and V-ing nouns

### 3.3.2 *V-ing Nouns in the Lexicon*

English has both plain nouns and *V-ing* nouns to denote the same situation conceptualized as THING. The suffix *-ing* is very productive in making nouns. Surprisingly enough, however, some *V-ing* nouns are registered in the lexicon.<sup>11</sup> Among them are *kicking*, *dressing*, *speaking*, *writing*, *painting*, and *cooking*, to name a few. On the other hand, other *V-ing* words such as *solving*, *exposing*, *dreaming*,

*frowning*, *replacing*, or *arranging*, are not in the lexicon as a noun.<sup>12</sup> They take a *V-ing* form just because syntax demands. What determines whether to register as a lexical noun or not and under what circumstances is it permitted as a lexicalized item? What might be the difference between plain nouns and *V-ing* nouns? In this subsection, giving an example *kicking*, the status and characteristics of *V-ing* nouns in the lexicon will be elucidated.

Langacker explains that the syntactic operation of adding the suffix *-ing* is called imperfectivization, which is done through internal viewing of the process. Internal viewing leads to ignoring the heterogeneity of the entity, so it can be seen as something like a mass noun. *Kicking* as a *V-ing* noun in the lexicon is a mass noun just like *water* in the following points:

1. *Kicking* is not bounded in the sense that *kicking* occurs whenever and wherever somebody carries out this action.
2. *Kicking* is homogeneous because the conceptualizer only profiles the internal stative situation.<sup>13</sup>
3. *Kicking* does not describe a single episode of kicking. When someone expresses an event as *kicking*, that means the speaker categorizes the event with similar events.
4. So, *kicking* is a generic way of describing the action to kick, which is a type.

In fact, most of the *V-ing* nouns in the lexicon are registered as mass nouns. Even when not in the lexicon, *V-ing* nouns just through a syntactic operation can be thought to have somewhat mass-like properties (suggestion from my informant). Still, some are in the lexicon and others are not.

*V-ing* nouns in the lexicon, or especially, should also be interpreted in a certain frame. Frame semantics was introduced by Fillmore (2007). He states that it “offers a particular way of looking at word meanings, ... for adding new meanings to words” (Fillmore 2007).

As stated, a noun designates THING which is inherently stable and permanent. At the same time, recognizing something as THING coerces the hearer into conceptualizing

it in a particular way that the speaker has intended. In other words, a *V-ing* noun in the lexicon (of course, defined as a noun) represents a frame in which it should be interpreted. This is not the case with *V-ing* words through syntactic operations.

A closer analysis reveals a property concerning the frames within which they are to be interpreted. There are a limited set of frames for *V-ing* nouns to enter the lexicon: (a) the sports frame, (b) the law or money frame, (c) the intellectual activity frame, and (d) the creation frame (Hiraiwa 2009a). Some examples in those frames are:

- (a) sports : *fishing, heading, holding, kicking, running, wrestling*
- (b) law/money : *kicking, proceeding, saving, signing, spanking stealing*
- (c) intellectual activity : *meaning, reading, speaking, understanding, writing*
- (d) creation : *building, cooking, dressing, ending, knitting, painting*

Examples in (a) represent of names of a sport or a game, or the skill names in the field, which supports the condition that *V-ing* nouns in the lexicon is generic.

As a matter of fact, *V-ing* nouns in all these frames share properties: (i) the process needs some skill or ability, and (ii) the result has some salience. One of the good examples to prove (i) is *holding*. *Holding* symbolizes any action that one grasps something in his hand(s). However, once in the lexicon, the holding action needs to have a special feature. In the sports frame, *holding* in volleyball is a foul play that a player keeps a ball on his arm(s) or hand(s) for a while, or in boxing that a player keeps his opponent's body in his arms. In the law frame, it is a decision of a court, or any property to which one has title. In the money frame, which is closely related with the law frame, *holding(s)* is an investment in a business. Therefore, *holding* as a *V-ing* noun in the lexicon cannot represent an action of grasping a vacuum cleaner by a housewife or a state in which an interesting book keeps fascinating a child (cf. *Storytellers held the children's interest*).

The feature (ii) has a great influence on the syntactic behaviors of *V-ing* nouns in the lexicon. Most of the *V-ing* nouns in the lexicon profile the process and they are

treated as mass nouns which designate generic action of the verb stem, regardless of the frame. However, there do exist cases where *V-ing* nouns in the lexicon are regarded as count nouns. This is closely related to the second condition. Among the four frames, the creation frame has a lot to do with this condition. *V-ing* nouns designating a creation process as THING, such as *building* or *knitting*, the result of the process as well as the procedure is naturally focused, for the purpose of the action lies in the thing created. So, the product or result (thing created) is likely to be focused, and then, it is easily conveyed as a count noun because it is quite possible a conceptualizer captures its boundary.

In fact, items other than those in the creation frame can be count nouns, like *saving*, *writing*, *meaning*, and *understanding*. It could be said that such *V-ing* nouns are related to something created through a certain skill or ability just like *building* or *knitting*.

So, the typical *V-ing* nouns are mass nouns, but when a conceptualizer focuses on the result or the product, she recognizes it as countable because of its boundedness.

### 3.4 A Fine-Grained Semantic Map

The semantic map presented by Croft (1991) is made to show the categoriality (realized in their unmarkedness) of each word class from a typological view. After the analysis in this chapter, I can offer a semantic map which includes the position of *V-ing* words, in addition to the two subcategories for nouns and verbs which Langacker suggested.

According to Langacker, both nouns and verbs show two types of conceptualization. Table 3 shows their position in the semantic map presented by Croft (1991). Mass nouns present more property-like characteristics because of their homogeneity, so they are placed lower than count noun, with a slight modifying function. Likewise, imperfective uses of verbs present more property-like characteristics than perfective uses of verbs because they can be used to denote generic property of an entity. So they are placed upper-left of perfective uses.

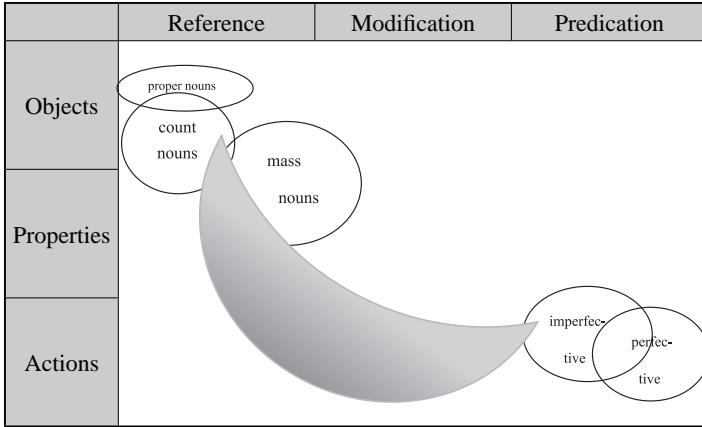


Table 3: A fine-grained semantic map for English *V-ing* words

The moon-shaped region in Table 3 shows the range of *V-ing* words. They cannot function as verbs because of their atemporal property, but they show from highly verby properties to truly nouny properties so that they may be construed as count nouns.<sup>14</sup>

Seen from a view of conceptualization, the degree of focusing on the inner complexity is a matter of importance. When a conceptualizer focuses on the inner complexity, she uses a verby *V-ing*. A verby *V-ing* word has lower categoriality for a noun but rather higher categoriality for a verb as in *I saw John kicking his son* (*kicking* without an article or a determiner, and not followed by a preposition). When focusing on the unity of an entity, she uses a nouny *V-ing*, which is expressed as in *I don't like John's kicking of his son*. *Kicking* this time shows high categoriality for nouns, which proves a conceptualizer's nouny construal of the situation. What I claim on these differences is that a conceptualizer can recognize sometimes slightly-focused, half-focused, or fairly-focused elements in *V-ing* words even if they take an identical form.

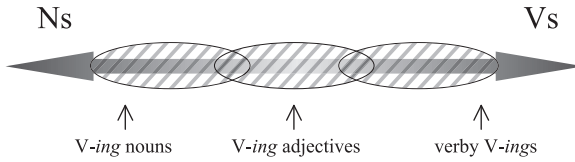


Figure 8: Schemas for *V-ing* nouns, *V-ing* adjectives, and verby *V-ings*

#### 4. Conclusion

Traditionally, eight classifications for word classes have been applied to English language. But the syntactic categorization is not appropriate from a functional view of language. When focusing on the semantic / pragmatic features of language, we cannot ignore the existence of a conceptualizer. Langacker defines meaning of an expression “does not reside in objective reality, nor is the problem of semantic description revealingly formulated in terms of truth condition” (Langacker 2002: 61). What expression a speaker uses reflects her construal of the scene.

Concerning *V-ing* words which are intermediate between nouns and verbs, what they denote depends on how strongly a conceptualizer recognizes the inner complexity of an entity and time in it. When she recognizes the inner complexity (either including time or ignoring), she realizes it in verbs or verby expressions. When she can defocus the inner complexity, she realizes her intention in atemporal, referential expressions, sometimes with nouny *V-ing* words.

I discussed decontextual *V-ing* words and highly contextual ones separately in Section 3, but nouny expressions are likely to be used with another nouny expressions (both with time-stability), and verby ones tend to attach to verby manifestations (both with obvious inner complexity). These restrictions are supported by other examples, and Langacker also evaluates that they are natural (Langacker 2002)

As we have seen, almost all the expressions in the English language exhibit properties which are construed between verby and nouny. There are a variety of expressions with intermediate status between them. One of the media to show the intermediacy is *V-ing* words which are the subject of this thesis. They cover

a wide range of the expressions except for predications for actions because of their atemporality. However, it is not the case that the syntactic characteristics determine the status of *V-ing* words, but it is our conceptualization that decides their syntactic behavior. In other words, their syntactic behavior is the symptoms of the conceptualization of the speaker.

In addition to that, we cannot draw fine lines between, say, gerunds and present participles. They vary in their nouniness or verbiness, and the degree of contextual dependency. All we can do is to try to grasp how a speaker sees the world through the expressions she uses, which are the symptom of the speaker's conceptualization.

When we see the expressions as constructions, construed as gestalt, a revised semantic map helps reveal the continuum of *V-ing* status. However, *V-ing* words are only one of the intermediacy between nouns and verbs. There are many other expressions between them, for example, past participles, *to*-infinitives, and so on. If I can reconsider the categories usually called 'verbals' or 'verbids' comprehensively, it may render a much finer explanation for human cognitive ability about construals of the outer world. Moreover, giving reconsideration of word classes including verbals may be applied to a better approach to language learning.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Setting nouns and verbs at both extremities is similar to Croft and Ross's (1972) squish.
- <sup>2</sup> The discussion of this section is based on Langacker (1987, 2002, 2008).
- <sup>3</sup> Langacker uses "predication" in a sense of verbalization or manifestation. To avoid confusion of this expression with Croft's "predication," I would rather use "manifestation" in this sense.
- <sup>4</sup> When the conceptualizer verbalizes it *he is kicking a ball*, the action can be said to be grounded in a discourse. Only grounded elements convey an intention a speaker has in a speech event. (Langacker 2008: 259) So interlocutors are able to communicate only when *kicking* is used as *he is kicking a ball* or *the kicking boy*, etc.
- <sup>5</sup> The semantic map shows predication which semantically denotes property is used with a copula verb without an article. These are diverting points between objects and actions which are used in predication.
- <sup>6</sup> However, English has many "true" adjectives which normally cannot be intensified by *very*, e.g.

*exhausted, huge, terrible, splendid, and wonderful.* If the claim by Quirk et al. is correct, are these adjectives considered peripheral?

<sup>7</sup> The reason why he mentioned the criteria are made syntactically and morphologically as well as syntactically was that he classified adjectives from these eight perspectives. (1) kind of semantic opposition, (2) derivations with *un-*, (3) occurrence with *-ish*, (4) inchoative and causative derivatives, (5) order of adjectives in an NP, (6) derived adverbs, (7) topic-manner constructions, and (8) comparison of derived adverbs. (Dixon 1977)

<sup>8</sup> *V-ing* nouns in these positions are generally called “gerunds.”

<sup>9</sup> Of course those verbs can take infinitival forms or other nominalizational patterns if conceptualization and conventional usage permit.

<sup>10</sup> Ross (1972) shows the concreteness of nouns as below:

To pass from left to right along the squish ... is to move in the direction of syntactic inertness, and to move away from syntactic freedom and volatility. ... [P]roceeding along the hierarchy is like descending into lower and lower temperatures, where the cold freezes up the productivity of syntactic rules, until at last nouns, the absolute zero of this space are reached. (*ibid*: 317)

<sup>11</sup> “In the lexicon” in this thesis means that ordinary dictionaries has the word as an entry. I exclude *OED* here because it contains a variety of entries from a wide variety of fields.

<sup>12</sup> The claim that *solving* is not found in the lexicon because the verb stem *solve* has a nominalized noun *solution*, is not reasonable because there are many examples that both its *V-ing* noun and derivational noun are to be found in the lexicon.

<sup>13</sup> This is one of the reasons why this type of *V-ing* words is counted as nouns because nouns are inherently stable.

<sup>14</sup> Imperfectivized words (*V-ing* words) can be used in progressives with temporal *be* verbs, which Langacker calls retemporalization. (Langacker 2002)

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