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The Old Japanese accusative revisited: Realizing all the universal options*

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1. Introduction

One thing that is certain about human language is that it continuously changes. A point that is almost too obvious even to mention is that however a language changes through time, it must remain a human language. In other words, the changes cannot be random in nature. An important idea put forth by some linguists is that these changes are predetermined in that diachronic variation within a particular language directly reflects variations found across contemporary languages; diachrony is synchrony when it comes to variations that can occur. In a clear expression of this idea, Lightfoot (1979:viii) observes that the formulation of “a possible grammar will provide the upper limits to the way in which a given grammar may change historically, insofar as it cannot change into something which is not a possible grammar.” In a similar vein, Joseph (1980:346), in addressing the loss of the infinitive form in Greek, notes that “[u]niversal constraints which hold in synchronic grammars are used to explain the direction taken by certain changes in syntax.”

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In Miyagawa (1989), I tested this hypothesis about language change by looking at how the accusative case marking for objects of eighth-century Old Japanese changed into the familiar system we find today. A noun phrase must have Case as a universal requirement (Chomsky 1981). Across languages, we typically find two different ways of case-marking the object: morphological case marking, such as in German, modern Japanese, and Latin, and what is sometimes referred to as abstract case, or the absence of any overt case form, which characterizes English, Romance languages, and a host of others. What I argued is that in Old Japanese (OJ), we find both morphological and abstract case, but language change transformed the language into one of morphological case throughout the language, which is what we find today. The choice between morphological case and abstract case in OJ is not random, as sometimes observed, but they are predicted by the inflection found on the verb, a point first noted by Matsunaga (1983). Specifically, conclusive form of the verb, which is found typically in the main clause, but also in certain subordinate clauses, allows abstract case, so that the object occurs “bare” without any case marking. In contrast, morphological case marking must appear if the verb has attributive inflection, which occurs commonly in subordinate clauses but it can also occur in the main clause if the clause is in what is called the *kakarimusubi* construction, as we will see later.

(1) Distribution of Abstract and Morphological Case (Miyagawa 1989: 206)

The *conclusive* form assigns abstract case while the case assigning feature of the *attributive* form must be manifested overtly as *wo*.

This is exemplified below from *Man'yōshū*, a collection of poems compiled in the eighth century A.D.

(2) Ware-ha imo ___ omohu.

I-Top wife think

‘I think of my wife.’

(3) [sima-wo miru] toki

island-Acc look when

‘when I look upon the island’

In (1), the verb ‘think’ is in the conclusive form, and the object ‘wife’ has no overt case marking, which arguably indicates that it is licensed by abstract case. In (2), the verb ‘look’ is in attributive form, and the object ‘island’ is accompanied by the OJ accusative case marker *wo*.¹ We can see from Matsuo’s (1938) work that both abstract case and morphological case were common in *Man’yôshû*.

(4) Frequency of the case marker *wo* in *Man’yôshû*

	Object NP with <i>wo</i>	Without <i>wo</i>
<i>Man’yôshû</i> (Book 17)	51	96

The fact that *wo* does not always appear has led some to suggest that the OJ *wo* was unstable as a case marker (Kobayashi 1970:226), or that it was simply optional (Wrona and Frellesvig 2008). However, close examination shows that the distribution of OJ *wo* is highly predictable and it clearly functions as a case marker.

It is important to point out that the difference between abstract and morphological case is not a matter of main vs. subordinate clause, as might be suggested from looking at (1) and (2). Although the conclusive form, which assigns abstract case, occurs largely in

¹In Miyagawa (1989), I used *o* as the accusative case marker, but in this chapter I will use *wo*, which reflects the original labial glide present in OJ and earlier Early Middle Japanese.

the main clause, it also occurs in subordinate clause with the complementizer *to*. The following example is from the *Tosa Diary* written in the tenth century.²

- (5) Kono hito [uta ___ *yoman* to] omofu kokoro arite narikeri
this person poem compose-intend Comp think mind exist Cop
'This person had the intention to compose poems.'

As shown, the object 'poem' is "bare," indicating that the verb has assigned abstract case.

On the other hand, the attributive form occurs typically in subordinate clauses, but it can also occur in the main clause in a construction called *kakarimusubi*. This is the construction in which a *kakari* focus particle occurs sentence medially, and the verb must be in the attributive form (or, with one type of *kakari* particle, *koso*, the verb is in the perfect form). The example below, taken from Sansom (1928), illustrates this rule for the *kakari* particles *zo* and *ya* (*zo* is used for emphasis, something akin to 'indeed', while *ya* is commonly used for rhetorical questions).

- (6) a. Isi-wa kawa-ni otu (Conclusive)
rock-Top river-in fall
'Rocks fall into the river.'
- b. Isi *zo* kawa-ni oturu (Attributive)
- c. Isi *ya* kawa-ni oturu (Attributive)

Among 208 examples in *Man'yōshū* (Takagi, *et al*, 1962:55-109), thirty-four are *kakarimusubi* constructions with a transitive verb and an object NP. All thirty-four are main clauses, and, the particle *wo* marks the object NP without exception (Matsunaga 1983). The following is one such example.

²The text for *Tosa Diary* is *Tosa Nikki* (1930) from Early Middle Japanese of tenth century. This particular example is noted in Zenno (1987).

(7) Kimi-ga mi-fune-wo itu to ka matamu
 you-Nom fine-boat-Acc when Kakari wait(attrib.)

‘When may we await your fine boat back?’

Another feature of the analysis presented in Miyagawa (1989), following Matsunaga (1983) and Miyagawa and Matsunaga (1986), is that the change from the OJ system to one that uses morphological case across the entire language is predictable from the way the verbal inflection changed from around the tenth century to the fifteenth century. During this period, the language lost the conclusive form, and the attributive form moved into its place. This is shown below, which is based on a diagram in Matsunaga (1983).

(8) Changes in the verbal inflection

Before the change

Inflection type	I	II	III	IV	V
Conclusive	-u	-i	-iru	-eru	-u
Attributive	-u	-u	-iru	-eru	-uru

After the change	-u	-u	-iru	-eru	-uru
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Before the change, conclusive and attributive inflections had different forms in Types II and V, and, more importantly, this difference identified the two inflections as distinct across the language. But after the change, the distinction was lost, and where there were differences earlier, the new form took on the old attributive form, suggesting that it is the attributive inflection from earlier that won out. This naturally led to the spread of the morphological case because the attributive form requires morphological case, and language change altered the distribution of the attributive form from occurring only in

certain environments (OJ), mostly in subordinate clauses, to much of the language including the main clause (MJ).

In this chapter, I will take up criticisms by Kinsui (1993) of the analysis of the distribution of OJ abstract and morphological case in Miyagawa (1989). I will do so by drawing on the work of Miyagawa and Ekida (2003) and also Yanagida (2007) and Yanagida and Whitman (2009). As we will see particularly from Yanagida's (2007) work (see also Yanagida and Whitman 2009), OJ had a third way to license Case on the object along with abstract and morphological case.

Kinsui (1993) accepts the distinction I drew between abstract case and morphological case marking for OJ (p. 202). He concludes by saying that he "believes that we can accept, as a tendency, the absence of *wo* on the main clause object and its presence in the subordinate clause object, as Miyagawa asserts" (p. 209). He is, however, reluctant to accept it at face value because there are "numerous counterexamples" (p. 208). He criticizes Miyagawa's theory as "too rigid and unable to account for the counterexamples" (Ibid.) by raising three main issues.

(9) Kinsui's criticisms

(i) Versification

Ninety percent of the poems in *Man'yōshū* consist of the *tanka*, a verse form that has five lines of 5-7-5-7-7 moras (Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai 1965). In poetry it is possible that the occurrence of the case marker *wo* is governed in part by the rigid versification.

- (ii) There are examples in which the object has the morphological *wo* despite the fact that the verb is in the conclusive form.

- (iii) There are examples in which the object does not have morphological *wo* despite the fact that the verb is in the attributive form.

I will take up each of these; I will combine (i) and (ii) in the next section, and in section 3, I will take up (iii) by drawing on recent work by Yanagida (2007) and Yanagida and Whitman (2009).

2. Versification

Kinsui's point that versification may sometimes dictate whether *wo* appears or not appears to find confirmation in the following *waka* poetry example taken from *Izumi Shikibu Diary*, a literary work of the tenth century (see Miyagawa and Ekida 2003). The *waka* versification is the 5-7-5-7-7 pattern commonly found in *Man'yōshū*. The translation is from Cranston (*Izumi Shikibu Diary* 1969).

- (10) Ookata ni “Nothing remarkable –
Samidaruru to ya The same old rain that pelts us
Omouran Every year, you think?
Kimi ___ koiwataru These are my tears of love
Kyoo no nagame o Falling in a deluge all day long!”

Morphological *wo* fails to occur although the verb is in the attributive form (*koiwataru*).

The absence of *wo* makes it possible to maintain the versification of five or seven moras – in this case seven. I will return to this example later.

To see whether poetic versification somehow skewed the distribution of *wo* in *Man'yōshū*, Miyagawa and Ekida (2003) looked at several major works of literature from the Heian Period (794-1184 A.D.), all written in prose with some poetry sprinkled

through the text; they excluded the poems. The two primary texts taken up are *Izumi Shikibu Diary* and *Murasaki Shikibu Diary*, both written by Heian court ladies in the tenth century. Miyagawa and Ekida also drew from the *Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu, the most important literary work in the Heian Period, as well as the *Sarashina Diary* (tenth century) to further confirm certain points observed in the other two texts. In this chapter, I will focus on the *Murasaki Shikibu Diary* to demonstrate Miyagawa and Ekida's point that we find the same distribution of abstract and morphological case in prose as well as in poetry.

The *Murasaki Shikibu Diary* (MSD) occupies eighty-three pages in the *Iwanami Bunko, Murasaki Shikibu Nikki* (1984), and was written by Murasaki Shikibu, the celebrated Heian writer and court lady who also authored the *Tale of Genji*. This diary, which does not contain very many *waka* poems (which were excluded for consistency), “has to do chiefly with the birth of two sons to the empress, events of political importance, since she was the daughter of Michinaga and through his royal grandchildren Michinaga got an unshakable grip on the imperial house” (Introduction to the *Tale of Genji*, tr. by E. Seidensticker, 1981:viii).

2.1 The text of *Murasaki Shikibu Diary*

Miyagawa and Ekida (M&E) found 382 pertinent sentences with a direct object in MSD. I first give the raw data below according to verbal inflection; M&E deal with four inflections, conclusive, attributive, perfect, and conjunctive. I will skip the perfect inflection but will include the conjunctive, which is found in a number of environments including as the verbal form for conjuncts. I include it because M&E use it to make an argument regarding the conclusive form.

(11) *Murasaki Shikibu Diary*: Preliminary

<u>Inflection</u>	<u>Object NP with <i>wo</i></u>	<u>Object NP without <i>wo</i></u>
Conclusive	30	56
Attributive	53	46
Conjunctive	90	92

This raw data in *MSD* contain many apparent counterexamples. There are thirty object NPs with *wo* occurring with the conclusive form. Also, there are forty-six instances of an object NP without *wo* occurring with the attributive form. What we see with the conjunctive form is that this form freely selects between the morphological case marker and abstract case, so the two possibilities are virtually even, a point that becomes important for dealing with some of the counterexamples.

As noted by Miyagawa and Ekida, once the raw data above are analyzed, the results are much more in tune with what Miyagawa (1989) argued for based on *Man'yōshū* (see also Matsunaga 1983, Miyagawa and Matsunaga 1986).

(12) *Murasaki Shikibu Diary*: Final

<u>Inflection</u>	<u>Object NP with <i>o</i></u>	<u>Object NP without <i>o</i></u>
Conclusive	5 (9%)	56 (91%)
Attributive	53 (85%)	9 (15%)
Conjunctive	90 (49%)	92 (51%)

The conclusive form overwhelmingly selects abstract case, while there is a strong tendency for the attributive form to select the morphological case marker *wo*. The conjunctive form remains split virtually evenly between the morphological case marker and abstract case, showing that it optionally assigns abstract case. This shows that the

observation originally made in Miyagawa (1989) (and Matsunaga 1983) based on the poetry of *Man'yōshū* is upheld even for prose. This responds to Kinsui's criticism that poetic versification may have skewed the distribution of abstract and morphological case independent of verbal inflection. As we will see later in the chapter, one interesting possibility does arise where the occurrence of *wo* may be conditioned by versification without violating any grammatical principles.

Below, I will summarize some of M&E's discussion of how they dealt with the counterexamples for the occurrence of *wo* with the conclusive form, keeping in abeyance the attributive form until the next section. As M&E note, there are a number lexical idiosyncrasies that force the occurrence of *wo* regardless of verbal inflection. There are, for example, a number of idioms included in the thirty counterexamples in (11) (occurrence of *wo* with the conclusive form) that are frozen in form with the *wo* particle. I will not deal with these lexical idiosyncrasies in this chapter. What I will deal with are three types of apparent counterexamples that have a common theme, namely, the conclusive form in these examples are prevented from assigning abstract case, and the morphological *wo* is inserted to meet the requirement of Case for the object NP.

To set the stage, I will briefly review the difference between conclusive and attributive forms that gives rise to different case marking possibilities. The conclusive form is "true verb form" used to predicate an action, property, or state (Sansom 1928:130). As a pure verb, we can surmise that it has all of the properties of a verb, including the capability to assign abstract case.³ In contrast, the attributive inflection has

³In recent theory, the accusative case assignment is done not directly by the verb, but by what is called a "small *v*" that selects VP (e.g., Chomsky 1995). I will assume

“substantive” properties, which makes it similar to a nominal. Konoshima (1962), for example, notes that the attributive inflection has a nominalizing function. The following example from Sansom (1928:136) demonstrates three substantive qualities of the attributive form.⁴

- (13) hito-no *mitogamuru*-o sirazu
 people blame-Acc not.know
 ‘not knowing that others blamed them’

First, the attributive form *mitogamuru* ‘blaming’ has a substantive interpretation, similar to the English gerundive form. Second, the particle *wo* attaches to it to make the phrase an argument of the verb *sirazu* ‘not know’. Third, the subject of *mitogamuru* has the genitive case marker, which is a hallmark of NPs in nominal clauses. These three properties make the attributive form appear nominal in nature. It would be incorrect, however, to identify it as a pure nominal because it has verbal and adjectival properties. For example, it is able to modify a noun without the prenominal genitive particle *no*. In (3) earlier, for example, if the attributive form *miru* ‘look’ were a pure nominal, we would expect the prenominal modification particle *no* between it and the relative head. In Miyagawa (1989), a parallel is drawn between this substantive nature of the attributive form and the gerundive form in English, the latter requiring insertion of *of* for Case.

(14) the teaching *of* calculus

The idea is that, due to the substantial nature, the attributive form is unable to assign

this, but will continue to describe case assignment in terms of verbs to be consistent with Miyagawa (1989).

⁴This example, quoted in Sansom (128:xi), is from *Shoku Nihongi*, which contains “certain Imperial edicts in pure Japanese” and was completed in 797 A.D.

abstract case, and *wo* is inserted to meet the Case requirement, just as *of* is inserted above. In modern theory, this nominalizing function would naturally be viewed as nominalizing the “small *v*” (Yanagida and Whitman 2009), in turn depriving the predicate of the ability to assign abstract case. However, to be consistent with Miyagawa (1989), I will continue to speak of the attributive form lacking this ability. Below, we will see that some of the counterexamples to the idea that the conclusive form assigns abstract case are those in which the conclusive form is somehow prevented from assigning abstract case, forcing *wo* to be inserted.

2.2. When *wo* occurs with the conclusive form

As shown in (11), there are thirty examples of this type that contradict the prediction that objects of the conclusive form need not have *wo* because the verb is able to assign abstract case. Miyagawa and Ekida account for all but five of these. I will summarize three such accounts that have the common theme that the conclusive form somehow is prevented from assigning abstract case.

A. Exceptional Case Marking (ECM)

A defining property of abstract case is that it must be assigned under adjacency with the verb (Stowell 1981). Thus, in English, normally nothing can intervene between the verb and its object, unless the object is made “heavy” and is able to undergo heavy NP shift.

(15) a. *John read yesterday a book.

b. John read yesterday a book with 23 chapters. (Heavy NP Shift)

One of the counterexamples in which the object has *wo* despite the fact that the verb is in the conclusive form is the following (Miyagawa and Ekida 2003).

(16) Sakizaki-no miyuki-*wo* nadote meiboku-arite-to

past-Gen visits-Acc why honor-copComp

omohi-tamahi-kemu (36,11)

think-honor-past speculative

‘Why did I feel my previous visits as such an honor?’

We can see that this is an ECM construction because it is the subordinate subject ‘previous visits’ that is marked with *wo*, and the matrix verb ‘think’ is a typical ECM verb. Similar examples occur in modern Japanese (Kuno 1976).

- (17) a. Taroo-ga Hanako-ga tensai-da to omotteiru.
Taro-Nom Hanako-Nom genius-Cop clever Comp think
‘Taro thinks Hanako is a genius.’
- b. Taroo-ga Hanako-*o* tensai-da to omotteiru. (ECM)
Taro-Nom Hanako-Acc genius Comp think

The accusative *wo* is licensed by the matrix verb ‘think’ in both the OJ example and in the MJ example above; given that it is ECM, the object does not occur adjacent to this matrix verb, so the verb cannot assign abstract case, and morphological case is thus inserted on the subordinate subject. One of Kinsui’s (1993) counterexamples from *Man’yôshû* is also an ECM construction, as he himself notes (I am using his romanization of the data below).

- (18) Yononaka *wo* usi to yasasi to omohe domo
 world-Acc unpleasant Comp shame Comp think although
 tobitachi kane tsu tori ni shi ara ne ba
 fly away cannot bird E be Neg
 ‘Although I feel the world as being unpleasant and unbearable, I cannot fly
 away as I am not a bird’

B. Emphasis

A number of counterexamples in (11) involve an object that is accompanied by *wo* because the object is emphasized; *wo* has this function.

- (19) Sore-*wo* ware masarite iha-mu to (78,6)
 it-Acc I more than speak-intend Comp
 ‘I speak about it more than (others do).’

This is an example in which the conclusive form occurs in the subordinate clause, which is made possible by the complementizer form *to*. Note that the object occurs away from the verb ‘speak’, suggesting that emphasis moves the object away from its original position and the verb, which makes assignment of abstract case impossible, thus *wo* is inserted, just like in the ECM construction. In the following example, the object is, on the surface, adjacent to the verb, but we can surmise that it has moved away from its original complement position.

- (20) Mi-tyau-no uti-*wo* tohora-se-tamahu (43,11)
 screen-Gen inside-Accpass-cause-honor
 ‘Let ... pass inside the screen.’

See Yanagida (2006), who argues that in OJ, all *wo*-marked phrases move to a

position outside the verbal projection; this may be related to the property of *wo* as marking definiteness (Motohashi 1989) or specificity (Yanagida and Whitman 2009).

C. Compound

Five of the counterexamples in (11) involve compound verbs. Compounding apparently deprives the verb of assigning abstract case, forcing *wo* to be inserted. Following is one such example.

(21) Sirokane-no su-*wo* hitobito tuki-sirohu (25,1)

silver-Gen cover-Acc people poke-each other

‘People laugh at the silver cover at each other.’

The verb *tuki-sirofu* is made up of ‘poke’ and ‘each other’, and M&E note that compounds almost always require *wo* on the object regardless of the verbal inflection, suggesting that compounding somehow deprives the verb of assigning abstract case. In this example, the object with *wo* has moved above the subject, which also makes it impossible to assign abstract case. There are examples where the object stays adjacent to the verb but nevertheless *wo* is required even if the verb is in the conclusive form. This is true for *MSD*, and it is always true for the other major work they analyzed, *Izumi Shikibu Diary*. The evidence M&E give has to do with the conjunctive inflection. Recall from (12) that the conjunctive form optionally assigns abstract case, and in the literary works analyzed, objects with and without *wo* are evenly split; we can see this in (12) (90 vs. 92). M&E report a similar even distribution in *Izumi Shikibu Diary*. However, when we look at compounds in the conclusive inflection, there is a clear pattern of requiring *wo*. The following is data from *Izumi Shikibu Diary* taken from M&E.

(22) Conjunctive Compounds in *ISD*

Object NP with <i>wo</i>	Object NP without <i>wo</i>
10 (91%)	1 (9%)

Just as with ECM and emphasis, the apparent inability to assign abstract case leads to *wo* being inserted when the verb is a compound, even one with conclusive inflection.

Although M&E do not give an explanation, it may be similar to what we see with gerundives in English in that adding certain morphological structure to a verb (*-ing* in English, compounding and attributive inflection in Japan) takes out the possibility of assigning abstract case. That is not an explanation, of course, and I will leave the issue open.

See M&E for accounts of other counterexamples to the idea that conclusive form assigns abstract case. All told, they account for all but five of the thirty counterexamples to the idea that the conclusive form normally assigns abstract case.

Finally, let us return to the poem from the *Izumi Shikibu Diary* given in (10) earlier and repeated below.

(23) Ookata ni	“Nothing remarkable –
Samidaruru to ya	The same old rain that pelts us
Omouran	Every year, you think?
Kimi ___ koiwataru	These are my tears of love
Kyoo no nagame o	Falling in a deluge all day long!”

The fourth line contains the object *kimi* in the bare form without *wo* despite the fact that the verb *koiwataru* is in the attributive form. The absence of *wo* makes it possible to fit

the line into one of seven moras as required by poetic versification. M&E note that the use of the verb *koiwataru* is largely limited to poetry, and it typically occurs with *kimi* ‘you’ or *imo* ‘wife’, so that the combination of *kimi* and *koiwataru* formed a “poetic expression” independent of the verbal inflection. This is one possible explanation. Below, we turn to the work of Yanagida (2007) (see also Yanagida and Whitman 2009) that provides a very different analysis in line with the idea that *wo* can be excluded here to respect versification because the Case requirement is met by a means other than abstract or morphological case.

3. Yanagida (2007) and Yanagida and Whiman (2009)

In this section, I turn to the attributive form, specifically addressing counterexamples to the idea that the attributive form, being nominal in nature, cannot assign abstract case, thereby requiring the morphological case *wo* to accompany the object. As we saw from *Murasaki Shikibu Diary*, there are a number of cases where the object occurs “bare” despite the verb being in the attributive inflection. While there are 53 instances of objects with *wo*, which is what we expect, there are 46 examples where the object is bare. Kinsui (1993) also notes similar counterexamples from *Man’yōshū*. M&E provide explanations for all but five of the 46 counterexamples. For example, three of them contain an object NP with the adverbial particle *-nado* ‘such as’ and one contains an object NP with *-bakari* ‘only’; these adverbial particles make it unnecessary for morphological case marking to appear even in modern Japanese.

3.1. Yanagida’s discovery

Yanagida (2007) proposes a unified explanation for most of the counterexamples

that cuts across the various “case-by-case” accounts in M&E based on her study of *Man’yōshū* (see also Yanagida and Whitman 2009). Yanagida found that, in *Man’yōshū*, there are 90 examples of transitive clauses that contain a “bare” object, and of these, 55 examples occur with the attributive form. The following is from her article quoted in Yanagida and Whitman (2009); I use their orthographic system.

- (24) Saywopimye no kwo ga pire puri-si yama (5/868).
 Sayohime GEN child ACT scarf wave hill
 ‘the name of the hill where Sayohime waved her scarf’

Here the verb *puri-si* ‘wave’ is in the attributive form and its object, *pire* ‘scarf’, occurs without *wo*. Here is Yanagida’s discovery.

- (25) Yanagida’s (2007) discovery

Of the 55 apparent counterexamples, where a bare object occurs with an attributive form, 54 contain objects that are non-branching nouns — single words, in other words.

We see this in (24) above, in which the object *pire* is a single word. Why should this be the case? Yanagida (2007) argues that this overwhelming tendency for bare objects of attributive forms to be non-branching indicates a third way in which objects can be licensed to meet the Case requirement.

Baker (1988) shows that in a number of languages, the Case on the object is licensed not by abstract or morphological case, but by the object incorporating into the verb. This is shown in the Chukchee example below taken from Spencer (1999) and cited in Yanagida and Whitman (2009).

- (26) a. Muri myt-ine-rety-rkyn kimit[?]-e.

we-ABS we-AP-carry-PRES/II load-INSTRU

‘We are carrying the load.’

b. Ytlyg-yn **qaa**-tym-g²e.

father-ABS deer-killed-2SG

‘The father killed a deer.’

In (a) the object occurs with an overt instrumental case marker, but in (b), the single-word object *qaa* ‘deer’(non-branching N) has incorporated into the verbal structure in order to meet the Case requirement. It is important that the incorporation occurs only on a head because it is a kind of morphological process occurring in syntax. What this means is that in OJ, we find three ways to license Case on the object.

(27) Licensing Case on the OJ object

- (i) abstract case
- (ii) morphological case
- (iii) head incorporation

While the first two were noted in Miyagawa (1989), the third is a new insight that cuts across most of the example-by-example explanations in M&E and provides a unified and dramatic account of much of the problem data related to the attributive form.

In the remainder of the chapter, I will attempt to replicate Yanagida’s discovery made on the basis of poetry in *Man’yōshū* by looking at the Heian prose studied in M&E.

3.2. Replicating Yanagida’s discovery in Heian literature

M&E provide the entire list of counterexamples from *Murasaki Shikibu Diary* and also *Izumi Shikibu Diary* in the appendices to their work. I examined these counterexamples to see if the examples from Heian prose of 10th century A.D. can

replicate Yanagida’s discovery made on the basis of poetry in the 8th century collection, *Man’yōshū*. Setting aside those examples that contain an object with an adverbial particle such as *–nado* ‘such’ and *–bakari* ‘only’, which do not require case marking, the following is the number of bare objects with attributive form divided into non-branching (single word) and branching (phrasal) types.

(28) Non-branching and branching bare objects with attributive form

	non-branching	branching
<i>Murasaki Shikibu Diary</i>	44	7
<i>Izumi Shikibu Diary</i>	13	6

MSD clearly evidences the pattern of Yanagida’s discovery: of the 51 bare objects with the attributive form, only seven are branching. An equally striking pattern is that, among those examples that M&E were unable to account for by their case-by-case explanations, of which there are nine, only one is branching. Unlike *MSD*, *ISD* does not show a clear pattern of incorporation: of the 19 relevant examples, six are branching. However, there is something noteworthy about all of the branching examples. All six involve the formal nominalizer *koto* (or *goto*). An example is given below.

(29) *mutukasiki koto* ___ *ifu-o kikosimesi te* (444, 9)

disturbing things say-Acc hear-honor

‘hear that (someone) says disturbing things’

M&E note this fact as well, and simply stipulate that a phrase with the formal nominalizer *koto* does not require Case. If we exclude these examples, *ISD* replicates Yanagida’s discovery without exception. I also note that in *MSD*, of the seven branching bare objects, two are of this type in which the object is headed by *koto*. Of the remaining

six, two involve the light verb *su* or its related causative form, and M&E note that these verbs tend to allow the object to occur without *wo* in any inflection.⁵

Why should the occurrence of *koto* (or the voiced counterpart *goto*) allow an object that branches to occur without *wo* even when the verb is in the attributive form? One way to think about this is that the clause headed by *koto* is not an NP, but a CP, and CPs do not require Case. This is simply a speculation, but the idea that *koto* may function as C (or N) has been proposed for modern Japanese by Whitman (1992).

Finally, let us return to the poem from *Izumi Shikibu Diary* in which the object, *kimi* occurs without *wo* despite the fact that the verb *koiwataru* is in the attributive, allowing the line to adhere to the 7-mora requirement.

(30) Kimi ___ koiwataru These are my tears of love

Note that the object is a single word, which means that its Case requirement is likely being met by incorporation. Here, there is an option of incorporation or assigning *wo* to

⁵The three remaining exceptions from *MSD* are the following.

- (i) mono-no kazukazu ___ kaki-taru fumi (27,3)
thing-Gen many write-perfective document
'document in which (one) wrote many things'
- (ii) hito-no hazi ___ mi-haberi-si yo (29,1)
person-Gen disgrace see-humble-past night
'the night that (someone) saw a person's disgrace'
- (iii) sodeguti-no ahahi ___ warou kasane-taru hito (88,1)
sleeve-Gen coloration bad lay-perfective person
'a person who layered (her) sleeves in an unpleasant manner'

the object, and this option gives the poet the freedom to choose between them in order to respect the versification.

4. Conclusion

I demonstrated that the systematic distribution of abstract and morphological case argued for in Miyagawa (1989) finds further support from the work of Miyagawa and Ekida (2003) and Yanagida (2007) and Yanagida and Whitman (2009). Most of the counterexamples to the proposed distribution, including those pointed out by Kinsui (1993), find explanation in independently motivated notions such as adjacency for abstract case assignment and head incorporation to fulfill the Case requirement. One interesting result that came out of applying Yanagida's head incorporation analysis is that the optional nature of *wo* did allow the poet in the OJ era to either select or not in order to respect the versification of poetry of the time while being fully compliant with the grammar of OJ.

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