Miyagawa's (1989) Exceptions: An Ergative Analysis[*]

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In this paper, I present data to show that Old Japanese (OJ) is an example of an ergative language with an active system. It is shown that 1) *ga* is an ergative-active case marker, 2) the prefix *i* is a pronominal clitic that manifests itself in an ergative-active system, and 3) unmarked DPs in underlying object position are assigned absolute case. Like many ergative languages, OJ displays a split in case marking. While conclusive clauses are essentially accusative, attributive clauses retain ergative characteristics. I make crucial reference to Miyagawa's (1989) analysis of attributive clauses and propose that attributive clauses have their historical origins in antipassives.

Introduction

In this paper, I present data from *Man'yôshû* (MYS), showing that the language of the *Nara* period (henceforth OJ) has the characteristics of ergative-active languages with a split case system.[1] It is known that in OJ the subject of an attributive predicate is marked by *ga* or *no*, whereas the subject of a conclusive predicate is generally unmarked morphologically. This is shown in (1a-b).

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[1] The *Man'yôshû* (Collection of a Myriad Leaves) is an anthology of Japanese verse completed early in the ninth century A.D. It is the earliest extensive written record of Old Japanese, comprising more than 4000 short and long poems. The *Kanji* used for particles are taken from one of the original texts (the *Nishi Honganji Bon*) and written in parentheses in each example.

(1) a. wago opokimi Ø kuni Ø   sirasu-rasi   (MYS 933)
       my emperor   country govern.CONCL
       'The emperor might govern the country.'
   b. kwopwi wo(乎) waga   su-ru   (MYS 2311)
       love   ACC   I   do-ATTR

In this paper, I argue that while the conclusive clause in (1a) is essentially accusative, the attributive clause in (1b) has ergative-active characteristics.[2]   The idea that these two conjugational forms are associated with distinct case marking systems is originally suggested in Miyagawa (1989). According to Miyagawa, a morphologically unmarked object, as in (1a) is assigned abstract case by the conclusive predicate, since the conclusive form is a true verb form.   The attributive form, as in (1b), however, is nominal and has no case assigning feature. The object of an attributive predicate must then be marked by the morphological case marker *wo* in order to avoid a violation of the case filter. Given that *wo* is required in present-day Japanese, Miyagawa (1989) and Miyagawa and Ekida (2003) propose that the Japanese language underwent a change in case marking from abstract case to morphological case, and that the driving force for this change is the increased use of the attributive form in main clauses. As is well-known, in the language of the *Nara* period, the attributive form is generally used in embedded clauses, and the matrix use of the attributive form is limited to the so-called *Kakarimusubi* 'focus concord' construction. The *Kakari-musubi* construction, however, started to break down in the *Heian* period (784-1186) (cf. Hendriks 1998). The attributive form came to be used in main clauses without a *kakari* focus particle, and eventually replaced the conclusive form. Miyagawa (1989) and Miyagawa and Ekida (2003) conducted extensive research on OJ texts, showing that the reanalysis of attributive predicates as main clause predicates led

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[2] It is known that in OJ, both the subject of an intransitive and the object of a transitive can be left morphologically unmarked. Motohashi (1989:134) proposes that these bare nominals are characterized as absolutives. He then suggests that OJ is a split ergative language; bare objects are absolutives and objects marked by *wo* are accusatives. Motohashi (1989:136) notes that "that OJ is an absolutive/ergative system is obscured by the fact that in OJ bare nominals occur as the subject of the transitive verb." The fact that "bare nominals occur as the subject of the transive," however, is inconsistent with his view that "OJ is an absolutive/ergative system." The basic problem with Motohashi's analysis is that he makes no reference to whether OJ possesses transitive subjects with ergative status. In this paper, I argue that main conclusive clauses whose subject and object are morphologically bare have a nominative-accusative system, and that ergativity is manifested in non-conclusive clauses.

to the increased use of *wo* in the history of Japanese. In this paper, I argue that the historical change described by Miyagawa (1989) and Miyagawa and Ekida (2003) patterns with a cross-linguistically well-documented change from ergative to accusative.

2. An Active System

It is widely held that active systems emerge in the transition from accusative to ergative, or from ergative to accusative. Bittner and Hale (1996) indicate that some languages regularly described as ergative have an extended ergative pattern, where splits occur between the agent argument of an unergative verb and the patient argument of an unaccusative verb. In this section, I present data to show that OJ has active typology. Traditionally, this type of "split intransitive" language is known as active.

2.1 Cross-referencing *I*

Vovin (1997) proposes that OJ has an active system in that the case particle *i*, which is traditionally identified as nominative case, is in fact the active case marker for the subject of transitive and of active intransitive verbs, but not the subject of non-active intransitives.[3] Vovin cites only five examples of the case particle *i* in the MYS. Although *i* as a case particle is rare in the MYS, there are many occurrences of the prefix *i* as in (2a-b). (A complete list of the prefix *i* in the MYS is given in Yanagida (forthcoming)).

(2)   a.   Nara no miyakwo no Sapo-kapa ni **i**-yuki itarite   (MYS 79)
            Nara GEN capital GEN Saho-river LOC I-go arive
            'I arrived at the River Sahokawa at Nara.'
      b.   Kume no wakugwo ga **i**-pure-keyemu iswo-no kusa no-ne (MYS 435)
            Kume GEN youth GEN I-touch-aux rock GEN grass GEN root
            'the root of the grass that the youth of Kume might have touched.'

We find a total of 73 occurrences of *i* in the MYS. Most of them are prefixed to active verbs.[4] There are a number of cases in which *i* is prefixed to the verb *yuku* 'go', but no examples in which *i* is prefixed to the verb *kuru* 'come'.

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[3] I assume that active and non-active intransitives correspond roughly to unergative and unaccusative verbs respectively. An active verb takes an agent argument and a non-active verb takes a patient argument. (See Washio (2004) for some grammatical effects of these two types of intransitives in Old Japanese.)

[4] There are a few examples in which *i* is prefixed to a non-active verb, as in (i).

Dixon (1994) shows that many ergative languages employ bound pronominal affixes attached to the verb which cross-reference argument NPs. Dixon further notes that "a cross-referencing system is never absolutely sufficient marker of syntactic function, but rather taken as some 'back-up' grammatical mechanism, e.g. an optional accusative or ergative marking." The prefix *i* behaves exactly like a pronominal cross-referencing affix on the verb. I take *i* to be a pronominal affix tshowing an ergative-active agreement system.[5] The prefix *i* can be suffixed to a verb in the attributive, conjunctive and perfect, but not in the conclusive form.

The use of the case particle *i* is much more common in *kunten* texts written in the early *Heian* (Early Middle Japanese) period. We find more than 100 occurrences of the case particle *i* on the subject NP in the text called *Konkômyô Saishô Ôkyô* 'The Sutra of Golden Light'. [6] Some examples are given in (3a-b).

(3) a. ware **i** … ti ga　　sakai wo　tuutatu-se-ri
　　　I　wisdom-GEN　border ACC pass-AUX
　　　'I passed through the border of wisdom.' (Kasuga 1969:Ch. 8-19)
　　b. Rusui **i** sono ko ni tugete-iwaku…
　　　Rusui I this person DAT tell
　　　'Rusui told this person...'　　　　　　　(Kasuga 1969:Ch. 9-5)

The case particle *i* marks only the subjects of active verbs: to be exact, the agent argument of transitive/unergative verbs. In this *kunten* text, we find no example in which *i* is used as a prefix. We speculate that the prefix *i* and the case particle *i*

(i) Miwa no yama…Nara no yama no yama no ma-ni **i**-kakuru made…
　Miwa GEN Mt.　Nara GEN Mt. GEN mountain GEN behind I-hide-until
　'Mt. Miwa, until it hides behind the side of Mt. Nara…' (MYS 17)

In (i), *kakuru* 'hide' is a non-active intransitive and takes a non-agent subject. Note that one of the most prominent rhetorical devises used in the MYS is 'personification': natural objects, such as mountain, cloud, river, are very often used metaphorically to describe a writer's internal state of mind at that very moment. The use of *i* may indicate that the mountain is personified, and that the verb associated with the subject is interpreted as active.

[5] Frellesvig and Whitman (2005) argue that *i-* originates as the proximal demonstrative pronoun, which is consistent with our analysis of the prefix *i* in OJ.

[6]The *Konkômyô Saishô Ôkyô* was originally written in India, and translated into Chinese in 703. This Chinese text was rendered into Japanese early in the *Heian* period through a system called *haku-ten* 'white glosses', which were added to the original Chinese text, and were used as a way of translating Chinese into Japanese.

are morphologically related, and that *i* has its origin in a pronominal clitic, but was reanalyzed as a case particle in the post *Manyô*-period.

2.2 *Ga*

An active system is also attested by the genitive particle *ga*, which, like the prefix *i*, can appear in various types of clauses, except for conclusive clauses.   In Modern Japanese, there is no doubt that *ga* is a nominative case marker, since it can mark the agent argument of transitive verbs and the patient argument of unaccusatives. The distribution of *ga* in OJ differs significantly from Modern Japanese in that *ga* marks only the agent argument of transitive and unergative verbs. The patient argument of unaccusative verbs is unmarked morphologically or marked by genitive *no*.[7] The difference is illustrated in (4-5).

Active verbs:
(4) a. tabi yuku kimi **ga** (之) ipye ni itaru made…   (MYS 549)
        trip go lord ACT   home LOC reach until
        'Until the lord who is going on a trip gets home…'
      b. kimi **ga** (之) omo Ø motomu-ramu   (MYS 2925)
        maid ACT   wet nurse look-for-AUX
        'You look for a wet nurse.'
Non-Active verbs:
(5) a. makwi Ø tatu ara-yama-miti wo…   kwoye… (MYS 45)
        tree   stand rough mountain path ACC cross
        '…treading along the mountain path thickly covered with trees.'
      b. makwi **no** (乃) tatu ara-yama-naka   (MYS 241)
        tree GEN   stand rough-mountain-inside
        'the mountain road thickly covered with trees'

The distribution of *ga* and *i* strongly suggests that OJ is an ergative -active language, and that transitive/unergative verbs are marked in distinct way from unaccusative verbs.

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[7] The verb *kuru 'come'* is an unaccusative verb and the subject is generally unmarked. The subject pronouns *aga* 'I' and *naga* 'you' can, however, cooccur with *kuru*. There are many examples in which the word *kimi* 'lord' marked by *ga* appears with *kuru* 'come', as in *kimi-ga komu* 'the Lord comes' (MYS 2062). This should be expected for an ergative-active language, since pronouns and proper nouns are highest in the animacy hierarchy and more likely to be interpreted as agentive (see Dixon 1994:70). Comrie (1978), for example, shows that in some ergative languages, ergative case appears on the subject of an unaccusative verb when the subject is more agentive (see Comrie 1978:366).

2.3 Unmarked Subjects

As discussed above, *ga* and *i* appear in various types of embedded clauses, but not in main clauses whose predicate takes the conclusive form. A main/embedded split is also attested by unmarked subjects. In embedded clauses, the subject (i.e. the patient argument) of an unaccusative verb is unmarked morphologically, while the subject (i.e., the agent argument) of a transitive/unergative verb is marked by genitive *ga* or *no*. In the MYS, there are a number of instances in which an unaccusative verb takes a morphologically unmarked subject. In almost all cases, bare subjects appear immediately adjacent to a verb, just like the bare object of a transitive verb.   This is shown in (6).

(6) a. wominapyesi Ø opuru sapapye   (MYS 1346)
         patrinias   grow marshy spot
         'the marshy spot where the patrinias grows'
     b. ma-tori Ø sumu   Unate no mori   (MYS 1344)
         sacred bird live   Unate-GEN wood
         'the woods of Unate where sacred birds live'

As we see in (7), when the unergative verb *yuku* 'go' appears in an attributive embedded clause, or in a conditional clause, the subject is marked by *ga* or *no*.[8]

(7) a. kimi **ga**   yuku umibye no yado   (MYS 3580, 3724)
         you-ACT go   sea facing GEN inn
         'the inn facing to the sea where you go'
     b. nanipa pye ni pito **no**   yukye-ba…   (MYS 1442)
         naniwa LOC   person GEN go-when
         'when the man went to Naniwa…'

When a bare subject occurs inside an embedded clause, the verb *yuku* has the meaning of 'flow' rather than 'go' as in (8).
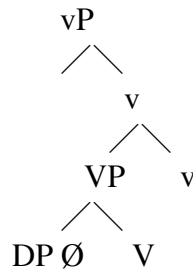
(8) Asuka-gapa Ø   yuku se wo   paya-mi …   (MYS 2713)
     Asuka-river   go water OBL fast-MI
     'Since the river of Asuka where the water flows is very fast…'

Given the strict adjacency requirement on bare subjects, I suggest that in embedded clauses, bare subjects have absolute status and appear in underlying
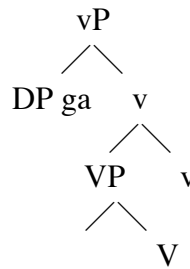
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[8] Genitive *no* differs from *ga* in that it can mark both the agent argument of a transitive/unergative verb and the patient argument of an unaccusative verb.

object position. Subjects marked by *ga* are ergative and appear in the external argument position.[9] The difference between (6) and (7) is represented as follows.

(9) a. Unaccusative   b. Transitive/Unergative

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        vP                                      vP
       /  \                                    /  \
          v                              DP ga      v
         /  \                                      /  \
       VP     v                             VP       v
      /  \                                 /  \
   DP Ø    V                                     V
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Turning now to conclusive clauses, unmarked subjects can occur as the external argument of transitive and the internal argument of unaccusatives. They often appear in clause initial position, as shown in (10).

(10) a. aki no pana-Ø kusa-kusa-ni ari to…   (MYS 4255)
         fall GEN flower   much   be-CONCL-that
         '(to say) that there are many sorts of flowers in fall season'
     b. wago opokimi Ø kuni Ø   sirasu-rasi   (MYS 933)
         my emperor   country   govern-AUX-CONCL
         'The emperor might govern the country.'

The distributional evidence indicates that OJ can be characterized as a split ergative language; while unmarked arguments in embedded clauses follow an ergative-absolutive pattern, those in main conclusive clauses follow a nominative-accusative pattern.

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[9] It is reported that Japanese children show a very similar pattern of case marking on the subject NP. Miyamoto et al. (1999) observe that children commonly omit the nominative case marker *ga* on the subject of unaccusative verbs, while consistently using *ga* on the subject of unergative and transitive verbs. They propose that the A-chain Deficit Hypothesis (ACDH) (Borer and Wexler 1987, 1992) accounts for why children treat unaccusative verbs differently from unergative/transitive verbs. From a learnability perspective, it may be worth pursuing a unified account for the similarity between the relevant historical change and the pattern revealed in language acquisition. The issue, however, goes beyond the scope of this paper.

3. Antipassive

Antipassives are common in ergative languages. In an antipassive, the subject has absolute status, and the (underlying) object is treated as an oblique. This section makes a crucial reference to Miyagawa's (1989) proposal for attributive clauses in OJ and explores the possibility that attributive clauses originate as antipassives.

3.1 Reanalysis of Antipassive

It is widely acknowledged that reanalysis of antipassive as transitive plays a key role in a historical change from ergative to accusative (cf. Dixon 1994, Bittner and Hale 1996, Aldridge 2004). The subject with absolute status is reanalyzed as a nominative subject, and the (underlying) oblique object is reanalyzed as an accusative object. According to Dixon, split ergativity can be seen as a property that emerges in this transition.

Dixon (1994) states that at the stage where there is a productive antipassive derivation, ergative languages have a strict division of verbs into transitive and intransitive. They have a morphological system indicating transitive and intransitive constructions. In Dyirbal, for examples, verbs fall into two categories. The verbs that have the –*l* form are transitive, and those that have the -*y* form are intransitive. Dyirbal has a productive antipassive derived by the addition of –*ga-y*. An important consequence that follows from reanalysis of antipassive is the loss of the distinction between transitive and intransitive constructions. According to Dixon, Warrgamay, the southern neighbor of Dyirbal, is a split ergative language, but the morphological division between transitive and intransitive is obscured by the loss of a productive antipassive construction.

Similarly, Aldridge (2004) argues that Malagasy, which she claims to be a split ergative language, has lost an antipassive construction. Following Paul and Travis (2003), Aldridge proposes that in Malagasy, an oblique object in an antipassive was reanalyzed as a direct object in that it can be definite and manifests 'Object Shift'. The former antipassive morpheme was extended to regular intransitives. The loss of antipassive led Malagasy to shift in the direction of an accusative language. It is known that Austronesian languages display varying degrees of ergativity. Tagalog is predominantly ergative, Malagasy is a split-ergative language, and standard Indonesian is basically accusative. Aldridge argues that these variations can be accounted for in terms of a historical continuum. The historical shift from ergative to accusative described for Austronesian languages emerges as a result of the reanalysis of antipassive. From a cross-linguistic perspective, I suggest that the analysis described by Dixon (1994) and Aldridge (2004) for Austronesian languages can be extended to OJ and its ancestor.

3.2 Miyagawa's (1989) Exceptions

Miyagawa (1989) argues that in OJ attributive predicates fail to assign accusative case, and hence the object must be case-marked by *wo* in order to avoid a violation of the case filter. As noted by Kinsui (1993) and Yanagida (2006), there are a number of examples in which an attributive predicate takes an object lacking morphological case, which are apparent counterexamples to Miyagawa's (1989) generalization. Miyagawa and Ekida (2003) attempt to account for Miyagawa's (1989) exceptions, but their account is not sufficient to cover all the exceptions; furthermore, Miyagawa and Ekida focus on data from EMJ, a distinct stage of the language from OJ. In the *MYS*, we find 90 occurrences of a transitive clause whose subject is marked by *no* or *ga* and whose object is morphologically unmarked.   55 occur with attributive predicates, as in (11a-b) (cf. Yanagida (2006)).

(11) a. Saywo-pimye no kwo **ga** (何) pire Ø puri-si yama-no na   (MYS 868)
          Sayo-hime GEN dear ACT scarf wave-PAST hill-GEN name
          'the name of the hill where Sayo-Hime waved her scarf'
     b. Sika no ama **no** (之) sipo Ø yaku keburi   (MYS 1246)
          Shika GEN fishermen GEN salt burn smoke
          'the smoky haze raising when fishermen of Shika burn salt'

Examples like (11a-b) are clearly counterexamples to Miyagawa's (1989) generalization. Although bare objects do occur with attributive predicates, my survey of the data shows that Miyagawa's exceptions are predictable.   The bare objects that appear with attributive predicates are with exception noun heads (N^0). What I would like to suggest is that a noun head immediately adjacent to an attributive predicate is incorporated into the verb, and that an incorporated noun need not be assigned case, following the analysis of Baker (1988). That is, examples like (11a-b) are analyzed as derived intransitives.

It is known that in many ergative languages object noun heads are incorporated into the verb in an antipassive (cf. Baker 1988, Comrie 1978, Spencer 1999). Spencer (1999) indicates that Chukchi, representative of the small Chukokto-Kamchatkan language group, is a split ergative language with two types of antipassive constructions:

(12) a. muri myt-ine-rety-rkyn **kimit?-e**
          we-ABS we-AP-carry-PRES/II load-INSTR
          'We are carrying the load.'
     b. ytlyg-yn **qaa**-tym-g?e
          father-ABS deer-killed-3SG

'The father killed a deer.'

(12a) is the antipassive with the object marked by oblique case, and (12b) is the antipassive with the object noun head incorporated into the verb. Given that Miyagawa's (1989) exceptions are derived intransitives, (11a-b) are reminiscent of the antipassive construction as illustrated in (12b). (11a), however, is not typical of the antipassive since the subject is marked by *ga*, which, under my analysis, is ergative. In the following, I present some evidence that an attributive clause is a vestigial or reanalyzed antipassive, and that OJ, like Malagasy, lost a previously productive antipassive construction.

3.3 Attributive as the Former Antipassive

Although there are a fair number of exceptions, it is widely assumed among Japanese grammarians that the suffixes *su* and *ru* indicate a transitive/intransitive opposition in OJ; verbs in the *–su* conjugation are transitive and those in the *-ru* conjugation are intransitive. Some examples are given in (13).

(13)   <u>Transitive</u>   <u>Intransitive</u>
    a. utu-**su** 'move'   utu-**ru** 'move'
    b. oko-**su** 'rise'   oko-**ru** 'rise'
    c. kape-**su** 'return'   kape-**ru** 'return'

Kuginuki (1996) conducted extensive research on the two verbal conjugations, *Yodan* 'quadrigrade' and *Shimo-Nidan* 'lower bigrade' conjugations in *Nara* period (OJ) texts, showing that when the verb ends with the suffix *su*, both *Yodan* and *Shimo-Nidan* verbs are commonly transitive, but that when the verb ends with the suffix *ru*, they behave differently. The result of his study is summarized in (14).

(14) *Yodan*/*Shimo-Nidan* Verbs with *–ru* and without *–ru* (Kuginuki 1996)

CONJUGATIONAL FORM	WITH-*RU*		WITHOUT-*RU*	
	TR	INTR	TR	INTR
a. *Yodan*	52 (36%)	94 (64%)	153 (54%)	130 (46%)
b. *Shimo-Nidan*	4 (13%)	26 (87%)	83 (86%)	14 (14%)

As is evident from (14), the transitive/intransitive division of *Yodan* verbs is not predictable from the suffix *ru*. *Shimo-Nidan* verbs, on the other hand, are predominantly intransitive when the verb root takes the suffix *ru*. 87% of the verbs with the suffix *ru* are intransitive. The ratio of transitive to intransitive is reversed when the verb does not take the suffix *ru*. 86% of the verbs without *ru*

are transitive. In other words, it appears likely that verbs in the *Shimo-Nidan* conjugation with the suffix *ru* are derived from transitive verbs.

The essential difference between *Yodan* and *Shimo-Nidan* verbs is the existence in the *Shimo-Nidan*, but not in the *Yodan*, of a special attributive form ending in the suffix *ru*, as illustrated in (15).

(15) | Conclusive | Attributive |
| --- | --- |
| a. | tabu 'eat' | tabu-**ru** 'eat' |
| b. | tasuku 'help' | tasuku-**ru** 'help' |

Based on typological observations, I propose that proto-Japanese had a strict division between transitive and intransitive constructions, and that the attributive suffix *ru* relates to the intransitive morpheme. That is, we can reconstruct that the Japanese language at one time had a division of verbs into transitive and intransitive, as illustrated in (16).

(16) | Transitive | Derived Intransitive | Intransitive |
| --- | --- | --- |
| -su | -ru | -ru |

Table (14) shows that this strict division was lost in OJ and that the original intransitive morpheme *ru* was extended to transitive verbs, in particular the *Yodan* verbs. Given that the attributive suffix appears in both transitive verbs and in regular intransitives, I propose that OJ, like Malagasy, reanalyzed an original antipassive construction. Objects were   reanalyzed as accusative objects.

3.4 Oblique to Accusative

The particle *wo* in OJ differs significantly from Modern Japanese in that it can mark not only a direct object, but all kinds of internal arguments and adjuncts. Some examples are given in (17a-b). In (17a) *wo* marks a locative adjunct and in (17b) a time adjunct.

(17) a. kapapye **wo** (乎) parusame ni ware tati-nuru   (MYS 1696)
  riverside OBL   spring rain by I stand-AUX
  'I am standing in the rain of spring beside the river.'
  b. ame no puru ywo **wo** (乎) pototogisu naki-te yuku-nari (MYS 1756)
  rain GEN rain night OBL cuckoo   cuckooing go-AUX
  'At night when rain is falling, a cuckoo is frying.'

In present-day Japanese, the locative and time adjuncts as given in (17a-b) are marked by the oblique case *de* or *ni*, but OJ allows these elements to be marked by *wo*. This is expected under the view that *wo* is descended from an oblique case.

A *wo*-marked object, however, does not behave like an oblique object. Yanagida (2006) observes that in OJ when an object is marked by *wo* it must appear in a position preceding a subject, as shown in (18).

(18) aki yama **wo** (乎) ikani ka kimi **ga** (之) pitori kwoyu-ramu (MYS 106)
　　　autumn mountain ACC how Q you ACT alone cross-AUX
　　　'How do you cross the autumn mountain alone?'

The particle *wo* in OJ necessarily marks the NP it attaches to as definite and appears when the object is dislocated to the left of the subject. This, however, is unexpected if *wo* is an oblique case marker, since oblique objects in antipassives tend cross-linguistically to be indefinite and undergo no syntactic movement (cf. Aldridge 2004). I take this as evidence that *wo* is descended from an oblique case marker, but has been reanalyzed as an accusative case in OJ.　Given that the suffix *ru* is used in transitive clauses, OJ, like Malagasy, has reanalyzed an antipassive construction, resulting in a split in case marking.

　　Split ergativity is a property of almost every ergative language. Many languages that are traditionally identified as ergative languages display a three-way split ergative case system. That is, the subject of an intransitive verb is marked with nominative (or absolutive) case, which is generally the unmarked case form. The subject of a transitive verb is marked with ergative case and the object with accusative case. Hindi can be analyzed as having a mechanism for specifying both ergative case and accusative case. (19a-c) are taken from Mahajan (1990). [10]

(19) a.　pulis ne　　cor ko　　jaldii se pakaR liyaa
　　　　　police ERG thief ACC quickly catch-PERF
　　　　　'The police quickly arrested the thief.'
　　　b.　kutte ne bhONke
　　　　　dogs ERG barked
　　　　　'The dogs barked.'
　　　c.　siitaa Ø aayii
　　　　　Sita arrived
　　　　　'Sita arrived.

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[10]　An object marked by *ko* is specific/definite, while an unmarked object is interpreted as nonspecific/indefinite (see also Enc 1990). In Mahajan (1990), *ko* is not glossed as an accusative case, but from typological observations, it is clear that specificity/definiteness is typical of accusative morphology.

OJ behaves exactly like Hindi in that the subject of a transitive/unergative verb is marked with ergative case, but that the subject of an unaccusative verb is unmarked morphologically. The morphological marking on the subject NP indicates that OJ is an ergative-active language with a three-way case system.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, I propose that the Japanese language of the OJ or Nara period had the characteristics of an ergative-active language with a split case system. I argue that Miyagawa's (1989) exceptions are descended from antipassives. The change described by Miyagawa (1989) can then be analyzed as a cross-linguistically well-documented change from ergative to accusative. I suggest that *ga* is an ergative case marker on the agent argument of transitive/unergative verbs and that *wo* is descended from an oblique case marker of the object in an antipassive. The loss of a productive antipassive construction led to a split in case marking. I have shown that like many ergative languages, OJ displays an ergative-accusative split, which is believed to emerge in a transition from ergative to accusative. A split in case marking occurs between main and embedded clauses. Main conclusive clauses are essentially accusative, while embedded clauses retain ergative characteristics (see Dixon 1994 for example a main/embedded split). The difference in case marking between main and embedded clauses may follow from the general tendency that a historical change starts out from unembedded (i.e., main) clauses (cf. Givón 1979, Lightfoot 1991).

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