

A Korean Grammatical Borrowing in Early Middle Japanese *Kunten* Texts and its Relation to the Syntactic Alignment of Earlier Korean and Japanese

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1. Introduction

Modern Korean and Japanese are textbook examples of accusative alignment. However there have been persistent suggestions over the last 25 years that earlier stages of both languages had ergative or active alignment. In this paper we focus on the postnominal particle *-i*, which has been analyzed as the reflex of an original ergative marker in Korean (King 1988), in Japanese (Vovin 1997, Takeuchi 2008), and as a loan from Korean to Japanese (Kobayashi 2009, Vovin 2010). Our conclusions are (i) there is little evidence that *-i* in earlier Korean was an ergative marker (ii) Old Japanese (OJ) was indeed a split active system (Yanagida 2005, 2007, Yanagida & Whitman 2007), but the agent marker was not *-i*, (iii) *-i* in one genre of OJ prose and in 9th century glossed texts has the subject marking and bound pronominal functions of earlier Korean *-i*, suggesting that it did originate as a loan, but in the former function it serves to mark broad focus subjects.

2. Alignment in earlier Korean

2.1 The ergative hypothesis for earlier Korean

King (1988) suggests that prior to late middle Korean (LMK; 15th c.) earlier Korean had ergative or perhaps active alignment. This is based on differences in case marking between Late Middle Korean (LMK; 15th century) and modern standard written Korean. King observes that “[c]ase marking in MK seems to have been more semantically-based than in modern Korean, and zero marking more frequent: non-referential objects tend to have zero marking, and ‘nominative’ nouns tend to get zero marking in two types of configurations” (1988: 2). The first of these (“Configuration A”) involves non-referential and/or indefinite DPs adjacent to non-transitive verbs:

- (1) CENG un pal Ø is-no-n TUNG ila.
 Ceng TOP foot exist-PROC-PADN lamp is
 ‘A Ceng is a lamp with feet.’
Wörin sökpo 1.8b (1459), King 1988: 2

“Configuration B” involves subjects of intransitive verbs in adjunct clauses:

- (2) PWUTHYE Ø NYELQPPAN ho-sya-n HHWUW ey
 Buddha nirvana do- HON-PADN after at
 ‘after the Buddha achieved nirvana’
Sökpo sangjöl 23.6.verso (1447)

King presents the following hypothesis for the diachronic development of alignment in Korean.

- (3) Stage 1: Ergative (Pre-Middle Korean)

	Subject	Object
Intransitive	Ø	
Transitive	-i	Ø
Stage 2: Extension of Ergative		
	Subject	Object
Intransitive	i	~ Ø
Transitive	-i	Ø/-γil

Stage 3: Accusative (15th century LMK)
 Subject Object

Intransitive	Ø/-i	
Transitive	Ø/-i	Ø/-l

The basic idea is that at Stage 1, the language realized ergative case as *-i* and absolutive case as zero on objects and intransitive subjects. At Stage 2, ergative marking is extended to some intransitive verbs, perhaps to unergatives in an active alignment pattern. By the 15th century, the alternation between overt case and zero no longer marks grammatical relations. We examine this hypothesis in the next two sections.

2.2 Configurations A and B

King's Configuration A is not necessarily an indicator of earlier ergativity. For example, Fry (2002) shows that adjacency to the predicate and nonspecificity/indefiniteness are predictors for so-called case drop in contemporary spoken Japanese, but this language is not ergative, nor was the Late Middle Japanese system which is its diachronic source.¹

Furthermore, "absolutive" patterns grouping together nonspecific/indefinite objects and unaccusative subjects are common across languages, irrespective of alignment. A well-known example is the Russian genitive of negation (Pesetsky 1982), which applies to nonspecific/indefinite objects and unaccusative subjects in negative sentences. Again, the pattern has nothing to do with a prior diachronic stage of ergativity. Instead, it has been argued that it reflects the shared VP-internal status of both nonspecific/indefinite objects and unaccusative subjects. Similarly, Takezawa (1987) argues that case drop on subjects and objects in Japanese is conditioned by their VP-internal status.

The final problem with Configuration A is that it is unclear how it is related to Configuration B. While configuration A is sensitive to the specificity/definiteness of the subject or object, configuration B is not.

Configuration B, however, seems more significant. Kim 1972 (246-249) makes the related observation that zero marked subjects are highly frequent in complex NPs.² All of Kim's (1972: 247-248) 22 examples from the *Sōk-po sangjōl* (1447) involve the adnominal endings *-(o/u)l* or *-(o/u)n*, which originally marked a high or clausal nominalization. In fact, Kim and King's observations intersect: all but 2 of Kim's 22 examples involve complex NPs

¹ The ancestor of the contemporary Japanese case marking pattern was a system in Middle Japanese where the subject of certain embedded clauses was marked with genitive *no* and the object with accusative *wo*. In Late Middle Japanese, *ga* replaced *no*, and the pattern was generalized to main clauses. See Yanagida & Whitman (2009) for details.

² Complex NPs correlate also show a high incidence of zero marked objects. Sugai (2004)

which are also adjuncts, like (2). In argument complex NPs, there is a strong tendency for the subject to be marked genitive (Whitman 2004).

- (4) na-y (L) ciz-wu-n CCWOY
 I-GEN commit-MOD-PADN sin
 ‘the sin that I committed *Sökpo sangjöl* 24.17.verso

The pattern whereby subjects in argument complex NPs are marked genitive, and subjects in adjunct complex NPs are zero (nominative) marked, resembles the same pattern in modern Turkish, as described by Kornfilt (2003). However in Turkish the non-genitive marked pattern is an innovation, not a retention.

Summarizing the results of this section, the distribution of zero marked subjects and objects in 15th century does not provide a strong indication of earlier ergativity in Korean. A tendency toward zero marking of nonspecific/indefinite subjects and objects can be found in modern Japanese. Zero marking of the subject in adjunct complex NPs occurs in modern Turkish. Neither of these patterns results from an immediately prior stage of ergative alignment.

2.3 What was going on before the 15th century: Data from kugyöl texts

To clarify what might have been going on before the 15th century, we investigated kugyöl texts from the 13th century and earlier. Kugyöl are a graphic system for glossing Chinese texts to be read in Korean (we discuss a similar textual source for earlier Japanese in 4). Kugyöl materials provide our earliest substantial pre-LMK source, dating from perhaps as early as the 10th century. Since kugyöl texts contain instances of ancestor of the LMK subject marker *-i*, they provide an opportunity for checking whether *-i* functioned as an ergative marker at an earlier stage of the language.

The answer is negative. Consider for example one of the first kugyöl texts to have been discovered, several leaves of the *Kuyök Inwang-gyöng* (舊譯仁王經 *Humane King Sutra*), glossed in the 13th century. Character glosses for *-i* in this text do not show a clear correlation with transitivity. Subjects marked with *-i* appear with both transitive and intransitive verbs. A count of the examples of the particle *-i* in the *Kuyök Inwang-gyöng* fragment shows 9 transitive subjects and 30 intransitive subjects. Although some examples of nonspecific/indefinite subjects occur with zero marking, as in (5a), other instances of nonspecific/indefinite subjects directly adjacent to an unaccusative verb occur with *-i* marking (5b).

- (5) a. ...CHYWUNG Ø is-kye-mye
 sentient [beings] Ø be-PAST-and
 ‘and there were (countless) sentient beings’

(Kuyōk Inwang-gyōng 2:3)

- b. ...KWUKTHWO-i is-wo-n toy
 land-NOM be-MOD-PADN place
 ‘and there were (countless) lands’

(Kuyōk Inwang-gyōng 2:3)

This is not an ergative pattern.

To investigate the distribution of DP-*i* in the oldest kugyōl texts, we surveyed the drypoint glosses in fascicle 20 of the Chin-bon *Hwaōm-gyōng* (*Avataṃsaka Sūtra*), based on the analysis of Lee et al 2009.³ Clear glosses for *-i* as a subject marker in this text are relatively rare. We counted 19 unambiguous examples. There are 4 examples of transitive and/or agentive subjects with *-i*. We have followed Lee et al’s (2009) notation for kugyōl glosses. The gloss marked as diagonal line in position 35 [35(/)] indicates *-i*.

- (6) a. 一切如來[35(/)]成正覺([41(· -) 35(· .) 51(· ·)])
 b. all Tathāgata-**i** achieve highest enlightenment-l
 c. all Tathāgata-**NOM** highest enlightenment-ADN achieve-ADN
 ‘(that) all the Tathāgatas achieved highest enlightenment’ (based on Lee et al 2009: 144)

There are 15 examples of intransitive subjects marked with *-i*, 5 in adnominal clauses, 10 in other contexts. (7) shows *-i* in a comparative clause.

- (7) 法界[35(/)]皆如虛空([24(· ·) 12(:) ...])
 Dharma world-**i** all similar emptiness-ADV do-ADN
 Dharma world-**NOM** all emptiness∅ resembl-ing do-ADN
 ‘that the Dharma worlds all are similar to emptiness’

(based on Lee et al 2009: 196)

In sum, the distribution of *-i* in fascicle 20 of the Chin-bon *Hwaōm-gyōng* is no more ergative than the distribution of this particle in the 13th century *Kuyōk Inwang-gyōng*, or 15th century hangŭl texts. It appears on animate and inanimate subjects of all kinds, with transitive and intransitive verbs, including unaccusatives. Prior to Koryō period kugyōl texts, our information about *-i* is scanty, but attestations in *hyangga* and early *idu* texts also do not support an ergative analysis. A famous example is the fourth line of the *hyangga Ch’ōyong-ga* ‘Song of Ch’ōyong’ (9th century).

³This text may be as old as the 10th century. It is a xylograph with stylus-inscribed drypoint glosses, in the collection of the Seong’am Museum, Seoul.

- (8) 脚烏伊四是良羅
 katol-i neyh il-el-a
 leg-NOM 4 COP-RET-ASSERT
 ‘It’s four legs!’ (Transliteration following Lee & Ramsey 2011)

Here the indefinite, inanimate *-i*-marked DP “legs” is the subject of an intransitive predicate, the copula.

2.4 The etymology of *-i*

We conclude this section with a brief discussion of the etymology of the nominative particle *-i*. King (1988) suggests that the postnominal particle originates from the adverbial suffix *-i*. However adjunct markers that develop into ergative markers are typically instrumental or genitive, but adverbial *-i* has neither of these functions. Furthermore, adverbial *-i* in earlier Korean was a suffix that attached to bound forms, the bare stem of verbs and adjectives. Throughout the history of Korean, suffixes and particles appear to have been distinct, with particles following only non-bound forms.

A likelier etymology for nominative particle *-i* relates it to the bound pronominal *i* “(the one) that...”, or the proximal demonstrative *i* ‘this’, which are at least etymologically most likely the same morpheme. The bound pronominal usage is found in LMK, kukyŏl materials, and Koryŏ period hyangga. (9) is an LMK example from the *Yongbi ŏch’ŏn ka* (1447):

- (9) Ka-l-ila ho-l i isi-na.
 go-FADN-COP-INDIC do-FADN BOUNDPRO be-ADVERS
 ‘There are ones who want to go, but...’ *Yongbi ŏch’ŏn ka* (1447) 45

Nam (2012: 27) suggests that in Koryŏ period hyangga, *i* functioned specifically as a [human] bound pronominal. The same combination of functions is exemplified by literary Burmese *thii*, which functions as a demonstrative pronoun, a nominative marker, and a clausal nominalizer (Simpson 2008). Simpson argues that the pronominal function was original, and that this was generalized to nominative marker and clausal nominalizer.

3. Alignment in earlier Japanese

3.1 Two theories of active alignment in Old Japanese

On the basis of examples like (10-11), Vovin 1997, followed by Takeuchi 2008, suggest that *i* functioned as an active marker in Old Japanese (OJ; 8th century), and *wo*, the ancestor of the modern Japanese accusative particle, as an absolutive marker.

- (10) Nakamaro Kwomaro-ra *i* sakasima ni aru tomogara wo
 Nakamaro Komaro-PL I revolt be exist gang WO
 izanap-i pikiwite
 luring leading
 ‘Nakamaro Komaro et al leading his gang in revolt’
Senmyō 19, 757, Emperor Tenmu
- (11) Asuka-gapa yuk-u se wo paya-mi
 Asuka river go-ADN shallows WO fast-mi
 ‘as the shallows flowing in Asuka River are fast’
 (*Man’yōshū* 11/2713, 8th century)

There are numerous problems with this hypothesis. First, outside of the *Shoku Nihongi senmyō* imperial edicts as in (10), the active marker *i* is a chimera. Kobayashi (2009: 6) counts 7 examples in the *Man’yōshū* poetic anthology, and 5 examples in other OJ verse texts. Of these, four actually appear to function as an object marker, and another as a dative marker. In light of these difficulties, Kobayashi (2009) and Vovin (2010) independently propose that subject marking *i* is a loan from Korean.

The problems with *wo* as an absolutive marker are similar. *Wo* occurs on the subject of intransitive predicates in ECM contexts (where it is in fact an argument of the higher verb; cf. Yanagida 2006), or in the adjective-*mi* pattern in (11). The latter pattern is limited to embedded adjunct contexts, and has been analyzed as an experiencer control construction (Aoki 2004), with *-mi* possibly derived from the stem of the verb *mi-* ‘see’. (For a recent update of this idea, see Tsuta 2007.) Crucially, *wo* never marks the subject of a matrix intransitive predicate.

Wo also has a number of characteristics that are unexpected of an absolutive marker. As pointed out by Yanagida (2006, 2007) it marks non-themes, including PPs. Finally, DPs marked by *wo* are specific (Yanagida 2006, 2007, Yanagida & Whitman 2009). We know of no other language where an absolutive marker is restricted to [specific] DPs.

3.2 Active *ga*, absolutive \emptyset (Yanagida 2005, 2007a, b)

A different split active system is posited for OJ by Yanagida (2005, 2007a, b). On this analysis, active alignment is restricted to nominalized clauses (adnominal, nominalized, realis and irrealis conditional). In such clauses the genitive marker *ga* functions as the active marker (12), while absolutive is zero marked (13). Absolutive objects adjacent to the verb are incorporated (Yanagida 2007a). Matrix non-nominalized clauses have accusative alignment, with zero-marked subject and object.

- (12) Saywopimye no kwo **ga** pire ∅ puri-si yama
 Sayohime GEN kid AGT scarf wave-PST.ADN mountain
 ‘the mountain where the kid Sayohime waved her scarf’
 (*Man’yōshū* 5/868)
- (13) pisakwi ∅ opu-ru kiywoki kapara ni
 hisagi grow-ADN clear riverbank on
 ‘on the clear river banks where the hisagi grows’
 (*Man’yōshū* 6/925)

This system shows a number of typical features of non-accusative alignment, such as genitive/active syncretism, and an alignment split where the non-accusative pattern appears in embedded clauses. As is typical of active languages, *ga*-marked subjects are DPs higher on the nominal hierarchy (Silverstein 1976). In contrast to the hypothesis described in 3.1, *ga*-marking on active subjects is categorical; that is, active marking with *ga* is the norm, and obligatory with DPs high on the nominal hierarchy, such as personal pronouns.

We therefore conclude that the system where *ga* functions as the active marker in a split active system is the more accurate analysis of OJ alignment. But the question remains: what is the source of subject marking *i* in early Japanese data where it appears?

4. The particle –*i* in earlier Japanese

4.1 9th century kunten texts; the explosion in the frequency of *i*

Kobayashi (2009) points out that compared to its highly limited distribution in 8th century texts, there is an explosion in the frequency of *i* in 9th century kunten material. Kunten are the counterpart of Korean kugyōl, a system for glossing Chinese texts and reading them in the vernacular (Yoshida et al 2001). Like kugyōl, kunten materials are an important source of information about earlier Japanese. Particularly during the beginning of the Early Middle Japanese period in the 9th century, when other vernacular sources are almost completely absent, the quantity of kunten texts (all glossed versions of sutras and sutra commentaries in Middle Chinese) greatly increases. Kobayashi observes that virtually all 9th century Buddhist kunten texts employ *i*. He also points out that the frequency of *i* increases by factor of 10 or more: compared to the 17 examples of *i* in the 62 *Shoku Nihongi senmyō*, there are approximately 290 examples in a single kunten text, the Saidaiji-bon *Konkōmyō saishō ōkyō* (ca. 830).⁴ This particle is not

⁴The count is due to Ōtsubo (1981: 442).

found in other texts of any genre in the EMJ period, with the exception of two examples from a *senmyō* imperial edict of 842 (Kobayashi 2009: 7).

Kobayashi points out that in the Saidaiji-bon *Konkōmyō saishō ōkyō* both *i*-marked subjects and zero-marked subjects occur, with zero marking more common. The same DP can occur as subject with either type of marking:

- (14) Toki ni moromoro no bisshū oyobi **daisyū** Ø kotogotoku mina
 time at all GEN monk and crowd completely all
 kokoro wo itasi... to tansu
 mind ACC extend COMP intone
 ‘At this time the monks and the crowd all focused their minds, and intoned...’ (Saidaiji-bon *Konkōmyō saishō ōkyō* fascicle 10, 26 l. 30)
- (15) ... toki ni muryau asokiya no nin.ten **daisyū i** mina
 time at countless infinite GEN humans.celestials crowd I all
 opi ni kanasibi yorokobi-te... to tansi-te
 greatly despair rejoicing-GER COMP intone-GER
 ‘at ... time a crowd of countless innumerable humans and celestials greatly despaired and rejoiced, and intoned...’ (ibid fasc.10, 26 l. 256)
- (16) Sanzen sekai no naka ni syupens-eru ten **daisyū i**
 3,000 world GEN middle in spread-STAT heaven crowd I
 kotogotoku kankisi-ki.
 completely rejoiced-PAST
 ‘A crowd of celestials spread across 3,000 worlds all rejoiced.’
 (Saidaiji-bon *Konkōmyō saishō ōkyō* fasc. 9, 21 l. 28)

All three of the preceding examples involve the same DP subject head, the expression *daisyū* (大衆) ‘crowd, great multitude’. (14) and (15) involve the same transitive predicate, *tansu* (歎す), ‘intone, recite’, but in (14) the subject is zero-marked, while in (15) it is marked with *i*. In (16) *daisyū* is again marked with *i*, but this time it is the subject of the intransitive predicate *kankisu* (歡喜す) ‘rejoice, exult’.

Kobayashi’s (2009) explanation of this variation is that the glossators of the Saidaiji-bon *Konkōmyō saishō ōkyō* transferred the glosses for *i*-marking from manuscripts originally glossed in Korea (Silla), or perhaps copies of such Sillan manuscripts. He points to other evidence suggesting that Sillan glossing (the ancestor of surviving Korean kugyōl materials) influenced glossing practice in Japan in the late 8th and early 9th century. He suggests that *i* was marked when the original Chinese text was complex, or the subject difficult to discern.

If this is correct, however, it is not clear why *i* is marked in (16), a simple clause. In other instances where we know EMJ glossators to have bor-

rowed or adapted Korean glosses, they fit them to the norms of Japanese syntax (Lee 2006, Whitman 2009). For example, Lee (2006) points out that in an early EMJ manuscript of the Avatamsaka sūtra held by the Kyoto National Museum, a phonogram gloss used to mark locative case in Korean kugyōl is borrowed to mark dative case in Japanese. EMJ uses the same particle (*ni*) to mark dative/locative, but in Korean locative and dative are distinct. It thus seems reasonable to suppose that *i* was used to mark a significant grammatical distinction in Japanese.

Looking back at (14-16), we notice that there is an information structural difference in the three examples of *daisyu* ‘crowd’. The existence of the zero-marked ‘crowd’ in (14) can be inferred from prior discourse (it is the crowd that the Buddha has been addressing in the text). The crowds in (15) and (16), in contrast, are newly invoked; their existence cannot be inferred from prior discourse. In a Korean original glossed version of this text, it is very likely that ‘crowd’ in (14) was marked with the topic marker *-(o/u)n*. But EMJ glossators did not borrow or adapt this gloss. We know that EMJ had both *pa*-marked and bare topics (Yanagida, Watanabe 2007); either would have been an appropriate choice for marking the subject in (14). ‘Crowd’ in (15-16), in contrast, has an interpretation corresponding to broad focus *ga* in Modern Japanese (Heycock 2008). EMJ had particles (so-called *kakari* particles) for marking narrow focus, but no specific segmental marker for marking broad focus. We suggest that *i* was adapted by EMJ glossators to mark broad focus subjects.

4.2 Bound pronominal *i* in 9th century kunten texts

As noted by previous researchers (Ōtsubo 1981: 438, Kobayashi 2009: 7) *i* also functions as a bound pronominal, preceded by the adnominal form of the predicate:

- (17) Bodai no papu wo gyapusuru **i** byaudou no
 Bodhi GEN dharma acc practice BOUNDPRO equality GEN
 gyapu wo syusuru wo ipu.
 practice=Acc following-do=acc say
 ‘Practicing the dharma of the Bodhi, we call it following the practice
 of nondiscrimination.’
 (Saidaiji-bon *Konkōmyō saishō ōkyō* fasc. 5, 10 l. 19)

Although the bound pronominal function of *i* and the subject marking function of *i* (which we have hypothesized to mark broad focus) are sometimes difficult to distinguish, (17) is clearly a case of the former, because the adnominal clause marked by *i* is the topic, not the subject of the main clause. Bound pronominal *i* may also be followed by the topic marker *pa*

and the narrow focus particle *si*. As we saw in 2.4, Korean *i* also functions as a bound pronominal. This usage also is attested in *kugyōl* texts, so it would have been known to any Japanese glossator consulting Korean glossed texts. The co-occurrence of these two exact same functions in *kugyōl* and EMJ *kunten* texts makes it extremely probable that the EMJ pattern was borrowed. However we have suggested that it was borrowed and adapted to a specific discourse structural function.

4.3 | in the *Senmyō* imperial edicts

The 17 examples of *i* in the *Shoku Nihongi* *senmyō* (imperial edicts) are the main basis for Yamada's (1954) claim that this particle was a subject marker. As in early EMJ *kunten* texts, *i* in the *Shoku Nihongi* *senmyō* is used both as a subject marker and a bound pronoun preceded by the adnominal form of the embedded predicate.

- (18) Nakamaro Kwomaro-ra **i** sakasima ni aru tomogara wo
 Nakamaro Komaro-PL SUBJ revolt be exist gang OBJ
 izanap-i pikiwite...
 lure leading
 'Nakamaro, Komaro et al leading their gang in revolt'
Senmyō 19, 757, Emperor Kōken

- (19) Kwo pa oya no kokoro nasu **i** si kwo ni pa aru besi.
 kid TOP parent GEN mind do BNDPRO FOC kid be TOP exist should
 'As for kids, doing their parents' minds should be (the property of)
 kids.' (*Senmyō* 13, 747)

As was the case with 9th century *kunten* texts, the subject marking and the bound pronominal functions of *i* can be clearly distinguished by syntax and discourse structural status. In (18), as in the *kunten* examples (15) and (16), *i* marks a broad focus subject. The rebels Nakamaro and Komaro are being introduced for the first time in this edict, and the entire clause presents new information. In (19), the adnominal clause headed by *i* receives narrow focus, marked by the focus particle *si*. The sequence DP *i si* never occurs; that is, *si* never follows *i* when the latter marks a simple DP.

In fact, these discourse structural properties of *i* have been hinted at by previous researchers. Ishida (1937) argues that *i* is an exclamatory particle that gives special emphasis to the preceding phrase. Kobayashi (1953) argues that it is secondary or semantic particle with a similar function. Iwai (1981: 222-223) argues that the bound pronominal function of *i* is primary, and the DP marking function derived from it. He interprets DP *i* as DP *sono mono* 'DP itself'. All of these researchers have detected the focus marking function of *i*.

The main thrust of the argument that *i* was an emphatic or focus marker has been to argue against the previous claim that *i* was a case marker. But the fact remains that in the senmyō and early EMJ kuntei texts where *i* seems well established, DP *i* invariably marks subjects. Takeuchi (2008) makes a more specific claim: following Vovin (1997), he argues specifically that *i* is an active case marker, picking out only transitive and intransitive agentive (unergative) subjects. Takeuchi's argument is obscured by the fact that he groups all OJ texts where *i* occurs together, so that he must dismiss non-subject marking examples of *i* in OJ verse texts as "exclamatory". He also fails to distinguish the bound pronominal and subject marking functions of *i*; if one were to include (19) as an example of subject marking *i*, it could not be considered agentive. However when we confine our attention to the 17 examples of *i* in the *Shoku Nihongi* senmyō, Takeuchi's observation is verified.

(20) **Particle *i* in the *Shoku Nihongi* senmyō**

(a) Agentive intransitive	0 examples
(b) Transitive	12 examples
(c) Topic	1 example
(c) Bound pronominal	4

Despite this correlation, the hypothesis that *i* is a subject (or active) marker faces serious problems. The most obvious is why the particle is not used to mark all agentive subjects. In particular, it is unclear why *i* is never used in the senmyō to mark first or second person subjects, despite the fact that these referents are the highest on the nominal hierarchy. A possible response to this is that *i*-marking was somehow "vestigial" or "archaic". But there is nothing archaic or formulaic about (18), which describes a moment of immediate crisis at the court. Likewise, we might expect *i* to mark the emperor, the first person "speaker" of the senmyō texts. DPs designating the emperor are by far and away the most frequent agentive subjects in the senmyō, but they are never marked by *i*.

This distribution is explained by the hypothesis that *i* marked broad focus subjects. Since personal pronouns, and in this text, the emperor, are discourse-presupposed, they are never marked with *i*. Existential subjects (King's Configuration A) were unmarked, so *i*-marked nonagentive intransitive subjects are less frequent, but in a more extensive text such as the Saidaigi-bon *Konkōmyō saishō ōkyō*, we find them in examples such as (15).

To clarify the difference between *i*-marked subjects and zero-marked subjects in the *Shoku Nihongi* senmyō, let us look at an example where both occur.

- (21) ...Pudino no Mapito Kiyomaro \emptyset si ga ane Popukun to ...
 Fujino no Mahito Kiyomaro he GEN sister Hōkun with
 ituparigoto wo tukuri-te Popukun i mono mawos-eri.
 slander ACC make-GER Hōkun SUBJ thing say-STAT
 ‘Fujino no Mahito Kiyomaro with his sister Hōkun made up a
 slander (about me), and Hōkun has said the thing.’ (*Senmyō* 44, 769)

In (21) Kiyomaro and Hōkun are both agentive subjects of transitive verbs. If *i*-marking were determined by grammatical relation or thematic role alone, there is no reason why both should not be marked with *i*. The difference between the two subjects is their information structural status. The clause whose subject is Kiyomaro (whose name is preceded by a long list of his rank and titles) is the background information for this sentence. The main assertion of the sentence, whose subject receives broad focus, is the clause ‘Hōkun has said the thing.’

5. Conclusion

This paper has supported the claim of Kobayashi (2009) and Vovin (2010) that *-i* in EMJ kunten texts and the 8th century *Shoku Nihongi* senmyō, is a borrowing from Korean. The identity of form and function, in particular the fact that the Japanese texts have both the subject marking and bound pronominal functions also found in Korean, are too complete to be coincidental, or for the forms to be inherited from a remote protolanguage.

At the same time we have argued that *-i* in the 8th and 9th century Japanese texts has a more specific function than its Korean counterpart: it marks broad focus subjects. This fact also supports the borrowing hypothesis. While matrix subjects were zero-marked in OJ and EMJ, they are identified by many components of the syntactic system, including word order and honorific agreement. Broad focus subjects, on the other hand, were not distinctively marked, at least in written texts. It is quite possible that they were prosodically distinguishable, as in the modern language; at any rate, the notion of broad focus subject was provided by universal grammar, not the donor language.

For EMJ kunten texts, the loan status of *-i* fits within a general picture of a heavy continental, and in particular Sillan, component in the establishment of kunten glossing practice in Japan. The nearly identical usage of *-i* in the *Shoku Nihongi* senmyō suggests a similar component in the development of senmyō textual practice, a possibility which has heretofore escaped Japanese scholarship.

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