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## **Differential argument marking in Old Japanese: Morphology, semantics, and syntax**

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### **1. Introduction**

Yanagida and Whitman (2009) propose that two major clause types in Old Japanese (OJ, 8th century), the one traditionally labeled as *shūsi* ‘conclusive’ and the other identified by Yanagida and Whitman as ‘nominalized’ clauses, display different alignment and word order. While the subjects of conclusive verbs are *zero*-marked, the subjects of nominalized verbs are realized with the genitive *ga*, *no*, or *zero*. Yanagida and Whitman (2009) propose that the genitive *ga*, ancestor of the Modern Japanese nominative, is the realization of an active case on the external argument (i.e. the agent) of transitive or active intransitive verbs. Kikuta (2012), however, addresses certain problems with Yanagida and Whitman’s hypothesis, suggesting that variable subject-marking in OJ is conditioned, not by the  $\theta$ -role (i.e. agent) assigned by the verb, but by the place of the subject on the animacy hierarchy. First/second person pronouns are invariably marked by *ga*, but inanimate nouns are marked by *no*. In Kikuta’s analysis, OJ has a nominative-accusative system with two differential subject markings, *ga* and *no*. It should be noted that while this opposition between *ga* and *no* has gained much attention in traditional grammar, no previous work, including Kikuta’s, has as of yet integrated a discussion of *zero*-marked counterparts; they are simply set aside as instances of stylistic case drop.

In recent typological and theoretical literature, languages with variable case marking have been investigated from the perspective of a broader pattern of differential argument marking. Differential subject marking occurs primarily in ergative languages, while differential object marking is independent of alignment and widely attested to in both ergative and accusative languages. This chapter discusses the characteristic phenomenon of differential argument marking in OJ. According to this approach, the crucial contrast is not merely between *ga* and *no*, but between case-marked and *zero*-marked arguments. *Zero*-marked arguments cannot be characterized simply as case drop, because they have both syntactic and semantic significance.

The chapter is organized as follows. Section 2 begins with a critical review of the analysis of alignment in OJ as proposed by Vovin (1997) and Takeuchi (2008). Section 3 provides the basic morphosyntactic characteristics of active alignment as discussed widely in

the literature, which provides an empirical basis for the claim that nominalized clauses in OJ show active alignment. Section 4 describes the results of a comprehensive survey of variable subject marking in OJ utilizing the Oxford-NINJAL Corpus of Old Japanese (ONCOJ). The data revealed that, while the alternation between *ga* and *no* is determined by the semantics of NPs, as widely assumed, differential subject marking associated with *ga* and *zero* is closely linked to the  $\theta$ -role assigned by the verb, implying a binary classification of predicates into active and inactive. Section 5 investigates the phenomenon of differential object marking vis a vis close inspection of two prose texts in OJ: *Norito* and *Senmyō*. This analysis revealed that *wo* marks specific objects and that the specific object moves out of VP.

## 2. Alignment

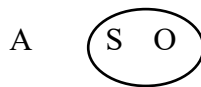
The typological literature widely assumes that alignment systems are classified into three types. Following Dixon's (1979) familiar terminology, S refers to the subject of an intransitive verb, A to the subject of a transitive verb, and O to the object of a transitive verb.

### (1) Three Types of Alignment

Nominative-Accusative



Ergative-Absolutive



Active-Inactive



In a nominative-accusative pattern, often abbreviated as 'accusative pattern', A and S are marked with a nominative case, and O is accusative. In ergative and active patterns, often abbreviated as 'non-accusative', S and O are marked with an absolutive case, and A is marked ergative or active. An active-inactive pattern is often analyzed as a subtype of an ergative pattern with a split intransitivity; the subject of an active intransitive verb (SA) is marked in the same way as the subject of a transitive verb (A), but differently from the subject of an inactive intransitive verb (SO). Many languages classified as non-accusative, however, exhibit a split ergativity in which a nominative-accusative pattern shows up in certain grammatical contexts typically conditioned by person or tense/aspect (cf. Dixon 1979).

#### 2.1 Vovin (1997)

Vovin (1997) initially proposes that OJ has active-inactive alignment. Under Vovin's analysis, the case marker *i*, which is treated as a nominative particle by traditional grammarians (cf. Yamada 1968), is, in fact, an active case marking the subjects of transitive and active intransitive verbs. His examples are cited in (2):

- (2) a. *papa i more-domo...* (MYS 14.3393)  
 mother AGT guard-although  
 ‘Though [my] mother guards [me]...’
- b. *unapi wotokwo i ame apugi...* (MYS 9.1809)  
 Unapi man AGT sky look up  
 ‘The man from Unapi looked up at the sky and...’

Vovin observes that the subjects of inactive intransitives are overwhelmingly unmarked in the same manner as objects of transitive verbs. Similarly, the morphological case *wo*, ancestor of the Modern Japanese accusative *o*, marks not only the objects of transitive verbs, but also the subjects of inactive intransitives. In particular, *wo* marks the subjects of adjectival predicates with *-mi*, which Vovin calls ‘quality stative verbs’. This is illustrated in (3-4).

- (3) [*izami no yama wo taka-mi*] *kamo yamato no mi-ye-nu* (MYS 1.44)  
 Izami GEN mountain ABS high-GER Q Yamato GEN see-PASS-not  
 ‘Is it because the Izami mountains are so high that I can’t see Yamato?’
- (4) [*kuni Ø topo-mi*] *kamo* (MYS 1.44)  
 province ABS far-GER Q  
 ‘Is it because I came too far from my country?’

Given these observations, Vovin claims that the unmarked *zero* form and *wo* are both absolutive in OJ.

Vovin’s analysis of *wo*, however, relies heavily on the *wo...-mi* construction. Aside from this construction, the examples Vovin cites do not necessarily show that *wo* marks the subject of intransitives. For example, consider (5):

- (5) *murasaki no nipop-yeru imwo wo niku-ku ara-ba*  
 Violet GEN beautiful-PERF beloved ABS unpleasant-GER be-COND  
*pitoduma yuwe ni ware kwopwi-me ya mo* (MYS 1.21)  
 other.wife due to I love-FUT-EXCL Q even  
 ‘If [my] beloved, who is beautiful like a violet, was not beautiful to me, would I love her even though she is another’s wife?’

In (5), *imwo* ‘my beloved’ is the subject of the adjectival predicate *nikuku* ‘unpleasant’ (as Vovin observes), but, at the same time, it is the object of the matrix verb *kwopu* ‘love’. That is, the entire clause has the configuration [DP<sub>i</sub> *wo* [*pro*<sub>i</sub> V] V], in which the object marked with *wo* appears in the higher clause, and the embedded clause contains the phonologically null subject (*pro*) coindexed with it.

Takeuchi’s (2008) proposal that OJ has active alignment is heavily based on Vovin’s (1997) observations about *wo*. Example (6) is cited from Takeuchi (2008).

- (6) *miti no siri kwopoda wotomye wo kamwi no goto kikoye-sika-domo*  
road GEN back Kohada maiden ABS God GEN like be.heard-FOC-but  
*api makura-maku* (Kojiki Kayo 45)  
together sleep-AUX.NMLZ  
‘Rumors about the Kohada maiden in her far-off land rumbled like thunder, but we lie together.’

Takeuchi (2008) claims that the *wo*-marked argument is the sole argument of the intransitive verb *kiko-yu* ‘can be heard’. It is important to note, however, that (6) has exactly the same structure as (5). In (6), the *wo*-marked argument that precedes the embedded *domo*-clauses is, in fact, the associative object of the matrix verb *makura-maku* ‘sleep together’.<sup>1</sup> Aside from DP *wo...-mi* constructions, neither Vovin nor Takeuchi present convincing evidence that *wo* marks the subject of inactive intransitive verbs. On the contrary, there is substantial evidence that subjects of non-active intransitives are marked with the genitive *no*.

- (7) a. **makwi no** tatu ara yama naka ni (MYS 3.241)  
tree GEN stand rough mountain inside LOC  
‘in the rough mountains covered with trees’  
b. **u no pana no** saku tukwi (MYS 18.4066)  
utsugi GEN blossom GEN bloom.ADN month  
‘the month when the utsugi blossom is in bloom.’

If *wo* is an absolutive case marker, then we have no explanation for why the subject is never marked with *wo* in adnominal contexts (7a-b).

For now, we may set aside the status of the NP *wo...-mi* pattern in (3). However, it is important to note that Tsuta (2004) convincingly argues that the diachronic source for *-mi* is

the infinitive of the transitive verb *mi-* ‘see’. According to this analysis, the subject of the adjectival predicate is, in fact, the matrix object of the verb *\*mi-* (at least in pre-OJ).

Similarly, Yanagida and Whitman (2009) analyze the *wo...-mi* pattern as adjunct AspPs, analogous to Acc-ing gerunds, such as ‘travel being painful’ in English. These have the following structure:

- (8) [<sub>AspP</sub> *tabi wo* [<sub>VP</sub> *kurusi*] *mi*] *kwopwi wore-ba* (MYS 15.3674)  
travel OBJ painful MI long.for be-PROV  
‘travel being painful, since I long for my wife’

In this analysis, *-mi* is the spellout of the head of [+transitive] AspP. The subject of the adjectival predicate is susceptible to a matrix object (or ECM) analysis of the verb *\*mi-*.

The hypothesis that *wo* marks the absolutive is based on the whole-language characterization of alignment typology, which assumes that the objects of transitive verbs are marked absolutive in ergative languages. However, the skewed ergative (active)-accusative pattern is widely attested, for example in Indic languages such as Hindi. Hindi, traditionally classified as ergative, in fact features active alignment; agent subjects of unergative verbs are marked with *-ne*, but the theme subjects of unaccusative verbs are morphologically *zero* (Mohanana 1994: 71).

### Hindi (Indo-Aryan)

- (9) a. *raam-ne nahaayaa.*  
Ram-ERG bathe-PERF  
‘Ram bathed.’  
b. *raam Ø giraa.*  
Ram.ABS fall-PERF  
‘Ram fell hard.’

The animate objects of transitive verbs, however, are necessarily marked with the accusative *ko* (10). The inanimate objects are marked with *ko* when they are specific; otherwise, they are morphologically *zero* (12) (Mohanana 1994: 79-80).

### Hindi (Indo-Aryan)

- (10) a. *ilaa-ne ek bacce-ko ut<sup>h</sup>aayaa.*  
Ila-AGT one child-ACC lift/carry-PERF  
‘Ila lifted a child.’

- b. ilaa-ne    haar Ø        ut<sup>h</sup>aayaa.  
 Ila-AGT    necklace.ABS   lift-PERF  
 ‘Illa lifted a necklace (non-specific).’

As shown in Hindi, many ergative languages feature the phenomenon of differential object marking. Depending on the animacy, specificity, or definiteness of NPs, certain objects are marked with the accusative case, but others are not. Differential object marking in OJ will be discussed in Section 5.

## 2.2 *What is ‘active’?*

Both the typological and theoretical literature have tended to classify ‘active’ as a subtype of ergative alignment because both ergative and active cases mark the agentive subjects (A) of transitive verbs, but not the patient arguments (S) of intransitive verbs. It is well known, however, that active-stative languages display considerable divergence in both morphology and syntax, which makes it difficult to find a coherent implementation of languages of this type. This section discusses the characteristic properties of active alignment that provide an empirical basis for the claim that OJ displays an active-inactive pattern.

### 2.2.1 *The two classes of predicates*

Active languages divide intransitive verbs into two categories: active and inactive. The exact lexical division differs crosslinguistically, but the two classes of intransitive verbs are distinguished by case marking. Active intransitive subjects (S<sub>A</sub>, typically agent arguments of unergatives) have the same marking as transitive subjects, while inactive intransitive subjects (S<sub>O</sub>, typically patient arguments of unaccusatives) have the same marking as transitive objects. We see such a pattern in Hindi, as illustrated in (9). Dixon (1979: 80-83) divides active alignment into fluid-S and split-S systems. In fluid-S systems, verbs are divided according to the meaning of each particular token. The active pattern appears when the S argument has control over the activity, and the inactive pattern appears when control is lacking. We see this pattern in Batsbi, a fluid S language cited by Comrie (1978: 366). In split-S systems, on the other hand, the two classes of intransitive verbs have fixed membership: they are classified as active or inactive based on their prototypical meaning. Guaraní (Tupí-Guaraní Mithun, 1991), a head-marking language, features a split-S system. In Guaraní, the unaccusative verb ‘die’, which involves no intention or control, is classified as active, while it is classified as inactive in most fluid S languages. In other words, this binary classification of active and inactive is based on some idiosyncratic meanings of a given word.

### 2.2.2 Nominal hierarchy

It is important to note that active and inactive marking depends not only on the semantics of predicates but on the place of S in the nominal hierarchy (11):

- (11) **The Nominal Hierarchy** (Silverstein 1976, revised by Dixon 1994: 85)  
first/second person > third person > proper nouns > human > animate > inanimate

Here, Dixon (1979: 86-87) interprets the nominal hierarchy (11) to “roughly indicate the overall ‘agency potential’ of any given NP,” and observes that “a number of languages have ‘split’ case marking exactly on this principle.” As Mithun (1991) points out, case systems based on agency are frequently restricted to nominals referring to human beings.<sup>2</sup> According to Mithun, Koasati shows agentive case marking of pronominal prefixes within verbs, but accusative case marking of nouns. The active system in Batsbi (Tsova-Tush) is limited to the first and second persons. Central Pomo has an active system in nominals referring to humans only. The Georgian active system is likewise restricted to human beings, while the Yuki system is restricted to animates. From these cross-linguistic observations, it follows that active marking is used with NPs from the left-hand side to the right-hand side of the nominal hierarchy. That is, if a language has agent marking in the third person, it also has agent marking in the first and second persons, which is exactly the opposite of the ergative case used with NPs from the right-hand to the left-hand side of the nominal hierarchy (Dixon 1979).

In languages like Guaraní (Tupí-Guaraní), transitive verbs are marked either active or inactive, depending on which of the two arguments is located higher on the nominal hierarchy. The argument that ranks higher is cross-referenced on the verb (Velazquez-Castillo 1996: 17). When the subject outranks the object or two arguments are of the same rank, the agent is cross-referenced on the verb (active marking). When the object outranks the subject, it is the patient that is cross-referenced on the verb (inactive marking). Even though the thematic role assigned by the verb is identical, assignment of active case is strictly determined by the place of the subject on the nominal hierarchy. That is, the active-inactive division in Guaraní is a clause-level phenomenon defined as the type of the grammatical relation between subject and object NPs.

### 2.2.3 Active/Genitive syncretism

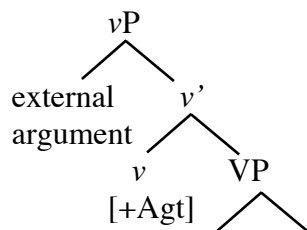
It has been widely acknowledged that ergative/active patterns show syncretism between ergative/active marking and possessive marking, e.g. Mayan (Coon 2008, Coon and Salanova

2009), Inuktitut (Johns 1992), Austronesian (Kaufman 2009, Aldridge 2015), Cariban (Gildea 1998, 2000), East Caucasian (Authier 2013), Guarani (Velazquez-Castillo 1996), Indic Iranian (Bynon 2005), and many others. Johns (1992) argues that, in Inuktitut, the ergative case is homophonous with the genitive case (*-up* for ergative/genitive); thus, the possessive construction and the ergative/active construction are structurally identical. Johns (1992) develops a synchronic account of Inuktitut ergativity based on possessive constructions. Gildea (1998, 2000) and Bynon (2005) propose a similar analysis for Cariban and Indic Iranian languages, respectively. Following this approach, syncretism between agent marking and genitive marking arises as a result of reanalysis of a possessive construction with the copula ‘be’ as monoclausal structure. A possessor is reanalyzed as an external argument (i.e. agent), and the biclausal copular structure is reanalyzed as a monoclausal transitive clause.

#### 2.2.4 Syntax

Many researchers propose that the ergative (or active) case is assigned to the external argument (AGENT) in the specifier position of *v*P (cf. Woolford [1997, 2008], Legate [2008], Aldridge [2004, 2008] and Anand and Nevins [2006], and many others). The external argument (AGENT) is  $\theta$ -marked and inherently case-assigned by *v* in a *v*P projection above VP, as represented in (12).

(12) Differential subject marking at argument structure



Legate (2008) points out that, while ergative is assigned to the external argument in the specifier position of [+transitive] *v*, active is assigned to the external argument in the specifier of [+Agent] *v*. The descriptive generalization, which supports the view that the ergative is an inherent case assigned by *v*, derives from the fact that ergative subjects, in some instances, occur in non-finite clauses, while structural nominative subjects do not (cf. Aldridge 2008). Derived subjects are never ergative; that is, no language promotes objects to ergative through operations such as raising or passive. Some recent researchers, however, have argued against the inherent case analysis of ergative, suggesting that ergative case is instead structural case.



Baker (2014) argues that the ergative case in Shipibo is a structural case rather than inherent. Rezac, Albizu and Etxepare (2014) claim that Basque ergative is structural, based on the ergative-to-absolutive in so-called ‘defective’ T contexts, such as raising and ECM constructions. Yanagida (2018a) proposes that ergative/active case is structural when it responds to the subject-in-situ generalization (SSG), which Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou (2001) claim to be a universal principle on structural case. The SSG states that when the subject remains in Spec, *v*P, the object must be externalized.

### (13) **The Subject-in-Situ Generalization (SSG)**

By Spell-out, *v*P can contain only one argument with an unchecked Case feature.  
(Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou 2001)

A widely observed feature of syntactically ergative languages is that, while the external subject of a transitive verb remains inside *v*P, the object of a transitive verb appears outside VP (Bittner and Hale 1996, Manning 1996, among others). These languages include Dyrirbal (the Pama-Nyungan language of Australia; Dixon 1994:130), Kuikúro and Panare (Cariban languages; Franchetto 1990 and Gildea 1998, 2000), Vafsi (Northwest Iranian; Haig 2008: 188). These languages are split ergative languages. In a nominative-accusative pattern, a direct object remains inside VP. When the subject is marked with ergative case, the direct object moves outside VP. Importantly, object movement is not a property of absolutive DP. As noted by Dixon, the object moves regardless of whether it is absolutive (unmarked) or accusative (case-marked). In section 5, we will show that OJ exhibits object movement characteristic of non-accusative languages when the subject is marked with *ga*.

## **3. Morphology**

### *3.1 Active/Inactive Prefixes*

Crosslinguistically, active alignment can be manifested in the morphological case marked on nouns, but many active languages are strictly head-marking. As is well-known, OJ possesses various verbal prefixes whose syntactic and semantic functions have been left unexplained by traditional grammarians. Yanagida and Whitman (2009) provide a comprehensive study of these prefixes and suggest that *i-* is attached to active verbs and *sa-* to inactive verbs. Examples (14) and (15) are cited in Yanagida and Whitman (2009: 117). N.B. all 75 occurrences for *i-* in the *Man'yōshū* are given in Yanagida (2007: 178-179).

- (14) a. *nara no miyakwo no Sapo kapa ni i-yuki itarite* (MYS 1.79)  
 Nara GEN capital GEN Saho river LOC I-go reaching  
 ‘I reached the River Sahokawa in Nara.’
- b. *kume no wakugwo ga i-pure-kyemu iswo no kusane* (MYS 3.435)  
 Kume GEN youth AGT I-touch-AUX.ADN rock GEN grass root  
 ‘the root of the grass that the youth of Kume would have touched.’
- (15) a. *sa-ne-si tumaya ni ide-tati sinwopi* (MYS 3.481)  
 SA-sleep-PST.ADN bedroom LOC leave-out remember  
 ‘remembering, leaving the bedroom where (I) slept’
- b. *sa-niturap-u wa ga opokimi* (MYS 3.420)  
 SA-shine-ADN I GEN great.lord  
 ‘my great lord who shines’
- c. [<sub>VP</sub> *sugwi no nwo ni sa-wodoru*] *kigisi* (MYS 19.4148)  
 cypress GEN field LOC SA-dance pheasant  
 ‘The pheasant dances in the cypress field.’

Predicates that appear with *-i* include: *yoseru* ‘put aside’, *puru* ‘wave’, *yuku* ‘go’, *wataru* ‘cross’, *toru* ‘take’, *karu* ‘mow’, *kakuru* ‘hide’, *wogamu* ‘pray’, *maporu* ‘go around’, *poru* ‘dig’, *wakaru* ‘part from’, *kogu* ‘row a boat’, *mukapu* ‘head out’, *pirou* ‘pick up’, *mureru* ‘gather’, etc. Predicates that appear with the prefix *sa-* include: *neru* ‘sleep’, *niturapu* ‘shine’, *pasiru* ‘(fish) run’, *wodoru* ‘(birds) dance’, *wataru* ‘(toads) cross’, *nebapu* ‘spread roots’, *narabu* ‘(birds) line up’, *kumoru* ‘get cloudy’, and *nituku* ‘get reddened’. Although these prefixes are somewhat vestigial in OJ, the distribution of *i-* and *sa-* strongly suggests that *i-* appears with active verbs, while *sa-* appears with inactive intransitive verbs. It should be noted that *sa-* occurs as a noun prefix, as in *sa-yo* ‘night’, while *i-* does not. This division parallels exactly the distribution of agreement prefixes in active languages, such as Sateré-Mawé (Meira 2006), where inactive prefixes occur with both nouns and inactive verbs while active prefixes occur with active verbs only.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, of both nouns and verbs as in (16), *sa-* triggers the process known as *rendaku*, in which the initial voiceless obstruents of a noun or a verb become voiced.

- (16) a. \**sa koromo* > *saNkoromo* > *sa-goromo* ‘his clothes’  
 b. \**sa pasiri* > *saNpasiri* > *sa-basiri* ‘his running’

(16) shows that *sa* may reflect an original possessive S argument. The *rendaku* process involves an earlier syllable of the form nasal + vowel (NV). The literature has suggested that the NV sequence is the earlier form of the genitive particle *no*.

Yanagida and Whitman (2009) cited one apparent counterexample to the generalization in MYS 804 in which *ga* and prefixal *sa-* appear to surface in the same clause:

- (17) *wotomye-ra ga sa-nasu itatwo wo osi-piraki*  
 maiden-PL AGT SA-sleep door OBJ push-open  
 ‘pushing open the door where the maidens sleep.’ (MYS 5.804)

Kojima, Kinoshita and Tōno (1972), however, interpret *wotomyera ga* ‘maidens GA’ as the genitive possessor of *itatwo* ‘(wooden) door’, a metonymic expression for ‘bedroom’. The entire NP, then, is interpreted as ‘pushing open the maiden’s (bedroom) door where they sleep’. This structure depicted in (18):

- (18) [<sub>NP</sub> *wotomyera ga* [[ *pro sa-nasu* ] *itatwo*]] *wo osipiraki*  
 maidens GEN SA-sleep door OBJ push open

In this interpretation, *wotomyera ga* is not the clausemate subject of *sa-nasu* ‘*sa*-sleep.’

### 3.3 *wataru* ‘cross’

Yanagida and Whitman observe that a verb, *wataru* ‘cross’ appears with either *i-* or *sa-*. There are 4 examples of *i-watar-* in the *Man’yōshū* (MYS 1742, 2081, 4101, and 4126), and 6 examples of *sa-watar-* (MYS 800, 971, 1960, 1976, 2450, and 2804). The subject of *i-watar-* is [+human] and volitional in all four examples: *kwo* ‘the young woman’ (1742), *tanabata* ‘Vega, the weaver star’ (2081), *ama* ‘the fisherfolk’ (4101). The subject of *sa-watar-* is [-human] in all six examples: *taniguku* ‘toads’ (800, 971), *pototogisu* ‘a cuckoo’ (1960, 1976), *tukwi* ‘the moon’ (2450), *kamo* ‘a teal’ (2804). Typical examples of each pattern as cited by Yanagida and Whitman are given in (19-20).

- (19) *ama no gapa pasi watasera-ba sono pe yu mo i-watara-sa-mu wo*  
 sky GEN river bridge span-COND that over from too I-cross-HON-AUX EXCL  
 ‘though if one put a bridge across the Milky Way, (they=Vega and Altair) would  
*i-cross over on that* (MYS 18.4126)
- (20) *kumo-ma ywori sa-wataru tukwi no opoposiku api misi kwo-ra*  
 cloud-gap from SA-cross moon like faintly join saw child-DIM  
 ‘the girl I saw faintly like the moon *sa-crossing* between the clouds’ (MYS 11.2450)

*I-watar-* ‘cross (over the bridge)’ is agentive, volitional, and telic—a stereotypical active verb. *Sa-watar-* is non-agentive and designates an incomplete action (the moon passing before the speaker’s view); it is a stereotypical inactive predicate. Commenting on (19), Kojima, Kinoshita and Tōno (1995, vol. 3: 191) observe precisely the distinction between *i-watar-* and *sa-watar-* described here. They also note that, while *i-watar-* occurs only with human subjects, *sa-watar-* is restricted to nonhuman subjects.

To summarize this section, OJ nominalized clauses show the vestiges of head-marking of an active-inactive division: active predicates by the prefix *i-* is in opposition to inactive predicates by the prefix *sa-*.

#### 4. Differential subject marking

In OJ, ‘nominalized clauses’, as identified by Yanagida and Whitman (2009), show three distinct ways of case marking. The genitive *ga*, the ancestor of Modern Japanese nominative case, is used for agentive case marking predominantly for the subjects of active verbs, while the theme subjects of inactive verbs are predominantly marked *zero*. The other genitive *no* is used independently of predicates; it can mark the subject of either an active or inactive verb. The coding property of the subject NP is determined by the location of NP in the nominal hierarchy, as stated in (11).

**Table 2:** Three-way case marking patterns on the subject of nominalized verbs

|                   | Transitive, Active<br>Intransitive | Inactive<br>Intransitive |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1P (clitic)       | a=ga, wa=ga                        |                          |
| 2P (clitic)       | na=ga                              |                          |
| 3P (clitic)       | si=ga                              |                          |
| Kinship           | ga                                 | zero                     |
| Human             | no                                 | no/zero                  |
| Non-Human Animate | no                                 | no/zero                  |
| Inanimate         | no                                 | no/zero                  |

As discussed in 2.2.2, the nominal hierarchy is interpreted as ‘the agency potential of given NPs’ (Dixon 1979: 86-87). Nominals higher up in the hierarchy are more likely to serve as the subject of a prototypical transitive verb. Table 2 shows that the alternation between *ga* and *no* depends on the place of the subject in the nominal hierarchy. *Ga* occurs on the weak or clitic forms of personal pronouns (primarily monosyllabic forms such as *a*, *wa* [1P], *na* [2P], *si* [3P]) and kinship terms, such as ‘mother’ and ‘child’, while the other genitive *no* occurs on common NPs.

The genitive *ga* marks the possessors of NP (21), the agent subject of the transitive verb (22), and the active intransitive verb (23) (See Appendix I for other nominal clause types).

### Possessor-possessed NP

- (21) [wa **ga** sekwo **ga** yadwo] (MYS 20.4303)  
 I GEN lover GEN house  
 ‘my lover’s house’

### Adnominal Clauses

- (22) [saywopimye **no** kwo **ga** pire Ø puri-si] yama (MYS 5.868)  
 Sayohime GEN child AGT scarf wave-PST.ADN mountain  
 ‘the mountain where Sayohime waved her cloth’
- (23) **kimi** **ga** yuku miti (MYS 15.3724)  
 you AGT go road  
 ‘the road my lord (you) travels’

The patient subjects of inactive intransitive verbs (24), on the other hand, behave like the objects of transitive verbs (22) insofar as they are *zero*-marked. *Zero*-marked subjects appear predominantly with unaccusative verbs and strictly adjacent to the verb.

- (24) a. *aki no nwo ni tuyu Ø opyeru pagwi wo ta-wora-zu-te* (MYS 20.4318)  
 fall GEN field LOC dew cover bush.clover OBJ hand-break-not-GER  
 ‘without breaking off the dew-laden bush clover in the fall meadow’
- b. *uramwi ywori kadi no oto Ø suru pa amawotomye kamo* (MYS 15.3641)  
 Urami from oar GEN sound make TOP fisherfolk.maiden Q  
 ‘Is the sound of the oar from Urami a maiden of the fisherfolk?’

Kinship terms are predominantly marked with *ga*, but there are some instances in which they are marked *zero* (25) when the predicate is inactive.

- (25) a. *tama sika-ba kimi Ø ki-masa-mu ka kiywoki pamapye ni* (MYS 19.4271)  
 pebble lay-COND you/lord come-AUX-AUX Q clean seashore LOC  
 ‘If I lay pebbles, will you/lord come on this clean seashore?’
- b. *puri siku yuki ni kimi Ø imasa-me ya mo* (MYS 19.4233)  
 fall spread snow LOC you stay-AUX FOC Q  
 ‘Will my lord stay despite of this heavy snowfall?’
- c. *kimi Ø mase-ba tokotu mikadwo to tonow-wi suru kamo* (MYS 2.174)  
 lord rest-PROV eternal palace as on-duty do Q  
 ‘Since the lord rests (there), shall I be permanently on night duty (in the Court)?’

N.B. The genitive *no* is independent of alignment, unlike *ga*. It can mark both the subject of transitive verbs (26) and the subject of inactive intransitive verbs (27).

- (26) *ipyebito no idura to ware wo topa-ba ikani ipa-mu* (MYS 15.3689)  
 family GEN where COMP I OBJ ask-if how say-AUX.ADN  
 ‘If your family should ask me where (you are now), how should I reply to them?’
- (27) a. *makwi no tatu ara yama naka ni* (MYS 3.241)  
 great.tree GEN stand rough mountain inside LOC  
 ‘in the rough mountains covered with trees’



and possess the following characteristics: 1) they are *impersonal*, i.e. a first-person experiencer is necessarily unexpressed; 2) the predicates take the vestigial causative light verb; and 3) an argument marked with *ga* is necessarily interpreted as a causer, but not as an experiencer. Accordingly, (28) can be analyzed as a causative construction. N.B. the agent subject is invariably an external argument, but the causer argument of a psych-verb is also an external argument. Thus, in many languages, the causer argument of an object-experiencer verb is marked with the ergative (see Woolford [2008] for Assamese [Eastern Indo-Aryan language]).

#### 4.2 Active/Inactive predicates

If *ga* is an active case, we do not expect it to cooccur with non-agentive stative verbs. Kikuta (2012), however, provides possible counterexamples beside psych-predicates, as illustrated in (29-30):

(29) **imo ga** papi nite **mase**-ba... (MYS 2.213)  
 lover AGT ash into be/go-PROV  
 ‘when my dear has gone into ashes...’

(30) **tegwona ga** *ari-sika*-ba... (MYS 14.3385)  
 maid AGT be-PST-PROV  
 ‘When there was a maid...’

These verbs are generally treated as inactive: the subject has no control or intention over the activity denoted by the verb. Given the data taken from Koji (1988), as cited in Table 1 and 2, Kikuta (2012) argues that differential case-marking in OJ is not conditioned by the semantics of the predicates, but by the location of the nominals on the animacy hierarchy.

**Table 1:** Pronominal subject and pronominal possessives marked with *ga* (Kikuta 2012)

|            | <i>wa</i><br>1P | <i>a</i><br>1P | <i>na</i><br>2P | <i>ono</i><br>2P | <i>ta</i><br>3P | <i>si</i><br>3P | <i>kore</i><br>this | total |
|------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------|
| subject    | 45              | 31             | 4               | 3                | 0               | 2               | 1                   | 86    |
| Possessive | 89              | 34             | 7               | 8                | 3               | 0               | 0                   | 141   |



**Table 2:** Nominal subject and nominal possessives marked with *ga* (Kikuta 2012)

|            | <i>kimi</i> | <i>imo</i> | <i>wag-imo</i> | <i>waga sekwo</i> | <i>wotomye</i> | <i>papa</i> | <i>kwo</i> | others | total |
|------------|-------------|------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------|------------|--------|-------|
| subject    | 90          | 49         | 37             | 28                | 16             | 9           | 6          | 23     | 258   |
| possessive | 39          | 97         | 26             | 25                | 11             | 5           | 9          | 76     | 288   |

The genitive *ga* is obligatory for first/second personal pronouns; *w(a)* and *na*, and the nominals intimate to the speaker, such as *kimi* ‘you/lord’, (*wag-imo*, *seko* ‘lover’, *wotomye* ‘girl’, *papa* ‘mother’, and *ko* ‘child’ (cf. Ohno 1977, Nomura 1933). The other genitive *no*, in contrast, is used for nominals lower on the animacy hierarchy.

However, no previous work—including Kikuta’s—has discussed the *zero* case in OJ. The crucial contrast here is not merely between *ga* and *no*, but between *ga* and *zero*. If *ga* and *zero* are associated with the active/inactive division, as argued in Yanagida and Whitman (2009), we would expect *ga* to appear with active predicates whose subjects are not marked *zero*, but possibly with *no* if the subject NP is lower in the nominal hierarchy. The data represented in Tables 3 and 4 were obtained from the Oxford-NINJAL Corpus of Old Japanese (ONCOJ), a syntactically annotated corpus, and selected by means of an exhaustive search designed to select predicates whose subjects are marked with *ga*, *no*, and *zero*.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 3:** Verbs with high volitionality (non-conclusive form)<sup>5</sup>

|             | Total | 待<br>wait | 泣<br>weep | 行<br>go | 振<br>wave | 植<br>plant | 着<br>wear | 寄<br>approach | 渡<br>cross | 笑<br>laugh |
|-------------|-------|-----------|-----------|---------|-----------|------------|-----------|---------------|------------|------------|
| <i>ga</i>   | 903   | 43        | 30        | 24      | 11        | 7          | 5         | 4             | 3          | 2          |
| <i>no</i>   | 1255  | 8         | 26        | 12      | 0         | 1          | 1         | 1             | 3          | 1          |
| <i>zero</i> | 2054  | 0         | 0         | 0       | 0         | 0          | 0         | 0             | 0          | 0          |

Table 3 includes the total number of subjects marked with *ga/no/zero* with predicates in the non-conclusive form. This study reveals that verbs which most frequently appear with *ga*-marked subjects never appear with *zero*-marked subjects. Table (4), on the other hand, shows possible counterexamples in which *ga* appears with predicates with low volitionality.

**Table 4:** The class of verbs with low volitionality (non-conclusive form)

|      | 寝<br>sleep | 座<br>be/go | 居<br>sit | 有<br>be | 濡<br>get wet | 死<br>die | total |
|------|------------|------------|----------|---------|--------------|----------|-------|
| ga   | 12         | 9          | 7        | 5       | 1            | 1        | 37    |
| no   | 1          | 3          | 0        | 4       | 0            | 3        | 25    |
| zero | 0          | 5          | 0        | 31      | 6            | 5        | 71    |

The verb 座 is ambiguously interpreted as either the existential ‘be’ (inactive) or ‘go’ (active). Kikuta cites (29) as a counterexample, but *imas-* in (29) could mean ‘go’. In OJ, the low volitionality verbs *ne-* ‘sleep’ and *wor-* ‘sit’ are, in fact, categorized as active since their subjects are marked with *ga* but never with *zero*. (Recall that the division of verbs into active/inactive subclasses involves some idiosyncratic properties of a given language [see 2.2.1]). There is only one problematic example in which *ne-* ‘sleep’ appears with a *zero*-marked subject.

- (31) asipyē ni pa kari Ø ne (宿) -taru kamo (MYS 10.2135)  
Reed.clump LOC TOP geese sleep/stay-PERF Q  
‘Wild geese might have stayed in a clump of reeds.’

Nakanishi (2005[1983]) points out that the Chinese character 宿 in (31) could be read as *yador-* ‘stay’ rather than *ne-* ‘sleep’. Given that this is the only exception we found in the ONCOJ, I simply assume that the verb 宿 here is read as *yador-* ‘stay’ and that its subject appears unmarked.

Although the data reviewed contain some counterexamples, specifically, 5 tokens of *ga* with the verb 有 ‘be’ (illustrated in [30]), overall, the data obtained from the ONCOJ support the hypothesis that *ga* and *zero* divide predicates into active/inactive in OJ.

## 5. Differential Object Marking

### 5.1 Zero-marked object

Miyagawa (1989) proposes that, in OJ and Early Middle Japanese, adnominal and conclusive clauses have distinct case assigning mechanisms. The conclusive form of the verb is truly verbal and assigns abstract case, that is, morphologically *zero*, to the object in the underlying object position, while the adnominal form has no case assigning ability. The object is

assigned overt structural case in the form of *wo* in order to avoid violation of the Case Filter. Miyagawa's (1989) generalization is stated in (32).

(32) Miyagawa's (1989) generalization (1989: 206)

**Accusative Case Assignment:** The conclusive form assigns abstract case while the case assigning feature of the attributive (=adnominal) form must be manifested overtly as *wo*.

However, as pointed out by Kinsui (1993, 2011), and Yanagida (2007a,b) there are a number of examples in which an adnominal predicate takes an object lacking a morphological case. Miyagawa and Ekida (2003) attempt to account for these exceptions to Miyagawa (1989), but their study is not sufficient to cover all the exceptions. In response to Miyagawa (1989), Kinsui (2011:104) suggests that the marking of objects with *wo* is purely stylistic. In some cases, whether *wo* occurs at all is determined by poetic versification with the basic line configuration of 5-7-5-7 syllables.

(33) **titi papa wo**     *mire-ba taputwosi* **mye kwo** *mire-ba megusi utukusi* (MYS 5.800)  
father mother OBJ see-PROV respect wife child see PROV cute beautiful  
'When I see my father and mother, I feel respect; when I see my wife and children,  
they are lovable and beautiful...'

In (33), the first and second objects appear in the same syntactic contexts: inside a provisional clause headed by *ba* 'when'. Nonetheless, the first occurrence of the object is marked with *wo*, and the second occurrence of the object is morphologically unmarked. It is important to note, however, that the second occurrence of *mekwo* 'wife and child' ends with the labialized mid-back vowel, which, according to one interpretation, is homophonous with the case particle *wo*. This analysis raises the possibility that deletion of the second occurrence of *wo* may simply be a case of haplology, or, more specifically, the poet taking advantage of haplology to preserve the meter.<sup>6</sup> I hypothesize that poetic versification does not override language's core grammar, but comes into play only when the grammar allows optionality.

Yanagida (2007a,b) indicates that in the *Man'yōshū*, there are at least 90 occurrences of a transitive clause whose subject is marked with *no* or *ga* and object is morphologically unmarked. Fifty-five occur with adnominal predicates. These include examples like (34).

- (34) a. *saywopimye no kwo ga pire Ø puri-si yama no na* (MYS 5.868)  
 Sayohime GEN child AGT scarf wave-PST.ADN hill GEN name  
 ‘the name of the hill where Sayohime waved a scarf’
- b. *kanasiki kworo ga ninwo Ø posaru kamo* (MYS 14.3351)  
 beloved child AGT cloth dry Q  
 ‘Is my beloved drying woven cloth?’

Examples like (34a-b) are clearly counterexamples to Miyagawa’s (1989) generalization. Yanagida (2007a,b), however, indicates that although *zero*-marked objects do occur with adnominal predicates, Miyagawa’s exceptions are predictable. The objects that follow the *ga*-marked subject are, without exception, non-branching noun heads immediately adjacent to the verb. Yanagida (2007a,b) and Yanagida and Whitman (2009) suggest that *zero*-marked nouns, such as *pire* ‘scarf’ and *ninwo* ‘cloth’, are syntactically incorporated into the verb.<sup>7</sup> That is, given that an incorporated noun need not be assigned a structural case, as suggested by Baker (1988: 106), examples like (34a-b) are analyzed as derived intransitives (N.B. object incorporation is a salient feature of languages with active alignment as observed by Klimov (1977: 125-6) and Sapir (1911)). In section 2.2.4, it was shown that nominalized clauses display a non-accusative pattern when *v* assigns no structural case to the object. From a typological perspective, Miyagawa’s (1989) synchronic treatment of adnominal clauses in OJ displays strong evidence that adnominal clauses have a non-accusative pattern.

### 5.1 *Wo*-marked objects

Yanagida (2006), following Motohashi (1989), proposes that *wo*-marked objects in OJ are interpreted as definite, while *zero*-marked objects are indefinite. However, since there are examples in which specific (i.e. D-linked) *wh*-phrases are marked with *wo*, Yanagida and Whitman revise Yanagida’s (2006) original claim and propose that the accusative case occurs when objects are specific.

- (35) *sipo pwi-na-ba tamamo kari tum-ye ipye no imo ga*  
 tide recede-PERF-COND seaweed cut gather-IMP house GEN wife AGT  
*pamadutwo kopa-ba nani wo simyesa-mu?* (MYS 3.360)  
 shore.gift want-COND what OBJ proffer-AUX.ADN  
 ‘If the tide has gone out, cut and gather the precious seaweed! If my wife at home asks for gifts from the shore, which (other) shall I offer her?’

- (36) makwi *no* itatwo *wo* osi piraki *siweya ide ko-ne* noti pa **nani** se-mu  
 wood GEN door OBJ push open damn out come-OPT after TOP what do-AUX.ADN  
 ‘Pushing open the wooden door (I say) “Come out!” Then what will (I) do?’  
 (MYS 11.2519)

In (35), the set of items that the speaker might offer his wife is defined as *pamadutwo* ‘gifts from the shore’. In this case, *nani wo* ‘what/which Obj’ picks out specific items from that set. In (36), by contrast, the universe of things the speaker might do is completely undefined by previous discourse.

Frellesvig, Horn and Yanagida (2015) make a complete search for the two types of objects using the ONCOJ. They suggest that a contrast between *wo*-marked and *zero*-marked objects in OJ fits into typologically well-attested differential object marking. The minimal pair examples (37-38) are cited in Frellesvig, Horn and Yanagida (2015).

- (37) kami tu se *ni*                    **u wo**                    **ya-tu**                    kaduke  
 upper GEN stream DAT cormorant OBJ eight-CLF make.dive  
 simo tu se *ni*                    **u wo**                    **ya-tu**                    kaduke  
 lower GEN stream DAT cormorant OBJ eight-CLF make.dive  
 ‘...making all eight of my cormorants dive in the upper reaches, making all eight of my cormorants dive in the lower reaches...’  
 (MYS.13.3330)
- (38) tosi no pa *ni* ayu *si* pasira-ba sakitakapa **u** **ya-tu**  
 every year sweetfish PART run-COND Sakita.River cormorant eight-CLF  
*kadukete* kapase *tadune-mu*  
 make.dive river.stream search-AUX  
 ‘Each year when the sweetfish run, making many cormorants dive, we shall scour rivers and streams’  
 (MYS.19.4158)

In OJ, the numeral quantifier *ya-tu* ‘eight-CLF’ is ambiguous; it can denote a precise cardinality or a non-specific sense of ‘many’. Example (37) describes the eight fishing cormorants in the upper reaches (specific) and eight cormorants in the lower reaches (specific). This interpretation is consistent with the presence of *wo* on the host noun *u wo* ‘cormorant’. In contrast, *ya-tu* ‘eight-CLF’ in (38) denotes a non-specific sense of ‘many’, hence the absence of *wo* on the host NP.

Finally, in languages in which specificity plays an important role in object marking, specific objects tend to move out of VP, while non-specific objects remain in situ (cf. Diesing

1992). We find this pattern in OJ. *Wo*-marked objects necessarily move over the *ga*-marked subject, resulting in the configuration [Object=*wo* Subject=*ga* V]. This is illustrated in (39).<sup>8</sup>

- (39) a. **aki-yama wo** ikani ka kimi ga pitori kwoyu-ramu (MYS 2.106)  
 autumn-mountain-OBJ how-Q you AGT alone cross-AUX  
 ‘How do you cross the autumn mountain alone?’
- b. **ware wo** yamwi ni ya imo ga kwopwi-tutu aru ramu? (MYS 15.3669)  
 I OBJ dark LOC Q wife AGT longing.for-CONT be AUX  
 ‘Would my wife be longing for me in the dark?’

As discussed in section 2.2.4, this particular OSV order is characteristic of non-accusative alignment. The subject appears in the external argument position, namely, Spec *v*P (see [12]). Since *v* does not assign structural case, the object moves outside *v*P. In the next section, I will strengthen the differential object marking hypothesis by providing a close inspection of the two prose texts, *Senmyō* and *Norito* unplagued by metrical questions.

## 5.2. *Senmyō* and *Norito*

The preceding analysis was primarily based on the *Man’yōshū*, a collection of poems with versification restrictions. By examining the two major prose texts in OJ, *Senmyō* (*Shokunihongi Senmyō*) and *Norito* (*Engishiki Norito*), this section attempts to show that the skewed distribution of *wo* is not due to poetic versification, as proposed by Kinsui (2011). *Shokunihongi Senmyō* is comprised of the sixty-two imperial edicts preserved in the *Shokunihongi* (Chronicles of Japan), an imperially commissioned Japanese history text completed in 797 CE. Volume VIII of the *Engishiki Norito* was compiled in the tenth century and contains Shinto rituals and practices in their pristine form. Obviously, the origin of these rituals dates to a much earlier period than that of the *Norito*’s compilation, and their composition is believed to reflect the language of the *Nara* period. The writing style of the *Senmyō* and *Norito* differs from the *Man’yōshū* insofar as it uses a set of writing conventions known as *Senmyōgaki*. In *Senmyōgaki*, grammatical particles, auxiliaries, and verb endings are, in some manuscripts, written phonographically in a smaller size. Lexical/content words, such as nouns and verbs, are written logographically in a larger size. Although the *Senmyō* contains a hybrid of phonogrammatic spellings and sections with a superficial Chinese-like style, it is known to reflect the Japanese language of the 8th century.

Wrona and Frellesvig (2010) present an extensive study of the distribution of *wo*- and *zero*-marked objects in these two prose texts. Contrary to Miyagawa’s (1989) generalization, quantitative study shows that there is no significant difference in the use of *wo* vs. *zero*-marking between adnominal and conclusive clauses. Wrona and Frellesvig suggest that *wo*- and *zero*-marking have no semantic effects either and conclude that *zero*-marked objects are simply analyzed as stylistic case drops. However, one problem with the *Senmyō* that Wrona and Frellesvig fail to address has to do with the nature of the text. Rather than being a complete and explicit transcript of imperial proclamations, *Senmyō* texts contain the characters of shorthand guides or notes for the orally pronounced proclamation, to be read out loud by specialized officials. They therefore omit some functional morphemes that are to be supplied by the reader, potentially including accusative *wo*. Thus, passages without *wo* in the written text do not necessarily correspond to *zero*-marked objects. The annotated versions of the *Senmyō* with so-called *yomisoe* ‘supplied readings’ are based on the original interpretation of Motoori (1803), and all subsequent annotated texts basically follow Motoori’s annotation. According to Ikeda (1996), Motoori’s (1803) text contains 83 tokens of supplied *wo*. Kitagawa’s (1982) version of the *Senmyō* text, on which Wrona and Frellesvig’s analysis is based, contains 85 tokens of supplied *wo*. Neither Motoori nor Kitagawa, however, provide explanations as to why *wo* is supplied in certain cases, but not in others. Given that the exact basis for *yomisoe* readings has never been made clear, it is extremely difficult to determine what counts as a *zero*-marked object. This problem is less significant in the *Man’yōshū*, because in most cases, the supplied *wo* occurs when the object is logographically written or in the *kanbun* ‘Chinese’ style. Crucially, the *Man’yōshū*, as a poetic text, follows the rules of Japanese versification, which generally require phrases to be arranged in five- or seven-syllable phrases. This makes it possible to predict with some degree of accuracy whether objects without phonographic *wo* should, in fact, be read with *wo*.

When counting the number of *wo*-marked and phonographically “unmarked” objects in the *Norito* and *Senmyō*, I found that the ratio between *wo*-marked and unmarked objects was similar to Wrona and Frellesvig’s.<sup>9</sup>

(40)

| <i>Wo</i> -Marked Objects |        | Unmarked Objects |        |
|---------------------------|--------|------------------|--------|
| Senmyō                    | Norito | Senmyō           | Norito |
| 498                       | 261    | 256              | 166    |

Quantitative data for *Senmyō* are from Kitagawa (1982), and those for *Norito* were taken from Kurano and Takeda (1958). The unmarked objects include tokens of supplied *wo*. In both the *Senmyō* (SM) and *Norito* (NT), *wo*-marked objects are consistently interpreted as specific. Some examples are given in (41-42) in which the supplied particles are in the parenthesis.

- (41) a. tare (si) (no) yatakwo **ka wa(ga) mikadwo wo** somuki-te... sika suru  
 who (FOC) (GEN) retainer Q 1P (GEN) emperor OBJ betray-INF this do.ADN  
 ‘Whose retainer betrays my emperor... and acts in this way.’ (SM: Edict 16)
- b. pito-tu *mo* **ware wo** uramu-beki koto pa omopoye-zu  
 one-CLF FOC 1P OBJ hate-AUX that TOP think-not  
 ‘I didn’t think anyone would hate me.’ (SM: Edict 16)
- (42) a. **yomo-(no)-kuni wo** yasu-kuni to tapirakeku sirosimyesu ga yuwe ni  
 four-(GEN)-country OBJ peaceful-country as tranquil rule GEN because LOC  
 ‘because [I] rule the country in peace, as a tranquil nation’ (NT: 祈年祭)
- b. opomitakara *no* tukuri **tukuru mono wo**...nasi-tamapa-zu sokonapyeru *pa*...  
 people GEN grow-INF grow.ADN thing OBJ do-HON-not harm TOP  
 ‘not allowing what [my] subjects grow to ripen, and doing harm’  
 (NT: 竜田風神祭)

The personal pronouns and the possessor + NP in (41-42) are inherently specific. In (42b), *tukuru mono* ‘crops’ is marked by *wo* because it refers to specific crops grown by the people of the nation (mentioned in the previous sentence). The *Norito* uses many instances of the expression [*kusagusa* Gen NP] ‘various/many NPs’. The NPs marked by *wo* are unambiguously specific, while *zero*-marked NPs are non-specific. This is illustrated in (43) and (44).

- (43) sumyegamwi *no* mapye *ni* sirwoki uma sirwoki wi sirwoki tori **kusagusa (no)**  
 deity GEN before LOC white horse white boar white cock various (GEN)  
**iromono wo** sonape maturite (NT: 祈年祭)  
 things OBJ prepare enshrine  
 ‘Before the sovereign deities of the Grains, I will prepare for and provide various kinds of offerings such things as the white horse, the white boar and the white cock.’
- (44) mima *ni* mikura Ø sonapete **kusagusa no mitegura** Ø sonapete (NT: 龍田風神祭)



horse LOC saddle provide many GEN offerings prepare for  
 ‘Providing a saddle for the horse and preparing for various kinds of offerings  
 (for the deity).’

In (43), the set of the items offered to the deity is defined by the previous context, while in (44), the NP *mitegura* ‘offering’ is not defined by the previous discourse, which explains the absence of *wo*.

N.B. *opo-ya-sima-no kuni* ‘the islands of Japan’ is always used in the unmarked form in the preverbal position of the verb form *sira-* ‘govern’. But *wo* shows up when it is specific and moved out of VP, as shown in the contrast between (45) and (46).

(45) *sikwi-sima ni opo-ya-simaguni-Ø sirasi-si sumyemima (no) mikoto*  
 Shiki-island LOC large-eight-island govern-PST God (GEN) Son  
 ‘The Son of God (emperor) that governs the Shiki Island.’ (NT: 竜田風神祭)

(46) *akitu mikamwi no opo-ya-simaguni wo... tapirakeku sirosimyesa-mu koto*  
 Emperor GEN large-eight-island OBJ... peacefully govern-AUX that  
 ‘That the emperor governs the islands of Japan peacefully.’ (NT: 儼祭詞)

In (45), *opo-ya-simaguni* appears immediately adjacent to the verb *sira-* ‘govern’. The NV complex is interpreted as the predicate ‘govern (lands) in general’. In (46), *opo-ya-simaguni* refers to the specific islands of Japan that are governed by the emperor.

Close examination, however, reveals that the bare objects that appear in *Senmyō* behave quite differently from those in the *Norito*. The *Norito* exhibits the same pattern as the *Man’yōshū*, insofar as preverbal bare objects in adnominal clauses invariably receive non-specific interpretations, as illustrated in (47).

- (47) a. *sumye-mima-(no)-mikoto no oponipe Ø kikosimyesa-mu tame (no) yuwe ni*  
 Son (GEN) God GEN harvest partake-AUX reason (GEN) for LOC  
 ‘in order that the Emperor partakes of rice harvest’ (NT: 大嘗祭)
- b. *tasuki Ø kakuru tomo no wo wo... magapi Ø nasa-sime-zusite*  
 sash put.on companion GEN man OBJ mistake do-AUX-not.GER  
 ‘making sure that officials who put on the sash do not go wrong’ (NT: 大殿祭)

The *Senmyō*, on the other hand, contains many counterexamples. That is, in (48), the bare objects of the adnominal verbs are unambiguously interpreted as specific.

- (48) a. **opodi opo-mapye tu kimi no tonokadwo** Ø arasikegasu koto naku  
 grandfather great GEN lord GEN dignitary.gate defile that not  
 ‘without defiling the gates of dignitaries and ancestors’ (SM: Edict 13)
- b. **sumyera ga mikadwo** Ø mamori tukape-maturu koto kapyerimi naki pito-domo  
 emperor GEN lord protect serve-HON that look.back not people-PL  
 ‘people who selflessly serve and protect the emperor’ (SM: Edict 13)
- c. **nakamaro ga ipye no mono** Ø kazwopuru ni pumi no naka ni nakamaro to  
 NM GEN house GEN thing examine.ADN LOC letter GEN inside LOC NM with  
 kaywopasi-kyeru pakarikoto no pumi ari (SM: Edict 30)  
 lay-PST conspiracy GEN letter exist  
 ‘When (the emperor) examined things in Nakamaro’s house, among the letters  
 was a secret letter in which (he) laid a conspiracy with Nakamaro.’

A question then arises as to why *Senmyō* does not pattern in the same way as *Norito*. It is important to note that *Shoku Nihongi*, in which *Senmyō* is included, is about the chronological history of the *ritsuryō sei* replicating China’s political system from the Tang Dynasty. Kotani (1986) argues that the reason for the different writing styles in *Senmyō* and *Norito* lies in the fact that they have different origins. According to Kotani, *Senmyō* was composed on the basis of *Shōchoku* ‘imperial rescript’ and written in Old Chinese. Thus, these texts contain many sentences in the *kanbun* ‘Chinese’ style. Even sentences in the Japanese style are based on *kanbun*, then transcribed from *kanbun* to Japanese by changing the word order and adding particles or verb endings to their original *kanbun* counterparts. *Norito*, on the other hand, originates in the oral tradition, which takes the form of folktales, songs, or chants, and thus reflects a genuine oral language. Although we must leave open the issue concerning *yomisoe* ‘supplied reading’, it is plausible to assume that the objects with specific interpretations, such as (48), are the ones presumably read with the supplied *wo*. *Norito*, on the other hand, does not share the shorthand character of *Senmyō* texts. It therefore provides more reliable evidence as to the presence or absence of =*wo*. Examination of *Norito* texts shows that preverbal bare objects pattern like *Man’yōshū* in that they receive non-specific interpretations.

## 6. Conclusion

This chapter has investigated two distinct levels of differential argument marking attested to in Old Japanese. Differential subject marking is associated with the semantic role assigned by the verb; specifically, agentive subjects are marked by *ga*, while non-agentive subjects are marked by *zero* or the other genitive *no*. The use of *ga* vis-a-vis *zero/no* is sensitive to the subject's position on the nominal hierarchy. The human NPs higher up on the hierarchy are associated with prototypical agents, which express volition and control, while the non-human or inanimate NPs lower down on the hierarchy are not transitivity prototypes. The OJ data showed that transitivity is a clause-level phenomenon defined as the type of NPs that serve as grammatical subjects. Differential object marking in OJ, on the other hand, is associated with a specific/non-specific distinction of object NPs. The distinctive [O *wo* S *ga* V] pattern of transitive clauses is consistent with the view that objects marked by *wo* are specific and that specific objects move outside VP.

## Appendix I

Other 'nominalized' clause types, which show the same patterns, are inflected in the provisional (49), conditional (50), and nominal form in *-(a)ku* (51).

(49) **Realis (*izenkei*) conditional**

*wa ga wore-ba            ura sipo miti-ku* (MYS 15.3707)

I AGT be-PROV            bay tide be.full-come

'When I was present the tide was high in the bay.'

(50) **Irrealis (*mizenkei*) conditional**

*masakikute imo ga ipapa-ba* (MYS 15.3583)

safely            wife AGT    bless-COND

'if you bless me godspeed'

(51) **V-*aku* Nominal form**

*wotomye-ra ga imo ni tugur-aku* (MYS 17.4011)

maiden-PL AGT            dream LOC    recount-NMLZ

'what the maidens recounted in my dream'

Each of the nominalized clause types in (49-51) shares the active alignment properties of the adnominal clauses; the external arguments of transitive verbs are marked by *ga*, but not by *zero*.

## Appendix II

As Yanagida (2006: 61) indicates, there is one possible counterexample in which the subject marked by *ga* is followed by the *wo*-marked object. This is illustrated in (52).

- (52) *yama no na to ipi-tugye to kamo saywopimye ga kono yama no pe ni*  
 hill GEN name as say-tell that Q Sayohime AGT this hill GEN upon LOC  
*pire wo* (遠) *puri-kyemu* (MYS 5.872)  
 sash OBJ wave-AUX  
 ‘Was it for transmitting as the name of the mountain that Sayohime waved a  
 sash upon this hill.’

The *Man'yōgana* 遠 in (52) is read *wo*. Yanagida (2006) suggests the possibility that this character is used to write the noun 緒 *wo* ‘long cloth/string/thong’, in which case, *pirewo* is a compound noun (‘long sash’) functioning as the object of the verb *puri* ‘wave’. Kuroda (2008), however, casts doubt on Yanagida’s proposal, suggesting an alternative interpretation for MYS 872. He notes that “the part of *Man'yōshū* in question is thought to originate in the collection of poems kept by Yamanoue Okura, one of the prominent poets of *Man'yōshū*, who, however, is believed to be a non-native speaker of Japanese. This fact may be relevant for this counterexample” (Kuroda 2007: 282). However, close examination of the *Norito* (*Engisiki Norito*) shows that there is a possibility that *pirewo* in *Man'yōshū* (872) is used as *engo* ‘related word’, associated with *pire kakuru tomono wo* (比禮懸伴緒) in the *Norito* (53).

- (53) *sumyemima (no) mikoto (no) asa no mike yupu no mike (ni)*  
 Godness (GEN) emperor (GEN) morning GEN meal evening GEN meal (DAT)  
*tukape matura pire* (比禮) Ø *kakuru tomo(no)* (懸伴) *wo* (緒)  
 serve-give.ADN sash put.on fellow (GEN) head  
*tasuki* Ø *kakuru tomo(no) wo wo te (no) magapi*  
 sash put.on group (GEN) head OBJ hand (GEN) mistake  
*asi (no) magapi* Ø *nasa-sime-zute* (NT: 御門祭)  
 foot (GEN) mistake do-CAUS-not  
 ‘As for the head of the group of the women, who serves for the emperor’s  
 morning and evening meals, and who puts her sash on over her shoulder,

not making any mistakes with her hands and her feet.’

Tsugita (2008: 262-264) points out that the word *pire*, which appears in the *Man'yōshū*, as in (52) and in the *Norito* in (53), both refer to the long sashes symbolically worn by noble women in the Nara period. According to Tsugita, the women who serve meals for the emperor ritually put sashes over their shoulder. The word *wo* 緒 in (53), which originally means long cloth/string/thong, here is in reference to the head of the group of women who serve the emperor his meals. The use of *pire* in a combination with the noun *wo* 緒 in the *Norito* favors Yanagida's (2006) original interpretation in that *wo* in MYS 872 is used, not to write the case particle, but rather the noun 緒.

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<sup>1</sup> As shown in section 5.1, *wo* in OJ marks a much wider range of internal arguments than ModJ *o* (For detailed observations, see Yanagida [2006]).

<sup>2</sup> Mithun (1991) identifies the semantic basis of the active-marking of various West Hemisphere languages, both synchronically and diachronically.

<sup>3</sup> Sateré-Mawé (Tupian) has an active system marked by two series of personal prefixes on the verb (cf. Mithun [1991]). Meira (2006) shows that, in Mawé, nonactive verbs are strikingly similar to (possessed) nouns. The same set of personal prefixes appear on nouns

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and nonactive verbs, and these prefixes do not select active verbs.

<sup>4</sup> I owe many thanks to Stephen Horn for his help in obtaining data from the ONCOJ.

<sup>5</sup> Subjects of predicates in the conclusive form are excluded since they are assigned nominative (i.e. zero) marking both S and A. Moreover, subjects with *naku*, meaning ‘make a cry’ (nonvolitional) as opposed to ‘sweep’ (volitional), are not included. They are all non-human animate (86 tokens). Inanimate bare subjects with *yuku* ‘go/pass/come’, as in (i), are not included either (14 tokens).

(i) aki yuke-ba kurenawi *nipopu* (MYS 3227)  
autumn come-PROV crimson smell  
‘When autumn comes crimson smells’

(i) involves no volitional activity performed by the agent.

<sup>6</sup> I extend my thanks to John Whitman for this observation.

<sup>7</sup>Modern Japanese does not have noun incorporation in the strict sense. The patterns of incorporation discussed by Kageyama (1980), such as *kosi o kakeru* vs. *kosikakeru*, *tema o toru* vs. *temadoru*, are not productive. These expressions are possibly analyzable as lexical compounds.

<sup>8</sup> See Yanagida (2007a) for all the examples with OSV order in the *Man’yōshū*. For one possible counterexample to this word order restriction, see appendix II.

<sup>9</sup> I ignored 是以, since there are many tokens which may or may not appear with *wo*. Ikeda’s (1996) data on Kitagawa (1982) excludes this phrase.