

Null Pronouns in Old Japanese: A study of Concessive, Conditional, and Provisional clauses

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Abstract

This study is an investigation of null pronouns in Old Japanese, the language of 8th century CE Japan, based on the Oxford Corpus of Old Japanese. In this talk we focus on the distribution of null pronouns in Concessive, Conditional, and Provisional clauses. We demonstrate that these three clause types are always subordinate clauses, and investigate the frequency of occurrence of null pronouns in these clauses. We show that Provisional clauses are less likely to contain null pronouns than Conditional and Concessive clauses, and reject the notion that Old Japanese has a grammaticized switch-reference system involving these inflections.