The syntax of mood constructions in Old Japanese: A corpus based study

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Outline

- An overview of mood constructions in OJ
  - Imperatives
  - Prohibitives
  - Optatives
- Discussion
- Conclusions
Introduction: The present study

- This paper investigates logical subjects in several mood-related constructions in central Old Japanese (OJ), the language of 8th century Japan. We focus on imperative, prohibitive and optative constructions, expressing the desire of the speaker for either the speaker or another entity to perform (or not) an event (or situation) (cf. Aikhenvald 2010, Bybee et al. 1994).

- These forms have not been discussed in any detail for OJ. Previous literature (e.g., Frellesvig 2010, Vovin 2009) briefly describes them, but does not investigate the grammatical properties.
Introduction: The present study

- OJ has several forms expressing these categories:

  **yuk- ‘go’:**

  - **Imperative:** yukye
    - ‘Go!’
  - **Prohibitive:** yuku na
    - ‘Don’t go!’
    - na-yuki
    - ‘Don’t go!’
    - na-yuki-so
    - ‘Don’t go!’
    - na-yuki-sone
    - ‘I don’t want you to go.’
  - **Optative:** yukana
    - ‘I want to go./Let’s go.’
  - yukane
    - ‘I want you to go.’
  - yukanamu/yukanamo
    - ‘I want him/her/it to go.’
Imperatives canonically express a speaker’s will to have an action performed with the expectation that someone (else) will perform the action. A canonical imperative encodes a Directive speech act (Searle 1975) on the part of the speaker (the one who “commands”).

A structural difference that sets imperatives apart from declaratives and interrogatives, is that the logical subject is often null, even for languages like English which typically require overt subjects.
In OJ, the logical subject of the imperative is also often null: it is null in 160 of the 264 examples in the OCOJ (roughly 60%).

The remaining 104 examples (40%) have overt logical subjects.

- Of these examples, 86 do not occur with any particle.
- The logical subject can be topicalized or focused.
- What is significant is that the subject is never marked for case.
Example of imperative with an overt subject, no particle (86 examples)

For one day, [drizzle]$_{LS}$ fall 1000 times at the house of my beloved whom I love. I will see it.’ (MYS.10.2234)
Imperatives

- The logical subject is marked with the topic particle *pa* (12 examples):

> aratama  no  tosi  yuki-gapyeri  paru  tataba  
> rough.jewel  COP  year  go-return  spring  begin  
> madu  wa  ga  yadwo  ni  [ugupisu  pa]_{LS}  
> first  I  GEN  hut  DAT  [bush.warbler  TOP]_{LS}  
> nakyе  
> sing.IMP  

‘If spring begins, the rough jewelled year has come and gone, first, [bush warbler]_{LS}, sing at my hut!’ (MYS.20.4490)
The logical subject is marked with the particle *yo* (1 example):

```
tukur-eru  ipye  ni  ti-yo  madeni
make-STAT house DAT 1000-generations RES
ki-mase   [opo-kimi  yo]_LS
come-RESP.IMP [PFX-lord VOC]_LS
    ware    mo
kaywopa-mu
return-CONJ
```

‘**Come** to the home that was built for 1000 generations, [my lord]_LS! I will also return.’ (MYS.1.79)
Imperatives may be embedded with complementizer *to*, in two different types. One type, Type A, retains a command interpretation, i.e., “(I said) do X!”.

There are 30 tokens of the command type embedded construction. (out of a total of 264 imperatives).

Of these examples 2/30 have overt logical subjects; they are not followed by any particles.
Imperatives

- Example of embedded command-type imperative with overt logical subject (2 examples):

  ‘Is it because the voice that calls “[Ferrymen]LS ferry the boat!” has not reached us, that the sound of the oars are not heard?’ (MYS.10.2072)
Imperatives

- The second type, Type B, is used to mean “in order to do”; (so) that X” and is *not* used to imply the will of the speaker to have an action carried out.

- There are 32 examples of Type B embedded “imperatives”, which share an interpretation of some future action with true imperatives, but differ in that there is no Directive speech act.

- There are 6 examples with an overt subject. Significantly, 4 of these examples are case marked with the accusative *wo*. (But 1 of the examples is not a reliable example.) The subjects of other 2 examples are followed by the particle *mo*. 
Imperatives

- Example of embedded non-command-type imperative with overt logical subject (6 examples):

```
ama no gapa se gotoni nusa wo
heaven GEN river shallows RES staff ACC

omite-maturu kokoro pa [kimi wo]_LS
offer heart TOP [lord ACC]_LS

saki-ku ki-mase to
fortunate-ACOP come-RESP.IMP COMP

‘My heart, offering a staff at each of heaven’s river’s shallows, is (doing this) in order for [my lord]_LS to come safely.’
(MYS.10.2069)
```
Imperatives

- There are two facts of primary interest in these data:
  - Case marked logical subjects do not occur with the imperative in a command structure (either embedded or main clause), they do occur with embedded Type B (non-command structure) imperatives.
Prohibitives are “negative imperatives”. Aikhenvald (2010: 165) notes that negative imperatives have different morphology and/or syntax from both negative declaratives and positive imperatives in many languages.

There are a total of 194 examples of prohibitive constructions in the OCOJ.
There are 4 ways to create prohibitive structures: *na-verb-so*; *na-verb-sone*; final particle *na*; and prefix *na*, as shown below, listed by order of frequency in the OCOJ.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>na-verb-so</em></td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>na-yuki-so</em></td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>na-verb-sone</em></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>na-yuki-sone</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>final particle na</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>yuku na</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>prefix na</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>na-yuki</em></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cross-linguistically, it is common for the logical subject of prohibitives, like imperatives, to be null.

`inoti ara ba apa koto mo ara-mu wa ga
life exist meet thing ETOP exist-CONJ I GEN
yuwe ni pada na-omopi-so inoti
reason COP frequently PROH-think-PROH life
dani peba
RES elapse

‘If we have life, we will meet. For me, don’t think (of me) often - even if life passes (by).’ (MYS.15.3745)"
In OJ, however, it is more common for the logical subject to be overt in 3 of the 4 prohibitive constructions.

- Only the prohibitive formed by the particle na (and this is the sole prohibitive which survives into NJ) has more null logical subjects than overt ones.

The total number of overt subjects for all prohibitive constructions is just slightly higher than null subjects.

The logical subject is never case marked; it can be followed by the topic particles *mo* or *pa* or focus particle *ya*, but is most frequently not marked at all.

Prohibitives
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>null</th>
<th>overt</th>
<th>% overt</th>
<th>particles with LS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>na-V-so</strong></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>30 Ø-marked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>na-V-sone</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>17 Ø-marked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>particle na</strong></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>20 Ø-marked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>prefix na</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>12 Ø-marked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>95</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>79 Ø-marked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15 pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 mo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The logical subject of a prohibitive is Ø-marked:

"It is today that my lord, going to Ki, where the morning cloth is good, will probably cross Mt. Matuti. [Rain]$_{LS}$ don’t fall!" (MYS.9.1680)
Prohibitives

- The logical subject of a prohibitive is topicalized with *pa*:

```
[yasumisisi wa ga opo-kimi pa][LS ubenaubena
[8.corner.ruler I GEN PFX-lord TOP][LS indeed
ware wo twopa-su na akidusima yamato
I ACC ask-RESP PROH Akidu.island Yamato
no kuni ni kari kwomu to
GEN country DAT goose lay.egg COMP
ware pa kika-zu
I TOP hear-NEG
‘[My great lord, ruler of the eight corners][LS, indeed, please do not ask me! I
have not heard that in Akidu island in the province of Yamato the goose has
laid an egg.’ (NSK.63)
```
All languages have an imperative and a prohibitive (Sadock & Zwicky 1985), but not many have a dedicated optative; thus OJ, which has optatives as part of the inflectional system, is unusual.

The optative is used to indicate the wish of a speaker for an event to occur, but, unlike the imperative, there is no expectation on the part of the speaker that the logical subject will perform the event or situation; the optative expresses a desire while the imperative expresses a command.
OJ has 3 inflectional optative forms depending on agreement with the logical subject, i.e., the entity the speaker wishes to do something.

This is unusual, as it is the only inflection in OJ for which there is agreement between the verb and an argument.
There are three types of optatives in OJ, depending on whether the logical subject is 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd}, or 3\textsuperscript{rd} person:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optative</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optative <em>ana</em></td>
<td><em>yukana</em></td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I want to go./Let’s go.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optative <em>ane</em></td>
<td><em>yukane</em></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I want you to go.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optative <em>anamu/o</em></td>
<td><em>yukanamu/yukanamo</em></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I want him/her/it to go.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Optatives

- An overt logical subject with optative -ana:

```
 ya-ti-kusa  no  pana  pa  uturopu  tokipa
  8-1000-grass  GEN  flower  TOP  change  eternal.rock
 naru  matu  no  sa-yeda  wo  [ware  pa]_{LS}
 COP  pine  GEN  PFX-branch  ACC  I  TOP]_{LS}

musubana  tie.OPT

‘The flowers of the 8000 grasses will change. I want [me]_{LS} to tie
the branch of the pine tree, which is like the eternal rock.’
(MYS.20.4501)
```
As with the imperatives and prohibitives, the logical subject is often null for -\textit{ana} and -\textit{ane}, but not as frequently null for -\textit{anamu} ~ -\textit{anamo}.

This may be because the logical subject of -\textit{ana} and -\textit{ane} is 1st person or 2nd person respectively, and recoverable from context, whereas the logical subject of -\textit{anamu} ~ -\textit{anamo} is a 3rd person referent and it may not always be clear from context who the referent is.

The ratio of overt subjects in each type:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>null</th>
<th>overt</th>
<th>% overt</th>
<th>particles with LS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>**Optative <em>ana</em></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2 Ø-marked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I want to go./</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s go.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 <em>mo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>15 Ø-marked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Optative <em>ane</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I want you to go.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 <em>si</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 <em>mo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Optative <em>anamu/o</em></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>5 Ø-marked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I want him/her/it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 <em>pa</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to go.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 <em>si mo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 <em>dani mo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>92</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>22 Ø-marked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13 <em>pa</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 <em>mo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 <em>si</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 <em>si mo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 <em>dani mo</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion: Subjects of imperatives

- In languages where imperatives are built on the 2nd person form of the verb, the verb would restrict any overt subject to be one with 2nd person features (i.e., you).
- 1st or 3rd person phrases would be vocatives, as in examples like:

[getting ready for a photo]
**Boys**, you stand on the left; **girls**, you stand on the right
Discussion: Subjects of imperatives

- In a study of imperative subjects, however, Zanuttini (2008) argues that overt subjects in examples like this are not vocatives:

[getting ready for a photo]
**Tall people** stand in the back, **shorter people** stand in the front!
Due to differences in the grammars of English and OJ, Zanuttini’s arguments do not carry over directly to OJ. However, we can still argue that OJ mood clause subjects are not vocatives. The evidence is very direct – there is a vocative marker in OJ, and it appears exactly once in all the mood constructions, repeated here:

\[
\begin{align*}
tukur-eru & \quad ipye & \quad ni & \quad ti-yo & \quad madeni \\
make-STAT & \quad house & \quad DAT & \quad 1000-generations & \quad RES \\
ki-mase & \quad [opo-kimi & \quad yo]_{LS} & \quad ware & \quad mo \\
\text{come-RESP.IMP} & \quad [PFX-lord & \quad VOC]_{LS} & \quad \text{I} & \quad \text{ETOP} \\
kaywopa-mu & \quad \text{return-CONJ} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘Come to the home that was built for 1000 generations, [my lord]_{LS}! I will also return.’ (MYS.1.79)
What is significant is that this is the only instance of vocative marking on any of the overt subjects in our examples. We would surely expect to find many more examples of overt subjects marked with the overt vocative marker yo if they were indeed vocative phrases.

There are also quite a few examples of imperatives with right-dislocated subjects, 48 out of 264 imperatives, which might favour vocative marking, but only this one example has the vocative marking.
Discussion: Semantics of mood clauses

- One approach to the meaning of imperatives is the “Semantic Type View” as described in Zanuttini et al. (2012) and Portner (2012).
- This view takes an imperative to be formally interpreted as a property, an instruction on a To-Do List, and the subject of the imperative is the one whose To-Do List is at issue. So if “Close the door” is directed to John, then John’s To-Do List gets the instruction on it; it is on his list of things to do.
- An advantage of this approach is that there can be lists of different types, and this immediately allows an account of the different “forces” that imperatives can have, as well as extending easily to prohibitives and optatives.
Discussion: Semantics of mood clauses

- A prohibitive can straightforwardly be interpreted with respect to a “Don’t-Do” list.
- For an optative, there is no expectation that the logical subject can or will bring about the action. Hence we can wish the clouds to part to reveal the sun, but we cannot order them to. An optative, then, involves a semantic “Wish list”.
Discussion: Overt Subjects

- As we have noted above, imperatives show a considerable proportion of overtly expressed subjects: of 264 imperative clauses (main and subordinate), 104 have an overt subject.
- This ratio of approximately 40% overt subjects appears to be consistent with other clause-types in OJ.
- As a comparison, we consider exclamative clauses, which are probably the closest comparison clauses for imperatives: both types are typically used as main clauses, both are non-declaratives, and both express some desire, affect, or emotion on the part of the speaker.
Discussion: Overt Subjects

- Exclamative example:

```
sasu take no yo gomorite
grow bamboo GEN section be.secluded
are wa ga sekwo ga wa-gari si
exist.IMP I GEN beloved GEN I-SFX RES
kozupa [ware]_LS kwopwi-me
come.NEG [I]_LS yearn-CONJ.EXCL
ya mo
FOC ETOP
```

‘Be secluded like a section of growing bamboo! If my beloved does not come to me, **would** [I]_LS **yearn** so much?’ (MYS.11.2773)
Discussion: Overt Subjects

- The OCOJ shows 611 exclamatives, of which 247 have overt subjects. So this is a ratio of just about 40% overt subjects, once again.
Another surprising aspect of the syntax of all the mood clauses is that there are no examples of overt subjects which are case marked.

Overt subjects may appear as bare NPs, or be marked by various kinds of discourse or emphasis markers, but none have the grammatical case that one would expect to find on subjects, which is actually Genitive in OJ.

In OJ, Genitive case is found on overt subjects of most clause types, primarily those which are subordinate or non-declarative (Frellesvig 2010, 127).
Discussion: Case marking

- If we look in the corpus, at least some instances of Genitive subjects are found with every inflectional form of the predicate, with the exception of the 3 mood types we discuss here. Again using exclamatives as a comparison, 59 out of 247 overt exclamative subjects are case marked (24%) – roughly 1 in 4.

- However, in our three mood types, the ratios of case marked to overt subjects are as follows:
  - Imperative: 0/104
  - Prohibitive: 0/99
  - Optative: 0/42
Nevertheless, as can be seen from the following chart, there are plenty of overt subjects which should have the potential to be case-marked:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>null</th>
<th>overt</th>
<th>% overt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Imperative</strong></td>
<td>160</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibitive <em>na-V-so</em></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibitive <em>na-V-sone</em></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibitive particle <em>na</em></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibitive prefix <em>na-</em></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prohibitive Total</strong></td>
<td>95</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optative <em>-ana</em></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optative <em>-ane</em></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optative <em>-anamu/o</em></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Optative Total</strong></td>
<td>92</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion: Case marking

- So there is certainly something to explain about why mood clauses do not show case-marked subjects. There must be a reason why subjects are never case marked in these clause-types.
- One consequence of the Semantic Type view described above is that the subject of an imperative picks out the individual whose list is to be updated with a new instruction.
- The imperative clause does not have a canonical subject-predicate relationship.
It is possible that the lack of subject case marking with mood-marked predicates is a reflex of this non-canonical relationship – the subject picks out the one(s) whose To-Do list (or other list) is to be updated, and the rest of the clause specifies the update.

It should be stressed that all other expected case marking (Accusative, Dative, oblique markers) is found in all three types of mood clause in OJ, so there is nothing otherwise unusual about the grammar of these clauses.
Conclusion

We have shown here that mood constructions in OJ have the following notable properties:

a. Imperatives allow overt subjects.
b. Imperatives may be embedded.
c. Prohibitives allow overt subjects.
d. These overt subjects are not vocatives.
e. OJ has a set of dedicated optative forms.
Conclusion

- All mood forms allow overt subjects, but these subjects are never case-marked as regular clausal subjects (in contrast to subjects of every other form of the predicate). These aspects of OJ syntax are quite unusual.

- In the development from OJ to NJ, the optative forms were replaced by other optative forms in EMJ (Frellesvig 2010), and then disappeared. NJ has a ‘desiderative’ form, which is formally unrelated to these earlier optative forms. The imperative and the prohibitive with post-verbal na remain in NJ. The other prohibitive forms have been lost.
References


References

Questions and Comments Welcome

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