What can Japanese dialects tell us about the function and development of the
nominalization particle "no"?

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This contribution is an attempt to verify several central claims and hypotheses about the Japanese nominalization phenomena in light of dialect data. The focus is on the following claims I have been making in recent years.

(1) There have existed two types of nominalization throughout the history of Japanese. The expression *Taroo=no (=o karita)* '(I borrowed) Taro's' represents the nominalization of nominals. *Akai=no (=ga hosii)* '(I want) the red one' and *kowareta=no (=o naosite)* '(fix) the one broken', on the other, are instances of the nominalization of verbal forms.

(2) $No_1$ (and $ga_1$ in Old Japanese and some contemporary dialects) occurring in the nominal nominalization functions as a nominalizer and is equivalent in its role to that of the so-called *rentaikei* (adnominal) endings for verbs and adjectives—both mark a nominalized form.

(3) The so-called genitive case particle *no* is nothing but a modification use of the nominalizer $no_1$; hence **no separate genitive case particle *no* exists in Japanese grammar, contrary to the traditional classification of particles**.

(4) $No_2$ in central dialects (and the equivalents in other dialects) marking nominalizations in the *rentaikei* form is a later development (beginning in the 16th C) and is distinct in its function and history from $no_1$ (and the equivalent dialect forms). The function of $no_2$ is to mark **the NP use or the referential function of nominalizations**, and, therefore, $no_2$ is not a nominalizer in the sense of $no_1$. Unlike $no_1$, $no_2$ does not occur in the modification use of verbal nominalizations, as in so-called relative clauses.

(5) Contrary to the widely-held hypothesis, the development of $no_2$ is independent from the merger of the conclusive (*shuushi*) and the adnominal (*rentai*) form in its origin and development. The origin of $no_2$ lies in the marking of the NP use of the nominalizations of nominals (e.g. 'wa=ga=**no** 'mine' already seen in the 10th C ), which has nothing to do with the merger of the conclusive and adnominal forms. The spread of this marking to the marking of the NP use of verbal nominalizations also appears independent from the merger of the relevant inflectional forms.

(6) The main distinction in nominalizations is between argument nominalizations and event nominalizations. So-called pseudo-cleft sentences of the following type are instances of argument nominalizations, and not to be treated similarly to event nominalizations with the assumption that the particle *no* here is of the complementizer-type marking event nominalizations.

> Asoko=de asonde-iru=**no**=wa/ga    uti=no musuko da.
> there=LOC play=be=NO=TOP/NOM our=NO son    COP
> 'The one playing over there is our son.'

(7) The restriction on the use of argument nominalization in reference to a respectable person as seen below has nothing to do with the particle *no*. This restriction obtains from the typical use of argument nominalizations in reference to objects/things. The absence of this restriction in Classical Japanese needs accounting apart from the *no*-marking in Modern Japanese.

> #Asoko=ni  mibun=no  takai=**no**=ga  iru.
>  there=LOC  rank=NO  high=NO=NOM  exist
> 'There is a high ranking one there.'

These claims are analyzed in the light of the nominalization patterns in a number of Japanese dialects (or sister languages of the central Japanese dialects) including Ryukyuan and Hachijojima dialects. Data from these dialects offer crucial evidence supporting the claims made above, for they include 1) cases where the adnominal/conclusive distinction is maintained and yet a nominalization particle has developed or where the relevant distinction is lost and yet a nominalization particle has not developed, 2) cases where the NP use of verbal nominalizations in the adnominal form obtains without the *no*2 equivalent, and 3) cases where the development of the $no_2$ equivalents is seen to varying degrees providing a window to the pattern of spread of nominalization particles.