

# Differential Object Marking in Old Japanese: A corpus based study

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- ▶ The Oxford Corpus of Old Japanese
- ▶ Accusative Case in Old Japanese
- ▶ Differential Object Marking in Old Japanese

# The Oxford Corpus of Old Japanese

Old Japanese; 8<sup>th</sup> century AD

The Oxford Corpus of Old Japanese (OCOJ)

[vsarpj.orinst.ox.ac.uk/corpus/](http://vsarpj.orinst.ox.ac.uk/corpus/)

# The Oxford Corpus of Old Japanese

Original text

Phonemic transcription

Annotation

XML mark-up following the standards of the  
**T**ext **E**ncoding **I**nitiative (TEI)

Manual mark-up

# The Oxford Corpus of Old Japanese

## Annotation

Writing

Part-of-speech

Lemmatization (Lexeme and morpheme UID)

Morphology, inflection

Syntax

Sentence

Clause

Noun phrase

# The Oxford Corpus of Old Japanese

**All poetic texts from the period**

*Kojiki kayō, Nihon shoki kayō, Fudoki kayō,  
Bussokuseki-ka, Shoku nihongi kayō, Manyōshū*

4979 poems, 89,419 words.

# The accusative in Old Japanese

## Accusative case particle *wo*

Object marking

Marking of other arguments

Marking the causee in causative constructions

Adjunct marking

NPs paired with resultative clauses

Absolute constructions

Exclamation

# The accusative in Old Japanese

(1)	小松	下乃	草乎	苺核
	<i>kwomatu ga</i>	<i>sita no</i>	<i>kaya wo</i>	<i>kara-sane</i>
	small.pine GEN	under GEN	grass ACC	cut-please

“I want (you) to cut **the grass under the small pine.**” (MYS 1.11)



# The accusative in Old Japanese

- (1) 小松                      下乃                      草乎                      苺核  
*kwomatu ga*              *sita no*                      *kaya wo*                      *kara-sane*  
small.pine GEN under GEN              grass ACC                      cut-please

“I want (you) to cut **the grass under the small pine.**” (MYS 1.11)

- (2) 安可見夜麻              久左衲                      可利曾氣  
*Akami-yama*              *kusane Ø*                      *kari-soke*  
Akami-mountain grass                      cut-remove

“At Mount Akami, cutting and removing **grasses**” (MYS 14.3479)

# Differential Object Marking in OJ

- ▶ Previous research, basic concepts
- ▶ Supporting data
- ▶ Explanatory force of the hypothesis
  - Interpretation of Floating Quantifiers
  - Interpretation of WH-words
- ▶ Utility of the results
  - New interpretations/translations of Old Japanese materials
- ▶ Accusative case drop

# Differential Object Marking in OJ

Recent accounts of variable object marking in OJ include:

S.-Y. Kuroda 2008

Yanagida and Whitman 2009

Wrona and Frellesvig 2010

Kinsui 2011

Miyagawa 2012

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# Differential Object Marking in OJ

Recent accounts of variable object marking in OJ include:

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☞ Yanagida and Whitman 2009      **Specificity**

~~Wrona and Frellesvig 2010~~

~~Kinsui 2011~~

~~Miyagawa 2012~~

# Differential Object Marking in OJ

- Variable object marking in Old Japanese is an instance of **Differential Object Marking (DOM)**

# Differential Object Marking in OJ

- ▶ DOM is mostly described in terms of either
  - *semantic features*
  - *information structure*(see Dalrymple and Nikolaeva 2011 for overview)
- ◆ DOM is found for example in Hungarian; Turkish; Hindi...

# Differential Object Marking in OJ

What is expressed by DOM in OJ is the property of **Specificity**.



# Differential Object Marking in OJ

## Specificity

**Definite noun phrases** are specific:

- the boy in my class is tall: **specific**

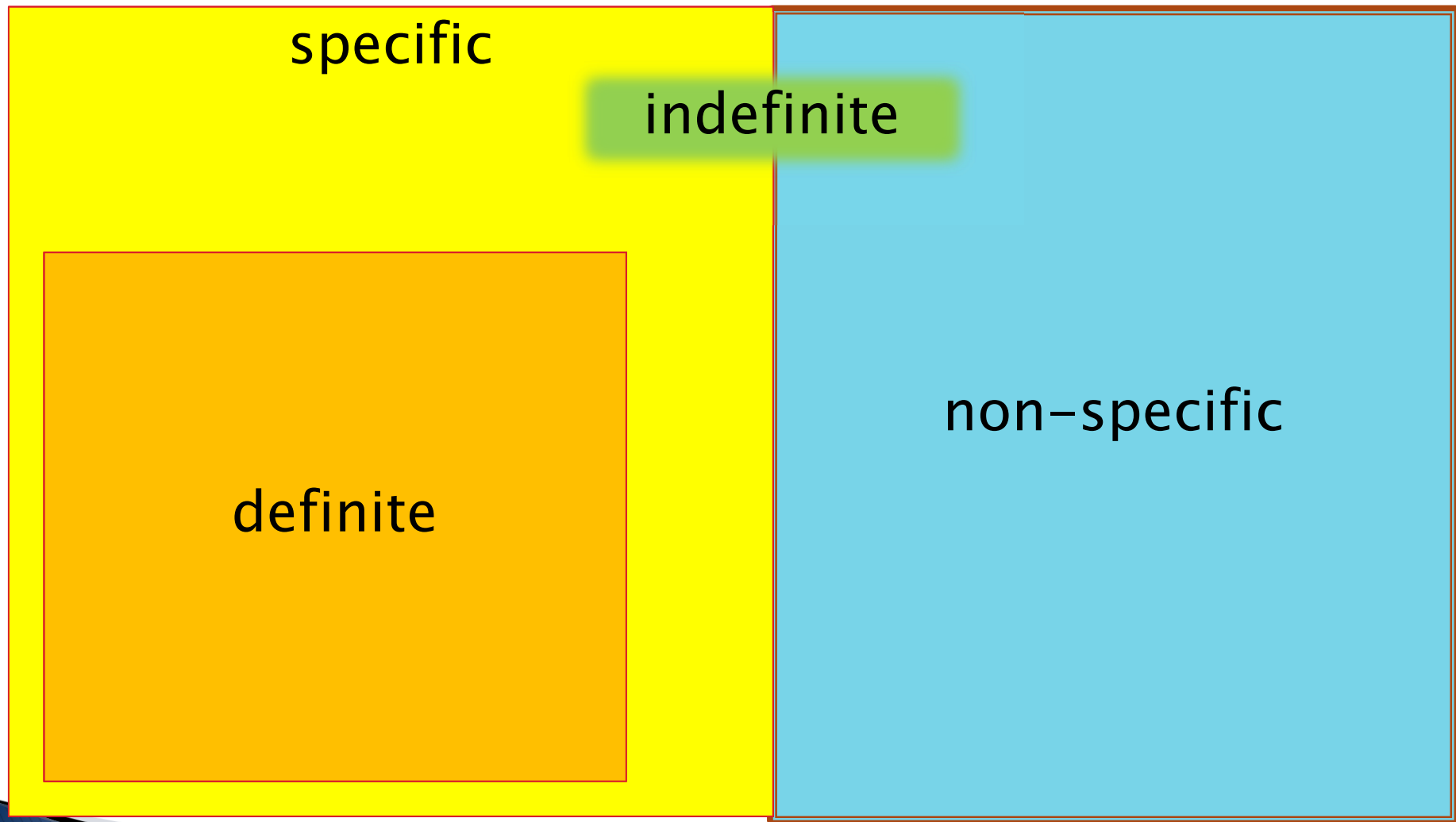
**Indefinite noun phrases** can be specific or non-specific

- a boy in my class is tall: **specific**
- a boy got sick: **specific** or **non-specific**
- there might be monsters in the closet: **non-specific**

# Definite, indefinite specific, non-specific

- ▶ Specificity is the association of an NP with some retrievable (either definite or presupposed) entity in the domain of discourse. Other terms for this type of specificity include “discourse-linking” (D-linking) or “anchoring”: *a man on the bus*.
- ▶ Accordingly, definiteness is just a special case of specificity: all definite NPs are specific: *the man on the bus*
- ▶ Indefinite NPs can be either specific or non-specific. *He has developed a habit.*
- ▶ Non-specific NPs can be associated with indefinite sets: *I ate some kind of mushroom; She found a child’s lunchbox, etc.*

# Definite, indefinite specific, non-specific



# Differential Object Marking in OJ

## Observations

1. Accusative marked objects are specific
2. Non-specific objects are not accusative marked
3. Some specific objects are not accusative marked

# Definite reference

(3) 吾君尔                      戲奴者戀良思                      給有  
*wa ga kimi ni              wake pa kwopu rasi              tabari-taru*  
I GEN lord DAT I TOP yearn seem                      **bestow-STAT.ADN**

茅花乎雖喫                      弥瘦尔夜須  
*tubana wo pamedo                      yase ni yasu*  
**bloodgrass ACC eat,though                      waste.away**

“It seems I am in love with my lord. Though I eat **the bloodgrass flowers you sent me**, I only grow thinner.” (MYS.8.1462)

# Non-specific reference

- (4) 宇利波米婆      胡藤母意母保由  
*uri pameba*      *kwo-domo omopoyu*  
**melon** eat      children come.to.mind
- 久利波米婆      麻斯提斯能波由  
*kuri pameba*      *masite sinwopa-yu*  
**chestnuts** eat      surpass admire-PASS.

“When I eat **melon**, my children come to mind. When I eat **chestnuts**, they are even more dear.” (MYS.5.802)

# Differential Object Marking in OJ

## Interpretation

Non-specific objects are not accusative marked

Specific objects are accusative marked;

however, in some contexts the accusative particle can be dropped, and in some contexts it must be dropped.

# The semantic contribution of DOM

- ▶ Some NPs are inherently definite, e.g.:
  - Pronouns
  - Proper nouns
  - Relational nouns
  - Unique entities
- ▶ Most NPs have definiteness determined by context (independent of DOM), e.g.:
  - NPs denoting previously mentioned entities
  - NPs denoting entities present in the speech situation
- ▶ **Some NPs are normally non-specific, e.g.:**
  - **NPs associated with Floating Quantifiers**
  - **NPs headed by or modified by WH-words (excluding ‘which’)**



# The semantic contribution of DOM

- ▶ Using the OCOJ we examined:

- NPs associated with FQs
- NPs headed by or modified by WH-words

1. In some instances we find textual matter (or contextual clues, etc.) that indicates a specific interpretation for such NPs.

2. We find a correspondence between accusative marking and specific interpretation for such NPs.

3. We find NPs with unambiguously non-specific interpretations to be bare.

# Floating Quantifiers

- ▶ The interpretation of FQs depends on the reference of the host noun from which they are floated.
- ▶ If the host noun is specific, the FQ takes either a partitive or a cardinal-universal interpretation:

*rei.no panda ga ni-too mesu da.*  
the panda NOM 2-animal female COP  
“**Two of the aforementioned pandas** are female.”

- ▶ If the host noun is non-specific the FQ takes a cardinality interpretation:

*tikurin kara panda ga ni-too detekita*  
bamboo.grove from panda NOM 2-animal came.out  
“**Two pandas** came out of the bamboo grove.”

# Specific NP hosts FQ

Here the FQ is interpreted as cardinal-universal.

- (5)
- |                             |                          |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ...梓弓                       | 弓腹振起                     | 志乃岐羽矣                    |
| ... <i>adusayumi</i>        | <i>yubara puri-okosi</i> | <i>sinokipa wo</i>       |
| catalpa.bow                 | bow.belly swing-raise    | arrow ACC                |
| <b>二</b> 手狭                 | 離兼                       | 人斯悔                      |
| <i>puta-tu ta-basami</i>    | <i>panati-kye-mu</i>     | <i>pito si kuti-wosi</i> |
| <b>two-thing</b> hand-pinch | loose-PST-CNJ            | person RES mouth-        |

“Deplorable, the person who (...) raised a bow, pinched **both those arrows**, and shot them away!” (MYS.13.3302)

# Non-specific NP hosts FQ

Here the FQ is interpreted as cardinal.

- (6) 那菟務始能                      譬務始能虚呂望                      赴多幣枳低  
*natumusi no*                      *pimusi no koromo*                      *puta-pye kite*  
summer.insect GEN                      silkworm GEN robe                      **two-layer** wear
- 介区瀾夜襄利破                      阿珥予区望阿羅儒  
*kakumi-yadari pa*                      *ani yo-ku mo ara-zu*  
hide-shelter TOP                      at.all good ETOP be-not

“A summer moth’s coccooning wearing **two** silk-worms’ robes is not at all acceptable.” (NSK.49)

# Specific NP hosts FQ

(7)

上瀬尔

*kami tu se ni*

upper GEN stream DAT

鶺鴒八頭漬

*u wo ya-tu kaduke*

cormorant ACC **eight-thing** make.dive

下瀬尔

*simo tu se ni*

lower GEN stream DAT

鶺鴒八頭漬

*u wo ya-tu kaduke*

cormorant ACC **eight-thing** 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)

# Non-specific NP hosts FQ

(8)

每年尔

*tosi no pa ni*

every year

鮎之走婆

*ayu si pasiraba*

sweetfish RES run

左伎多河

*sakitakapa*

Sakita River

鷓八

*u ya-tu*

cormorant **eight-thing**

頭可頭氣氏

*kadukete*

make.dive

河瀬多頭祢牟

*kapase tadune-mu*

river.stream search

“Each year when the sweetfish run, making **many**  
**cormorants** dive, we shall scour rivers and streams.”

(MYS.19.4158)

# DOM with WH-NPs

- ▶ When a normally non-specific WH-word appears as a NP head or a NP modifier, the resulting NP is interpreted as non-specific unless it accusative marked:

*tare no tuma*

who GEN spouse

“whose spouse”

→

*tare no tuma wo*

who GEN spouse ACC

“the spouse of which person”

- ▶ When a normally specific WH-word (*idure* ‘which’) appears as a NP head or a NP modifier, that NP must be interpreted as specific.

# DOM and WH-words

- ▶ We looked exhaustively at NPs involving the three following **WH- words**:

*nani* ‘what’ (indefinite, normally non-specific)

*ta, tare* ‘who’ (indefinite, normally non-specific)

*idure* ‘which’ (indefinite, always specific)



# DOM with WH-NPs: *ta*, *tare* ‘who’

- ▶ 95 examples with *ta* or *tare* as either an NP head or an NP complement.
- ▶ 10 as objects
  - 6 are specific and have accusative marking
  - 4 are non-specific and have no accusative marking

# DOM with WH-NPs: *ta, tare* ‘who’

Here *ta* ‘who’ appears as an NP complement, but the reference is specific (‘who among those in the capital’) and the object NP is marked with *wo*.

- (9)      應還                      時者成來                      京師尔而  
*kapyeru be-ku*      *toki pa nari-kyeri*                      *miyakwo nite*  
return ought      time TOP becomecapital      COP

誰手本乎可  
*ta ga tamoto wo ka*  
who GEN sleeve ACC Q

吾將枕  
*wa ga makuraka-mu*  
I GEN lie.upon-shall

“The time has come for us to return. In the capital, **the sleeve of which person** shall I use as my pillow?” (MYS.3.439)

# DOM with WH-NPs: *ta, tare* ‘who’

Here *ta* ‘who’ appears as an NP head, but again the reference is specific (‘who out of those who love me’) so the object NP is *ACC-marked*.

(10) 眉根搔                      誰乎香將見跡                      思乍  
*maywone kaki      tare wo ka mi-mu to                      omopitutu*  
eyebrow scratch   **who ACC Q** see-shall that                      think

氣長戀之                      妹尔相鴨  
*ke-naga-ku kwopwi-si                      imo ni ap-yeru kamo*  
days-long yearn-SPAST,AND                      beloved DAT meet-STAT SFP

“Scratching my eyebrow, thinking, ‘**Which person** am I about to see?,’ here I am meeting my beloved whom I have longed for day in and day out!” (MYS.11.2614b)

# DOM with WH-NPs: *ta, tare* ‘who’

Here *ta* ‘who’ appears as an NP complement, the reference is non-specific (‘who in the world’), and the object NP is bare.

- (11) 都久波尼爾      阿波牟等      伊比志古波  
*tukupane ni      apa-mu to      ipi-si kwo pa*  
Tsukuba Peak at meet-would that said girl TOP

多賀己等岐氣波加      弥尼阿波巢氣牟也  
*ta ga koto kikeba ka      mi-ne apa-zu-kye-mu*  
**who GEN word** heard Q sleep meet-not-must.have

“The girl who said we would meet on Tsukuba Peak, because she heard **whose words** must it have been that she won’t come to sleep with me?” (FK.2)

# DOM with WH-NPs: *nani* ‘what’

- ▶ 99 examples with *nani* as either an NP head or an NP complement.
- ▶ 11 appear in object NPs
  - 8 are specific and have accusative marking
  - 3 are non-specific and have no accusative marking

# DOM with WH-NPs: *nani* ‘what’

Here *nani* ‘what’ appears as an NP head, but the reference is specific (‘which of the usual beach souvenirs’) so the object NP is accusative marked.

(12)	塩干去者 <i>sipo pwi-naba</i> tide ebb-if	玉藻苳葺 <i>tamamo kari-tumye</i> jewelweed cut-pile	家妹之 <i>ipye no imo ga</i> home’s beloved
	濱褻乞者 <i>pamadutwo kopaba</i> beach.souvenir beg.if	何矣 <i>nani wo</i> <b>what ACC</b>	示 <i>simyesa-mu</i> proffer-shall

“When the tide goes out, cut and pile up some jewel-seaweed. If my darling at home asks for a beach souvenir, **which** (of those) shall we proffer?” (MYS.3.360)

# DOM with WH-NPs: *nani* ‘what’

Here *nani* ‘what’ appears as an NP complement, and the reference is non-specific (‘what kind of inanity’), so the object NP is bare.

(13) 小豆奈九                      何狂言                      今更  
*adukina-ku*                      *nani no tapakoto*                      *imasara-ni*  
pointless                      what GEN inanity                      belated-COP

小童言爲流                      老人二四手  
*warapagoto suru*                      *oipito nisite*  
babbling do                      old.person being

“Pointlessly, **what sort of inanity**, at this late date, are (you) babbling, in spite of (your) being old?” (MYS.11.2582)

# DOM with WH-NPs: *idure* ‘which’

- ▶ 14 examples in the OCOJ
- ▶ 5 are used in object NPs:
  - 4 are specific (‘which’) and have accusative marking
  - 1 is non-specific and has no accusative marking.



# DOM with WH-NPs: *idure* ‘which’

Here *idure* ‘which’ modifies an NP head, and the resulting NP is specific and accusative marked.

(14) 阿米都之乃                      以都例乃可美乎                      以乃良波加  
*ametusi no*                              *idure no kami wo*                              *inoraba ka*  
heaven.earth GEN                      which GEN god ACC                      pray.if Q

有都久之波波爾                      麻多己等刀波牟  
*utukusi papa ni*                              *mata koto-twopa-mu*  
adorable mother DAT                      again word-exchange-shall

“If (I) beseech **which god of heaven and earth** is it that (I) may speak to my dear mother again?” (MYS.20.4392)

# WH-word NP complements and non-specific reference: *idure* ‘which’

Here *idure* ‘which’ appears modifying an NP complement, so the reference is non-specific (‘a shelter in which village’) and the object NP is bare.

(15)	十月	雨間毛不置	零尔西者
	<i>kamunadukwi</i>	<i>amama mo oka-zu</i>	<i>puri-ni-seba</i>
	tenth.month	rain.gap put-not	fall-PERF-PAST.if
	誰里之	宿可	借益
	<i>idure no satwo no</i>	<i>yadwo ka</i>	<i>kara-masi</i>
	which is village GEN	shelter Q	borrow-SUBJNC

“In the tenth month if it had rained without a break, (I) would have borrowed **a shelter in which village?**” (MYS.12.3214)

# DOM and normally indefinite NPs

- ▶ For normally indefinite NPs, DOM can make a crucial difference in the interpretation of the NP
- ▶ For the two types of NPs we examined, the correspondence between accusative marking and specificity was complete.

# Applying the hypothesis to underdetermined cases

- ▶ We have shown that the hypothesis that accusative marked NPs are specific accounts for a variety of data.
- ▶ Now we will show how adding this to our knowledge of the grammar of OJ can enrich our interpretation of texts.

# DOM as an aid to interpretation

The verb *motome-* (seek) frequently takes NPs with non-specific reference, but there is nothing else in the context to suggest the object isn't specific except the absence of accusative marking.

- (16)
- |                           |                         |                      |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 綠兒之                       | 為社乳母者                   | 求云                   |
| <i>midorikwo no</i>       | <i>tame koso omo pa</i> | <i>motomu to ipe</i> |
| baby GEN                  | sake FOC wet-nurse      | seek that say        |
| 乳飲哉君之                     | 於毛                      | 求覽                   |
| <i>ti nome ya kimi ga</i> | <i>omo</i>              | <i>motomu ramu</i>   |
| milk drink Q lord GEN     | wet-nurse               | seek must.be         |

“Though (we) say it’s for a child that one seeks a wet-nurse, could it be that my lord seeks **a wet-nurse** because he drinks milk?” (MYS.12.2925)

# DOM as an aid to interpretation

Assuming specific reference for accusative marked NPs, the interpretation for (17) below changes:

(17) 春之在者                      妻乎                      求等                      鶯之  
*paru sareba*                      *tuma wo*                      *motomu to*                      *ugupisu no*  
Spring come                      spouse ACC                      seek to                      warbler GEN

木末乎傳                                      鳴乍                                      本名  
*konure wo tutapi*                                      *nakitutu*                                      *motona*  
branch ACC transit                                      cry                                      in.vain

“When Spring comes, the warbler hops between the branches to find **its mate**, but alas, in vain.”

(MYS.10.1826)

# DOM as an aid to interpretation

Accusative marked objects are specific.

(18) 驗無                      物乎不念者                      一坏乃  
*sirusi na-ki*                      *mono wo omopa-zu pa*                      *pito-tuki no*  
impact none                      thing ACC think-not TOP one-cup GEN

濁酒乎                                      可飲有良師  
*nigor-eru sake wo*                                      *nomu be-ku aru rasi*  
cloudy wine ACC                                      drink should seem

“Rather than worrying about **this thing which has no impact**, it seems better to drink **this cup of cloudy wine**.”

(MYS.3.338)

# Differential Object Marking in OJ

## Conclusion

Non-specific objects are not accusative marked

Specific objects are accusative marked;

however, in some contexts the accusative particle can be dropped, and in some contexts it must be dropped.



# Accusative case drop

We found 36 object NPs containing proximal demonstrative *ko* ‘this’ at some structural level. All are specific, and many of them are definite.

Case marked: 23

Case dropped: 13

10 adjacent to the verb

10 in main clauses

0 denoting entities high in animacy

0 preceding the subject NP

# Accusative case drop

Proximal demonstrative *ko* ‘*this*’ in object NPs:

- (19) 此山乎                      牛掃神之                      從夾  
ko no yama wo    usipaku kamwi no                      mukasi ywori  
不禁行事叙  
isame-nu waza zo  
“This is a dance that from old times the god who owns **this mountain**  
doesn’t forbid.” (MYS.9.1759)
- (20) 大殿之 此廻之 雪                      莫踏祢  
opo-tono no ko no motopori no yuki                      na-pumi-sone  
“Don’t step on **the snow in this area around the great lord**”  
(MYS.19.4227)

# Accusative case drop

Some factors which contribute to allowing or disallowing drop of the accusative case particle on specific objects:

- ▶ Clause type: main clause types tend to allow accusative drop, while others do not.
  
- ▶ Lexical properties:
  - NPs with WH-words, NPs associated with FQs
  - Animacy
  - *mat-* 'await' idiosyncratically allows accusative drop, overriding other factors

# Accusative case drop: Clause type

- ▶ In clauses where the predicate is in the Adnominal form (and to a large extent in the Conditional, Provisional, and Nominal forms) in OJ, specific objects are frequently accusative case marked.
- ▶ In some types of main clause (Conclusive, Imperative, Optative, Exclamatory, Negative Conjectural) accusative case on specific objects is frequently dropped.

# Accusative case drop: Lexical properties

For WH-words and NPs associated with FQs with specific reference, case drop does not occur.

Animacy: When a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun comprises an object NP, that NP is regularly accusative marked:

- *wa, ware* 'I'
- *na, nare* 'you'

# *mat-* ‘await’

Idiosyncratically, and overriding other rules, the verb *mat-* ‘await’ can take unmarked definite objects:

- (19) 久堅之                      天河津尔                      舟泛而  
*pisakata no*                      *ama no kapatu ni*                      *pune ukete*  
distant COP                      heaven GEN ford DAT                      boat float
- 君                      待夜等者                      不明毛有寐鹿  
*kimi*                      *matu ywo-ra pa*                      *ake-zu mo ara-nu ka*  
lord                      await night TOP                      dawn ETOP be-not Q

“This night when I await **my lord** floating a boat in the shallow of the river of far-off heaven, will it never dawn?” (MYS.10.2070)

# *mat-* ‘wait’

(20) 奴婆多麻能            欲和多流都奇乎            伊久欲布等  
*nubatama no*            *ywo wataru tukwi wo*            *ikuywo pu to*  
jewel COP            night traverse moon ACC    how.many transpire that

余美都追伊毛波            和礼            麻都良牟曾  
*yomitutu imo pa*            *ware*            *matu ramu so*  
counting beloved TOP    **me**            await must.be FOC

“Measuring the moon that crosses the jewel-black night by how many nights pass, my beloved, no doubt (she) awaits **me**.” (MYS.18.4072)

# Diachronic perspective

- ▶ At some point post-OJ, DOM is discontinued, and specificity is no longer a factor on whether objects get accusative case marked.



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