

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

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

# The Oxford Corpus of Old Japanese

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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



# 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	刈核
	<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

‘Please cut **the grass under the small pine**’ (MYS 1.11)

# The accusative in Old Japanese

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

‘Please cut **the grass under the small pine**’ (MYS 1.11)

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

‘At Mount Akami I cut and removed **grasses**’ (MYS 14.3479)

# Differential Object Marking in Old Japanese

# 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
- ▶ Contexts that allow or disallow accusative case drop
- ▶ Further research

# 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**

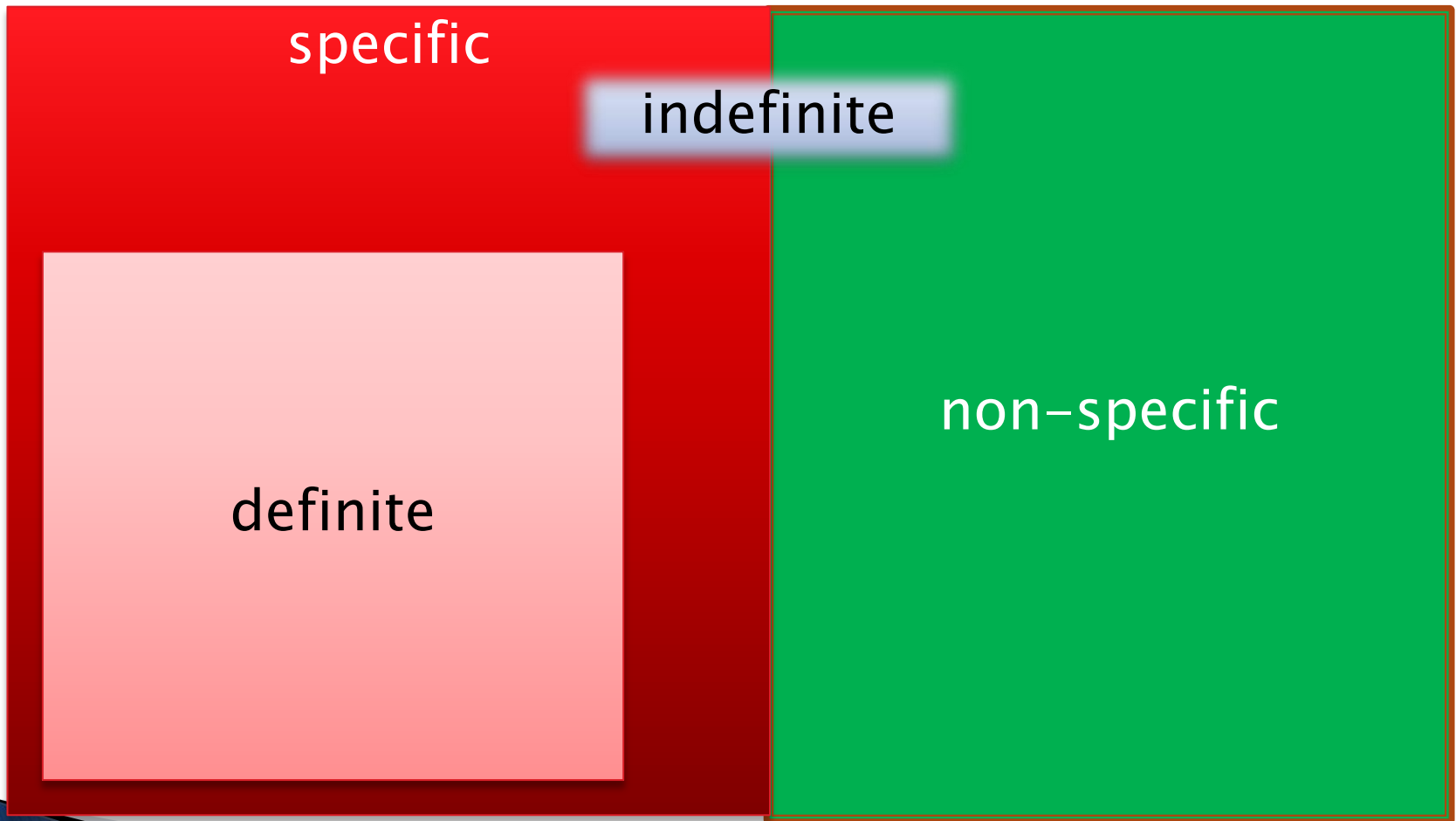
**Indefinite noun phrases** can be specific or non-specific

- *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. Another word for this type of specificity is “discourse-linking” (D-linking): *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**

茅花乎雖喫                      弥瘦尔夜須  
**tubana** *wo* pamedo                      yase *ni* yasu  
**bloodgrass ACC** eat                      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, the accusative particle can be dropped in some contexts.

# The semantic contribution of DOM

- ▶ Some NPs are inherently definite, e.g.:
  - Pronouns
  - Proper nouns
  - Relational nouns
  - Unique entities
- ▶ Most NPs have their status determined by context (aside from the presence or absence 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’)**

# Two tests using quantification

- ▶ We examined the following NPs using the OCOJ:
    - NPs associated with FQs
    - NPs headed by or modified by WH-words
1. Occasionally 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 universal interpretation:

rei.no panda wa **ni-too** mesu da.

the panda TOP **2-animal** female COP

“As for **the pandas**, **two of them** are female.”

- ▶ If the host noun is indefinite 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.”

# Definite NP hosts FQ

Here the FQ is interpreted as universal.

- (5)
- |                             |                       |                    |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| ...梓弓                       | 弓腹振起                  | 志乃岐羽矣              |
| ...adusayumi                | yubara puri-okosi     | <i>sinokipa wo</i> |
| catalpa.bow                 | bow.belly swing-raise | <b>arrow ACC</b>   |
| <b>二手狭</b>                  | 離兼                    | 人斯悔                |
| <b>puta-tu</b> ta-basami    | panati-kye-mu         | pito si kuti-wosi  |
| <b>two-thing</b> hand-pinch | loose-PST-CNJ         | person RES mouth-  |

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

# Indefinite NP hosts FQ

Here the FQ is interpreted cardinally.

- (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 coccooned, wearing **two silk-worms’ robes** is not at all acceptable.” (NSK.49)

# Definite NP hosts FQ

- (7) 上瀬尔                      鵜矣八頭漬  
kami tu se *ni*              u wo **ya-tu** kaduke  
upper GEN stream DAT      cormorant ACC **eight-thing** make.dive
- 下瀬尔                      鵜矣八頭漬  
simo tu se *ni*              u wo **ya-tu** kaduke  
lower GEN stream DAT      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)



# Indefinite NP hosts FQ

- (8) 每年尔                      鮎之走婆                      左伎多河  
tosi no pa *ni*                  ayu *si* pasiraba                  sakitakapa  
every year                      sweetfish RES run                  Sakita River

鷓八頭可頭氣氏                      河瀨多頭祢牟  
u **ya-tu** kadukete                      kapase *tadune-mu*  
cormorant **eight-thing** make.dive    river.stream search

“Each year when the sweetfish run, making **our many cormorants** dive, we shall scour rivers and streams.”  
(MYS.19.4158)

# DOM with WH-NPs

- ▶ When a normally nonspecific 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

‘which person’s spouse

- ▶ 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, **which one's sleeve** 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*

“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, but the reference is non-specific (‘who in the world’) so 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                      玉藻苺蔵                      家妹之  
sipo pwi-*naba*                  tamamo kari-tumye                  ipye no imo ga  
tide ebb-if                      jewelweed cut-pile                  home’s beloved

濱褻乞者                      何矣示  
pamadutwo kopaba                  **nani wo** simyesa-mu  
beach.souvenir beg-if                  **what ACC** 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**                      this.point-COP

小童言爲流  
*warapagoto suru*  
babbling do

老人二四手  
*oipito nisite*  
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 has 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  
          kamunadukwi        amama *mo* oka-zu                puri-*ni-seba*  
          tenth.month         rain.gap put-not                 fall-PERF-PAST.if

誰里之                      宿可借益  
**idure no satwo no**        **yadwo *ka* kara-*masi***  
**which is village GEN**      **shelter Q**

“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 lack of accusative marking.

(16) 綠兒之                      為社乳母者                      求云  
midorikwo no              tame koso *omo pa*              motomu to ipe  
baby GEN                      sake FOC wet-nurse              seek that say

乳飲哉君之                      於毛求覽  
ti nome ya kimi ga              *omo* motomu *ramu*  
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, the accusative particle can be dropped in some contexts.

# Contexts for accusative case drop

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

- ▶ Clause type: certain clause types never allow accusative drop, while others do
  
- ▶ Lexical properties:
  - Animacy
  - Quantification: WH-words, FQ
  - *mat-* 'await' idiosyncratically allows accusative drop, overriding other factors

# Contexts for accusative case drop: Clause type

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

# Contexts for accusative case drop: Lexical properties

Quantification: WH-words, FQ

Animacy: When 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns comprise an object NP it is always accusative marked:

- *wa, ware* ‘I’
- *na, nare* ‘you’

# *mat-* ‘wait’

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)



# Further research

- ▶ Corpus survey of DOM across all clause types examining in particular which contexts allow drop of accusative case on specific objects.
- ▶ Diachronic study to determine the factors for the loss of DOM after OJ.

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