

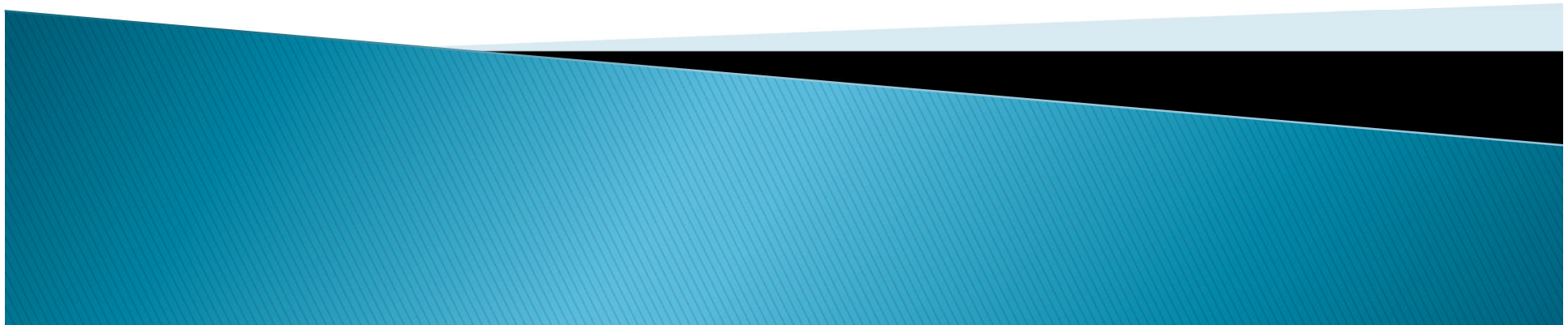
Research Centre for Japanese Language and Linguistics  
University of Oxford

オックスフォード大学 日本語研究センター  
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# On accusative case marking in Old Japanese

Corpus Based Studies of Japanese Language  
History  
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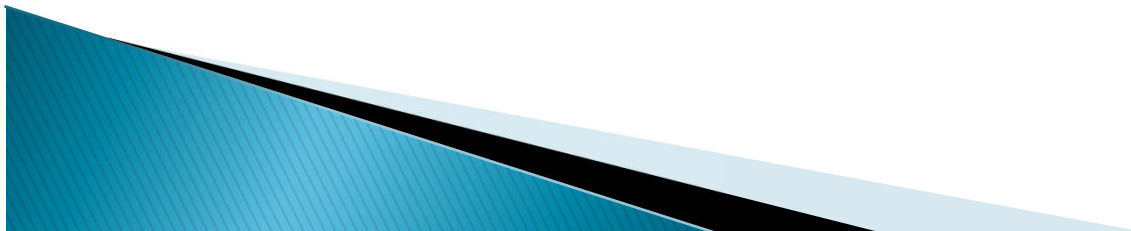
# Goals of the talk

- ▶ Test the hypothesis that *wo*-marked NPs in Old Japanese regularly have specific reference.
  - Control for leftward movement of object NPs by categorizing instances of bare and *wo*-marked objects according to their precedence relations with subject NPs.
  - Examine the information structure roles of *wo*-marked and unmarked NPs in Old Japanese.
- ▶ Look for other interesting patterns



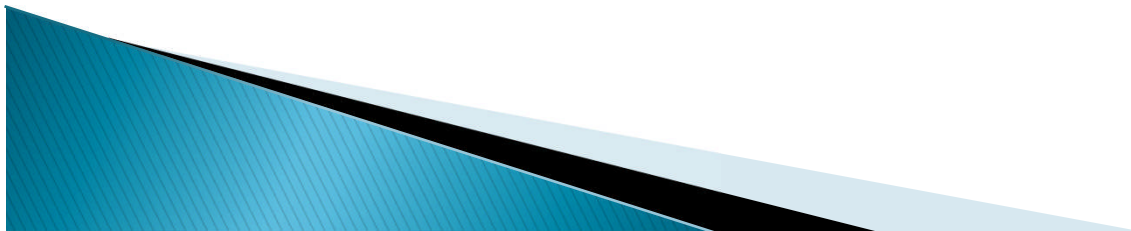
# Hypothesis

- ▶ In Old Japanese, the particle *wo* has an information structure role: *wo* marks object noun phrases (NPs) that have specific reference. Conversely, bare object NPs in object position have non-specific reference.



# Specificity

- ▶ **Working definition:** Specific reference is reference to an entity or group that is “linked” to the previous discourse either by identity to an entity in the domain (definite reference), or by membership to a definite group in the domain (indefinite specific reference).



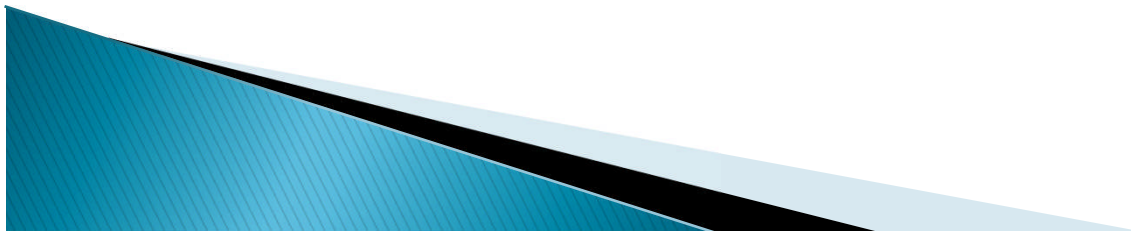
# “Object”

- ▶ In order to reduce the number of syntactic factors to look at, we exclude “causees” of causative constructions, and we exclude verbal nouns appearing with light verbs.
- ▶ For the purposes of examining motion we also exclude NPs marked with particles other than genitive and accusative particles.
- ▶ We set aside the important topics of predicate inflections and precise grammatical roles, and see what can be inferred from linear order and case-marking only.



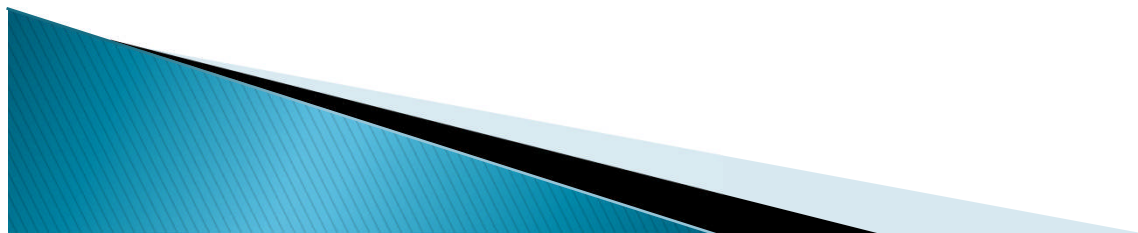
# Specific *wo*-marked object

- (1) 吾衣 於 君 令服与登  
wa.ga.kinu wo kimi ni kiseyo *to*  
self's.robe ACC lord DAT dress COMP  
霍公鳥 吾乎 領  
pototogisu ware *wo* unagasu  
cuckoo I ACC urge.on  
“The cuckoo urges me on (telling me to)  
put my robe on my lord ”(MYS.10.1961)



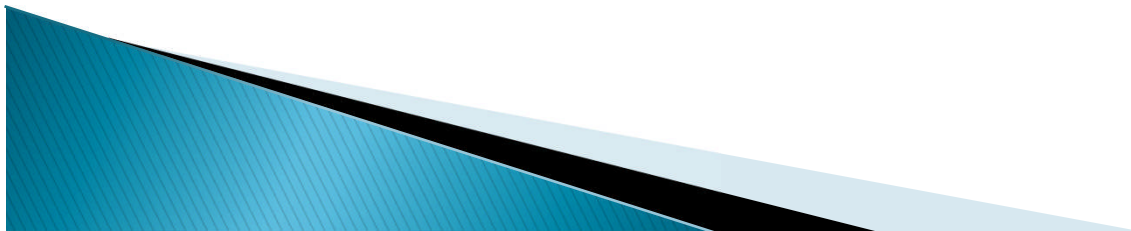
# Non-specific bare object

- (2) 奥津波 部都藻 纏持  
*oki.tu.nami pye.tu.mo maki-moti*  
offing' s.waves shore' s.weedwrap-hold  
依来十方 君尔 益有 玉  
*yose-ku tomo kimi ni*  
*masar-eru tama*  
push-come even lord DAT exceed  
jewel 将縁八方  
*yose-me ya mo*  
push.would FOC ETOP  
“Even if the offing' s waves wash the shore' s weed  
here, could they ever wash up a jewel that exceeds  
my lord? Never!”(MYS.7.1206a)



# Basic assumption

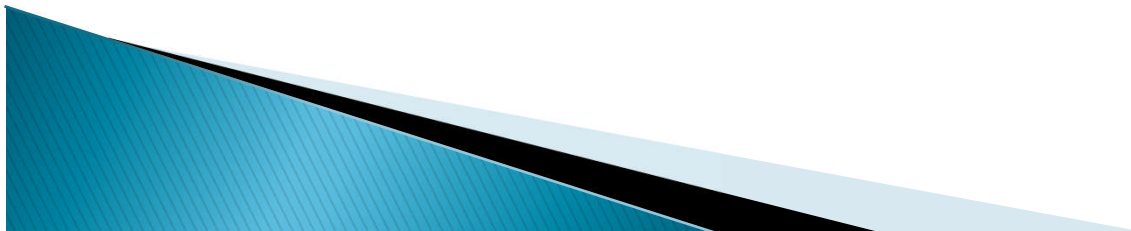
- ▶ NPs that have shifted to the left (either because of “scrambling” or topicalization) are more likely to represent “old information,” and are more likely to have specific reference.





# Do *wo*-marked NPs *have* to move?

- ▶ Looking at 1) adjacency to predicate, 2) precedence w.r.t the subject, and 3) the case-marking of subject and object, are there any contexts where bare objects and *wo*-marked objects don't alternate?
- ▶ For clauses containing subjects that are neither focused nor topic-marked, there are 18 *wo*-marked objects string-adjacent to the predicate. Is there any evidence that these have moved string-vacuously?



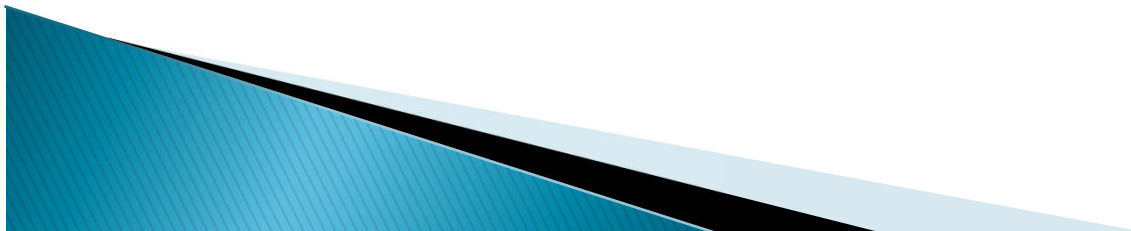
# For argument's sake

- ▶ Let's assume that objects that have moved out of VP to a position adjoined to VP are more likely to have elements intervening between them and the predicate.
- ▶ If *wo*-marked objects always move out of VP, we predict that we will find the pattern **subject NP > NP-*wo* > XP > predicate** more often for these than for bare objects.



# Clauses with bare subjects

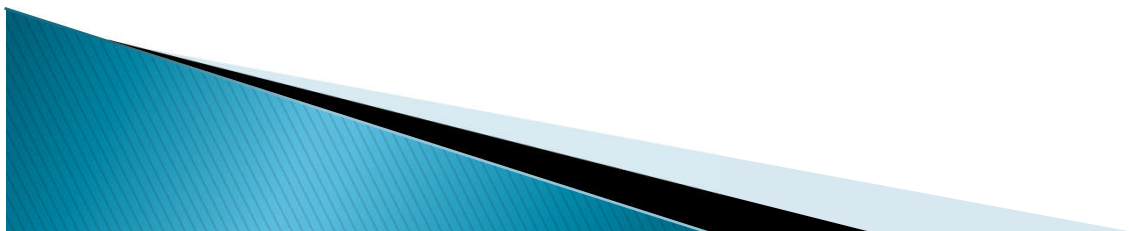
- ▶ For clauses with objects string-adjacent to the predicate, 36 had bare objects and 3 had *wo*-marked objects.



# Bare subject with bare object adjacent to the predicate

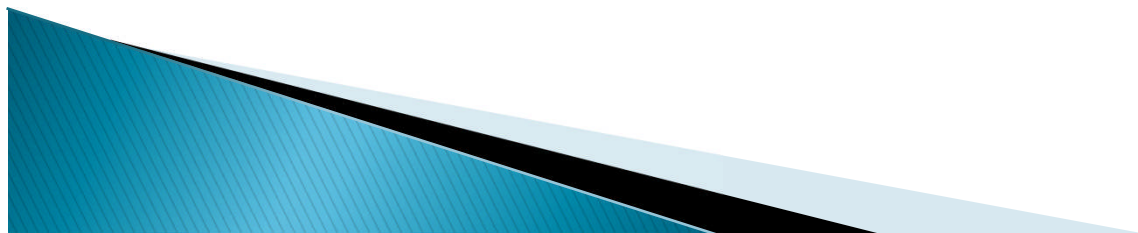
- (3) 暮名寸尔                      求食為鶴  
*yupu.nagi ni*                      *asari suru*                      *tadu*  
evening.calm DAT                      forage do                      egret  
塩満者                      奥浪高三  
*sipo miteba*                      *okinami*                      *taka-mi*  
tide see.PROV                      sea.wave                      high  
己妻                      喚  
*ono.ga.duma* *ywobu*  
self's.mate call

“The egret that forages in the evening calm, when it sees the tide, because the waves are high, calls its mate.” (MYS.7.1165)



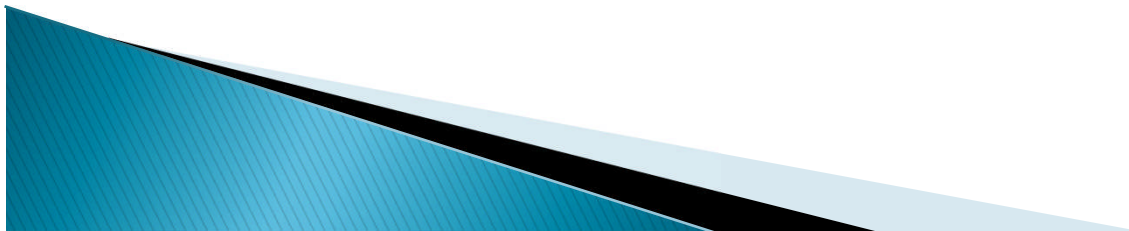
# Bare subject with *wo*-marked object adjacent to the predicate

- (4) 里 近 家哉 應居  
satwo tika-ku ipye ya woru be-ki  
town close home Q exist should  
此吾目 人目乎 為乍  
ko.no.wa.ga.me pitome wo situtu  
these.eyes.of.mine other's.eyes do.CONT  
戀 繁口  
kwopwi no sige-kyeku  
yearning GEN intensity  
“Should one’s house be near the town? The  
intensity of my yearning! —while these eyes of mine  
mind other’s eyes.” (MYS.12.2876)



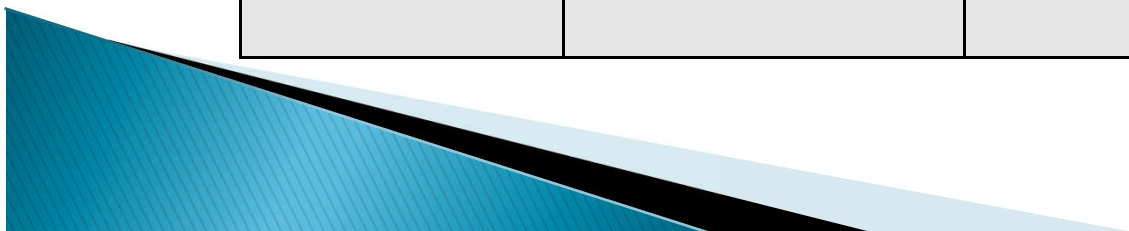
# Non-adjacency for objects co-occurring with bare subjects

- ▶ There were 15 bare objects that were non-adjacent to the predicate, but 14 of these preceded the bare subject. The 1 example where the unmarked object followed the bare subject and preceded some other element was MYS.1.70.
- ▶ There were 34 *wo*-marked objects non-adjacent to the predicate, but 32 of these preceded the bare subject. The two examples where the *wo*-marked object followed the bare subject and preceded some other element were MYS.8.1509 and MYS.6.1020.1021.



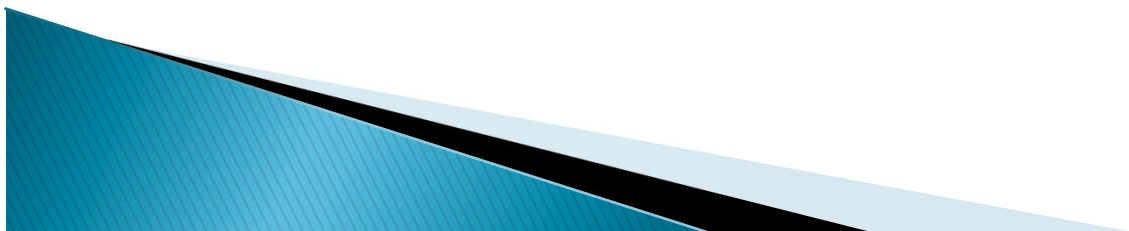
# Bare subjects occurring with objects

	adjacent to predicate	non-adjacent, following bare subject	preceding bare subject
bare object	36	1	14
wo-marked object	3	2	32



# Bare object preceding bare subject

- (5) 百尔千尔                      人者                      雖言  
momo.ni.ti.ni                      pito pa                      ipu tomo  
100.1000.times                      people TOP                      say even  
月草之                      移                      情  
tukwikusa no                      uturopu                      kokoro  
dayflower COP                      fade                      heart  
吾      将持八方  
ware mota-me ya mo  
I      hold-CONJ Q ETOP  
“Even if people say so 100 or 1000 times, would I  
have a heart that fades like a dayflower?”  
(MYS.12.3059)

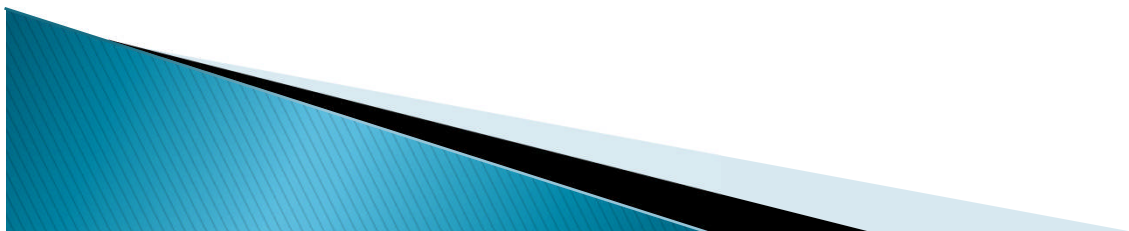




# *wo*-marked object preceding a bare subject

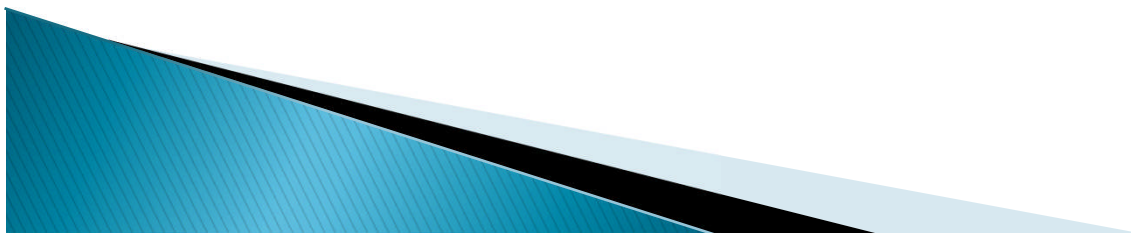
(6)	天雲	依相	遠
	amakumo <u>no</u>	yoriapi	topo-mi
	rain.cloud COP	approach.meet	distant
	雖不相	異手枕	
	apa-zu tomo	kototamakura <u>wo</u>	
	meet.NEG even	other.hand.pillow ACC	
	吾 纏哉		
	<b>ware</b> maka-me ya <u>mo</u>		
	<b>I</b> wrap-CONJ.EXCL Q ETOP		

“Because meeting is distant, like rain clouds, would I wrap up in another’s pillow-sleeve?” (MYS.11.2451)



# Clauses with NP-GEN subjects

- ▶ For clauses with objects string-adjacent to the predicate, 59 had bare objects and 15 had *wo*-marked objects (with no other particle).



# Genitive subject with bare object adjacent to the predicate

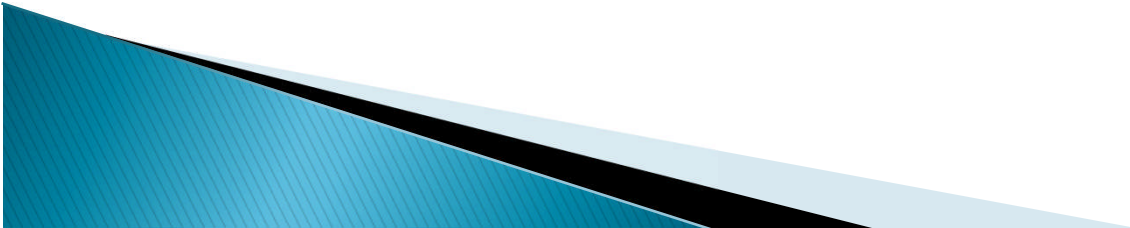
(7) 君之            吾之名  
kimi ga            wa ga na  
lord GEN        I GEN name

告兼

nori-kye-mu

speak-PST-CONJ

“(...) did you call my name?”        (MYS.11.2639)



# Genitive subject with *wo*-marked object adjacent to the predicate

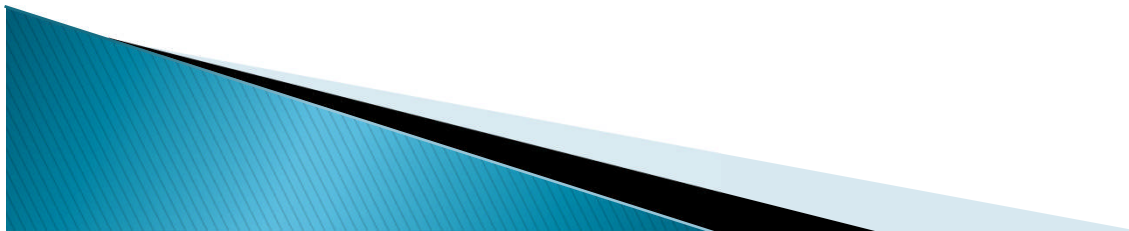
- (8) 志漏止利乃芳我                      都都弥乎  
*sirwotori.no.pa ga*                      *tutumi wo*  
white.bird' s.wings GEN              dyke ACC

都都牟止母

*tutumu tomo*

pile even

“Even if the wings of the white bird pile up a dyke (...)” (FK.9)



# Genitive subject with *wo*-marked object adjacent to the predicate

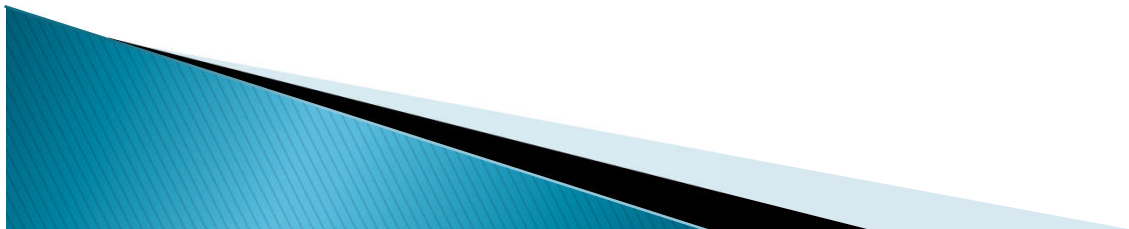
(9) 人之 遠名乎 可立  
pito no topona wo tatu be-ki  
people GEN rumor ACC stand should

物可

mono *ka*

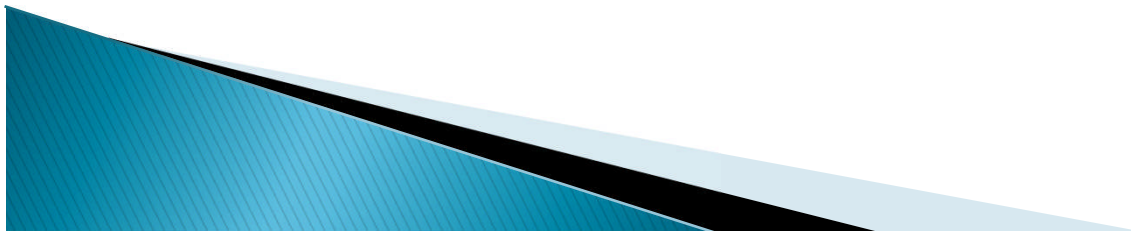
thing Q

“It this a case where people should spread rumors?” (MYS.11.2772)



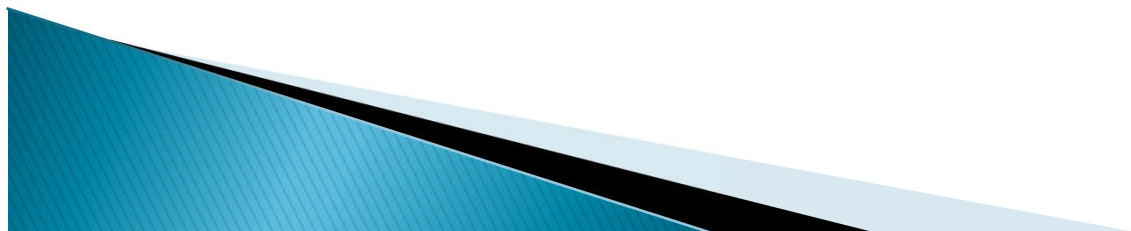
# Non-adjacency for objects co-occurring with genitive subjects

- ▶ There were 11 clauses with bare objects that were non adjacent to the verb, and 8 of them preceded the NP-GEN subject. The 3 examples where the bare object followed the NP-GEN subject and preceded some other element were MYS.3.364, MYS.3.293, and MYS.1.1169.
- ▶ There were 43 clauses with NP-GEN subjects and *wo*-marked objects (with no other particle) that were non-adjacent to the predicate, but in 42 of them the *wo*-marked object preceded the NP-GEN subject. The only exception was MYS.8.1446.



# Genitive subjects occurring with objects

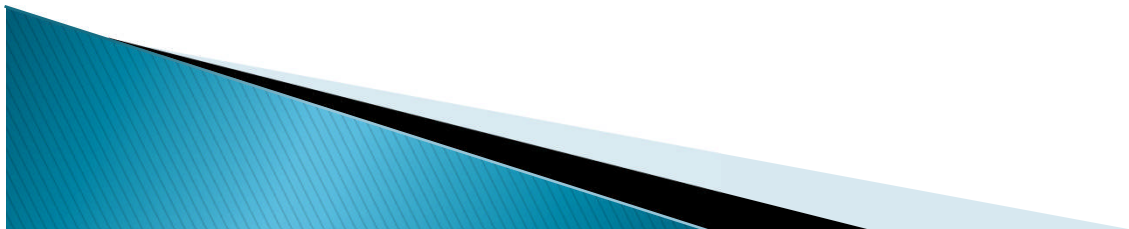
	adjacent to predicate	non-adjacent, following genitive subject	preceding genitive subject
bare objects	59	3	8
<i>wo</i> -marked objects	15	1	42



# Non-adjacent *wo*-marked object following a genitive subject

- (10) 春野尔                      安佐留                      雉乃  
paru.no.nwo ni              asaru                      kigisi no  
spring.field DAT              search                      pheasant GEN  
妻戀尔    己我當乎  
tumagwopwi ni                                      ono.ga.atari wo  
spouse.yearning DAT                                      self' s.location ACC  
人尔                      令知管  
pito ni                      siretutu  
People DAT      tell.CONT.

“The pheasant looking for food on the spring field, by yearning for its mate, is letting its whereabouts be known by people” (MYS.8.1446)





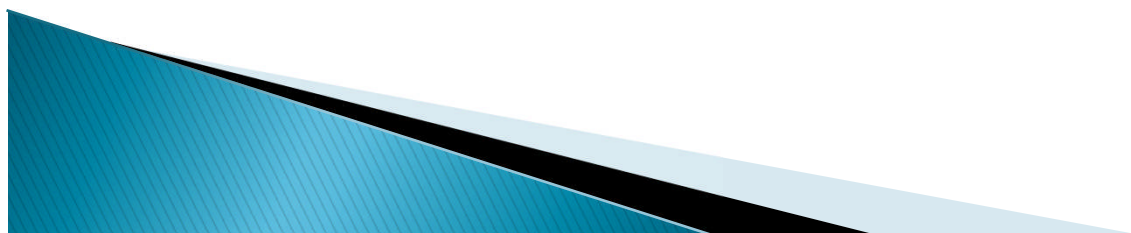
# Preliminary results

- ▶ Bare objects behave similarly to *wo*-marked objects in some respects:
  - Both can appear adjacent to the predicate, whether the subject is genitive-marked or not (although after bare subjects, *wo*-marked objects are extremely rare).
  - For both, when they are not adjacent to the predicate, they are far more likely to precede the subject than to follow the subject and precede some other element.
- ▶ While *wo*-marked objects are far more likely to precede a subject than follow it, and bare objects are far more likely to follow a subject than precede it, provisionally, we can treat bare and *wo*-marked objects in the same way: If they precede the subject, they have been left-shifted. If they follow the subject, they are *in situ*.



# Specificity of objects

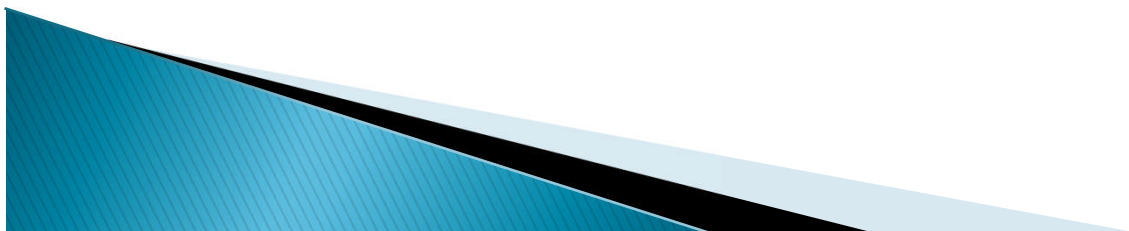
	bare objects following either bare or genitive subjects	bare objects preceding either bare or genitive subjects	<i>wo</i> -marked objects following either bare or genitive subjects	<i>wo</i> -marked objects preceding either bare or genitive subjects
non-specific	27	6	3	10
specific	71	18	18	63
total	98	24	21	73



# Specific bare object following subject

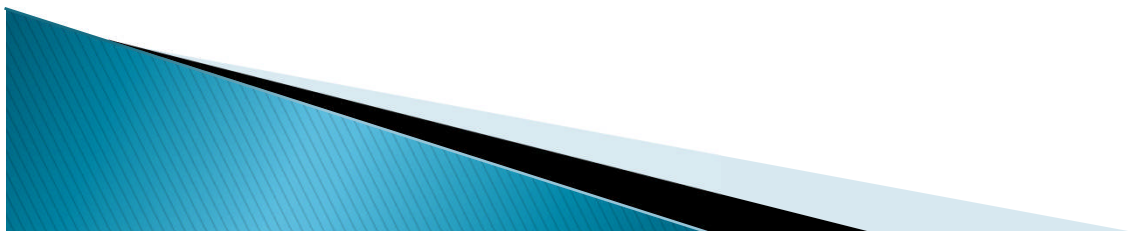
(11)	暮名寸尔	求食為	鶴
	yupu.nagi ni	asari suru	tadu
	evening.calm DAT	forage do	egret
	塩満者	奥浪高三	
	sipo miteba	okinami	taka-mi
	tide see.PROV	sea.wave	high
	己妻	喚	
	ono.ga.duma	ywobu	
	self' s.mate	call	

“The egret that forages in the evening calm, when it sees the tide, because the waves are high, calls its mate.” (MYS.7.1165)



# Non-specific bare object preceding subject

- (12) 百尔千尔                      人者                      雖言  
momo.ni.ti.ni                      pito pa                      ipu tomo  
100.1000.times                      people TOP                      say even  
月草之                      移                      情  
tukwikusa no                      uturopu                      kokoro  
dayflower COP                      fade                      heart  
吾                      将持八方  
ware                      mota-me ya mo  
I                      hold-CONJ Q ETOP  
“Even if people say so 100 or 1000 times, would I  
have a heart that fades like a dayflower?”  
(MYS.12.3059)



# Non-specific *wo*-marked object following subject

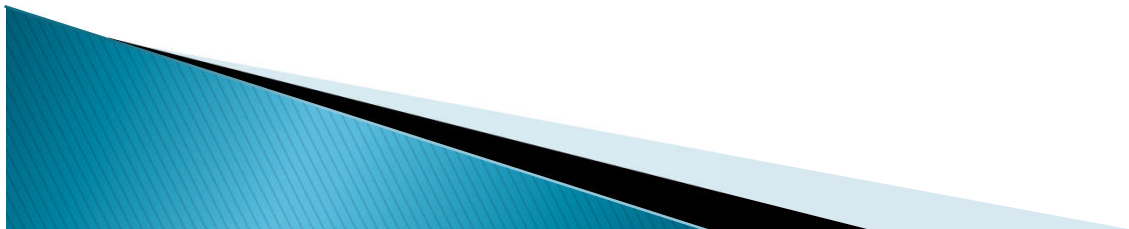
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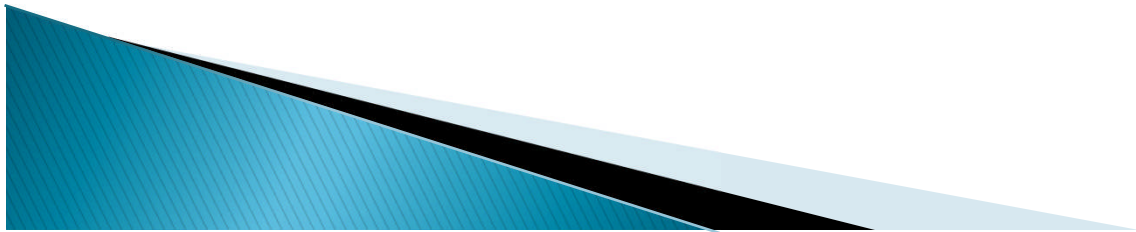
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“It this a case where people should spread rumors?” (MYS.11.2772)



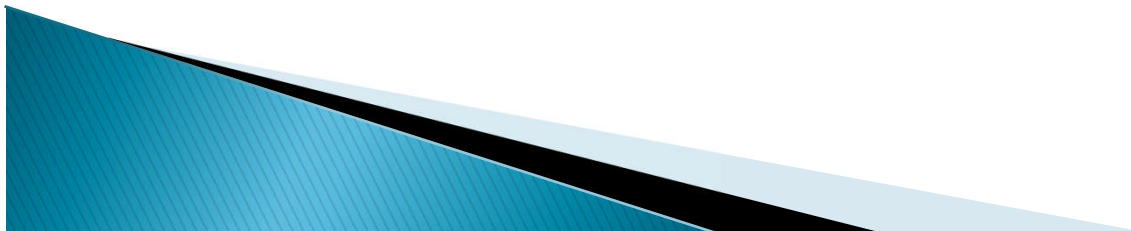
# Non-specific *wo*-marked object preceding subject

- (14) 安良多麻能等之能乎                      奈我久  
*aratama.no.tosi.no.wo*                      *naga-ku*  
rough.jewel.year.string                      long  
安波射礼杼                      家之伎                      己許呂乎  
*apa-zaredo*                      *kyesi-ki*                      *kokoro wo*  
meet-NEG.CONC                      strange                      heart ACC  
安我                      毛波奈久                      爾  
*a ga*                      *mopa-naku*                      *ni*  
I GEN                      think-NEG.NMLZ                      COP  
“Though we haven’t met for a long string of years,  
it’s not that I’m re-thinking how I feel.”  
(MYS.15.3775)



# Observations

- ▶ There is some evidence to say that neither left-shifting nor *wo*-marking necessarily determine the information structure role of object NPs in OJ.
- ▶ However, *wo*-marked objects preceding subjects are mostly specific, and bare objects following subjects are frequently (but not mostly) non-specific.
- ▶ Furthermore, bare objects preceding genitive subjects are few in number, and *wo*-marked objects following bare subjects are few in number.



# Conclusion

- ▶ The strongest evidence indicates that the hypothesis that bare objects following subjects are regularly non-specific is untenable.
- ▶ Within the parameters of this study, the presence or absence of *wo*-marking on the object is a strong independent factor determining its position w.r.t. the subject.
- ▶ So what is the role of *wo*-marking in Japanese?

