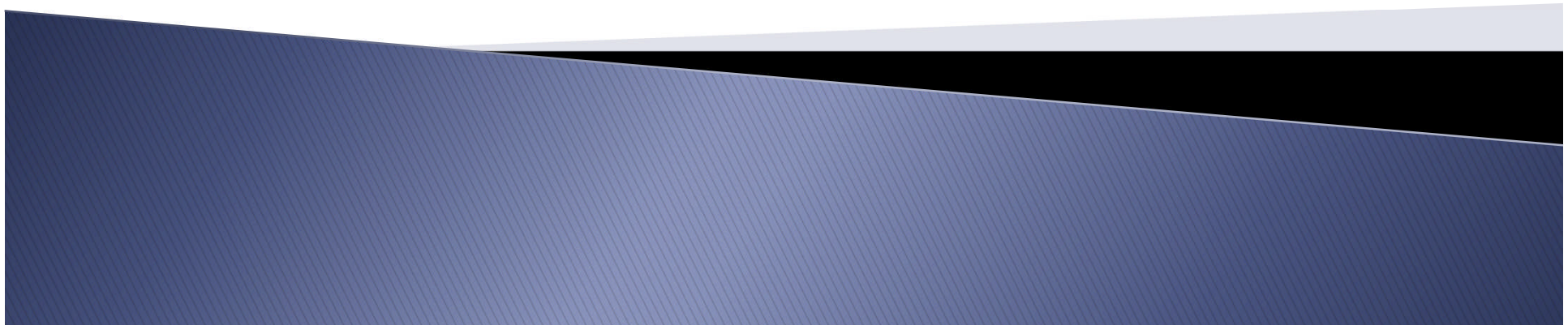Research Centre for Japanese Language and Linguistics

University of Oxford

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On null pronouns in Old Japanese

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Overview (I)

▸ The research reported here builds on the earlier investigations of null pronouns in Old Japanese by Horn and Russell (to appear) and Frellesvig et al. (to appear).

▸ These studies considered the distribution of null pronouns in a sample of 300 clauses from the OCOJ, containing 100 examples each of verbs in Provisional, Conditional, and Concessive forms.

▸ The goal of the present study is to investigate some of the apparent generalizations in these earlier works.

Overview (II)

- I have mainly concentrated on 5 verbs: *mi-* 'see', *kik-* 'hear', *(o)mop-* 'think', *se-* 'do' and *yuk-* 'go'.
- These verbs looked the most promising, from the original investigations. I considered all the phonographic examples for these 5 verbs where at least one relevant argument is null.
- I have considered some but not all of the logographic examples, so the observations here may be only partial.
- A total of about 80 examples so far.
- I have not considered the distribution of null pronouns within a single clause.

Overview (III)

▸ The **Provisional** and **Conditional** forms both end in /ba/, but are morphologically distinct:

　　mireba 'see.Prov' and *miba* 'see.Cond'.

▸ **Provisional** (ending in *-(e)ba*), sometimes called 'realis conditional': 'when S_1, S_2' or 'since S_1, S_2' or 'given that S_1, S_2'.

▸ **Conditional** (ending in *-(a)ba*), sometimes called 'irrealis conditional': 'if S_1, S_2'.

　　Provisional: *yukeba* "When/because (I) go"
　　Conditional: *yukaba* "If (I) go"

An example – Provisional

(1) 霞立 野 上乃 方尔

[kasumi tatu nwo <u>no</u> pe *no* kata *ni*

[mist rise field GEN above GEN slope DAT

行之可波 鴬 鳴都

yuki-*sikaba*] [ugupisu naki-*tu*]

go-SPAST.PROV] [warbler cry-PERF]

"When I was going to (once I arrived at) the slope over the field where mist rises, a warbler began to sing." (MYS.8.1443)

Overview of structures (I)

- Following Kuno (1973), we take the Provisional or Conditional clause to be subordinated within a superordinate clause.

- As the subordinate Provisional or Conditional clause typically linearly precedes the superordinate clause, the subordinate clause predicate is V_1 and the superordinate predicate is V_2.

- Accordingly, the subordinate clause is labelled S_1 and the superordinate clause S_2.

$$[S_2 [S_1 \ldots V_1] \ldots V_2]$$

where V_1 is Provisional or Conditional

Overview of structures (II)

- If S_1 is structurally within S_2 but not fully at its left edge, it is possible that some constituent of S_2 precedes the constituents of S_1.

- For example, the NP subject of the superordinate clause might precede the subordinate clause:

$$[S_2 \; NP \; [S_1 \ldots NP \ldots V_1] \ldots V_2]$$

Background – previous studies

- Akiba (1977) claimed that the Provisional and Conditional inflections /ba/ in Early Middle Japanese (EMJ) are markers of switch-reference – a marker of "different subject", in contrast to the gerund (-*te*), which marks "same subject".

- This claim is challenged and shown to be incorrect for EMJ by Ohori (1994), who reports that the same subject is retained in Provisional and Conditional clauses around 20% in MJ and 30% in late MJ, and by McAuley (2002), who reports 30% retention of same subject in EMJ.

Background – our previous work

▸ The previous works conflate the two /ba/ forms, but they have different grammatical properties and so must be kept apart.

▸ Horn and Russell (2012) showed that null subjects of Provisional clauses in OJ are retained at a low but non-negligible rate, and that null subjects of Conditional clauses are retained at a higher rate.

▸ In Frellesvig et al. (2012) we used the distribution of anaphoric properties across clauses to show that the Provisional or Conditional clauses are structurally subordinate to the containing clause (which follows, unless the subordinate clause is itself right-dislocated).

▸ While Provisional clauses might disfavor the identification of their subject with the superordinate clause subject, this is not and never has been a formal grammatical property, but can be attributed to the discourse relations between the subordinate and superordinate clauses (also suggested in Ohori 1994, McAuley 2002).

Anaphora between an overt NP and a null pronoun

Frellesvig et al. (to appear) identify three different structural conditions for examples in which an overt is related to both clauses under consideration.

(2)   a. Left Pronominalization:

$$[S_2 \, [S_1 \, \ldots \, pro_i \ldots \, V_1] \, \ldots \, \mathbf{NP_i} \ldots \, V_2]$$

b. Right Pronominalization:

$$[S_2 \, [S_1 \, \ldots \, \mathbf{NP_i} \, \ldots \, V_1] \, \ldots \, pro_i \, \ldots \, V_2]$$

c. 'Binding':

$$[S_2 \, \mathbf{NP_i} \, [S_1 \, \ldots \, pro_i \, \ldots \, V_1] \, \ldots \, V_2]$$

Anaphora involving two null positions

There are also plenty of examples where both positions are null, as in (3a), and a few examples with a Topic on the left, binding into both clauses, as in (3b).

(3)   a. Two null pronouns:

$$[S_2 [S_1 \ldots pro_i \ldots V_1] \ldots pro_i \ldots V_2]$$

b. Topic binding:

$$\textbf{Topic}_\textbf{i} [S_2 [S_1 \ldots e_i \ldots V_1] \ldots pro_i \ldots V_2]$$

(Strictly speaking the topic binds an empty position and the other silent position is a null pronoun.)

Topic binding

(4) 都久波尼爾　　　　阿波牟等　　　　　　　伊比志

[NP *tukupane ni*　　*apa-mu to*　　　　　*ipi-si*

tsukuba.peak DAT　　meet-CONJ that　　say-SPAST

古波　　　　　　多賀　　　　　　　己等　岐気波加

kwo pa]ᵢ　　[[eᵢ *ta ga*　　*koto　kikeba ka*]

child TOP　　[[　who GEN　words　hear.PROV Q]

弥尼　　　　　　阿波巣気牟也

proᵢ　*mi-ne*　　　*apa-zu-kye-mu*]

HON-sleep　　meet-NEG-SPAST-CONJ]

"The girl who said she would meet me at Tsukuba Peak
– because [she] heard *whose* rumors, must it be that [she]
won't sleep with me." (FK.2) (tree)

FK.2
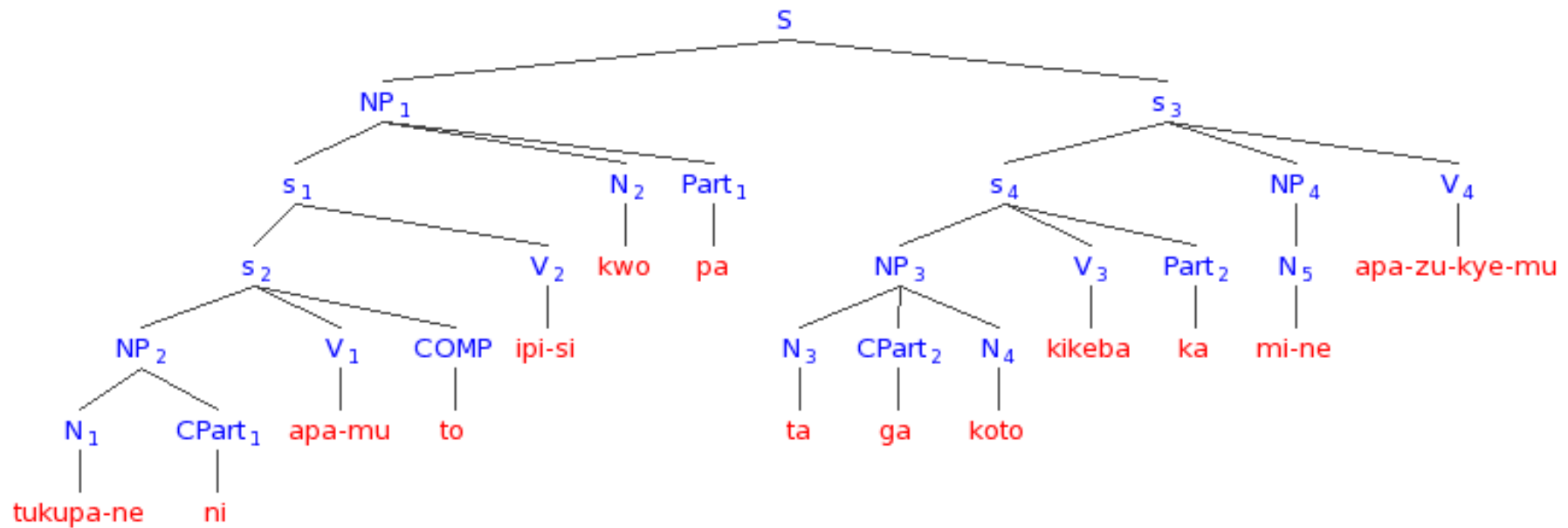
"**The girl who said she would meet me at Tsukuba Peak** – because [she] heard *whose* rumors, must it be that [she] won't sleep with me."

Two null arguments and Right Pronominalization

First *mireba* : [S][S] (null subjects, "same subject")

Second *mireba* : [S][S], O [S] (… overt O, null S)

(5)　　父母乎　　　　美礼婆　　　　多布斗斯

titipapa *wo*　　　*mireba*　　　*taputwo-si*

parents ACC　　　see.PROV　　　awesome

妻子　　　　　　美礼婆　　　　米具斯宇都久志

myekwo　　　　*mireba*　　　*megusi-utukusi*

wife.child　　　see.PROV　　　dear-lovely

"When [one]$_i$ looks at his father and mother, [he]$_i$ is filled with awe. When [he]$_i$ looks at [his]$_i$ wives and children$_k$, [they]$_k$ are dear and lovable [to him]$_i$." (MYS.5.800; translation due to Vovin 2010, 28-29)

Overview of findings (I)

Anaphoric relations between subordinate subject/object and superordinate subject/object.

Provisional clauses

▸ Anaphora is always to the superordinate clause subject.

    [S][S], S [S], [S] S, O [S], [O] S

Conditional clauses

▸ Either argument (S/O) in the subordinate clause may corefer with either argument (S/O) in the superordinate clause.

    [S][S], S [S], [S] S, O [S], ~~[O] S~~

    [O][O], O [O], [O] O, S [O], ~~[S] O~~

Findings

▸ The Provisional is more restricted than the Conditional.

▸ A null object in a Provisional clause only corefers with the superordinate subject.

▸ To be more specific, anaphora from a Provisional clause is to a superordinate clause subject, an experiencer, or the possessor of the subject, but never an object.

Overview of findings (II)

Provisional clauses

▶ Appear with Topic binding.

▶ Don't seem to show 'mixed' cases.

Conditional clauses

▶ Do not readily appear with Topic binding (the Conditional already is a/the Topic?).

▶ The few 'mixed' cases (OS, SO) seem to be Right Pronominalization (X [X]), with one argument overt.

Anaphora – Provisional

An example involving a null pronoun in a Provisional clause bound to the experiencer in the main clause:

(6)　　曾乎　　　　　見礼婆　　　許己呂乎伊多美

　　　　so wo　　　　mi*reba*　　　*kokoro wo ita-mi*

　　　　that ACC　　　see.PROV　　heart ACC hurt

　　　　"When [I] see that,　[I feel my] heart hurts,　　and
...." (MYS 18.4122)

(Adjectives in OJ co-occur with accusative-marked arguments.)

Right Pronominalization

(7) 　　　　　於朋佐箇珥　　阿布夜　　　烏等謎烏

[$_{S2}$ (*pro$_i$) [$_{S1}$ [$_{NP}$ *oposaka-ni*　　*apu ya*　　*wotomye-wo*]$_i$

　　　　　big.hill-DAT　　　meet FOC　young.woman-ACC

　　瀰知　　度沛麼　　　　　　哆駄珥破　　　　　　　　能邏孺

　　miti　　*twopeba*]　　*tadani pa*　　　　pro$_i$　　　*nora-zu*]

　　road　　ask.PROV　　　straight TOP　　　　　　　say-NEG

　　"When I asked the way from <u>the young woman I met on the big</u>
<u>hill</u>,　<u>she</u> didn't say [tell me] the direct way." (NSK.64) (tree)

- Syntactic binding theory (Chomsky 1981) dictates that the null pronoun pro, 'she', cannot be in the initial position of S$_2$, and therefore must linearly follow S$_1$, as shown.
- O [S]

NSK.64
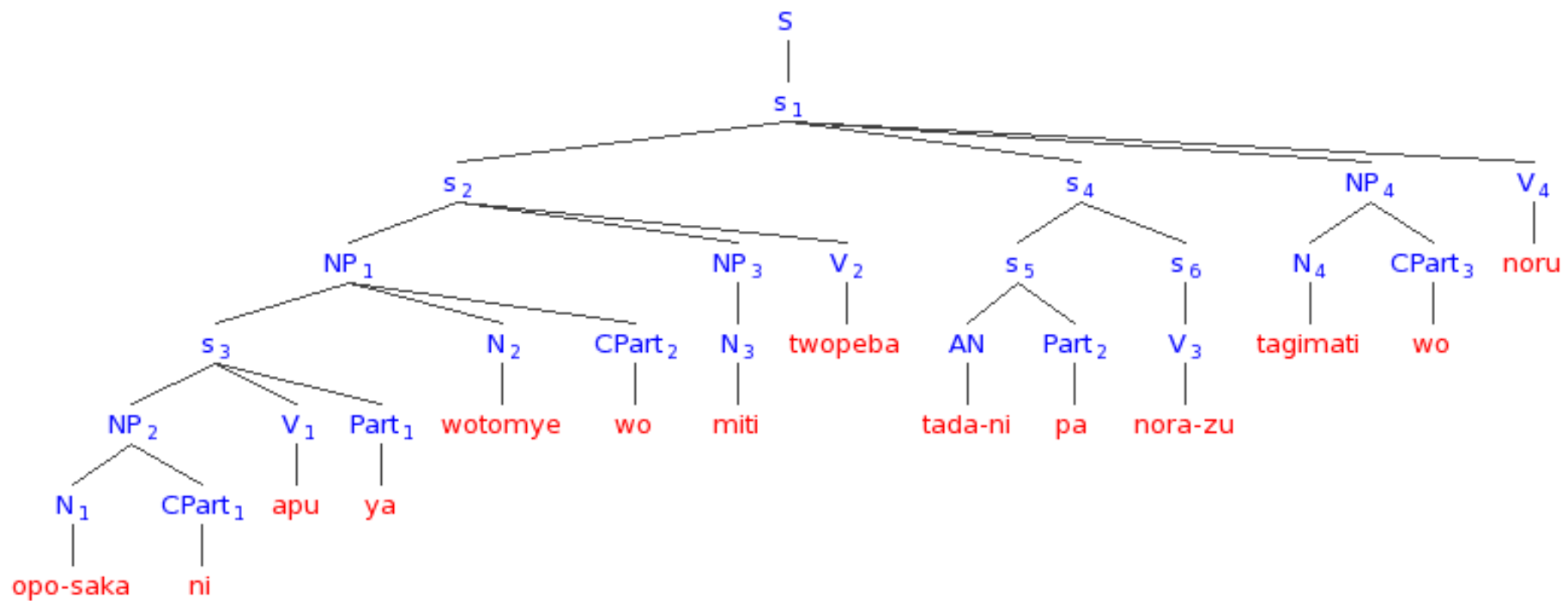
"When I asked the way from <u>the young woman I met on the big hill</u>, <u>she</u> didn't say [tell me] the direct way."

Right Pronominalization, subjects

(8)   近江道乃   相坂山丹

[$_{S2}$ [$_{S1}$ [apumidi *no*   *apusaka*yama *ni*
Ōmi Road GEN   Ōsaka Mountain DAT

手向爲   吾越 徃者

tamuke site]   wa$_i$ ga kwoye-yukeba] (…) pro$_i$

make.offering do.GER   I GEN cross-go.PROV (…)

又   反見

mata   kapyeri-mi-mu]

again   return-look-CONJ

"When I cross, making an offering at Ōsaka Mountain of Ōmi Road, (…) [I] will look back on (all this) again." (MYS.13.3240)

▸ S [S], Genitive-marked subject

Left Pronominalization

(9)　　　　　麻須良男乃　　　　　欲妣多天思加婆

$[_{S2}$ $[_{S1}$ *masurawo no* **pro$_i$**　*ywobi-tate-sikaba*]

　　　　　fine.man GEN　　　call-stand-SPAST.PROV

左乎之加能　　　　牟奈和気由加牟

$[_{NP}$ *sawosika no$_i$*]　*munawake-yuka-mu*]

buck GEN　　　　press.through-go-CONJ

"Because the fine men flushed [it] out, the buck must be pressing through (the brush)." (MYS 20.4320)

- [O] S, Genitive-marked subject

Left Pronominalization

(10)   念西   餘西鹿齒

[$_{S1}$ pro$_i$ omopu *ni si*   amari-*ni-sikaba*]

       think.ADN DAT RES exceed-PERF-SPAST.PROV

門   出而 吾   反側乎

[kadwo <u>ni</u>   idete]   [$_{NP}$ wa ga]$_i$ koipusu] wo

door DAT go.out.GER   I GEN   lay.down CONJ

"(...) my collapsing upon going out of doors because worry overwhelmed me." (MYS.12.2947b)

▸ [S] S

Binding (I)

(11)　　　　　烏玉乃　　　　　夜霧　　　　　　立而

[$_{S2}$ [$_{NP}$ nubatama *no*　　　ywogwiri no　　　tatite

　　　black.jewel COP　　　night.mist GEN　　stand.GER

不清　　　　　　照有　　　　　　　月夜乃

opoposi-ku　　　　ter-eru　　　　　　tukuywo *no*]$_i$

vague-ACOP　　　shine-STAT　　　moon.night GEN

　　　見者　　　　　　悲沙

[$_{S1}$ pro$_i$ mireba]　　　kanasi-*sa*]

　　　see.PROV　　　be.touching-ACOP.EXCL

"How touching, when you look at (it), is the moon that

shines dimly when the jewel-black night mist rises."

(MYS.6.982) (Genitive is most likely subject of *kanasi-sa*.)

Binding (II)

(12)

	壽毛	須底弓	相争尓
[$_{S2}$ [$_{NP}$ (...)	inoti *mo*	*sutete*	araswopi.*ni*
	life even	discard.GER	competing
嬬問	為家留	D 嬬等之	
tumadopi	si-*kyeru*	wotomye-ra ga]$_i$	
engagement	do-MPAST	young.woman-SFX GEN	
	聞者	悲左	
[$_{S1}$ pro$_i$	kikeba]	kanasi-*sa*	
	hear.PROV	touching-ACOP.EXCL	

"How touching, when you hear about [her], is the young girl whom the two men wooed, in competition, even throwing their lives away (...)" (MYS.19.4211)
(In both Binding examples the null argument is the O of S$_1$.)

Binding (III)

(13)　九月　　　　　四具礼乃　　　雨之　山霧

nagatukwi <u>no</u> *sigure no*　　ame no yamagwiri <u>no</u>

　　　　　　　　　　　　　rain GEN mist GEN

烟寸　[吾胸　　　　誰乎　見者将息]

ibuse*ki* [a ga mune　ta *wo*　miba yama-mu]

　　　I GEN heart someone Acc see.Cond stop

"If [it] sees someone [lit. who], <u>my heart </u>will stop [feeling lost]." (MYS.10.2263a) (tree)

(In this Conditional example the Binding is to the S of the subordinate clause.)
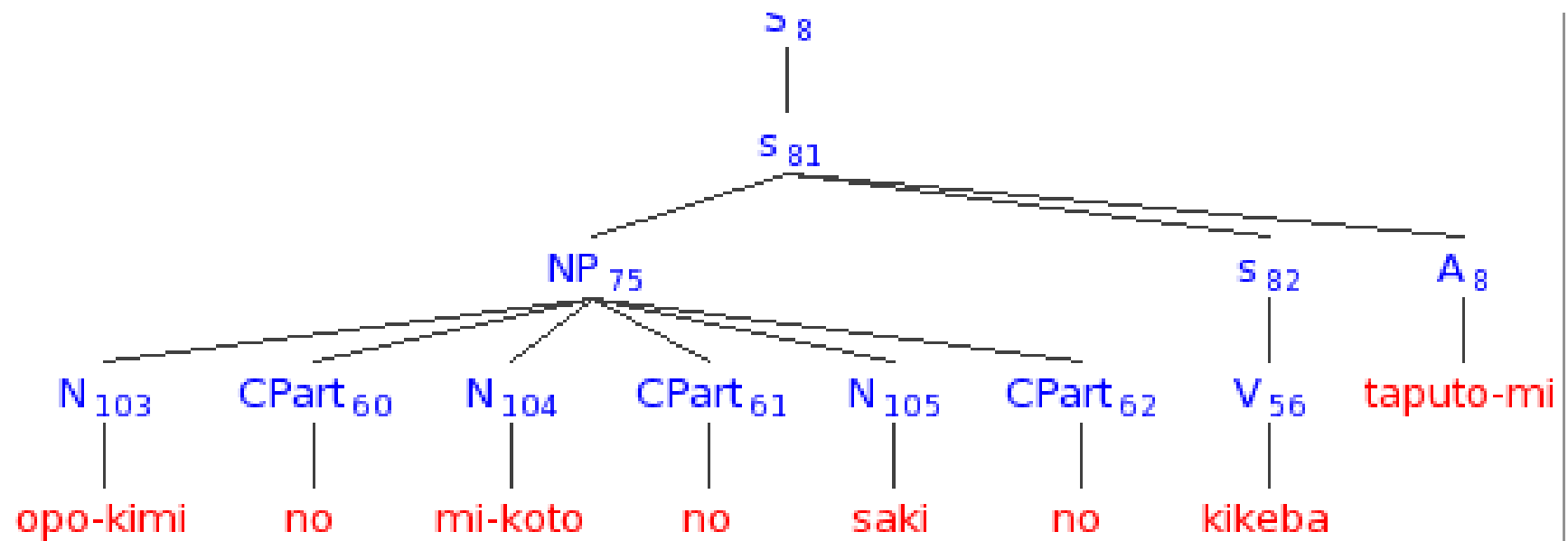
Binding – MYS.10.2263a
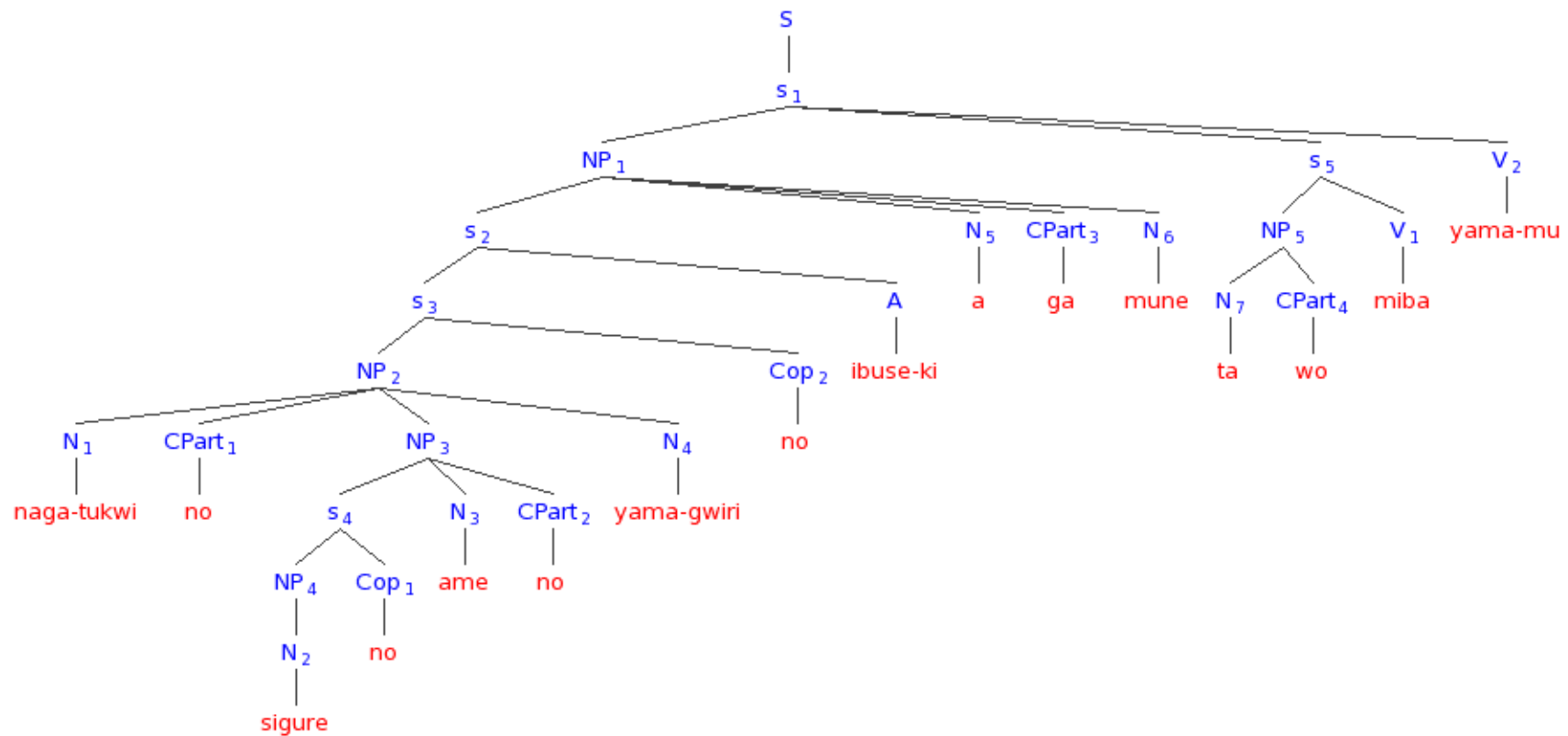
Provisional examples – minimal pair

(14)　大皇乃　　　　　　御言能左吉乃

opo-kimi *no*　　　mi-koto *no saki no*

great-lord GEN fine-word GEN fortune GEN

聞者　　　　　貴美

kikeba　　　taputwo-*mi*

hear.Prov　precious

"The fortune of my great lord's words, when [I] hear [it], is precious." (MYS.18.4094a)
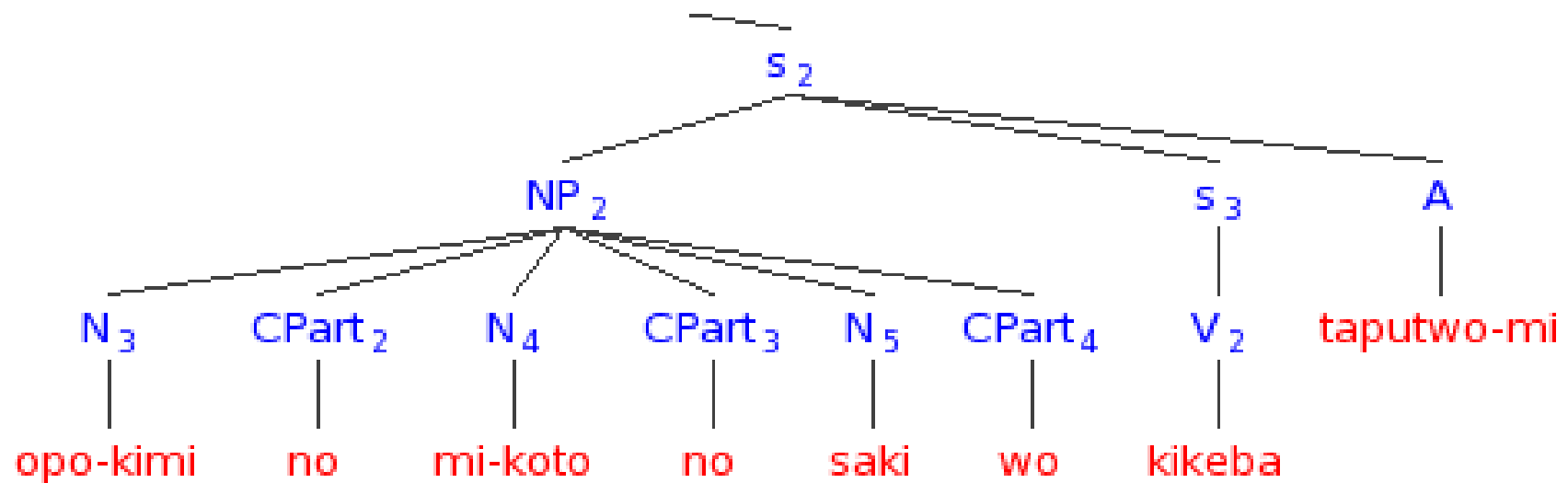
MYS.18.4094a

Provisional examples

(15)　於保伎美能　　　美許登乃佐吉乎

opo-kimi no　　　　mi-koto no saki wo

great-lord GEN fine-word GEN fortune ACC
聞者　　　　　多布刀美

kikeba　　　　taputwo-mi

hear.Prov　　　precious

"When [I] hear the fortune of my great lord's words, [it] is precious." (MYS.18.4095a)

MYS.18.4095a

Conditionals

Now, a few examples involving conditionals

▸ Look at OO cases (RPro, LPro)

▸ Look at mixed cases (O [S], [S] O)

Conditionals

(16) 君乎　　　　見者　　　　許増

kimi *wo*　　　mi-teba　　　*koso*

you Acc　　　see-Perf.Cond Emph

命　　對　　　　　　吾　　戀止目

inoti <u>ni</u> mukapu　　wa ga kwopwi-yama-*me*

life DAT risk　　　　I GEN love-stop-Conj

"If [I] have seen you, would I, who risk [my] life, stop loving [you]?" (MYS.12.2979)

▸ O [O], also [S] S

Conditionals

(17) 凡尔　　　　吾之　　　　　念者
　　　oboroka-*ni*　ware *si*　pro　omopaba
　　　carelessly-Dat I EMPH　think.Cond
　　　人妻尔　　　　有　　　　云　妹尔
　　　pitoduma *ni*　ari <u>to</u>　　ipu　imo *ni*
　　　man's.wife DAT Cop Comp say　beloved DAT
　　　戀管　　　　有米也
　　　kwopwi*tutu*　ara-*me ya*
　　　love-Cont　　Stat-Conj Foc

"If I carelessly thought [about her], would [I] be loving my beloved, who is said to be another's wife?" (MYS.12.2909)

▸ [O] O (object is actually dative)

Mixed O [S]

(18)　可美都気努
　　　[*kami tu kenwo*
　　　Kamitukeno
　　　可保夜我奴麻能　　　　　伊波為都良
　　　kapoya ga numa no　　　*ipawitura*]ᵢ
　　　Kapoya GEN marsh GEN　　rock.vine
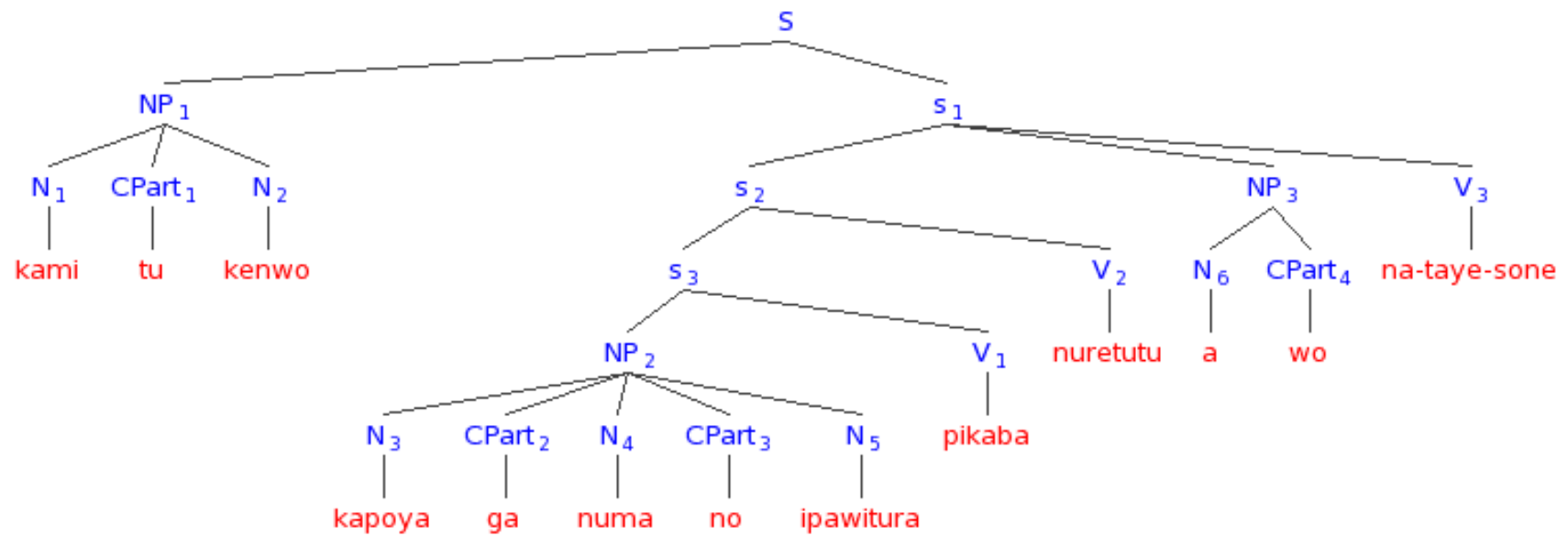　　　比可波　 proᵢ　奴礼都追
　　　pikaba　　　*nuretutu*
　　　pick.Cond　　get.loose

"If [I] ask [you] out, [come] smoothly [to me like] a rock vine from Kapoya Marsh in Kamitukeno that comes smoothly if one pulls it. (MYS.14.1316; translation based on Vovin 2012) (tree)
▸ Overt object of *pikaba* is subject of *nuretutu*.

MYS.14.3416

Mixed S [O]

(19)　　　　　　美頭能睿能　　　　　宇良志麻能　　古我

　　　　[S2 [S1 [NP *midu.no.ye no*　　*urasima no*　　*kwo ga*]i
　　　　　　Mizunoe GEN　　　　　Urashima GEN　child GEN

多麻久志義　　阿気受阿理世波　　　　　麻多母
tamakusige　　*ake-zuari-seba*]　proj　　　　*mata mo*
jewel.box　　open-NEG-SPAST.COND　again even

阿波麻志遠
apa-masi wo]
meet-SUBJ CNJ

"If only the child from Urashima in Mizunoe hadn't opened the box, [I, we, she] could have met [him] even again." (FK.15)

▸ S [O], Genitive-marked subject

Conclusion

▸ Provisional and Conditional clauses seem to be structurally above or below the subject position of their superordinate clause (structures follow).

▸ Many anaphoric relations between S/O in each clause are possible (later slide), but arguments of Provisionals always seem to link to S in the superordinate clause.

▸ This must be a fact about the contexts in which Provisional clauses appear, not Provisional clauses themselves.

▸ Notes on case marking: so far, genitive subjects of Provisionals participate in S [S] but genitive subjects of Conditionals do not (S [O]).

▸ Accusative on O is possible but not necessary in both O [S] and O [O].

Subordinate clause adjoined to S
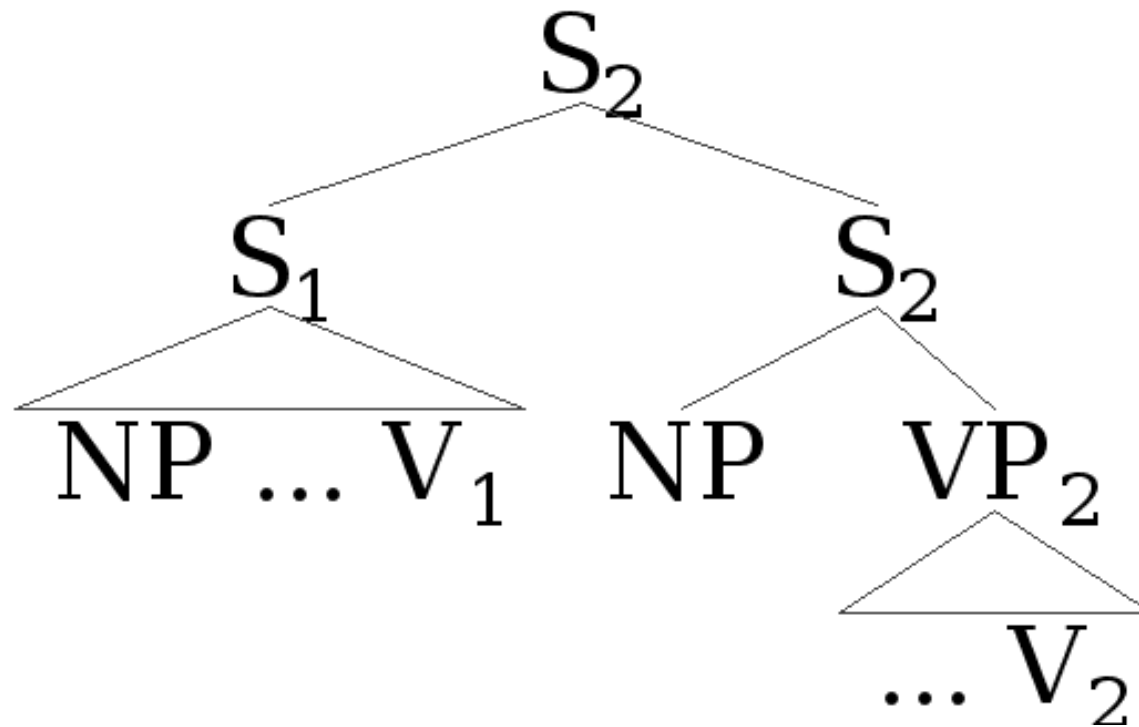
Subordinate clause adjoined to VP
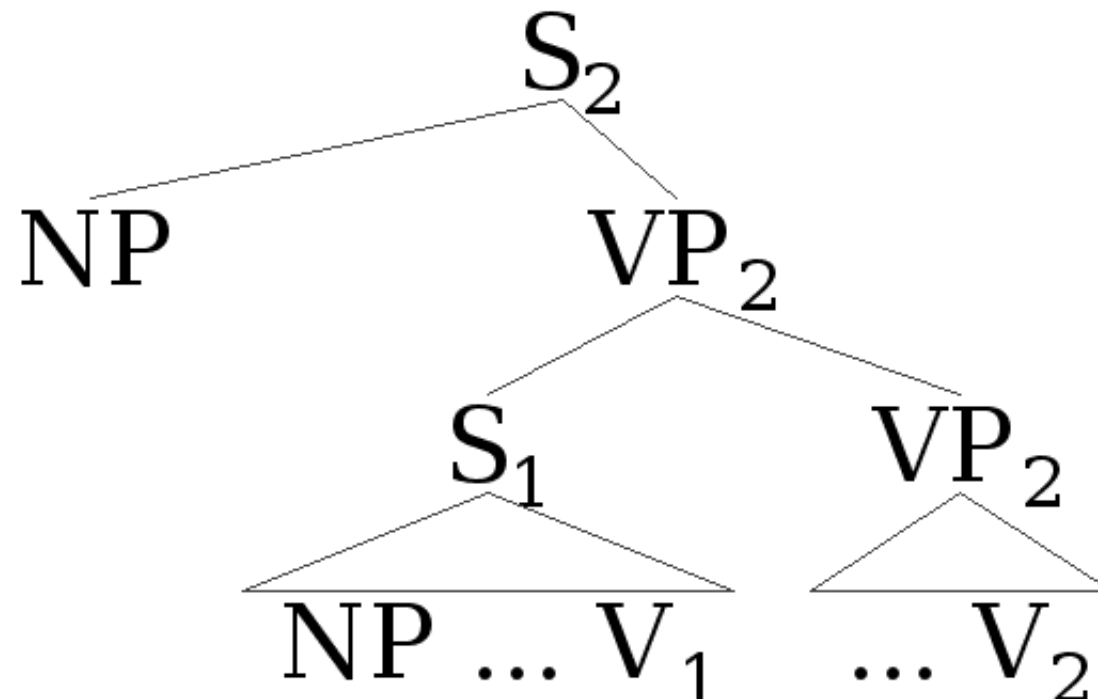
Anaphoric patterns

Provisional clauses

‣ Anaphora is always to the superordinate clause subject.

   [S][S], S [S], [S] S, O [S], [O] S

Conditional clauses

‣ Either argument (S/O) in the subordinate clause may corefer with either argument (S/O) in the superordinate clause.

   [S][S], S [S], [S] S, O [S], ~~[O] S~~
   [O][O], O [O], [O] O, S [O], ~~[S] O~~

Thank you!

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