

**OLD JAPANESE
PARTICLES
Bjarke Frellesvig**

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1. Particles.

Particles are bound postpositional grammatical words which attach to a host, minimally a word, to specify some grammatical function or relation. There is a close connection between grammar and particles. Some particles are mainly semantic, but most contribute to the syntax and/or pragmatics of an utterance. As the best studied OJ texts are poetry it is difficult to gain a complete picture of the grammatical systems in which the particles took part. The literary or rhetorical style employed in the OJ poetry means that it is full of exclamations, invocations, lamentations, etc. These are, of course, features of language use in any culture at any time, but the nature of our materials has skewed the view of the grammar of the OJ particles, many of which traditionally are glossed 'emphatic'.

The following classification of particles into six types is traditional (although other classifications are found): (a) *case particles* (*kaku-joshi*), (b) *focus particles* (*kakari-joshi*), (c) *restrictive particles* (*fuku-joshi*), (d) *conjunctive particles* (*setsuzoku-joshi*), (e) *final particles* (*shuu-joshi*), (f) *interjectional particles* (*kantoo-joshi*). Note that it is based first of all on functional criteria and that several particles belong in more than one class.

In Japanese school grammar, the part of speech known as *joshi* (助詞) 'auxiliary word' includes particles, but also a number of verbal inflectional endings. This is because Japanese part of speech classification traditionally is a

classification into morpheme types, not into word types. However, the two are different in that inflectional endings take part in forming a word whereas particles attach to a full word, phrase, or clause. Note, however, that there is some *functional* overlap between inflectional verbal endings on the one hand and conjunctive, final, and interjectional particles on the other, in that both contribute to the expression of modality and interclausal syntax. But note also that not all such inflectional endings, e.g. the Imperative formant *-ye/-yo*, are included among *joshi* in the traditional classification.

Limiting the above classification to particles proper (i.e. excluding inflectional endings) and with the addition of a class not provided in the school grammar, namely that of *complementizer*, the following grouping is by and large valid for OJ and the following stages of Japanese:

Adverbial particles (a-d above) attach to nouns or nominalized verbals or clauses, marking their host as an adverbial, more or less semantically determined, within a clause, either as a complement or adjunct noun phrase within a clause, or as a subordinate clause within a higher clause. (NB: Note that this characterization does not apply to all of the functions of the Genitive case particles, which basically and primarily are adnominal.)

Sentence particles (e-f) attach to verbal or nominal predicates to express the modality or illocutionary force of a sentence or utterance.

Complementizer marks reported speech.

2. Adverbial particles

2.1 Case particles attach to nouns and nominalised forms of verbs and adjectives, specifying grammatical relations within a clause. Although we speak of these OJ particles as case particles, it is clear that they do not yet form a fully developed case system comparable to that of NJ - or of languages with case inflection - nor do they reflect an inherited case system (see **etymology**). As in MJ, marking of core arguments, subject and object, is optional in OJ, but it is a noteworthy fact that OJ does not have means of marking a nominal explicitly as the subject of a main clause. Using familiar names for cases, the OJ case particles are as follows, divided into three groups on the basis of their use and productivity:

- (1) OJ case particles

Main

Accusative	<i>wo</i>
Genitive	<i>ga; no; tu</i>
Dative	<i>ni</i>
Ablative	<i>ywori (~ ywo ~ yuri ~ yu)</i>
Comitative	<i>to</i>

Obsolete

Nominative	<i>i</i>
Genitive	<i>rwo; ro; na (~ da)</i>

Emerging

Ablative	<i>kara</i>
Allative	<i>pye</i>

2.1.1 Main OJ case particles.

Accusative **wo** is mainly used to mark direct and traversal objects. It is also used as a conjunctive particle and as an interjectional particle. When followed by the topic particle *pa* the resulting form is *wo-ba*.

Dative **ni** is the general oblique case, marking both argument and non-argument oblique nominals. The main uses are indirect object, allative, purposive,¹ agent, instrumental, locative, temporal. A variant *nite* is used in some of the peripheral functions, especially instrumental, locative, temporal.

Ablative **ywori ~ ywo ~ yuri ~ yu** are used about source of movement, comparison, material, and means: 'from, than, with'. There is no discernable difference in use between the four variants; in EMJ only the shape *yori* survived.

Comitative **to** is used as coordinative, comitative, and comparative: 'with, and, than'.

The Genitive primarily expresses an adnominal relation, subordinating one noun phrase to another. The two main productive Genitive markers are **no** and **ga**. They are to a large extent equivalent, but there is a number of differences in use between them. Some of these differences reflect that *no* in OJ as in all later stages of Japanese is a productive Adnominal form of the copula. As opposed to *ga*, *no* can thus have the meaning 'which is' and thus express a much wider range of relations.

Other differences, however, seem to indicate a systematic specialisation between *ga* and *no* as variant Genitive

¹ In this function also used in purpose-of-motion constructions after verb Infinitives, e.g. *tumi ni ku* 'come to pick (flowers)'.

markers: (a) Personal pronouns take *ga* (*wa-ga* 'mine', *na-ga* 'yours', *si-ga* 'his', *ta-ga* 'whose') never *no*; demonstratives take *no* (*ko-no* 'this', *so-no* 'that') never *ga* (cf. **pronouns**). (b) When combining with some grammaticalized dependent nouns (and the dependent adjective *goto-si* 'be like, as if') through an intervening Genitive particle, rather than directly, the Adnominal verb form takes *ga*, not *no*, (3). This is opposed to the Nominalized verb form which usually takes *no*. (c) Finally, and famously, *ga* is said to be used with 'sentient nouns whose referent is someone close to the speaker or the person who dominates the narrative viewpoint', whereas *no* is used with 'exalted or indefinite animate nouns' (see Takeuchi 1999:159f who offers (4) as an illustrative example). As shown by Hirata, however, this differentiation in usage does not become fully developed until EMJ and there are ample counterexamples in OJ.

In addition to the adnominal function, both *ga* and *no* can be used to mark subjects in subordinate clauses (and in main clauses with the predicate in a conditioned Adnominal form (*kakari-musubi*, see 2.2 below)), (3).

- (2) *wa ga mure-inaba* (K 4)
'when I go away'
- (3) *puku kaze no miyenu ga gotoku,*
yuku midu no tomaranu gotoku (M 19.4160)
'like the blowing wind is not visible,
like flowing water does not cease'
- (4) *titi-papa ga tame ni, moropito no tame ni* (BS 1)
'for the sake of father and mother, and for the sake of all
people'

Tu which only survived into EMJ in lexicalized collocations appears somewhat fossilized already in OJ, in expressions like *nipa-tu-tori* 'garden-Gen-bird; chicken'. It is sometimes termed 'locative Genitive' as it often is found after nouns denoting some kind of place; this is, however, not likely to be an original feature of this particle which derives from a copula and which is also used to adnominalise adjectives and other words (see 5.2.1 and **copula**).

2.1.2 Obsolete and peripheral case particles

Genitives (attributives): The particle **rwo** had all but disappeared from the language at the OJ stage. It may be recovered from a few expressions like *kamu-rwo-ki* 'spirit-Gen-male' and *kamu-rwo-mi* 'spirit-Gen-female'; these words are also found in the shape *kamu-ru-ki/-mi* indicating that *rwo* goes back to **ro* which in the course of mid vowel raising to *ru* had the intermediary shape

rwo. It is of some diachronic interest for its possible relation to the Adnominal formant *-ru* in the secondary verb classes. Another similar particle is **ro** found in a few lexicalized items such as *woroti* 'big snake' (< *woro-ti* 'top, peak - Gen - fierce, powerful creature') and with the first person pronoun in Eastern OJ *wa-ro* 'my'.

An Genitive marker **na** is usually included in grammars, based on lexicalized forms such as *ma-na-kwo* 'eye-na-?child; eye(ball)' and *ta-na-soko* 'hand-na-bottom; palm of the hand', but note that Vovin suggests (1994b:253), not unconvincingly, that *na* may in fact rather be an old dual or plural marker, based on the occurrence of *na* mostly with paired body parts (*ma-na* 'eyes', *ta-na* 'hands) or uncountable nouns (*mi-na* 'water').² Based on a few words such as *kedamono* 'beast' (*ke-da-mono* 'hair-da-being'), **da** is often said to be an obsolete variant of *na*.

Nominative i is rare in the OJ texts and went out of use after OJ, although it is found in some archaic EMJ translation glosses to Chinese texts (*kanbun-kundoku* glosses). Most examples are found the Imperial Edicts (Senmyoo) which are thought in several respects to preserve archaic language usage. There is no consensus about the main or basic function of OJ *i*. It has most recently been studied in Miller 1989 and Vovin 1997 who arrive at strikingly different conclusions, namely that *i* is an old *accusative* marker (Miller) or an *active* marker in a vestigial active/passive alignment system (Vovin). What is clear is that *i* is used to mark certain subjects, mainly in subordinate clauses. It is also traditionally said to be used for emphasis, and there are some occurrences where it appears to nominalise. While at best marginal already in OJ, this particle is of some diachronic interest, as it may be related to the Korean nominative particle *i* and may also be involved in the lexicalization of the free form of apophonic nouns (see **proto-phonology**).

- (5) *ipye naru imo i obobosimesemu* (M 12.3161)
'my beloved who is at home will worry about me'
(6) *Nakamaro i itupari kadamyeru kokoro wo motite ikusa wo okosi*
(S28)
'Nakamaro, having a lying and deceitful heart, raised an army'

1.1.3 *Emerging case particles*. **Kara** which in later periods replaced *yori* to become the general ablative

² There seems to be only a single compelling counterexample to Vovin's suggestion: *momo na pito* (NS 11) '100-na-person; 100/many people'.

marker was in OJ coming into use, but was not yet fully established with all the grammatical meanings of *ywori*. It is thought to be from a noun 'will, way, extent' which was all but obsolete in OJ. It is also found in the conjunctive particle *mono kara* and had other semi-grammatical uses as well. The noun *pye* 'side, direction' was being grammaticalized as an *allative* case particle ***pye***, but had in the OJ period not yet acquired that status.

2.2 Focus particles

Focus particles single out a nominal constituent for comment or as focus for emphasis or question. They express no particular syntactic relationship between the marked constituent and its predicate and are thus pragmatic rather than syntactic; they can combine with or substitute for other adverbial particles. These particles may be divided into two groups, topic particles and focus particles proper:

The *topic* particles ***pa*** and ***mo*** are used with little difference from later stages of Japanese: *pa* to mark a regular or contrastive topic, *mo* to mark an emphatic topic, 'also, even'. When combining with accusative *wo*, *pa* becomes *ba*: *wo-ba*.

The *focus* particles proper mark the focus of emphasis, ***namo***, ***so***, ***koso***, or question, marking the focus of yes/no questions, ***ya***, and WH-questions, ***ka***, respectively. *Namo* is found only once in Man'yooshuu, but is relatively frequent in Senmyoo; it has the variant *namu* which replaces *namo* in EMJ. *So* has the variant *zo* which replaces *so* in EMJ.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| (a) emphatic | <i>namo</i> (~ <i>namu</i>), <i>so</i> (~ <i>zo</i>), <i>koso</i> |
| (b) interrogative | <i>ya</i> (yes/no), <i>ka</i> (WH) |

In doing so they furthermore correlate with specific forms of the predicate within their sentence: *ka*, *ya*, *so*, *namo* correlate with the Adnominal, whereas *koso* correlates with the Exclamatory (except when the predicate is an adjective, in which case also *koso* correlates with the Adnominal). This serves to mark the scope of the focus, i.e. to mark the predicate which belongs (usually as presupposed) with the focussed constituent. This relation of correspondence is in Japanese grammar known as '*kakari-musubi*'. *Musubi* is the traditional name for the conclusion ('tying up') of a sentence. *Kakari* 'correlation' may here may here be thought of as 'relation opener' (the focus particles are thus traditionally termed 'correlational particles')

(*kakari-joshi*)). This conception of a *kakari-musubi* relationship is not dissimilar from that of the *topic-comment* (or *theme-rheme*) relation (as opposed to a *subject-predicate* relation).

- (7) *ima koso pa wa-dori ni ara-me* (K 3)
now Foc Top my-bird Cop.Inf exist-Conj.Excl
Now indeed, I am my own'

The focus particles thus have two functions: (a) to signal special types of utterance: emphatic or interrogative, and among the latter: yes/no or WH. This is reinforced by the use of a special form of the predicate of that sentence. And (b), to flag the point of focus for that utterance type. It should be noted that the focus particles (with the exception of *namo*) can be used sentence finally. In that case they function like final particles (2.1) and may be said primarily to mark the type of utterance (i.e. only (a) above), or perhaps to focus the predicate.

2.3 Restrictive particles form adverbial phrases of extent or degree and include: ***bakari*** (from *pakar-* 'to measure, plan') 'about, approximately', ***dani*** 'at least; even', ***made (ni)*** 'until; so much that', ***nomwi*** 'only, solely, alone; entirely, fully, completely', ***sape*** 'also, further, besides, even, at least', ***si*** 'also, even', ***simo*** 'even', ***sura*** 'even, at least'. Note that *made(ni)* which in EMJ came to be used as a conjunctive particle already in OJ could follow a nominalized clause.

2.4 Conjunctive particles follow finite verb forms to form subordinate clauses: ***gane*** (only in postposed purposive clauses to volitional main clauses) 'so that', ***gani*** 'as if'; ***mono wo*** 'although'; ***mono kara (ni)*** 'as, while', ***mono yuwe (ni)*** 'as, while'; ***ni*** 'as, when, because', ***to*** (a) concessive '(even) if, although' (in this use, often followed by *mo*: ***tomo***; cf. here the etymologically related Concessive formant *-do(mo)*), (b) purposive 'in order to, (so) that'; ***wo*** 'as, because'; ***yuwe (ni)*** 'because' (also after nouns: 'because of'). Note that *gane*, *gani*, and concessive *to(mo)* follow the Conclusive of the predicate; other conjunctive particles follow the Adnominal.

As mentioned, in Japanese school grammar this class of particle includes a number of verbal inflectional endings, viz. those forming nonfinite verbal forms such as the Gerund formant *-te* or the Concessive *-do*.

3. Sentence particles

3.1 Final particles occur in utterance final position, after finite verb forms or predicate nominals, contributing to the specification of the modality to the entire utterance: *gane* optative; *kamo* (a) interrogative, (b) exclamatory; *moga* desiderative (after nominals and adverbials, including Infinitive-1 of adjectives); *miyu* evidential ('it seems, appears'), see 4.2; *na* (a) prohibitive ('don't!'), (b) exclamatory. As mentioned above, the focus particles *so*, *koso*, *ka*, *ya* can also function as final particles. *So* and *koso* mark the predicate or sentence as emphatic; *ka* and *ya* mark the sentence as interrogative (including rhetorical questions used as exclamations).

3.2 Interjectional particles form interjections or invocations: *ro* (rare in the central dialect, but frequent in Eastern), *we*, *wo*, *ya*, *yo*. It is worth noting that the Imperative verb endings for the secondary verb classes conspicuously originate in interjectional particles (-*yo* for Central, -*ro* for Eastern).

4. Complementizer.

The quotative complementizer, *to*, is used after directly or indirectly quoted utterances, sometimes with the verb of utterance omitted, and in naming constructions. In Japanese school grammar the complementizer is grouped with the case particle *to*, but the two are different functions.

- (8) *ametuti pa pirosi to ipedo* (M 5.892)
 world Top wide Comp say.Concessive
 'although you/they say that the world is wide'
- (9) *yamato no kuni wo akidusima to ipu* (NS 75)
 Yamato Gen country Acc Akizushima TO₂ call
 'call the country of Yamato Akizushima'

5. Etymology

Suggestions of more or less plausible internal etymologies for the particles abound in dictionaries, but are in many cases not persuasive, apart from some particles being compounds of others, e.g. *si-mo*, *ka-mo*, *na-mo*. However, a good number of particles do have fairly obvious internal etymologies, indicating that they either were in the process of being, or fairly recently had been, grammaticalized.

5.1 Nominal sources. The directional case particles have conspicuous nominal sources: the ablatives *ywori* ~ *ywo* ~ *yuri* ~ *yu* derive from the source of the OJ noun *yuri*

'after(wards)' < pre-OJ **yori*,³ and the emerging allative and ablative particles are based on the nouns *pye* 'side, direction' and *kara* 'will, way, extent', respectively. The restrictive particle *bakari* is from the noun *pakari* 'estimate, limit' (derived from *pakar-* 'to measure, plan'). The conjunctive particles *yuwe (ni)*, *mono wo*, *mono kara (ni)*, *mono yuwe (ni)* incorporate the nouns *yuwe* 'reason', *mono* 'being, thing', *kara* 'will, way, extent', in most cases optionally adverbialized by *ni* the Infinitive of the copula. As in later stages of Japanese, conjunctive particles are frequently grammaticalized from full or dependent nouns, usually optionally adverbialized by the copula Infinitive *ni*.

It is most likely that other particles have nominal sources which we can no longer recover with the same amount of certainty, e.g. *made(ni)*. It is optionally adverbialized by the copula Infinitive and already in OJ it could follow clauses with the predicate in the Adnominal form; in EMJ, it came to function as both terminative case particle and conjunctive particle ('until'). As a nominal source, *matwo* 'target' comes to mind, but the phonological derivation is not straightforward.

5.2 Verbal sources.

The restrictive particle *si* most likely derives from the ancestor of *se-* 'to do'. A single particle, the final particle *miyu*, derives from a finite verb form, viz. the Conclusive of *miye-*, the passive of *mi-* 'to see'. Traditionally *miyu* is not classified synchronically as a particle, but it should be, as (a) it follows the Conclusive of verbs (Infinitive-1 of adjectives), and (b) it is only found in the form *miyu*, not in any other inflected forms, in this function. It was presumably grammaticalized from biclausal or bisentential constructions.

5.2.1 *Copula*. A number of particles had been or were in OJ in the process of being grammaticalized from a form of a copula: *no*, *ni*, *tu*, and *to* all functioned as particles and as forms of a copula at the same time; see **copula**.

³ In order to account for the four OJ variants, a shorter pre-OJ variant, **yo*, must be assumed, reflecting either shortening or that **yori* itself originally is bimorphemic **yo-ri*. Mid-vowel raising gave **yori* > OJ *yuri*, **yo* > OJ *ywo*. The remaining two OJ forms, *ywori* and *yu*, would then be analogical, based on *yuri* ~ *ywo*.

5.2.2 *Roots of other verbs.* *Wo* which functions as an Accusative case particle, a conjunctive particle, and an interjectional particle was likely grammaticalized from the root underlying the existential verbs *wor-* (< *wV-r-) and *wi-* (< *wV-i). The focus particles *koso* and *so* are from the roots of the verbs *-kose-* (< *kCsC-i) a defective optative auxiliary verb and *se-* (< *sC-i) 'to do', respectively. Note that both *koso* and *so* are used as (vestigial) forms of the two verbs apart from their use as focus particles; see further **verb diachrony** about the use of bare verb roots as forms.

5.3 *External etymology*

The *external* etymology of OJ particles has mainly been studied within an Altaic, or Japanese-Korean, comparative framework. However, particles are short words and the risk of chance resemblances is therefore not small. More importantly, it is a fact which is not usually addressed explicitly in comparative studies that no significant subset of particles within OJ represents an inherited system. This is well illustrated by the case particles of which only *ga*, *i*, and *rwo* lack a transparent internal source, as opposed to *wo*, *no*, *tu*, *ni*, *ywori*, *to*, *na*, *kara*, *pye* whose grammaticalization from other parts of speech is either documented or easily recoverable. This suggests that comparison of individual particles with forms in other languages has to be interpreted with caution. Recently, however, some comparative studies have added to the evidence which relates Japanese and Korean (Martin 1990, 1991; Frellesvig 2001).

References: *i*: Miller 1989, Vovin 1997. *wo*: Shibatani 1990:333ff. Genitives: Hirata forthcoming. *ni*, *no*, *to*, *tu* and grammaticalization from copula: Frellesvig 2001. Focus, *kakari-musubi*: Takeuchi 1999:169ff, Ohno 1993, Whitman 1997, Wrona 2003, Hendriks 2000. External etymologies: Miller 1971, Murayama 1957; Martin 1990, 1991, Frellesvig 2001.