

From Relativization to Nominalization and More: Evidence from the History of Okinawan

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Introduction

The nominalization-relativization syncretism is characteristic of languages in Tibeto-Burman areas (e.g. Noonan 1997; DeLancey 1999), whilst the diachronic process of the phenomenon is now pursued in East and Southeast Asian languages as well (e.g. Yap and Wrona forthcoming). These preceding works propose two different directions of change. One is that nominalization has developed into relativization (e.g. Yap and Matthews 2008) albeit with a lack of syntactic explicitness in some cases by the want of historical documents. The other concerns the inverse direction from relativization to nominalization, which is proposed by researchers such as LaPolla (2003 with Huang). Although they are opposing against each other, each survey result remains and raises an intriguing possibility, which is worth reconsideration through the analysis of other languages. However, it should be pointed out that preceding research cannot give a full account of the directions with a paucity of crucial historical evidence. Genetti (2008) embarks on a reconstructing research into the diachronic process in which relativization and nominalization each give rise to the other based on five Tibeto-Burman languages; she provides a good syntactic analysis, but any synchronic study seems to have its own limits. Building on these preceding works, this study addresses the historical development of the Okinawan nominalizer *si*, which used to be *sī* (see the next section), out of its earlier usage as the head of relative clause i.e. from relativization to nominalization.

1 Data

Since the languages spoken in Okinawa have a history of about four-hundred years, it is possible to compare some sizeable materials at different synchronic

stages for a historical-comparative study. This study thus examines as primary data several historical materials written in the sixteenth/seventeenth through eighteenth centuries; some other materials in later centuries are also used, albeit on an as-needed basis, as supplementary data sources. The materials are shown in (1).

- (1) 16/17C: *Omorosausi* vols.1-22 (poems)
 Early 18C: *Gosamarutichiuchi* (c. 1718)¹
Shuusinkaneiri (c. 1718)
Mekarusi (c. 1718)
Unnamunukurui (c. 1718)
Timizinuyin (? 1733)
 Late 18C: *Hanauinuyin* (after 1770)
 19/20C: *Ryuuka* (traditional Okinawan verse songs)

According to Hokama (1995: 350) i.e. the unabridged dictionary of the Ancient Okinawan, *si* can trace back to the oldest document *Omorosausi*, which had been compiled in three parts from the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries. *Omorosausi* consists of twenty-two volumes of *omoro* i.e. songs as dedications to the gods and goddesses, and 1554 songs in total are included in the twenty-two volumes of *sausi* i.e. book or brochure. The oldest song is said to have been the *omoro* in the thirteenth century, while the latest is identified as the *omoro* sung by Queen Shoonei in the early seventeenth century (Hokama 2000b: 455). I used the Hokama's (2000b) edition of *Omorosausi*, referring to Shimizu (2004) if need be.

The materials in the eighteenth century all belong to the genre of kumiodori i.e. a traditional Okinawan musical drama. Kumiodori dramas utilize stories and themes with popular appeal, which are performed with traditional Okinawan songs and dances using stylized movements. The first four works in (1) were all written by Tamagusuku Chookun (1684-1734), the originator of kumiodori. The other two kumiodori texts are considered to have been written, respectively, in the mid and the latter half of the eighteenth century. *Timizinuyin*, which is usually known as the modern pronunciation *Temizunoen*, was written by Heshikiya Choobin (1700-1734) around 1733 (Ohtani 1981: 14). *Hanauinuyin*, usually known as *Hanaurinoen*, was made up by Takamiyagusuku Peechin (dates unknown); the text is generally believed to have been written sometime within two decades after 1770 (*ibid.*). All these texts of kumiodori are edited and included in Ifa (1962).

The phonetic form *si*, albeit written *su* in the cursive form of kana, had been used from the sixteenth/seventeenth century to the late nineteenth century, specif-

¹ I referred to Okinawa Prefectural Board of Education (2000: 70) for the dates of the first four Kumiodori dramas. Ohtani (1981: 13) states that there is no conclusive evidence for the dates of *Mekarusi* and *Unnamunukurui*. Note that *Gosamarutichiuchi* is also known as *Nidootichiuchi*.

ically until around 1870 i.e. the very early period in the Meiji Era [1868-1912] (Hokama 2000a: 308-310). In the early Meiji Era, the phonetic value of alveolar fricative [s] in *su* [sɨ] remained to be used by members of the samurai class, while it has completed a phonetic change into the postalveolar fricative [ʃ] in Present Day Okinawan (Hokama 1995: 759); the vowel quality is also changed from [ɨ] to [i]. Yet for convenience sake, I will use the *si* form consistently in this study for clarity.

In the following sections, I will only illustrate some crucial examples excerpted from these data sources because of space limitations.

2. Functional Changes of *si*

2.1 The Sixteenth/Seventeenth Century

In *Omorosausi*, there are six examples of *si*-headed clauses, and five of them can be translated as ‘the one/person who does something...’, while the other one is ambiguous in the interpretation. Since it might have served as a nominalizer (see below), I treat it as an example of nominalization. On the other hand, no example of the independent use of *si* was found in the texts. Let us take a look at some examples.² Notice that elements in focus are all underlined.

- (2) *Omorosausi*, vol. 3, 102 (17C)³
Ubudama *ha*
life-generating.ball TOP
inuru *si* *du* *yukakiru*
bless *si*.person PT govern
‘The person who (can) invoke(s) certain life-generating power from Ubudama (is the one/person who can) govern the world.’

- (3) *Omorosausi*, vol. 17, 1187 (17C)
Chikwii *ichigusiku*
famous Ikei.castle
mira *nu* *si* *ga* *hurubi*,
see NEG *si* NOM perish
chikwii *uni*
famous spiritually.advanced.person
ncha *si* *ga* *masai*...
see *si* NOM flourish

² For the transcription of *Omorosausi* I followed Shimizu (2004) unless otherwise noted.

³ The glossing conventions are as follows: COMP=complementizer; GEN=genitive; HON=honorific; LINK=clause-linker; NEG=negative; NOM=nominative; NOML=nominalizer; NP=noun phrase; PT=particle; REL=relativizer; ST=stance marker; TOP=topic; v=verb.

(6) *Mekarushi* (18C)

matsi n tamamizi n
 pine.tree too waterfall too
waga munu tu ŷu si ya
 self.GEN thing COMP say si.NOML PT
muri ya ŷara ni
 impossible PT is PT

‘Saying that both pine trees and waterfalls are your own is unfair, isn’t it?’

As to (5), Hokama (1976: 195) and Ifa (1962: 53) interpret the function of *si* as a nominalizer, providing the same note on this line. However, if we take it as a nominalizing function, the whole sentence turns out to be logically inconsistent, because ‘the thing that asks for lodging’ is logically impossible, whilst ‘the person that asks for lodging’ is semantically transparent. In (6), the functional role of *si* can be regarded as a nominalizer (see Hokama 1976: 231).

In addition to these functions, *si* came to have a new function at this stage, as follows.

(7) *Shuusinkaneiri* (18C)

ī gurisha a sigā
 say difficult be si.thing.NOM‘but’
wan ya Nakagusiku
 I PT place.name
Wakamatsi du yayuru.
 person.name PT be

‘‘I hate to ask you, but I am Wakamatsu from Nakagusuku.’’ (lit. ‘‘Thing that/what is difficult to say is I am Wakamatsu from Nakagusuku.’’)

(8) *Mekarushi* (18C)

kashiragi nu a sigā
 head.hair NOM be si.thing.NOM‘but’
shija nu kami naran.
 humans GEN hair be.not

‘‘(The person i.e. Mekarushi) has a full head of hair, but (it) is not (like) humans.’’ (lit. ?‘‘Thing that there is a full head of hair is not the one of humans’’)

In (7) and (8), the nominalizer *si* is accompanied by the nominative marker *ga*, and the whole unit serves as a concessive conjunction ‘although’ (Ifa 1962: 276). Once we take it into account that the Japanese nominative case marker *ga* underwent the similar functional extension from a nominative to a concessive conjunc-

tion, this newly derived function would not be heterogeneous (see Genetti 1988 for similar issues in Newari, Tibeto-Burman languages). Kinjo (1974 [1944]) points out one construction [*iga* (si + concessive conjunction) ‘although’ in Present Day Okinawan, albeit limited to the regional speech spoken in Naha. Considering both functional similarity and phonological change, the earlier form of [*iga* i.e. *sigā* may possibly have derived in the early eighteenth century.

2.3 The Late Eighteenth Century

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, the functional range of *si* had moved through the semantic bleaching of the original ‘person’ meaning. That is, the relativization strategy based on the lexical meaning ‘the one/person who does something’ faded out, while the nominalization strategy including the clause-combining function *sigā* became dominant with progression of semantic bleaching. Here are examples of nominalization and concessive conjunction, respectively, in (9) and (10).

(9) *Hanauinuyin* (after 1770)

<i>uchikurisha</i>		<i>shu<u>si</u>n</i>	
sorrow.suffer		do.si.NOML.PT	
<i>tin</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>usadami</i>	<i>nu</i>
heaven	GEN	fate	GEN
<i>kunu</i>	<i>'mmari</i>	<i>tu</i>	<i>muti...</i>
this	birth	COMP	think

‘(I) think that lamenting and suffering (is due to) this life (of mine), a divine ordinance...

(10) *Hanauinuyin* (after 1770)

<i>yuufukuna</i>	<i>sudachi</i>	<i>shichiwuta</i>	<i>sigā</i>
rich	upbringing	do.PST	si.thing.NOM‘but’
<i>dandan</i>	<i>fushiyawashi</i>	<i>tsizichi,</i>	
gradually	unhappiness	continue	
<i>Shuri</i>	<i>nu</i>	<i>simee</i>	<i>naran...</i>
place.name	GEN	living	NEG.be

‘(The person) was well-bred, but (now) is not living in Shuri because of adversities of life...’

2.4 Interim Summary

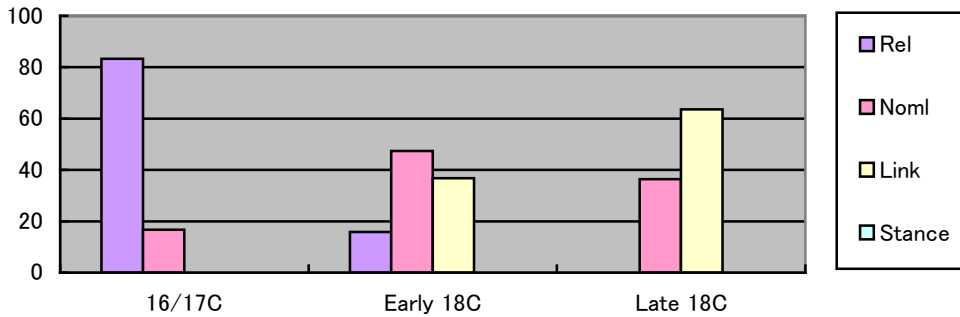
Table 1 summarizes the token frequency of the functions of *si* in the sixteenth through the late eighteenth centuries. The fourth function of *si*, i.e. stance-marking that is frequently used in later stages, has not yet appeared at these stages

(see the next section; Shibasaki forthcoming). Figure 1 gives a graphic representation of the historical transition of *si* based on the proportional frequencies.

Table 1: The Token Frequency of the Functions of *si*

Function types	16/17C	Early18C	Late18C
<i>si</i> -relativization ‘the one/person who...’	5 (83.3%)	3 (15.8%)	0
<i>si</i> -nominalization ‘thing that...’	1 (16.7%)	9 (47.4%)	4 (36.4%)
<i>si</i> -marked clause linker ‘although’	0	7 (36.8%)	7 (63.6%)
<i>si</i> -stance marker	0	0	0

Figure 1: The Proportional Frequency of the Functions of *si*



There are four important findings from this survey result. Firstly, the *si*-headed relativization, which I translate as ‘the one/person who does something,’ declined in the early eighteenth century, subsequently disappearing in the late eighteenth century. Secondly, the clause-linking function ‘although’ newly emerged in the early eighteenth century. Thirdly, while the *si*-nominalization strategy was relatively infrequent in the sixteenth/seventeenth centuries, it became popular in the eighteenth century. Fourthly, the stance-marking strategy of *si*, which is dominant over the others in present-day Okinawan conversational discourse, had not yet developed at these stages. Of course, since these four findings are based only on the database in (1), especially those in the sixteenth/seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, I do not intend to generalize them beyond the realm of this case study. However, as discussed in the next section, the functional extension or functional transfer attested in the case of *si* is self-consistent or makes more sense to take it as a case of structural persistence, one of the robust tenets of grammaticalization (Hopper 1991). I will thus deal with the issue in the next section.

3. Mechanisms of Functional Change

The erstwhile function of the *si*-headed relativization developed into its newer nominalizing function as shown in the above. This functional transfer or expansion is confirmed at the clause-edge, which is quite suggestive of further grammaticalization from a morphosyntactic perspective. For example, in the history of Japanese i.e. the only language with which Okinawan is genetically affiliated, some case-marking particles e.g. the nominative *ga* was developed into clause-combining particles. Furthermore, while other clause-combining particles such as *kara* ‘because’ and *reba* ‘if’ are used as part of subordinate clauses to introduce their main clauses, they often appear without main clauses, giving rise to clause-final particles at the right periphery (see papers in Ohori 1998 and Higashiizumi 2006). Taking the morphosyntactic position of *si* into account, the nominalizing function of *si* has the potential to further develop its function to such stance marking functions as seen in the history of Japanese particles (see Yap, Matthews & Horie 2004).

In this section, I will give a brief account of the mechanisms of the functional change of *si*, referring to both structural persistence and semantic bleaching. Yet before that, let us glance over how *si* had further expanded its function.

3.1 *Si* as a Stance Marker

Shinzato (2008: 13) states that “*si* never developed this sentence-final particle usage.” If this is true, Okinawan has not yet proceeded enough to grammaticalize a nominalizer to a stance marker; otherwise, it might have followed a different pathway of change. Let us take a look at the following example.

(11) *ʔunnabusi* (19C?; Kadokaru 2003: 280)⁴

<i>cizi</i>	<i>nu</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>nu</i>	<i>tacu</i>	<i>si</i>	
prohibition	GEN	board	GEN	stand	si.exclamatory	
<i>kui</i>	<i>sinubu</i>	<i>madi</i>	<i>nu</i>	<i>cizi</i>	<i>ya</i>	<i>nesami</i>
love	remember	even	GEN	prohibition	PT	be.not

‘A prohibition order board is standing, (but it) would not forbid (us) to love’ or ‘A prohibition order board’s standing would not (mean to) forbid (us) to love.’

In this example, *si* appears at the end of the first clause, rendering two types of

⁴ When this song was written is not yet clear. According to Kadokaru (2003: 280), the name of *ʔunnabushi* was first found in the Anthology of Ryukyuan Poems i.e. *Ryuukadaizenshuu* (1878) and that this song was one of those poems prevailing in the nineteenth century. I follow Kadokaru (2003), but see Hokama (1976: 111) for another possibility that this song dates back to the first half of the eighteenth century, although he mentions that the singer *ʔunnabushi*’s dates of birth and death are still unknown.

interpretation as shown in the English translations. The first translation is based on the interpretation of *si* as a clause-final particle i.e. a stance marker. In other words, the clause followed by *si* turns out to be an independent clause. The second translation depends on the assumption that *si* serves to nominalize the preceding clause. That is, the *si*-clause is the subject of the whole sentence. In fact, these two interpretations are suggested in the annotated bibliography for this poem in Hokama (1976: 115, nt.2). Considering the fact that this stance-marking function became much more popular in the next century, it would be a reasonable inference that due to the morphosyntactic ambiguity, *si* began to be used at the clause-final position in the nineteenth century, taking on a poetic or an exclamatory function.⁵

3.2 *Siga* as a Stance Marker

On the other hand, it is also pointed out in Section 2.2 that the *siga* ‘although’ lexicalization appeared in the early eighteenth century. Since the etymological meaning of *si* was ‘person’, it is no wonder that the semantically agent *si* frequently co-occurs with the nominative case marker *ga*. In fact, all the six examples of *si* in the head of relative clause in the sixteenth/seventeenth centuries were semantically agent, and five of the six appeared as *siga*. The other one is accompanied by the emphatic particle *du* i.e. *sidu* as in (2); however, even this *si* turns out to be agent in meaning. Notice that the nominative case marker *ga* cannot appear with the emphatic particle *du*.

In the eighteenth century, *siga* was very frequently used especially when *si* served as a clause-combining function. In the early eighteenth century, for example, all the seven uses of the *si*-marked clause linker ‘although’ in Table 1 were *siga*, while in the late eighteenth century, five of the seven *si*-marked clause linkers ‘although’ were *siga*. Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that the almost fixed expression *siga* linking particle may have functionally expanded into a stance marker in much the same way as *si* had developed it, as shown in the preceding section. Consider the example to follow.

⁵ The clause-final particle usage of *si* came to indicate something ‘deprecatory’ or ‘dismissive’ in later stages, especially in conversational discourse by the young Okinawan people (Shibasaki forthcoming).

- (12) *Mutudanabusi* (Early 20C?; Shimabukuro and Onaga 1968: 103)⁶
Sinnikuihuni nu ?icuru take 'jariba
 dogout.canoe NOM can.go ocean be.if
kiju ya ?nzi 'ugasi ?aca ja cusiga
 today PT go meet tomorrow PT come.siga.ST
 ‘(If my girlfriend lives within the) canoeing distance, (I can) go and meet
 (her) and come (back) tomorrow, but (it’s impossible).’

The clause-final *siga* in (12) can be considered to serve as a stance marker. The *siga*-clause conveys the poet’s desire to see his girlfriend, while the unuttered main clause would convey his giving up of his desire to see her in the real world. Ahagon (1983: 226) lists both clause-final and clause-linking uses under the heading of *siga*, and regards the function of *siga* in (12) as a clause-final exclamatory use i.e. stance marker. In the twentieth century on, the stance-marking use has become the major function of *si* as well as *siga* (see Kinjo 1974: 101-102).

3.3 Structural Persistence and Semantic Bleaching

What is characteristic of the functional expansion of *si* is the structural persistence by which *si* is situated at a certain syntactic position. Take a look at Figure 2, which represents the schematized morphosyntactic structures of the four functions of *si*. Note that ‘periods’ means the stages in which functions in focus are mainly attested in the database.

Figure 2. The syntactic representations of the *si*-marked clause

Function types	Structures	Meanings	Periods
<i>si</i> -relativization	[[clause1...v] + <i>si</i> ‘person’] NP...	‘the one who...’	16/17C
<i>si</i> -nominalization	[[clause1...v] + <i>si</i> ‘thing’] NP...	‘thing who...’	17-18C
<i>si</i> -marked clause linker	[[clause1...v] + <i>si</i> ‘thing’] NP + ga,	‘although...’	18C~
<i>si</i> -stance marker	[clause1...v] + <i>si</i>	‘speaker’s stance’	19C~
	[clause1...v] + <i>siga</i>	‘speaker’s stance’	19C~

The verb form in the clause is attributive that modifies *si*, regardless of whether *si* is semantically ‘person’ or ‘thing’; even after *si* changed into the clause-final stance marker, the verb form remains the same. In the earlier relativization and nominalization functions, *si*-marked clauses are embedded in the larger clauses, while the clause-linking function of the *si*-marked subordinate clause calls for the

⁶ Satoshi Nishioka states that the poem may have been sung by a man born in the Meiji Era [1868-1912] judging from the transcribed pronunciation.

following main clause. Both *si*-marked and *sigā*-marked stance marking clauses requires no clauses to follow. However, the point is that the *si*-marked clauses have one syntactic structure in common i.e. [clause 1] + *si/sigā*. What differentiates these functions from each other is the semantic content of *si*. In other words, the *si*-headed clause is used as a relative clause as long as *si* remains to indicate ‘person’, while the clause is used as a nominalized clause once *si* becomes semantically bleached. When the semantic content becomes empty, *si* comes to serve as a clause-final stance marker. Since the semantic bleaching proceeds in chronological order, it can be concluded that the functional transfer or expansion of *si* due to semantic bleaching and structural persistence. And this conclusion dovetails with Hopper’s (1991) principle in (13).

(13) Principle of Persistence (Hopper 1991: 22)

“when a form undergoes grammaticalization from a lexical to a grammatical function, so long as it is grammatically viable some traces of its original lexical meanings tend to adhere to it, and details of its lexical history may be reflected in constraints on its grammatical distribution.”

4. Nominalization-Relativization Syncretism Revisited

Finally, I would like to rethink what-is-called nominalization-relativization syncretism addressed at the beginning of this study. Issues on the nominalization-relativization syncretism have been at the center of a linguistic controversy since Matisoff (1972). The two directions of change dead against each other have been proposed, for example, by Noonan (1997) and DeLancey (1999) on the one hand and by LaPolla (2003 with Huang) on the other. These two opposing ideas are nicely summarized in Genetti (2008). However, the languages surveyed in these preceding works are not always abundant in historical materials, but rather little or almost none, in comparison to languages relatively rich in historical documents such as Japanese and Okinawan. In this study, I thus examined the history of Okinawan, and found that the direction of change is from relativization to nominalization. Furthermore, this directional pathway is consistent with Principle of Persistence, a principle of grammaticalization in Hopper (1991). I will thus suggest that one linguistic phenomenon that is considered to be area-specific may be solved once we put it in a wider range of languages.

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