Switch Reference in Old Japanese
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SWITCH REFERENCE IN OLD JAPANESE*

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1. The phenomenon of "switch reference" has been given attention mainly by American Indian linguists (e.g. Jacobsen, 1967, Winter, 1970, and, Langdon and Munro, 1975). In this paper I will present evidence from Old Japanese (OJ, henceforth) for a switch reference phenomenon which resembles that in the Yuman group in many interesting ways, and then propose an explanation for the fact that different subject markers are the same in form as certain case markers. The discussion will be developed in the following order. First, I will provide some relevant background information about the OJ conjunctions and verb morphology. Next, I will present data that support my view that OJ conjunctive particles had the function of signaling identity or nonidentity of reference of the subjects of conjoined clauses. Then, I will suggest how and from what such conjunctions developed. Finally, based on the proposed historical analysis, I will attempt to make a further clarification of the general nature of switch reference markers. The texts used in this study are Taketori Monogatari 'Tale of A Bamboo-Collector' (the oldest work of prose in this language written in the beginning of the 9th century), three chapters of Genji Monogatari 'Tale of Genji' (written in the beginning of the 10th century) and Tsutsumi-Chuunagon Monogatari 'Tale of Tsutsumi-Chuunagon' (a collection of tales written after Genji)[1].

2. In OJ, clauses are conjoined either with or without a conjunctive particle such as te, ba, wo and ni. Whether these conjunctive particles have the subordinate function or the coordinate function is not an easy question to answer. Let us simply assume in the following discussion that they are basically coordinate conjunctions. In a conjunction sentence, the verb occurs in a nonfinal form in all clauses but the last. The following shows the cooccurrence between various nonfinal forms of the verb and conjunctive particles.

	Type I	Type II	Conjunctive particles
I	Stem-i-	Stem-e-	/-Ø or -te
A	Stem-a-	Stem-e-	/-ba (in the sense of 'if')
E	Stem-e-	Stem-ure-	/-ba (in the sense of 'since')
URU	Stem-u-	Stem-uru-	/-ni or -wo
(U	Stem-u	Stem-u	/in sentence final position)

(Verbs are subcategorized into several types according to the conjugational pattern. Most verbs belong either to Type I or to Type II. Minor types and irregular verbs are not considered here. The underlined capital letters on the left are used in the gloss in the examples to indicate respective suffixes of the verb.)

The I form occurs also followed by auxiliaries such as honorific and tense aspect. The A form indicates that the action or the event expressed by the verb has not yet been realized and thus typically

occurs being followed by the negative or future tense morpheme. The E form, on the contrary, indicates an realized action or event. The URU form occurs in a relative clause or in some other subordinate clauses. It should be noted that this form is not distinct from the final form in Type I verbs.

3. Japanese scholars have taken pains to characterize OJ conjunctive particles in terms of the meanings. For example, ba is often referred to as a conjunctive particle of "condition". Thus kaze huk-e-ba hune idas-a-zu: wind blow-E-BA boat put=out-A-NEG (= indicates that the two English morphemes correspond to a single OJ morpheme, and vice versa) is translated as 'since the wind is blowing, we do not put out the boat'. A clause to which ni or wo is attached is said to be an adversative conditional clause. Thus, kuraki-ni haya oki=iz-uru hito ar-i: dark-NI already get=up-URU person be-U is interpreted as 'although it is dark, there are some people who are already getting up'. However, such semantic properties are not inherent to these conjunctive particles as seen from the fact that there are a number of cases which are not compatible with such interpretations. A close examination of OJ texts has revealed that they are better characterizable in terms of the switch-reference function. That is, conjunctive te signals retention of the subject and ba, wo, or ni a switch of the subject. This function of switch reference is best illustrated in chain constructions as below[2].

(1)[Syoosyoo .....ohas-i-te,] [uti=tatak-i-tamah-u- ni,] [hito=
Syoosyoo come-I-SS knock- I-HON- URU- DS people

bito odorok- i-te,] [naka no kimi okos- i-
were=surprised-I-SS middle GEN princess wake=up-I-

tatematur-i-te,] [wa=ga kata he watas-i-kikoy-e nado s- uru-ni,]
HON- I-SS own room to take- I-HON- I etc. do-URU-DS

[yagate ir- i-tamah-i-te,] [. . . (Tsutsumi, 403)
soon enter-I-HON- I-SS

'Syoosyoo came and knocked (on the door), and people were surprised, woke up the middle princess, and took (her) to (her) own room, and (Syoosyoo) entered soon, . . . '

(2)[Kaguyahime ni "....." to ih- e-ba,] [Kaguyahime "....." to
Kaguyahime to COMP say-E-DS Kaguyahime COMP

ih- e-ba,] ["....." to ih- e-ba,] [. . . (Taketori, 54)
say-E-DS COMP say-E-DS

'(he) said to Kaguyahime, ".....", and Kaguyahime said, ".....", and (he) said, ".....", . . . '

(3)[m- i-w- i-tar- i-si- wo,] [e- tat=i=tomar-a-nu koto ar-i-te,]
see-I-be-I-PERF-I-PAST-DS can-stay- A-NEG thing be-I-SS

[iz- uru-wo,] [. . . (Tsutsumi, 373)
go=out-URU-DS

'(the child) was looking at (him), and (the father) had some reason that (he) could not stay, and went out, and (the child). .'

(Brackets are provided to indicate clause boundaries. OJ directional he corresponds to modern Japanese e.)
Notice that subject NP's are unsparingly deleted without leaving any trace behind (no anaphoric pronoun and no agreement marker on the verb). The information that conjunctive particles provide about the referent of the up-coming subject is therefore of greater value for appropriate interpretation in OJ than in languages where deleted subjects are indicated in their own clauses.

The majority of conjunction sentences in the texts readily fall under our generalization. Taketori, for example, contains 536 cases of conjunction sentences by the same subject marker te, out of which 506 (94%) clearly signal the same subject. The remaining cases are in clauses the subject of which is not easily identifiable. First of all, expressions of time, distance and weather either are devoid of surface subjects or have subjects which will never be definite (e.g., ame hur-u: rain fall-U='rain falls') in Japanese. These expressions are unique in most languages in that the status of the subject, expressed or not, is open to question. Langdon and Munro(1975) observe that speakers do not completely agree on the choice of 'same' or 'different' markers in such problematical cases but each speaker has his own principle. In OJ the same subject marker te is preferred in conjoining such a clause to another which may or may not have a distinct subject.

(4) [mi- ka bakari ar-i-te,] [kog-i-kaher-i-tamah-i-n- u]
three day about be-I-SS row-I-return-I-HON- I-PERF-U
(Taketori, 35)

'(he) rowed back home in about three days'
(Lit. 'there was TIME about three days, and . . . ')

(5) [umi goto ni aruk-i-tamah-u-ni,] [ito tooku-te,] [Tukusi no
sea every to go- I-HON-URU-DS very far- SS Tukusi GEN

kata no umi ni kog=i=id-e-n- u] (Taketori, 47)
area GEN sea to row=out- E-PERF-U

'(he) went to every sea, and (it) was very far, and (he) rowed out as far as the area of Tukusi'

(6) [sukosi hikar-i-te,] [kaze ha nao hayaku huk- u]
a-little flash-I-SS wind TOP=SUB still fast blow-U
(Taketori, 48)

'(the lightening) flashed a little, and the wind still blew fast'
(The OJ topic marker ha corresponds to the modern Japanese wa.)
Secondly, idiomatic expressions as in (7) do not have an overt subject (perhaps because it is unspecified) and are treated similarly.

(7) [oya wo hazim-e-te] [nan to mo sir- a-zu (Taketori, 59)
parent DO begin-I-SS what COMP even know-A-NEG
'Beginning from (=including) (her) parents, nobody knew what (it was)'

Thirdly, in a so-called multiple subject construction, it is the first subject that is responsible for the choice of 'same' or 'different' markers.

(8) [on=me ha siro=me ni-te,] [hus- i-tamah-er-i
HON=eye TOP=SUB white=eye be-SS lie=down-I-HON-I=be-U
(Taketori, 52)

'(his$_i$) eyes were white eyes, and (he$_i$) was lying down'

(-er- in the second clause is analyzed as the verb suffix -i plus ar(i) 'to be'.)

As indicated by the subscripts in the English translation, it is understood that on=me 'eyes' are inalienably possessed by the same person as the person of the subject in the second clause. It has been noticed (e.g. Kuno, 1973) that a sentence is allowed to take more than one NP marked by the subject marker ga in modern Japanese. (The subject is unmarked in OJ.) In the traditional example zoo-ga hana-ga nagai: elephant=SUB nose=SUB long 'elephants, their noses are long', both zoo and hana can be marked by ga, but neither of them can stand by itself as the subject of the predicate nagai. It should be noted that there is a special relationship (which Yang, 1972, called a Macro-Micro relationship) between the two nouns which are simultaneously marked as the subject.

Seemingly exceptional cases with the different subject marker ba (10 /120 in Taketori and 12/460 in Genji) are not random, either. They involve a copula sentence and/or a sentence with a perfective or past tense auxiliary. Consider (9)-(12):

(9) [wono ga nas- a-nu ko nar-e-ba,] [kokoro ni mo sitagah-
own GEN bear-A-NEG child be-E- DS intention to even obey-
a-zu namu ar-u]
A-NEG EMPH be-URU] (Taketori, 31)

'(she) is not a child (we) ourselves gave birth to, and (she) is not obeying (our) intention'

(The sentence final verb occurs in the URU form when the clause contains a constituent emphasized by an emphatic particle like namu.)

(10) [koyasugai wo huto nigir-i-mot-ar-e-ba,] [uresiku oboy-uru
cawry=shell DO hard grasp-I-have-be-E-DS happy feel-URU
nar-i
be-U (Taketori, 52)

'(I) have grasped the cowry shell hard, and (I) feel happy'
(or, '. . . . , and (it) is that (I) feel happy')

(11) [Kaguyahime ha tumi wo tukur-i-tamah-er-i-ker- e-ba,]
Kaguyahime TOP=SUB crime DO make- I-HON- I=be-I-PAST-I-DS
[.... wonore ga moto ni ohas- i-tamah-u-nar-i](Taketori, 63)
own GEN place in be=HON-I-HON-URU-be-U

'Kaguyahime has comitted a crime, and (she) has stayed in your place'

(12) [hazime yoku goranz- i-t- ure-ba,] [medetaku oboy-e-
at=first well look=at=HON-I-PERF-E-DS beautiful think-I-

sas-e-tamah-i-te,] (Taketori,56)
HON-I-HON- I-SS

'(the Emperor) looked at (her) well at first, and (he) thought (her) beautiful, and , . . '

Notice that the first clause of (9) and the second clause of (10) and (11) are copular sentences (the copula nar(i) appended to a clause does not change the logical meaning of the clause but emphasizes the assertion, its semantic function being analogous to the English is in sentences like It's that I cannot agree with you). Also notice that the first clause in sentence (12) is in the perfective. In Japanese the copula appended to a clause is analyzable as a one-argument higher predicate with a sentential subject as below.

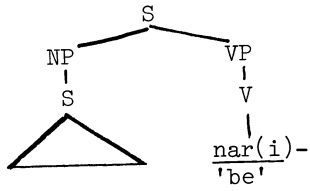

Diagram-1

Since a sentential subject cannot be referentially identical with a concrete noun such as 'I' and 'Kaguyahime', it is rather natural that a different subject marker ba is used in sentences (10) and (11). Sentence (9) takes ba for a like reason: since an independent nominal predicate sentence does not necessarily require the copula in OJ, the first clause of (9) can also be analyzed as in Diagram-1, two juxtaposed NP's being embedded to nar-e-. Tense-aspect auxiliaries have some main verb properties (e.g., they conjugate like main verbs) and thus can be regarded as higher predicates like nar(i). The first clause of sentence (12) is thus analyzed as having as its subject the entire clause hazime yoku goranz-i-[3].

It is difficult to give evidence of wo and ni as different subject markers (i.e. conjunctive particles) in terms of figures. They are often ambiguous between case markers and conjunctive particles because the wo and ni that occur after the URU form of the verb are not always conjunctive particles. They may be case markers attached to headless relative clauses as will be discussed shortly. The ambiguity, however, is not important at this point. The result of counting all cases of [S - wo/ni - S], regardless of the grammatical category of wo and ni, confirms the view that wo and ni are different subject markers. I have found only one counter-example of ni and none of wo in Taketori. In Genji five cases (out of 175) and two (out of 89) seem to be counter**examples** of ni and wo respectively.

4. Let us turn to the historical question of where these switch-

reference markers came from. Consider the following sentences first.

(13) [kono kawa ha morokosi ni mo nak-ar-i-ker-u- wo,]
this fur TOP=SUB China in even not-be-I-PAST-URU-DS

karauzite motom=e=tazun-e-tar-u nar-i (Taketori, 44)
with=difficulty found- I-PERF-URU be-U

(a) '(I) found this fur, which was not even in China, with difficulty'

(b) 'this fur was not (found) even in China, and (I) have found (it) with difficulty'

The first clause can be taken either as a headless relative clause or as a clause coordinately conjoined with the following clause by wo, as shown by the English translations (a) and (b) respectively[4]. The two analyses are depicted in the following diagrams leaving aside the sentence final copula nar(i).

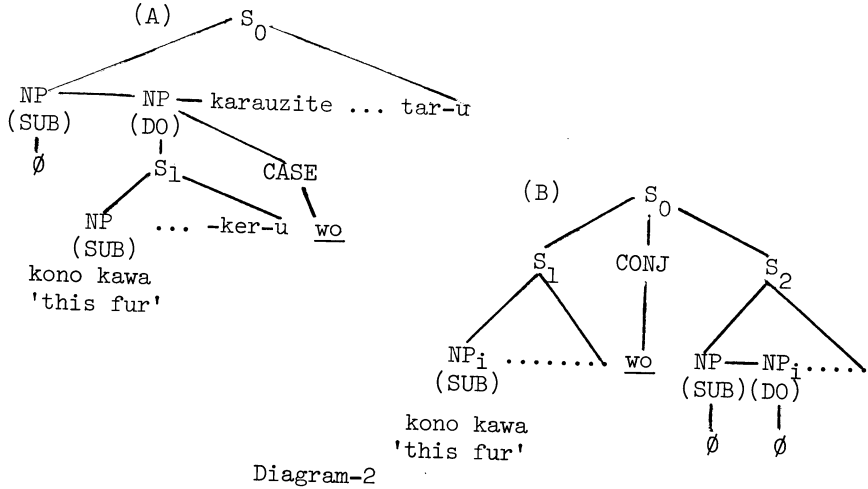

Diagram-2

In (A) the subject of S_1 is the semantic head of the headless relative clause and functions at the same time as the direct object of the matrix sentence S_0. The conjunction analysis (B) assumes that the direct object S_2 is deleted by pronominalization. This possibility of multi-analysis seems to be crucial for the development of different subject markers wo and ni. Suppose that a speaker utters sentence (13) intending (A), which his interlocutor may interpret as (B). It is likely, then, that the latter person soon starts to use a sentence like (14), which is analyzable as in (B) but is no longer analyzable as in (A).

(14) [Kaguyahime "....." to ih- i-te,] [imiziku nak-u- wo,]
Kaguyahime COMP say-I-SS bitterly cry-URU DS

Okina "....." to ih- i-te,] [. . . (Taketori, 60)
Okina COMP say-I-SS,

'Kaguyahime said, ".....", and cried bitterly, and then Okina said, ".....", and . . . '

Notice that the ex- direct object marker is now simply conjoining two sentences with different subjects. The crux of this reanalysis lies in the following facts. First, the URU form of the verb that occurs in final position of a headless relative clause has a nominalizing force and enables a case marker to attach directly to it. However, as I previously mentioned, this form was not actually distinct from the final form in the Type I verb to which most OJ verbs belonged (it is reported that Genji contains 5448 main verbs, out of which 3165 belong to this type). That is, a subordinate clause and an independent clause were not formally distinct. Secondly, the semantic head of a headless relative clause was always the subject of the relative clause. Since a nonsubject NP is normally different from the subject NP in reference, the subject of the matrix sentence and that of the headless relative clause marked by the direct object marker wo or the oblique case marker ni also different[5] Thirdly, OJ made extensive use of zero-pronominalization. It is quite plausible, given these factors, for case markers wo and ni to change into conjunctive particles with a secondary function of signaling switch reference through a process illustrated below.

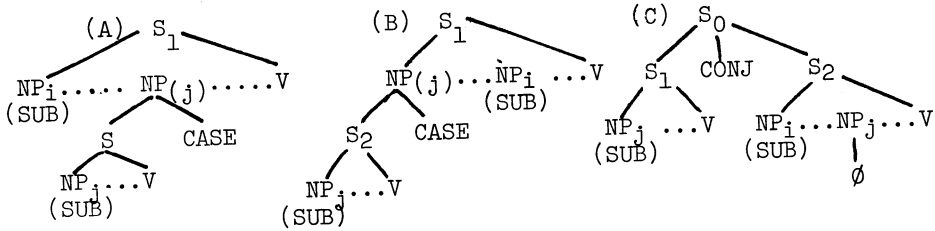

Diagram-3

If a nonsubject headless relative clause (S_2) in (A) is fronted, perhaps for am emphatic purpose (both wo and ni had an emphatic use in OJ), then a sequence S_1-CASE-S_2 is realized. This sequence can in turn be interpreted as a coordinate conjunction construction only if the case marker wo/ni is understood as a conjunction instead of a case marker. In the resultant structure the direct object or an oblique case NP_j is understood as deleted by the general process of pronominalization. Once this reanalysis has taken place, it becom possible for any two sentences to be conjoined by wo/ni as long as their subjects are different (and if there is some relevance between them).

Assuming that clauses in a chain construction are coordinately conjoined (for it seems to be quite difficult to comprehend a self-embedding sentences with several stacked sentences), the time of reanalysis may be roughly determined. In Taketori, the earliest text most of the sentences in the form of [S-wo/ni-S] are analyzable as in (B) and wo and ni do not occur in chain constructions[6]. That is, the conjunctive status of these morphemes had not been established

yet. In Genji, about a century later, ni occurs rather frequently in chain constructions but wo does not. In Tsutsumi-Chuunagon, the latest among the three, wo occurs in chain constructions as frequently as ni. In other words, wo was reanalyzed as a switch reference marker later than any other marker.

5. The claim that a reanalysis had taken place does not entail that wo and ni after the verb in the URU form were always conjunctions thereafter. In sentences like (15), where one clause is placed within another forming a nested construction, the relative clause analysis may be more appropriate.

(15) [onna ha [kono hito no omoh-u-ran koto sahe
woman TOP=SUB this person GEB think-U-CONJECTURE thing even
..... warinaki-ni,] nagar-uru made ase=ni=nar-i-te,] [. . .
bitter (Reason) flow-URU till perspire- I-SS
(Genji, 96)
'the woman perspired to the degree that (sweat) flowed down because of what this boy might think, which is bitter'

Either analysis is possible if there is no blending of two clauses.

(16) [Okina kotowari=ni omoh- u- ni,] ["....." nado ih- i-w- i-
Okina reasonable think-URU DS etc. say-I-be-I-
tar- i (Taketori, 37)
PERF-U

(a) '(he) was saying, "....." and so forth to Okina, who thought it reasonable'

(b) 'Okina thought it reasonable, and (he) was saying, "....." and so forth.

And, the coordinate conjunction analysis may be more realistic for a chain construction. Thus, wo and ni should be characterized as having either the case marking function or the switch-reference function in addition to the basic function of linking a constituent to another. (If the constituent to be linked is taken as a non-nominal clause, it has the latter function, but, if the constituent is understood as nominal, it has the function of relating the nominal to the verb.) In actuality, however, it may be only in extreme cases such as in chain constructions that the speaker makes a clear distinction between the case marking function and the switch-reference function. Case marking wo and ni=occur in contexts with different subjects regardless of this functional distinction. Given the nature of switch-reference, one should perhaps not attempt to decide whether switch-reference markers are the same as or different from case markers. Winter (1970) has brought to our attention the question as to whether a switch-reference marker conjoins clauses subordinately or coordinately. He considers that clauses linked by a switch-reference marker stand in a "paratactic" relation. It should be clear from the foregoing discussion that one need not attempt to answer this question, either. His emphasis on

the switch-reference function in conjunction with the coordinate conjunction analysis may be true of chain constructions.

Another switch-reference marker ba is evidently related to an emphatic (or topic) marker ha[7]. In view of the fact that when this particle occurred with the wo-marked direct object NP, it was always in its voiced allo- form ba (although the reason for this voicing is not understood), one may speculate that the switch-reference marking ba had developed from an emphatic particle for nonsubject constituents.

As mentioned before, the same subject marker te developed from the I form of a perfective auxiliary t(u). This perfective auxiliary in a nonfinal clause once designated that the event of the clause is temporally prior to the event of the following clause. It may have come to be associated with the sameness of the subject because temporal sequentiality is more easily perceived in the same actor's successive actions and the pattern NP_i-VP_1-and then-(NP_i)-VP_2 may be significantly more frequent than the pattern NP_i-VP_1-and then-NP_j-VP_2 in actual language use.

If conjunctions marking different subjects developed in the same way in OJ and Yuman languages, it is also possible that the Yuman same subject marking -k is related to the tense marker -k that occurs in sentence final position (as Langdon and Munro, 1975, believe) rather than to locative -k (as suggested by Winter, 1970).

The formal identity between the same subject marker and the subject marker (-ø) in some Yuman languages is also explainable by extending the process in which the different markers developed from nonsubject markers. OJ ga, which was just developing as the subject marker towards the end of the OJ period appears as the same subject marker in later stages.

Although comments on languages other than OJ must be taken with caution, the above discussions should shed light on some general questions about switch-reference that have been raised in previous studies. For one thing, an example of this phenomenon from OJ, a language which has no genetic affiliation with American Indian language families, strengthens the hitherto tentative conclusion that switch reference can develop independently in different languages and thus the possession of this device is not specific enough to be a piece of evidence for a genetic relationship. For another, the development of switch reference I have suggested for OJ and the non-discrete nature of the case marking and switch-reference functions may answer Winter's (1970) question as to whether the relationship between switch-reference markers and case markers is diachronic or synchronic.

Footnotes

* I am grateful to Professors Sandra Thomson (UCLA), Pamela Munro (UCLA) and S-Y Kuroda (UCSD) for their generous assistance and helpful comments. None of them of course is responsible for any error herein.

1. Examples are all based on the texts of the Iwanami Koten Bungaku Taikei 'The Iwanami Series of Japanese Classics'.

2. Chain constructions may be peculiar to languages with the switch-reference device. Langdon and Munro (1975) have observed that such long stretches of texts are common in Yuman languages. A Quechua instructor also mentioned the possibility of having multiple conjunction sentences. (A Quechua conjunction -qti is described as a conjunction that requires different subjects in Lastra, 1968.)

3. An alternative explanation resorts to the morphological peculiarities of the copula nar(i) and tense-aspect auxiliaries that came about as a result of the historical development of te. The same subject marker te originated in the I form of a perfective auxiliary t(u) and therefore cannot be suffixed to its cognate t-uru (the URU form of t(u)) or to past tense morphemes. For tense markers occur at the end of the verb suffix series. For some peculiar reason the copula nar(i) also rejects te. In other words, morphological constraints may have overridden the rule of switch-reference.

4. OJ headless relative clauses have been discussed in detail as "pivot-independent relative clauses" in Kuroda (1974).

5. ni was not a special marker for the indirect object in OJ. It occurred with almost any oblique case, marking 'location', 'time', 'benefactive', 'reason', 'purpose', etc.

6. There are cases where S-ni does not have a clear case role in the following (i.e. matrix) clause, but this is not disturbing, considering the fact that the semantic range that ni covered was so wide that even N-ni was not always given a unique interpretation.

7. ha is closely related to the modern Japanese topic marker wa, but there are some semantic differences between OJ ha and modern Japanese wa. In modern Japanese, for example, wa never occurs with the direct object marker o while the OJ direct object marker wo is often found followed by ba (=an allo-morph of ha).

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