

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS OF THE NOMINALS
***MONO AND KOTO* IN JAPANESE**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Japanese
at Massey University

Masami Murata

1999

Abstract

Syntax and semantics of the nominals *mono* and *koto* in Japanese

Masami Murata

School of Language Studies
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Massey University

There is a group of words which are usually referred to as *keisiki-meisi* (i.e. formal nouns) in Japanese. The formal noun is defined as a noun which does not have a substantive meaning, and is not used in isolation, but requires a preceding modifier. In this thesis, examinations of various aspects of the Japanese nouns *mono* and *koto*, which are widely acknowledged as typical examples of formal noun, will be presented. *Mono* and *koto* occur with a variety of terms to produce additional derivatives. For example, when the copula *da* is attached to *mono* or *koto* at the end of a sentence, it becomes a sentence-final modality which strongly reflects the speaker's emotions or feelings. However, owing to the fact that *mono* and *koto* are also used on occasion as substantive nouns without preceding modifiers, scholars tend to merely clarify the boundary between the use of *mono* or *koto* as a substantive noun, and its use as a formal noun, giving two separate labels to the same noun. In this study, the existence of continuity between these two usages – substantive and formal – is hypothesised. The syntactic and semantic features observed throughout the derivative forms of *mono* and *koto* offer a chance to explore and identify the unifying features of the two different usages. It is also demonstrated that, viewed in the light of the framework of grammaticalisation, the category 'formal noun' is only a label that has been put onto a group of nouns which can be grammaticalised or which have already been grammaticalised.

Acknowledgements

Many people have given me the benefit of their help and advice while I was engaged in the process of researching, writing, and editing this thesis. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the following people.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor Professor Kiyoharu Ono. The example of his rigorous scholarship has been an inspiration for me. In terms of this thesis, his comments at various stages of production have been invaluable, and his enthusiasm and encouragement made it possible to complete this work.

I would also like to thank Professor Fumio Tamamura at Doshisha University, who guided me into the world of language studies and fostered my interest in the field of Japanese linguistics, and Professor Masayoshi Shibatani at Kobe University, whose encouragement helped me to cope with hardship whenever I came up against a stone wall. Fay Butts and Richard Donovan kindly read through the manuscript, and gave me invaluable comments.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge both the mental and physical support given by my wife, Yoko, her family, and my parents. Without their profound understanding and warmth, I could not have even started my study in this beautiful country Aotearoa (New Zealand).

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Abbreviations	v
Note on Romanisation	vi
Sources of Japanese Examples	vii

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Purpose of study.....	1
1.2 Review of literature	3
1.2.1 Formal nouns and traditional Japanese grammarians	3
1.2.1.1 Yamada (1908).....	3
1.2.1.2 Matsushita (1930).....	4
1.2.1.3 Tokieda (1950).....	5
1.2.1.4 Sakuma (1956)	6
1.2.2 Formal nouns and generative grammarians.....	7
1.2.3 Formal nouns and recent research.....	9
1.2.3.1 Uchida (1982).....	10
1.2.3.2 Takaichi (1986)	11
1.2.3.3 Teramura (1981).....	12

Chapter 2: Syntactic and semantic analyses of *mono*

2.1 <i>Mono</i> as a noun.....	14
2.2 <i>Mono</i> as a sentence-final modality.....	18

2.3	<i>Mono</i> as a conjunctive particle.....	39
2.3.1	<i>Mono</i> as a conjunctive particle.....	39
2.3.2	<i>Mononara</i>	40
2.3.3	<i>Monode</i> / <i>monodakara</i>	42
2.3.4	<i>Monono</i>	46
2.3.5	<i>Mono-o</i>	49
2.4	<i>Mono</i> as a sentence-final particle.....	55

Chapter 3: Syntactic and semantic analyses of *koto*

3.1	<i>Koto</i> as a noun.....	61
3.1.1	<i>Koto</i> as a substantive noun and its basic definition.....	61
3.1.2	Clause + <i>koto</i>	63
3.1.3	Determiner + <i>koto</i>	66
3.1.4	Clause + <i>to iu</i> + <i>koto</i>	70
3.1.5	Clause + <i>to no</i> + <i>koto</i>	74
3.2	<i>Koto</i> as a sentence-final modality	76
3.3	<i>Koto</i> as a conjunctive particle	82
3.4	<i>Koto</i> as a sentence-final particle.....	86

Chapter 4: Conclusion

4.1	Re-examination of Teramura (1981)	93
4.2	Grammaticalisation of <i>mono</i> and <i>koto</i>	98
4.3	The category <i>keisiki-meisi</i>	102

Appendix	104
-----------------------	-----

Bibliography	105
---------------------------	-----

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used in giving translations of the example sentences.

ACC	ACCusative case marker (<i>o</i>)
COP	COPula (<i>da/desu</i>)
CP	Conjunctive Particle
FN	Formal Noun
GEN	GENitive case marker (<i>no</i>)
NOM	NOMinative case marker (<i>ga</i>)
NOMI	NOMInaliser
SFM	Sentence-Final Modality
SFP	Sentence-Final Particle
TOP	TOPic marker (<i>wa</i>)
*	ungrammatical / unacceptable
?	awkward

Note on Romanisation

The *Kunrei* romanisation is adopted in Japanese examples.

The Hepburn system is used in translations of the examples and bibliographical information.

When a different system is adopted in citations, it is changed to the above system for unification.

Sources of Japanese Examples

Many of Japanese examples are taken from the following short stories in *Showa bungaku zenshu* Vol. 32 (Shogakukan 1989).

A: “Kawauso”, Kuniko Mukoda

B: “Ido no hoshi”, Rie Yoshiyuki

C: “Kaetteiku haha”, Haku Kohiyama

D: “Amagomori”, Kiichiro Takahashi

E: “Bosai no hirumae”, Takashi Tsujii

F: “Asai nemuri”, Kunie Iwahashi

G: “Suisho”, Kuninobu Noro

H: “Sakura-densha”, Kazuko Saegusa

I: “Uchusen”, Shuichi Sae

J: “Manhattan-to no onna”, Tomohiko Yamada

The source of each example is presented in the following format.

(e.g.) [B: 864]

[B: 864] indicates that the example is taken from “Ido no hoshi” by Rie Yoshiyuki, which is on page 864 of *Showa bungaku zenshu* Vol. 32 (Shogakukan 1989).