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CHAPTER 7

# The importance of compounds in pJ reconstruction

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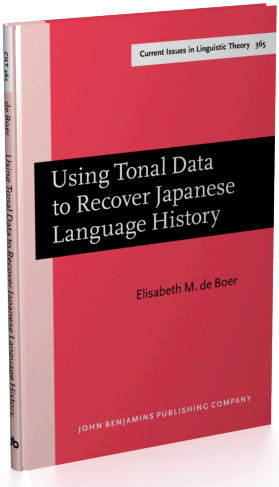


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CHAPTER 7

# The importance of compounds in pJ reconstruction

That the Gairin type tone system evidently came about as a result of an innovation that did not occur in other dialects in Japan is especially remarkable because the Gairin dialects occupy four widely separated regions, but perhaps just as striking is the contrast between the tones of compounds in Gairin dialects when compared with the same compounds in Nairin, Chūrin, and Kyōto type tone systems.

Before describing that contrast, we introduce a few helpful terminological conventions. We shall say that a morpheme of three (or more) morae is LONG, and a morpheme with (one or) two is SHORT. The vast majority of Japanese nouns contain just two or three morae, so unless otherwise noted, 'long' will mean three morae, and 'short' two. We shall call the two constituent parts of a compound its HEAD and CODA, and categorize compounds by the number of morae in each part with labels of the form 2–2, 2–3, etc.

## 7.1 Different rules for noun compounds in different dialects

Tone in compounds in the word-melody systems of southern Kyūshū is relatively simple: the word-melody of the head extends to the compound as a whole (Hirayama 1936). In the Gairin type tones systems too, the head determines the tone of the compound. If the head has all /Ø/ tones, the compound will have all /Ø/ tones; if the head contains an /H/ tone, the compound will contain an /H/ (Hiroto & Ōhara 1953; Kobayashi 1974; Uwano 1997), though the location of the /H/ in a particular noun may be different in different dialects. Nevertheless, both the Gairin and Kagoshima systems have merged classes 2.2 with 2.1 and classes 3.2 with 3.1. In the Nairin, Chūrin, and Kyōto type tone systems, by contrast, compound tone is usually determined by the coda, although the tones of the compound can be very irregular in these dialects, especially if both head and coda are short.

Why do the rules for tones in noun compounds seemingly cut across the mergers of tone classes that are defining features of the Nairin, Chūrin, Gairin, and Kyōto tone systems, especially given the geographical distribution of the Gairin type dialects? Part of the answer is, no doubt, that a concatenation of two nouns may be a lexicalized compound in one dialect but productive in another,

and that, in the case of lexicalizations, they are not necessarily formed simultaneously in different dialects. These considerations are important because, as explained in the next section, compounds often preserve archaic tonal distinctions later lost in their constituent words in isolation.

## 7.2 The tones of compounds preserved archaic distinctions

The tone of compounds in the dialects of Tōkyō and Kyōto are a result of a mixture of different kinds of rules; factors such as the lengths of the heads and codas also play an important role (Chew 1963; Akinaga 1966; McCawley 1968; Okuda 1971; Uwano 1997). One might say that the tones of modern compounds with long codas are assigned largely by productive (synchronic) rules whereas compounds with short codas are generally lexicalized. When a compound is lexicalized, the tones of its parts reflect the tones of their constituents prior to the lexicalization. In 1943, Wada showed that the tones of compounds with long heads and short codas in Tōkyō and Kyōto were determined by the tone class of the coda. He also showed that there was a striking agreement in the tones of noun compounds in these two dialects even though the tones of their codas, when occurring in isolation, were different in each. Though Kyōto morphemes may begin with a distinctive /L/ (boldfaced in Table 7.1), it is the location of the /H/ (also boldfaced) that determines the tones of the whole compound in both Kyōto and Tōkyō.

**Table 7.1** Wada's comparison of compound tone in Tōkyō and Kyōto (1943)

| Class of coda | Compound | Gloss | Tōkyō | Kyōto |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.1 | *koobe-usi* | 'Kōbe cow' | [LH**H**-LL] | [HH**H**-LL] |
| | *madara-usi* | 'spotted cow' | [LH**H**-LL] | [**LLH**-LL] |
| 2.2 | *mikage-isi* | 'granite' | [LH**H**-LL] | [HH**H**-LL] |
| | *hiuti-isi* | 'flint' | [LH**H**-LL] | [**LLH**-LL] |
| 2.3 | *Nihon-inu* | 'Japanese dog' | [LHH-HH] | [HHH-HH] |
| | *Akita-inu* | 'Akita dog' | [LHH-HH] | [**LLL**-LH] |
| 2.4 | *sando-gasa* | 'straw rain hat' | [LHH-**HL**] | [HHH-**HL**] |
| | *Amida-gasa* | 'Amida umbrella' | [LHH-**HL**] | [**LLL**-**HL**] |
| 2.5 | *Sikoku-zaru* | 'Shikoku monkey' | [LHH-**HL**] | [HHH-**HL**] |
| | *tenaga-zaru* | 'gibbon' | [LHH-**HL**] | [**LLL**-**HL**] |

In light of Ramsey's theory of a left shift of /H/ in Kyōto relative to Tōkyō, Wada's data imply that the shift did not occur in noun compounds. They make it appear that, in both Tōkyō and Kyōto, the position (or absence) of /H/ tone in the coda is decisive. Word-initial tone, which is distinctive in Kyōto, plays a role only insofar as compounds start with [H] unless the initial /L/ is present. In addition, Wada's comparisons show that, in both Kyōto and Tōkyō, the distinction between tone classes 2.2 and 2.3 is maintained in compounds even though it was lost early on for those nouns in isolation.

Wada understood that the tones in compounds must be archaic, but found it hard to determine how the rules for these compounds worked in Middle Japanese because he was relying on the standard theory of MJ reconstruction, under which the reconstruction of the MJ tones resembles the pitches of modern Kyōto when nouns occur in isolation but not when they are codas in a compound. either in Tōkyō or in Kyōto. Under Ramsey's theory, the reason for this is easy to see: the Kyōto left shift of /H/, which affected nouns in isolation, was blocked in codas (Table 7.2).

**Table 7.2** Codas of compounds studied by Wada

| Tone class of coda | MJ tone (standard) | MJ tone (Ramsey) | Tone in Kyōto compounds | Tone in Kyōto in isolation | Tone in Tōkyō in isolation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.1 | /HH/ | /LL/ | [LL] | [HH] | [LH] |
| 2.2 | /HL/ | /LH/ | [LL] | [**H**L] | [L**H**] |
| 2.3 | /LL/ | /HH/ | [HH] | [**H**L] | [L**H**] |
| 2.4 | /LH/ | /HL/ | [**H**L] | [LH] | [**H**L] |
| 2.5 | /LF/ | /HR/ | [**H**L] | [L**H**] | [**H**L] |

It is true that 2.2 codas are [LL] (rather than [LH]) in Kyōto, and that /R/ has left no trace in Tōkyō in codas of class 2.5, but these facts are no doubt due to the modern rule that keeps pitch within a word low once it has fallen from [H]. We will see many examples of this at work below. It is a restriction that did not yet exist in Middle Japanese.

## 7.3 MJ vs. modern compound rules

Though Wada's observations support Ramsey's theory, they leave a few questions unanswered. For example, why does 2.3 *inu* 'dog', which is MJ /HH/ and Tōkyō /LH/, show up as [HH] in *Nihon-inu*? Given that MJ *Nihon* was /HHH/, as the Kyōto reflex suggests, did the initial MJ /H/ of the compound cause the initial /L/ of the coda to rise in Tōkyō? Such questions show that, although the MJ tones of the heads and codas in isolation largely explain the tones of the corresponding modern compounds, we cannot neglect separately comparing the MJ and modern tones of the whole compounds themselves. As we have just seen, lexicalization seems to have blocked the Kyōto left shift of /H/, at least in 3–2 noun compounds, so it would be unreasonable to presume that the correspondences of MJ and modern tones in other compounds are due *only* to productive rules governing the tones of compounds in modern dialects, such as the rules affecting 2.2 and 2.5 codas mentioned above. Some of the correspondences may point to tone patterns that antedate MJ; if so, they can provide clues to changes that occurred between pJ and MJ.

## 7.4 Why are the compound tone rules of MJ so complex?

Besides codas such as 2.3 *inu*, one finds that codas that belong to the same tone class (especially the /L/-initial tone classes 2.1 and 2.2) may attach with either level ([LL], [HH]) or oblique tone patterns ([LH], [HL]). The compound tone rules in the Kyōto type dialects and the Nairin and Chūrin dialects have evidently preserved old tonal distinctions in lexicalized compounds. Might not Middle Japanese itself have preserved an older layer of tonal distinctions in noun compounds? It has been noticed, for instance, that the influence of heads on the tones of compounds observed in Gairin type tone systems is also seen in the tone rules for family names (which are usually compounds) in Tōkyō (a Chūrin dialect); Matsumori (2016) has suggested that, at an earlier time, dominance of the head tones in determining the tone of compounds was once the rule in dialects all over Japan. If so, rules in which codas play a crucial role could be something that spread out later from central Japan, and never reached the peripheral Gairin type tone systems.

To clarify the rules for compounds in Middle Japanese, I have made a detailed comparison of MJ compounds, which I present in the next chapter, based on a database I created using Akinaga et al. 1997, 1998.