Syntactic change from connective to focus particles in Japanese

Tomohide KINUHATA

Although there has been much discussion on semantic change, previous studies on Japanese have paid little attention to the change of syntax. In this presentation, I propose a path of syntactic change in Japanese through the examination of connective and focus particles such as nara(ba), naritomo and demo.

Nara(ba) is one of the conditional forms in Modern Japanese. In Classical Japanese, however, ba is a conditional marker and nara a copula verb. Naraba therefore takes a predicate nominal and makes VP. We can find many instances of predicate nominals preceding naraba in this period (see (1)). In Middle Japanese, referential NPs and case marker-attached-NPs are used with nara(ba) as shown in (2) and (3). This makes it possible for us to say that Nara(ba) acquires the status of a topic marker in this period.

A similar change occurred in Naritomo. In Classical Japanese, nari, just like nara, takes a predicate nominal as illustrated in (4). In Middle Japanese, referential NPs and case marker-attached-NPs such as (5) or (6) are in the position before naritomo, which, we could say, have changed into a topic marker. But Naritomo underwent a further change into a focus particle. It can focus V in the main clause in Pre-Modern Japanese (see (7)).

Demo takes a similar track with Naritomo.

The process of syntactic change is schematically represented as follows (X are operators that CP or TopP relate to, but semantic types of X differ in Phases 1, 2 and 3).

Phase 1  [XP [CP [VP1 ...nari] tomo] [X' [VP2......]]]
Phase 2  [XP [TopP [NP... ] naritomo] [X' [VP2......]]]
Phase 3  [XP [X'[FocP [VP2... V ...] naritomo]]]
Path  verb + connectives  >  topic  >  Focus

In Phase 1, nari is a head of VP and tomo a subordinator. In Phase 2, nari and tomo merge into one word which is the head of TopP. In Phase 3, Naritomo as a focus marker becomes an element in the main clause and can take V or VP2 as the focus (see Kuroda 1979). From the above observations, I propose that connective particles must be in the topic position during the change into focus particles.

These changes are syntactic because both the connective and focus particles are fully grammaticalized, and these are changes of syntactic features these items possess.

Syntactic changes in Japanese are classified by Kinsui 2004 into two types; ‘centripetal change’ and ‘centrifugal change.’ The former refers to changes from sentence-external to sentence-internal elements (e.g. connective to focus particles as seen above) and the latter sentence-internal to sentence-external elements (e.g. case marker to connective particles, see Ishigaki 1955). As regards the changes between focus particles and the sentence external elements, however, ‘centripetal change’ can be observed more frequently than ‘centrifugal change’; datte, gana and kakari-musubi are the examples of the former among others. In order to construct a theory of syntactic change, we will have to investigate the relationships between the types of changes and the categories of the changing items.
References

Ishigaki, Kenji (1955) Zhoshi no rekishitekikenkyu (Historical studies of the particles), Iwanami Publisher.


Examples

1. ware onna naraba, mutubiyori namasi
   If I were a woman, I would have got married. Genji, Wakana

2. anesama nara shinashi yanse u
   You would die. Chikamatsu Joruri, 'Horikawanamitsudzumi'

3. Hai myo de nara kinaga no kimi no yaitoya nadoha yoku tohuttamono zyate
   'Kinaga no kimi no yaitoya' is well known as a pen name. Sharebon, 'Hokkatuzyo'

4. kuitiwo siki sina naritomo kokoro mo tomari namukasi
   Even if she were humble, I would be attracted to her. Genji, Yadorigi

5. Sono kataha gahi naritomo kurehi
   'Give me that wing. Toraakira Kyogen, 'Gantsubute'

6. facanai fude no ato uo naritomo tematcutte,
   I just want to send a short letter. Amakusaban Heike, Ch. 1

7. naze koroshi naritomo nasarezu
   'Why don't you kill me?' Chikamatsu Joruri, 'Udzukimomiji'

Texts

11C. Genji Monogatari (Nihon Koten Bungaku Zenshu, Shogakukan)
16C. Amakusaban Heike Monogatari Taishohonmon oyobi Sosakuin (Meijishoin)
17C. Okura Toraakirabon Kyogenshu no Kenkyu (Hyogensya)
18C. Chikamatsu Jorurishu (Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei, Iwanamishoten)
	Sharebon Taiisei 16 (Chuokoron)