

## The Genesis of Indefinite Pronouns in Japanese and Korean

Korean (1a) and Japanese (1b) exemplify a crosslinguistically well-attested pattern where indefinite pronouns are composed of an interrogative word and an interrogative particle.

- (1) a. Mina-ka mues-in-ka-lul sassta.      b. Mina-ga nani-ka-o katta.  
 Mina-NOM what-be-Q-ACC bought.      Mina-NOM what-Q-ACC bought.  
 ‘Mina bought something’      ‘Mina bought something’

In this paper we present a new account of the diachronic development for such pronouns, an account better supported by the historical facts than treatments in the typological literature (Haspelmath 1997) and in previous studies focused on Japanese.

Haspelmath (1997) argues that the grammaticalization of indefinites results from reduction of a concessive conditional clause of the basic form [*Mina bought something<sub>i</sub>, whatever it<sub>i</sub> may be*] (p. 136). Although his analysis is close to the view we adopt in this paper, the precise source he posits does not match the Japanese and Korean facts, because in these languages concessive conditionals are not realized by ‘interrogative.word + interrogative.particle’ but by ‘interrogative.word + scalar.focus.particle’ (e.g. Korean *-tunci* ‘any at all’, Japanese *mo* ‘even’).

On the other hand, Japanese historical grammarians (e.g. Ogawa 1976-77, Yamaguchi 1990, Watanabe 2002) have claimed that indefinite pronouns such as *nanika* in (1b) originate from the *kakarimusubi*, focus interrogative pattern in (2).

- (2) Yo-no fito-goto-ni nani-wo kamo kofi-to-fa ifu  
 world-GEN person-respectively-DAT what-ACC Q love-Quote-TOP say  
 ‘What does each person consider love?’ *Ise Monogatari* 10th C.

However, this analysis fails to account both for the Korean data, and for an additional Japanese indefinite pronoun pattern consisting of ‘interrogative.word + *yara*’ as in (3), because both of these patterns are completely independent from *kakarimusubi*.

- (3) nani-yara-ga mune-ni-fa ari-te kuti-fe de-zu.  
 what-yara-NOM heart-DAT-TOP exist-CONJ mouth-DIR come.up-NEG.  
 ‘I have something to say, but I cannot tell.’ Udukimomizi 1706

We propose that indefinite pronouns originate from matrix-adjoined wh-questions (see Lee 1997, Takamiya 2004, Kinuhata et al. to appear for the same source for similar different constructions).

- (4) a. THAYTUKTHYEN-i na-m in ka pwuthye-y SYEYKAN-ay  
 Buddha.heaven-NOM emerge-NML is Q Buddha-GEN world-in  
 na-sya-m in ka i khun KWANGMYENG-i ZIPPANG-ay ta  
 emerge-HON-NML is Q this big light-NOM 10.direction-in all  
 pichwisy-as-ta.  
 shine-HON-PAST-DEC  
 ‘Was it the Buddha-heaven emerging, was it the Buddha emerging into the world, this great light shone in all the ten directions.’ Pephwakyeng enhay 3.106b 1463  
 b. Sono omofi-no tumori-ni ka Yokobue-fa ... hodonau sisita.  
 that thought-GEN accumulate-Copula Q Yokobue-TOP ... soon died.  
 ‘Did she worry a lot, Yokobue died right away.’ Amakusaban Heike 1592

The adjoined question pattern is abundantly attested in Korean and Japanese through their history. Parallel patterns occur with endings such as *yara(mu)* [I guess] in Japanese, the source of the modern

particle *yara*.

- (5) Nan-to omofare-saburafi-keru yaramu, kauto-mo ofoserare-saburafa-zu.  
what-QUO think-POL-Past yara this-also say.HON-POL-NEG

‘What did he think, he said nothing to me.’

Kakuichibon Heike 14th C.

The adjoined question analysis gives a single account for the genesis of indefinite pronouns of Korean and Japanese. It also does not suffer from an additional defect of the kakarimusubi account: the fact that there is an approximately 100 year gap, corresponding roughly to the 17th century, between the disappearance of Japanese *kakarimusubi* and the emergence of indefinite pronouns with *ka*.

We explain the change in structure and the meaning in detail. In examples such as (4) and (5), the source structure consists of a wh-question marked with *ka*, *in-ka* or *yara* adjoined to a matrix declarative clause. The interrogative/indefinite ambiguity appears in examples like the following involving an adjoined phrase in *ka/in.ka*

- (6) a. Encey-puthe(-)in(-)ka kaul-i salacy-e pelin nukkim-i tu-n-ta.  
when-from(-)is(-)Q fall-NOM disappear end.up feeling-NOM get-PRES-DEC

i. ‘From when was it, I got the feeling that fall had disappeared.’

ii. ‘From some point I got the feeling that fall had disappeared.’

- b. Itu-kara ka, kirui-wo siti-ni ma-o watasi  
when-from Q clothes-ACC pawn-to interval-ACC crossing

i. ‘From when was it, I have been making ends meet pawning clothes.’

ii. ‘From some point, I have been making ends meet pawning clothes.’ Tennoamijima 1720

The reanalysis eliminates the interrogative interpretation of the adjoined material corresponding to (i). In semantic terms, the interpretation of the adjunct changes from a wh question, that is, the set of propositions obtained by substituting for the interrogative pronoun:  $\lambda p[\exists x[p = I \text{ have made ends meet from } x]]$  (Hamblin 1973), to an existential indefinite, associated with the interpretation  $\exists x[I \text{ have made ends meet from } x]$ . As we see in (6) for both languages, when *ka* attaches to an adjoined phrase, the interrogative interpretation of *wh - ka/in.ka* is still available. But once the interrogative word is fully reanalyzed as an indefinite, it may occur in a clause-internal DP position as in the following examples.

- (7) a. Nwuku(-)n(-)ka-ka mun-ul twutuly-ess-ta.  
someone-NOM door-ACC knock.on-PAST-DEC

‘Someone knocked on the door.’

- b. Inuetu nani-ka syootisi-te deteiku  
Inuetu something understand-CONJ go.out

Inuetu understand something and go out.’

Teikenofana 1807

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