

## Corpus Based Studies in Japanese Historical Syntax

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The Japanese language has a medium-long written history, with extensive records going back to the beginning of the eighth century AD. As may be expected, the history of Japanese, as reflected in the written record, has been studied extensively, and today we have a fairly good detailed idea of the history of the phonology and morphology of Japanese through its attested historical stages. It is in the historical syntax of Japanese that most challenges and open questions are found, and recently the study of pre-modern Japanese syntax has attracted interest from the point of view of various versions of current syntactic theory, with studies dealing with specific aspects of the syntax of Old and Middle Japanese, such as case marking, word order, complementation, negation, and focus constructions. Valuable as these studies are, the difficulties they confront also reflect the complexity of the written record, which has many complications regarding text tradition and interpretation of script and orthography, combined with the volume of material.

In this talk I will present research on pre-modern Japanese syntax from the research project *Verb semantics and argument realization in pre-modern Japanese*. This is a large collaborative research project hosted by the University of Oxford which investigates the basic syntax of pre-modern Japanese within the overall framework of 'argument realization'. The research is based on a digital corpus, under development, of pre-modern Japanese texts encoded with relevant linguistic information, including word identification, morphology and syntactic constituency.