-aku Nominalization in Early-Heian Japanese *Kundoku* Discourse: A Preliminary Study[*]

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1 Introduction

Nominalized sentences in Japanese—those ending with a nominal construction, rather than a finite predicate—often express a speaker's attitude toward an event (Shin'ya 2009) and interact much more closely with modality when compared to Indo-European languages (Narrog 2009). This has been the case throughout the history of the language, although there have been shifts in the morphemes involved and how the nominalization process interacts with the predicate paradigm system.

There were three primary clause nominalization strategies in Old Japanese (ca. 8th century CE) texts—paradigmatic nominalization (using the adnominal form of the verb paradigm), following the adnominal verb form with the noun *koto*, and following the adnominal form with the suffix *-aku*. Although *-aku* lost its productivity by the 10th century (Kobayashi 1957, Majtczak 2009), it was a productive morpheme in the agglutinating predi-

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cate paradigm in earlier Japanese (Vovin 2005). Omodaka et. al (1967: 251) suggest that the original meaning of the morpheme may be indexing a "psychological place" and Mukai (2019) uses a possible-world model to argue that *-aku* is a subjective modal that marks suppositions, convictions, and expressions of emotion in Old Japanese. Although Mukai does not take early-Heian glossed texts into account, following the long-standing convention that all material from the Heian period is Early Middle Japanese, Ōtsubo (1961) and other scholars have written extensively on how early-Heian Japanese glossed translations of Sinitic texts contain Old Japanese constructions and Osterkamp (2021) argues convincingly that the language of 9th-period glossed texts should be understood as Old Japanese.

In these texts, the nominalizer *-aku* could be used sentence-finally, as in (1), clause-initially, as in (2), and to introduce a quotation, as in (3).[1]

(1)　苦哉、我が愛子を失ひつラク。　(Kasuga 1942a: 194)[2]
　　　kanasiki ka ya. Wa ga aiko wo usinapi-turaku.
　　　painful Q SPF. I GEN beloved.child ACC lose-PFV-NMLZ
　　　'Oh how painful! That I have lost my beloved child.'

(2)　庶ハクハ此（の）教を長ク懸（け）て永ク來者を濟せむ。
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(Nakada 1958: 3)
　　　Negapaku pa ko no wosipe wo nagaku kake-te nagaku raisya wo
　　　suma-se-mu.
　　　what.I.hope TOP this GEN teaching ACC long cover-GER long
　　　seeker ACC be.satsified-CAUS-MOD
　　　'What I hope is that this teaching will satisfy seekers (of the way) for
　　　a long time.'

(3)　婆羅門の言（は）ク「...」といふ。　(Kasuga 1942a: 11–12)
　　　baramon no ipaku [Quotation] *to ipu.*
　　　brahman GEN say-NMLZ "[Quotation]" COMP say
　　　'The brahman's saying, "[Quotation]" he says.'

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[1] I use the following abbreviations: ACC (accusative), CAUS (causative), COMP (complementizer), COP (copula), EPIS (epistemic modal), FOC (focus particle), GEN (genitive), GER (gerund), IMP (imperative), INDIR (indirect evidential), LOC (locative), MIR (mirative), MOD (modal), NMLZ (nominalizer), PFV (perfective), PST (past), Q (question particle), SFP (sentence-final particle), TOP (topic).

[2] All quotations use the transliteration methodology of the cited texts. *Hiragana* are from *wokototen* glosses, *katakana* are from *kana*(-esque) glosses, and *hiragana* in parentheses are the cited scholar's educated guess based on the context.

All -*aku* nominalizations form event, rather than participant, nominalized clauses, and when they are used sentence-finally, such as in (1), they are referential predicates that characters evaluate with heightened emotions, such as being wonderful, sad, fearful, painful, etc. Sentence-final -*aku* nominalizations only occur in dialogues quoted by narrators in these texts. -*aku* is found sentence-initially as an adverb, as in (2), in both in narration and quotations. Outside of dialogue, narrators use -*aku* before almost every quote, as in (3), before concluding with, most often, the same utterance or thinking verb in a finite form.

This study examines -*aku* nominalizations in 9th-century Japanese *kundoku* narrative discourse and argues that, as it is used in 8th-century sources, -*aku* primarily serves a modal function, marking predicates as facts that can be targets of evaluation by characters in emotional scenes. This paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 overviews literature on nominalizations in 8th-century poetic discourse. Section 3 focuses on these nominalizations in Sinitic Buddhist narratives translated in the 9th-century. Modern-day remnants of -*aku* nominalization are discussed in Section 4. Section 5 concludes the paper with a discussion on -*aku*'s modal function, which has changed little over time even after the suffix's loss of productivity.

2   Nominalization in 8th-Century Poetic Discourse

As mentioned in §1 there are three nominalization strategies used in 8th-century Japanese poetic discourse. The first is paradigmatic nominalization, or using the adnominal form of the verb paradigm known in Japanese as *rentaiku* (連体句). The second is following the adnominal verb form with the noun *koto*, known in Japanese as *juntaiku* (準体句). The nominalization strategy that is the focus of this paper is known in Japanese as *kugohō* (ク語法), following the adnominal form with the suffix -*aku*. This construction generally results in the deletion of the final -*u* in the adnominal form, such that, for example, *ipu* 'say' followed by -*aku* results in *ipaku* rather than *ipuaku. This structure is referred to as the "verbal noun" in Majtczak (2008) and the "Nominal form" in Wrona (2009), but it will be referred to as "-*aku* nominalization" throughout this paper. Regarding how these nominalizations relate to the predicate, Wrona concludes that "[the Old Japanese] system of complementation pivots around Nominal [(-*aku*)] complements and *to*-complements" and that "[a]dnominal and *koto*-complements are clearly making their way into the [Old Japanese] complement system, but are not yet fully integrated" (Wrona 2008: 392). In other words, among the three nominalization strategies, -*aku* was most likely to be a complement selected by the predicate.

The following chart, based on data from Mukai (2019: 7), shows how the different nominalization strategies interacted with auxiliaries (inflecting suffixes) in 8th-century poetic discourse.

governed auxiliary	adnominal	*koto*	*-aku*
negation *-zu*	3	7	124
modal *-mu*	0	12	62
other	206	211	26

Table 1. Nominalization of auxiliaries in 8th-century poetic discourse

We can see that among the nominalization strategies, *-aku* is most likely to follow negation *-zu* and modal *-mu*, both of which govern the irrealis stem. Mukai (2019) also argues that "when we consider [*-aku*'s] association with auxiliaries that govern the irrealis stem, thinking verbs, and hypothetical expressions, we can say that it is an expression of the situation based on the subjective perception of the speaker" (Mukai 2019: 11). While *-aku* likely originated from a bound noun meaning 'place' or 'thing' (Sansom 1928) and has been described as semantically equivalent to periphrastic *koto* nominalizations (Ōno 1952), its ties to the evaluation of the predicate have been suggested in a definition of the suffix in (Omodaka et. al 1967) as "psychological place" and Mukai's (2019) conclusion that it is a "subjective modal." In the following section, we will compare *-aku* with the other two nominalization strategies in the earliest extended narratives in Japanese, 9th-century gloss translations of Sinitic Buddhist texts.

3   Nominalization in 9th-Century *Kundoku* Discourse

The sources of data for this investigation are early-Heian, or 9th-century, *kundokubun* (訓読文 'vernacular reading language') Buddhist texts.[3] The method for reading Sinitic texts as Japanese, known as *kundoku* ('vernacular reading'), came to be known for being highly codified translationese with each sentence rendered without regard to the surrounding discourse, but evidence from glossed 9th-century texts show rich use of predicate morphology reflecting the narrative context (Bundschuh 2021).

Thus, we are looking at a particular register of early Japanese, one used to translate sutras and commentaries written in Literary Sinitic. The data in this study come from a Saidaiji temple late-9th-century translation of the *Golden Light Sutra* (J. 金光明最勝王経 *Konkōmyō saishō ō kyō*) transliteration (J. 書き下し文 *kakikudashibun*) found in Kasuga (1942a) and a

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[3] See Nakada (1954: 151–154) for a discussion on the differences between *kundokubun* and *futsūbun* ('normal language').

Tōdaiji temple translation of the *Kṣitigarbha Ten Wheels Sutra* (J. 地蔵十輪経 *Jizō jūrin kyō*) in Nakada (1958) and Nakada (1980).

3.1 Adnominals and Periphrastic *Koto* Nominalizations in Early-Heian *Kundoku* Discourse

To begin, adnominals and periphrastic *koto* nominalizations are much more prevalent in the translated narratives of the 9th-century compared the 8th. As we find in earlier data, adnominal noun phrases can operate in both object position, as in (4), and subject position, as in (5).

(4)　「. . .」といふなるを聞（き）つ (Kasuga 1982a: 193)
　　　"[. . .]" *to ip**u** nar**u** wo kiki-tu*
　　　"[. . .]" COMP say(NMLZ) COP(NMLZ) ACC hear-PFV
　　　'I heard that it was that they said "[. . .]".'

(5)　隨といふは能（く）二種の事業を造作す。 (Nakada 1958: 39)
　　　*zui to ip**u** pa yoku nisyu no zigyau wo zausa.su*
　　　accordance COMP say(NMLZ) TOP able.to two.kinds ACC create
　　　'That which is called accordance is able to create two kinds.'

Periphrastic *koto* nominalizations are found in periphrastic predicates, such as the extended potential using *u* (得 'attain'), found in (6), and in object positions, such as (7), among other uses.

(6)　未曾有なること得つ。 (Kasuga 1982a: 14)
　　　*mizou naru **koto** e-tu*
　　　unprecedented COP NMLZ attain-PFV
　　　'They were able to attain the unprecedented.'

(7)　願フ、此の人を食すること（を）聽（し）たまへ。
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(Nakada 1958: 70)
　　　*kopu, ko no pito wo ziki.suru **koto** wo yurusi-tamape*
　　　please this GEN person ACC eat NMLZ ACC permit-HON(IMP)
　　　'Please allow me to eat these people.'

3.2 *-aku* Nominalization in Early-Heian *Kundoku* Discourse

Although less common than adnominal or periphrastic *koto* nominalizations, suffix *-aku* nominalization was common and varied in early-Heian discourse. Tsukishima (1969: 494–501), in a comparison of *-aku* nominalization in vernacular poetry and vernacular glossing language, finds the following uses in the latter: 1) Marking a speech/thought predicate leading a

quoted sentence with *to ipu* or another speech/thought predicate at the end of the quotation. 2) Making a declarative adverb of hoping, which is generally followed by a predicate stipulating that condition. This use is often followed by *pa*. 3) Ending the sentence with *-aku* or adding the emphatic particle *nomi*. Regarding this third function, Tsukishima writes that this form creates an exclamatory nominalized predicate and adding *nomi* strengthens the exclamatory function. However, Kasuga (1942b: 203) had previously noted that *nomi* is most often added when the *-aku* clause is not preceded by an interjection, such as *kanasiki ka ya* 'how sad!', as seen in (1) above, and *zenya* 'good!' as seen in (10) below.

We will now look at examples of types 1–3 in Early Heian *kundoku* discourse. We saw a pre-quotation *-aku* in (3) above, but these can be verbs of thinking or evaluation as well, such as (8).

(8)   是の念を作（さ）ク「...」トオモフ。 (Kasuga 1942a: 6)
      ko no nen wo nasaku [Quotation] *to omopu.*
      this GEN thought ACC make-NMLZ [Quotation] COMP think
      'creating this thought, "[Quotation]" they think.'

Although the final verb of speaking or thinking is predominantly the same as the pre-quotative *-aku* predicate, examples where a different verb with similar semantics, such as (8), or the same verb with a different tense or aspect auxiliary found after the quotation are possible.

An example of an adverbial function of *-aku* was presented in (2) above. It contains a pattern common in these constructions—that of the finite predicate containing a modal expression. We see this in the following example as well.

(9)   我も今疑（は）クは弟は其の身を捨（てつ）ラむ。
      ware mo ima utagapaku pa otouto pa so no mi wo sute-tu-ramu.
      I also now suspect-NMLZ TOP younger.brother TOP that GEN
      body ACC discard-PFV-MOD
      'I, too, now suspect that our younger brother has likely discarded his body.'

While we see *negapaku pa* ('I hope that') in (2), here we find *utagapaku pa* ('what I suspect'). These adverbial constructions most often contain verbs that present the speaker's evaluation of the predicate, which most often ends in a modal construction, reflecting the fact that adverbial *-aku* phrases are always modal in nature. The adverbial phrase is found on the left periphery of the sentence, allowing it to better interact with the discourse context.

Sentence-final -*aku* nominalizations highlight the structure's use in expressing speaker evaluation. We saw an expression of pain in (1) above, but -*aku* is more often found in these texts following exclamations of joy, as we see in the following example.

(10) 善哉善哉。汝等乃能ク此の誓願を発サク。 (Nakada 1980: 183)
    *zenya zenya. Nandi-ra sunapati yoku ko no seigwan wo okos**aku**.*
    good good. you-PL thus able.to this GEN vow ACC make-NMLZ
    'How good, how good! That you are thus able to make this oath!'

Unlike adverbial -*aku* phrases, sentence-final -*aku* is the result of a cleft construction consisting of a nominative noun phrase moving to the right periphery, where it interacts with the discourse context and indicates speaker evaluation. However, unlike adnominal and *koto* nominalizations, we never find -*aku* constructions as complements in the standard subject-object-verb sentence structure. Now we will look at these three nominalization strategies involved in a single quotation in an embedded narrative.

3.3 9th-century Nominalizations in Context

The following is a section from the *Golden Light Sutra* depicting a grieving king in which we find all three nominalization strategies.

(11) a. 王是の語を聞（き）て悲歎して（而）言（は）ク、
      *wao ko no go wo kiki-te pitan.si-te ip**aku**,*
      king this GEN words ACC hear-GER painfully.lament-GER
      say-NMLZ
      'The king heard this story and painfully lamented, saying,'

    b. 「苦哉苦哉、我が愛子を失ひつラク。
      *"kanasi**ki** ka ya, kanasi**ki** ka ya. wa ga aisi wo usitapi-tur**aku**.*
      "sad(NMLZ) Q SFP, sad(NMLZ) Q SFP. I GEN beloved.child
      ACC lose-PFV-NMLZ.
      '"Oh how painful, oh how painful! That I have lost my beloved
      child!'

    c. 初に子の有しし時には歓喜すること少（か）リキ。
      *ui ni ko no yuu.si-si toki ni pa kanki.suru **koto** sukunakariki.*
      first LOC child GEN exist-PST time LOC TOP rejoice NMLZ
      few-PST.
      'When I first had a child there was little rejoicing.'

    d.   後に子を失（ひ）つル時にゾ憂苦することは多かリケル。
        *noti ni ko wo usitapi-turu toki ni zo yuuku.suru **koto** pa*
        *opokariker**u**.*
        after LOC child ACC lose-PFV time LOC FOC feel.pain NMLZ
        much-MIR(NMLZ).
        'It is when I later lost my child that (I realize the fact is that)
        there is much pain.'

The selection begins with a common quotation-introducing -*aku* nominalization in (11a). The first line spoken by the king, (11b), is the same as (1) above, with a repeating 'how sad!' followed by an -*aku* noun phrase presenting what is sad. Both (11c) and (11d) contain parallel *koto* nominalizations, both of which are the subject of what are few and many. In (11d) we also find a cleft-construction (J. 係り結び *kakari-musubi*) with quasi-copular focus particle *zo* followed by a predicate nominalized in the adnominal form. The king says two more lines without nominalized predicates, but the quotation ends with *to notamapu*, an honorific verb of speaking not seen in the pre-quotative -*aku* nominalization *ipaku*. The sentence-final exclamative use of -*aku* is found in earlier Japanese (Wrona 2008: 130), but falls out of use by the vernacular narratives of the 10th-century. In the following section we will consider how the suffix endures in Japanese today.

4   -*aku* Nominalization in Japanese Today

Although -*aku* constructions came to be fossilized by the 11th-century (Kobayashi 1957, Majtczak 2009), modality remains ingrained in the semantics of fossilized -*aku* lexemes, as we can see in the following examples.

(12)   恐らく行くだろう。
      *Osor**aku** iku darō.*
      probably go EPIS
      'They will probably go.'

(13)   田中曰く行くらしい。
      *Tanaka iw**aku** iku rashī.*
      Tanaka according.to go EPIS/INDIR
      'According to Tanaka, they will go.'

(14)   願わくは行くことを。
      *Negaw**aku** wa iku koto o.*
      what.I.hope TOP go NMLZ ACC
      'What I hope is that they will go.'

Osoraku, seen in (12), is largely constrained to being followed by the epistemic modal *darō*. While *iwaku* (the modern-day pronunciation of *ipaku*, seen in (3) above) is still largely constrained to quotative constructions, it can be used with the auxiliary *rashī*, as seen in (13). *Rashī* is often used to present second-hand evidence, but may index the speaker's epistemic stance of vouching for the information provided. Finally, we see in (14) *negawaku wa*, the modern-day pronunciation of *negapaku pa* (seen in (2) above), which still presents the speaker's hopes. In sum, the adverbial predicates nominalized by -*aku* that have endured in Japanese, although they have become lexicalized with -*aku* no longer acting as a productive morpheme, all interact with modality.

5 Conclusions

In this paper we have seen how the predicates nominalized by the suffix -*aku* have maintained their modal function diachronically. Just as in the 8th century, each phrase nominalization strategy had a distinct function in 9th-century *kundoku* discourse. Mukai's (2019) findings on the modality of -*aku* nominalization in 8th-century texts are also consistent with the 9th-century narrative data discussed in this paper. It marks sentence-final predicates as facts that can be targets of evaluation by characters in emotional scenes, paralleling right periphery modality nominalizations today, and its adverbial function interacts with the left periphery, most often with modal auxiliary -*mu* governing the following finite predicate.

Among its three primary functions in early-Heian *kundoku* discourse, its pre-quotative use is the most removed from the periphery and, thus, interacts the least with modality. It can be understood as an extension of -*aku*'s modal semantics by presenting a predicate as a fact to be the target of qualification—rather than evaluation—by first noting the manner in which words are said before qualifying the contents of the speech act. This hypothesis is supported by the potential modal use of *iwaku* in Japanese today.

By taking the discourse context into consideration, we can better understand the pragmatics of -*aku* beyond its surface function as a nominalizing morpheme. Furthermore, rather than focusing on poetic texts, taking *kundoku* narrative texts into account as well provides us with a greater range of language use, showing us that speakers use varied nominalization strategies to perform different communicative functions, even in early gloss translations. These data support the fact that -*aku* nominalizations have maintained their interactions with modality over time after their loss of productivity, even in the fossilized forms that remain today.

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