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**SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS OF THE NOMINALS**  
***MONO AND KOTO* IN JAPANESE**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
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## Abstract

### Syntax and semantics of the nominals *mono* and *koto* in Japanese

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There is a group of words which are usually referred to as *keisiki-meisi* (i.e. formal nouns) in Japanese. The formal noun is defined as a noun which does not have a substantive meaning, and is not used in isolation, but requires a preceding modifier. In this thesis, examinations of various aspects of the Japanese nouns *mono* and *koto*, which are widely acknowledged as typical examples of formal noun, will be presented. *Mono* and *koto* occur with a variety of terms to produce additional derivatives. For example, when the copula *da* is attached to *mono* or *koto* at the end of a sentence, it becomes a sentence-final modality which strongly reflects the speaker's emotions or feelings. However, owing to the fact that *mono* and *koto* are also used on occasion as substantive nouns without preceding modifiers, scholars tend to merely clarify the boundary between the use of *mono* or *koto* as a substantive noun, and its use as a formal noun, giving two separate labels to the same noun. In this study, the existence of continuity between these two usages – substantive and formal – is hypothesised. The syntactic and semantic features observed throughout the derivative forms of *mono* and *koto* offer a chance to explore and identify the unifying features of the two different usages. It is also demonstrated that, viewed in the light of the framework of grammaticalisation, the category 'formal noun' is only a label that has been put onto a group of nouns which can be grammaticalised or which have already been grammaticalised.

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## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	i
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	ii
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	iii
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	v
<b>Note on Romanisation</b> .....	vi
<b>Sources of Japanese Examples</b> .....	vii

### Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Purpose of study.....	1
1.2 Review of literature .....	3
1.2.1 Formal nouns and traditional Japanese grammarians .....	3
1.2.1.1 Yamada (1908).....	3
1.2.1.2 Matsushita (1930).....	4
1.2.1.3 Tokieda (1950).....	5
1.2.1.4 Sakuma (1956) .....	6
1.2.2 Formal nouns and generative grammarians.....	7
1.2.3 Formal nouns and recent research.....	9
1.2.3.1 Uchida (1982).....	10
1.2.3.2 Takaichi (1986) .....	11
1.2.3.3 Teramura (1981).....	12

### Chapter 2: Syntactic and semantic analyses of *mono*

2.1 <i>Mono</i> as a noun.....	14
2.2 <i>Mono</i> as a sentence-final modality.....	18

2.3	<i>Mono</i> as a conjunctive particle.....	39
2.3.1	<i>Mono</i> as a conjunctive particle.....	39
2.3.2	<i>Mononara</i> .....	40
2.3.3	<i>Monode / monodakara</i> .....	42
2.3.4	<i>Monono</i> .....	46
2.3.5	<i>Mono-o</i> .....	49
2.4	<i>Mono</i> as a sentence-final particle.....	55

### **Chapter 3: Syntactic and semantic analyses of *koto***

3.1	<i>Koto</i> as a noun.....	61
3.1.1	<i>Koto</i> as a substantive noun and its basic definition.....	61
3.1.2	Clause + <i>koto</i> .....	63
3.1.3	Determiner + <i>koto</i> .....	66
3.1.4	Clause + <i>to iu</i> + <i>koto</i> .....	70
3.1.5	Clause + <i>to no</i> + <i>koto</i> .....	74
3.2	<i>Koto</i> as a sentence-final modality .....	76
3.3	<i>Koto</i> as a conjunctive particle .....	82
3.4	<i>Koto</i> as a sentence-final particle.....	86

### **Chapter 4: Conclusion**

4.1	Re-examination of Teramura (1981) .....	93
4.2	Grammaticalisation of <i>mono</i> and <i>koto</i> .....	98
4.3	The category <i>keisiki-meisi</i> .....	102

<b>Appendix</b> .....	104
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<b>Bibliography</b> .....	105
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## Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used in giving translations of the example sentences.

ACC	ACCusative case marker ( <i>o</i> )
COP	COPula ( <i>da/desu</i> )
CP	Conjunctive Particle
FN	Formal Noun
GEN	GENitive case marker ( <i>no</i> )
NOM	NOMinative case marker ( <i>ga</i> )
NOMI	NOMInaliser
SFM	Sentence-Final Modality
SFP	Sentence-Final Particle
TOP	TOPic marker ( <i>wa</i> )
*	ungrammatical / unacceptable
?	awkward

## Note on Romanisation

The *Kunrei* romanisation is adopted in Japanese examples.

The Hepburn system is used in translations of the examples and bibliographical information.

When a different system is adopted in citations, it is changed to the above system for unification.



## Sources of Japanese Examples

Many of Japanese examples are taken from the following short stories in *Showa bungaku zenshu* Vol. 32 (Shogakukan 1989).

A: “Kawauso”, Kuniko Mukoda

B: “Ido no hoshi”, Rie Yoshiyuki

C: “Kaetteiku haha”, Haku Kohiyama

D: “Amagomori”, Kiichiro Takahashi

E: “Bosai no hirumae”, Takashi Tsujii

F: “Asai nemuri”, Kunie Iwahashi

G: “Suisho”, Kuninobu Noro

H: “Sakura-densha”, Kazuko Saegusa

I: “Uchusen”, Shuichi Sae

J: “Manhattan-to no onna”, Tomohiko Yamada

The source of each example is presented in the following format.

(e.g.) [B: 864]

[B: 864] indicates that the example is taken from “Ido no hoshi” by Rie Yoshiyuki, which is on page 864 of *Showa bungaku zenshu* Vol. 32 (Shogakukan 1989).