

The rhythmic effects of *rendaku* and hiatal elision in Western Old Japanese poetry

This talk will discuss the rhythmic effects of two stabilizing mechanisms in Western Old Japanese (WOJ) poetry attested in books 5 and 15 of the *Man'yōshū* poetry anthology. These books were chosen for the study because they are written primarily in phonograms, rather than the logograms that dominate many other books of the *Man'yōshū*.

WOJ was the language of the capital Nara in the 8th century. It is attested in thousands of poems as well as some prose. In most WOJ poetry lines of verse are rhythmically segmented into units of five or seven syllables. Lines that exceed these syllable counts in their underlying representations face internal pressure to conform in their surface representations. To achieve this, we may find an occurrence of morpheme-based *rendaku* on the surface form when a candidate nasal-initial case marker (such as the locative *-ni*) or copula (*ni*) exists in the underlying representation. The vowel of the candidate is deleted, allowing fusion of its onset with a following voiceless onset. The end result is a rhythmically stable line. Alternatively, if the line has a hiatus in the underlying representation, the surface form may exhibit elision of either V_1 or V_2 , which achieves the same rhythmic stability. Some lines may contain instances of each rhythmic stabilizer, or multiple instances of a single type.

In my analysis, I will first discuss examples of each rhythmic stabilizer, including instances where they occur and instances where they are possible but do not occur (such as in underlyingly stable lines). I will then discuss implementation differences among the two stabilizers, with a specific focus on any tendency to prefer one over another in a specific context. Finally, I will briefly discuss differences in the behaviors of rhythmic stabilizers in WOJ and Eastern Old Japanese.