

# The Meaning Function of the Case Particle *fi* in the Tsuken Island Dialect of Japanese Considered from the Perspective of Collocative Relations<sup>1</sup>

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Članek predstavlja členek *fi* v narečju otoka Tsuken (Okinawa, Japon-  
ska), ki ima podobno funkcijo kot predlog *to* v angleščini. Domnevno  
gre za ustreznik členkov *ni* ali *e* v knjižni japonščini, vendar njegov  
izvor ni povsem jasen. *fi* nima le funkcije *ni* ali *e*, temveč tudi eno  
izmed funkcij *made* knjižne japonščine. Zdi se, da se je *fi* razvil v  
narečju otoka Tsuken.

This paper describes the case particle *fi* in the Tsuken Island dialect  
of Okinawa, Japan. This particle has a similar function to the prepo-  
sition *to* in the English language. It is thought that *fi* is equivalent to  
case particles *ni* or *e* in the Japanese standard language, but its origin  
is not clear. *fi* has not only the function of *ni* or *e*, but also one of the  
functions of Standard Japanese *made*. It seems that *fi* developed in  
the Tsuken Island dialect.

**Ključne besede:** narečje otoka Tsuken, členek, kolokativni odnosi,  
naštevaje

**Key words:** Tsuken Island dialect, case particles, collocative rela-  
tions, enumeration

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ance in translating my paper.

## 1 About Tsuken Island

Tsuken Island lies about 5 km southeast of the Yokatsu peninsula which is located on the east coast side of the central part of the main island of Okinawa. The island is 8 km in circumference and it has an area of 1.75 km<sup>2</sup>. Geographically, Tsuken Island is located in the southern district of the main island of Okinawa. However, the Tsuken Island dialect is close to the dialects of northern Okinawa and it is now established that it belongs to the northern Okinawan dialect group.

Most of the islanders make a living from fishing and agriculture. In particular, the cultivation of carrots is popular and Tsuken Island is also called “Carrot Island”. The sea is blue and clear and the beach is excellent. Visitors are increasing every year, but on the other hand the population is decreasing. The island was serviced by 10–11 round trips per day until 3 years ago, but the service has now been reduced to 5 round trips per day. The younger generation (under forty) who have grown up on the island can understand the dialect, but cannot use it. Such a severe situation may accelerate the extinction of the dialect. The Tsuken Island dialect is a so-called “Endangered Language”.

## 2 The function of the Tsuken Island dialect case particle *fi*

The case particle *fi*<sup>2</sup> interacts with the movement feature of verbs and marks nouns for direction of the destination or direction of movement. It has a semantic function similar to the English preposition *to* or the Standard Japanese case particle *e*. The following example sentences are taken from natural conversations.<sup>3</sup>

- 1) NaΦa=*fi*                      nzu-taŋ.                      (of→I)<sup>4</sup>  
 Place name=ALL                      go out- PST  
 (When I was young,)                      I was in Naha.
- 2) inagu    tɛu=nu                      ja:=*fi*                      he:ku    ika-n=ro.                      (of→I)  
 woman person=GEN    house=ALL    early    go- NGT=SFP  
 A woman doesn't go to others' houses early (on New Year's Day).

There are many other verbs in the Tsuken Island dialect, for example those meaning ‘come’, ‘return’, ‘visit’, which are used with the case particle *fi*.

<sup>2</sup> Case particles which express direction and which are cognate with *fi* are found in the dialects of northern Okinawa. They differ from dialect to dialect, being attested as [ʃi], [kaʃi], [haʃi], and the like. I do not know whether the cognate particles in these other dialects are used in the same correlative relation to forms equivalent to *kara* as Tsuken Island dialect has.

<sup>3</sup> All Tsuken Island data in this paper has been collected by the author in the course of her investigations into the dialect of Tsuken Island from 2002 to 2009. The examples in this paper have been taken from natural conversations.

<sup>4</sup> This shows who said the utterance and to whom. The abbreviations stand for the following: of: old woman / om: old man / mf: middle-aged woman / mm: middle-aged man.

### 3 The function of the Tsuken Island dialect case particle *kara* (ablative)

The case particle *kara*<sup>5</sup> has the semantic function of indicating the starting point of time and location. Its semantic function is similar to the English preposition *from*. Additionally, *kara* has the function of marking the instrumental and locative case, but these functions will not be described here. For the moment we shall focus on the function which indicates a starting point.

#### 3.1 The temporal function of the case particle *kara*

First, I will give examples of the function of the case particle *kara* which indicates a temporal starting point as follows.

- 3) nama=*kara*          ikuru      (mf→of)  
 Now=ABL          go.ADN  
 I will go now.
- 4) raieu:=*kara*      saji          makuru=*mu*D=*ja*:=*na*. (of→of)  
 next week=ABL    seed          sow = $\phi$ =SFP=Q  
 You are going to sow the seeds from next week, aren't you?

As shown above, the time that the action and the act are begun is indicated by the case particle *kara*. With this function, the case particle *kara* can be combined with various types of verb in the Tsuken Island dialect.

#### 3.2 The locational function of the case particle *kara*

Next, I give examples of the case particle *kara* which indicates a locational starting point.

- 5) o:jama=*kara*          ei-saD=*jo*.      (of→of)  
 Place name=ABL      come-PST=SFP  
 She came from Oyama.
- 6) uma=*kara*    massugu nzi-ne    sansaro-gwa:=ga          a:=mun=*na*.  
 here=ABL    straight go-CVB.    CND three forked road-DIM=NOM    COP= $\phi$ =Q  
 (of→of)  
 There is a three-forked road when going straight ahead from here, isn't there?

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<sup>5</sup> There is a similar case particle *kara* in the standard language, but the range of functions is not identical. Both the standard language and the Tsuken Island dialect particles have the function of the marker of beginning. However whereas *kara* also functions to indicate instrument and the location of movement in the Tsuken Island dialect, the standard language *kara* does not have these functions.

The case particle *kara* functions to indicate the locational starting point of movement in the Tsuken Island dialect.

#### 4 The function of the Tsuken Island dialect case particle *mari*

The case particle *mari*<sup>6</sup> has the semantic function of indicating the end point or limit of time and location. It has a semantic function similar to the English prepositions *to* and *until*.

##### 4.1 The temporal function of the case particle *mari*

First, I will give examples of the function of the case particle *mari* which indicates a temporal end point or limit as follows.

- 7) *jozi=mari*                      *aeiri-kisu-n=ro.*                      (om→of)  
 NUM=LMT                      play-PRF-NPST=SPF  
 She has played until four o'clock.
- 8) *nizu:go=mari=ja*    *na:*    *naΦa.*                      (of→I)  
 NUM=LMT=EMP    DSC    Place name  
 I was in Naha until 25 years old.

In the Tsuken Island dialect the case particle *mari* indicates the temporal end point of a continuing action or state.

##### 4.2 The locative-indicating function of the case particle *mari*

Next, I will give examples of the function of the case particle *mari* which indicates a locational end point or limit as follows.

- 9) *ja:mi*                      *je*    *nakanomatei=mari*    *attea-ku-m=ba.*    (of→om)  
 second person    DSC    Place name=LMT    walk-HBT-NPST=Q  
 Do you walk to Nakanomachi?
- 10) *ukibaru-gwa:=mari*    *ndzu-n=teuD=jo.*    (of→of)  
 Place name-DIM=LMT    go-NPST=HS=SPF  
 I heard that he will go to Ukibaru Island.

The case particle *mari* functions to indicate the locational arrival point of movement. In addition, it seems that it conveys a feeling of marvel or surprise. For example, in sentence 9) there is a feeling of surprise regarding walking

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<sup>6</sup> The standard language has the cognate case particle *made* which has virtually the same function as Tsuken Island dialect *mari*.

to Nakanomachi. The speaker is surprised because the addressee had walked such a long distance.

### 5 The collocation of *kara* and *fi*, and *kara* and *mari*

Collocations of *kara* and *fi*, and *kara* and *mari*<sup>7</sup> are used in the Tsuken Island dialect. These have a similar function to that of the prepositions *from* and *to* in English. When these collocations are considered, it is noted that the former cannot be used in a temporal sense. Let us look at some examples.

#### 5.1 The collocation of locational *kara* and *fi*

First, I will give examples of the collocation of *kara* and *fi*. This expression N=*kara* N=*fi* is used when indicating a range in space. It is not used to indicate time.

- 11) penna=*kara*      uma=*ei*      iku-tam=*ba:jo*      jamagusuku=*ei=ru*. (of→of)  
 Place name=ABL here=ALL go-PST=SFP      Place name=ALL=EMP  
 I went from Henna to Yamagusuku.
- 12) pe:bara=*kara*      uma=*ei*      ido:ei-kiei=*kara*      gozu:gokanen=*naru*. (of→I)  
 Place name=ABL here=ALL move-PRF= after NUM= pass  
 55 years have passed since I moved to Tsuken Island from Haebaru.

#### 5.2 The collocation of temporal and locational *kara* and *mari*

Next, I will give examples of the collocation of *kara* and *mari*. The expression N=*kara* N=*mari* is used when showing a range in either space or time. In example 13) it functions to indicate location, and in 14) it indicates time.

- 13) i-teai      ki-sai      he:bara=*kara*      kiDwam=*mari*. (of→of)  
 go-ITER      come-ITER      Place name=ABL      Place name =ALL  
 I went back and forth from Haebaru to Kin Bay.
- 14) jozi=*kara*      gozi=*mari=ja-gutu=jo*      ju':ban=*nu*  
 NUM=ABL      NUM=LMT=COP-CVB.CSL=IJP      supper =TOP  
 nu:kui      dzumbi-ei:=*kara*.      (of→of)  
 variously      make-PRF=CVB.CND  
 Because the meeting was from 4:00 to 5:00, after I made supper, I went out.

<sup>7</sup> These collocations exist both in the Tsuken Island dialect and in Standard Japanese. The case particles *kara* and *fi* are used as markers to indicate enumeration in the Tsuken Island dialect, but the collocation of *kara* and *ni* or *e* in Standard Japanese lacks this function.

Judging from the above, we can conclude the following. The form N=*kara* N=*fi* is mainly used in combination with verbs of movement. This is probably due to the influence of the case-marking particle *fi*. On the other hand, the form N=*kara* N=*mari* focuses on the range of time or location.

## 6 The enumeration function of *tu*, *tuka* and N=*kara* N=*fi*

In the Tsuken Island dialect the case particles *kara* and *fi* are used as markers which indicate enumeration. To be specific, *kara* is the marker of beginning, and *fi* is the marker of ending. In addition to this, the case particles *tu* and *tuka* also function to indicate enumeration. I will describe the features of these particles in the following two subsections.

### 6.1 The function of the particle *tu*

First, let us look at examples where the case particle *tu* is used.

- 15) *teo:nan=tu zinan=tu rokunan=tu ukina:.* (of→of)  
 Eldest son=EQL second son=EQL sixth son=EQL Place name  
 The eldest son, the second son, and the sixth son are in Okinawa
- 16) *je sa:=tu kwa:ei-gwa:=tu kati-iki=be.* (of→of)  
 INTJ tea=EQL sweets-DIM=EQL eat-go=SFP  
 Hey, have tea and sweets.
- 17) *kinu:=nu bento:=ŋka=ja tui=nu karaage=tu*  
 yesterday=GEN box lunch=DAT=TOP chicken=GEN deep fry=EQL  
*ju:=nu ŋurai=tu=ga iteu-tan=ro.* (mf→I)  
 fish=GEN fried food=EQL=NOM put-PST=SFP  
 In yesterday's box lunch, there was fried chicken and fish.

Example 15) can be interpreted as saying that, of six brothers, three live in Okinawa. In other words all the brothers who live in Okinawa are enumerated. Next, in example 16) tea and sweets are enumerated. These two things are regarded as a set. Finally, in example 17) fried chicken and fried fish are enumerated. It is thought that other side dishes might have been in the lunch box, but two dishes were picked out as representative. The case particle *tu* has three enumeration indicating functions. One is exhaustive enumeration, another is partial enumeration, and the third is listing as a set.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The standard language has cognate *to* and *toka* too, with virtually the same functions as the Tsuken Island dialect forms.

## 6.2 The function of the particle *tuka*

Next, let us look at examples which use the case particle *tuka*.

- 18) nama meron=*tuka*    suika=*tuka*    tsuku-tu-n=*ro*. (mf→I)  
 now melon=EQL    watermelon=EQL    grow-PROG-NPST=SFP  
 Now I am growing melons and watermelons.
- 19) eima=*nz=je*:    (< nzi=*ja*)    irabutea=*tuka*  
 island=LOC=TOP    knobsnout parrotfish=EQL  
 kamasai=*ga*    ziko    tu-raru-n=*ro*. (mf→I)  
 barracuda=NOM    many    fish-POT-NPST=SFP  
 On the island, we can catch a lot of knobsnout parrotfish and barracuda.

The function of the case particle *tuka* resembles that of the case particle *tu* as used in example 17). In example 18), the melon and watermelon are enumerated, but the speaker is also growing other farm produce. In example 18), the knobsnout parrotfish and barracuda are enumerated. However, other fish can be caught around Tsuken Island. The case particle *tuka* has the function of partial enumeration.

## 6.3 The function of the collocation N=*kara* N=*fi*

Finally, let us look at examples where the expression N=*kara* N=*fi* is used.

- 20) hanako=*kara*    mata    jo:ko=*ei=jo*    ta...  
 NAME=EQL.BEG    and    NAME=EQL.END=IJP    FIL  
 taro:=*nu*    panaei    kika-n-taj=*tei=jo*. (om→of)  
 NAME=GEM    talk    hear-NGT-PST=HS=SFP  
 I heard that neither Hanako nor Yoko heard Taro's story.
- 21) makiko:=*kara*    ju:ko=*ei*    kunu=*ja:=jzi*    suda-ti. (of→I)  
 NAME=EQL.BEG    NAME=EQL.END    DEM=house=LOC    grow up-CVB.PST  
 Makiko through to Yuko grew up in this house.
- 22) saDe:=*kara*    junioη=*kara*    seikjo:=*ei*    ikui=*ga*  
 NAME=EQL    NAME=EQL    NAME=EQL.END    go=but  
 unu=*mise=nakante*    muru    urikire=*jam=ba:jo*. (mf→of)  
 DEM=shops-APPR    all    sellout=COP=SFP  
 I went to Sanei, Union, and Seikyo. But in these shops, all the bean-jam buns were sold out.

The expression N=*kara* N=*fi* enumerates the entire range of items in the Tsuken Island dialect. The case particle *fi* is closely related to movement verbs. Because of this, the form functions to show the direction of movement or the place where someone has moved to. The particles *kara* and *fi* in the expression N=*kara* N=*fi* connect one place to another, creating a continuous line. It is thought that the *fi* in *this construction* is connected with *fi* showing arrival point.

In Standard Japanese N=*kara* N=*made* is used as a form of enumeration that looks like N=*kara* N=*fi*, but the usage is not identical. For example, when saying “Taro=*kara* Hanako=*made*”, there must be at least one other person in addition to Taro and Hanako (contrast Tsuken Island example 20)). It is thought that it is connected with expression N=*kara* N=*made* showing a range.

The persons who have been enumerated in examples 20) and 21) are sisters. Hanako and Yoko are two sisters and these two persons are enumerated. That is to say it is an exhaustive enumeration. In the other example, Makiko and Yuko are two of five siblings. The other three persons are not enumerated. Makiko is the oldest, and Yuko is the youngest sibling, and the siblings have been enumerated in order of the age. Actually, the sisters in example 20) have not been enumerated randomly but have also been enumerated in order of age. A time-line can be imagined. In example 22), the shops which the speaker went around are mentioned. They are likely to be enumerated in the order of having been visited, though it is not possible to conclude this for certain. It is thought that “beginning” and “ending” are indicated in this expression N=*kara* N=*fi*.

## 7 Conclusion

The characteristics of the case particle *fi* or the expression N=*kara* N=*fi* of the Tsuken Island dialect can be described as follows.

The case particle *fi* interacts with the movement feature of verbs and assigns to nouns the function of indicating the direction of the destination of movement.

There is a collocation of *kara* and *fi*. The expression N=*kara* N=*fi* is strongly connected with verbs of movement. Because of that, the form functions to show the direction of movement or the place where someone has moved to. The expression N=*kara* N=*fi* cannot indicate time. The case particle *fi* has the function of indicating direction or arrival point, but does not indicate limit. On the other hand, there is also a collocation of *kara* and *mari*, and the expression N=*kara* N=*mari* can indicate location or time. *mari* functions to indicate an arrival point or limit.

The case particles *tu* and *tuka*, and the expression N=*kara* N=*fi*, function as indicators of enumeration. When looking at the function of *tu* in detail, we see it has three functions. One is exhaustive enumeration, another is partial enumeration, and the third is enumeration as a set. *tuka* has the function of partial enumeration. N=*kara* N=*fi* invokes the image of a line, and does not enumerate at random but according to a certain order.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ABL – ablative; ALL – allative; ADN – adnominal; APPR – approximative;  
COP – copula; CVB.CND – converb condition; CVB.CSL – converb causal;



CVB.PST – converb past; DAT – dative; DEM – demonstrative;  
 DIM – diminutive; DSC – discourse marker; EMP – emphatic; EQL – equalis;  
 EQL.BEG – equalis (beginning marker); EQL.END – equalis (ending marker);  
 FIL – filler; GEN – genitive; HBT – habitual; HS – hearsay; IJP – interjectional particle;  
 INTJ – interjection; ITER – iterative; LMT – limitative; LOC – locative;  
 N – noun; NGT – negation, negative; NOM – nominative; NPST – non-past;  
 NUM – numeral; POT – potential; PRF – perfect; PROG – progressive;  
 PST – past; Q – question particle/marker; SFP – sentence final particle;  
 TOP – topic; V – verb;  $\phi$  – null substantive

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## POMENSKA FUNKCIJA ČLENKA *fi* V JAPONSKEM NAREČJU OTOKA TSUKEN V LUČI KOLOKATIVNIH ODNOSOV

V članku je predstavljen členek za označitev sklona *fi*, ki ima podobno funkcijo kot predlog *to* v angleščini. Zasedimo ga v japonskem narečju otoka Tsuken (Okinawa). V članku so predstavljene naslednje štiri točke: (1) *fi* je povezan z lastnostjo gibanja pri glagolih, samostalnikom pa pripisuje funkcijo smeri gibanja; (2) obstaja korelacija med *kara* in *fi*, ki je podobna korelaciji med angleškima predlogoma *from* in *to*; (3) *kara* in *fi* se uporabljata kot označevalca naštevanja: *kara* je označevalec začetka in *fi* je označevalec konca; v knjižni japonščini se kot označevalec konca uporablja *made*;

(4) *fi* ima tudi pomen *made*; v japonskem knjižnem jeziku se *made* 'dokler' uporablja kot označevalec konca časa, toda *fi* nima te funkcije, temveč samostalnikom pripisuje funkcijo točke prihoda. Domnevno je *fi* ustreznik sklonskemu členku *ni* ali *e* v knjižni japonščini, vendar njegov izvor ni povsem jasen. *fi* nima le funkcije *ni* ali *e*, temveč tudi funkcijo *made*. Zdi se, da se je *fi* razvil v narečju otoka Tsuken.

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