On Postposed Adverbial Clauses in Japanese Conversation

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the characteristics of postposed adverbial clauses in Japanese.[1, 2] Based on corpus investigation, I describe the discourse patterns of postposed *kara* (because) clauses and *kedo* (though) clauses. I argue that both constructions are motivated by discourse factors, but the motivations differ from each other.

While the canonical position of the Japanese adverbial clause is said to be before the main clause, it can occur after the main clause in spoken data (Clancy, 1982: 68-70; Thompson et al. 2007: 295). For example, in (1), the *kara* (because) clause modifies the clause that precedes it.[3] Thus, we can consider this a case of a postposed *kara* clause.

(1) ((4 participants are talking about beggars))
K; inaka ni wa imasen yone? (0.3) honttoni seikatsu dekinai **kara**.
country LOC TOP exist:POL:NEG PRT really life can:NEG because
"(Beggars) don't live in the countryside, do they? Because (they) can't survive at all."

The example above can be heard as a natural expression, even if it is presented without context. Moreover, changing the position of the *kara* clause and the main clause, we can invent a sentence which has the same semantic content as (1).

(2) ((Invented sentence based on (1)))
honttoni seikatsu dekinai **kara**, inaka ni wa imasen yone?
really life can:NEG because country LOC TOP exist:POL:NEG PRT
"Because (they) can't survive at all, (beggars) don't live in the countryside, do they?"

This sentence is not only natural, but also a more canonical or standard expression which could appear even in a written genre. The question then arises as to why speaker *K* in (1) puts the *kara* clause after rather than before the main clause.

Papers in Linguistic Science, No.14 (2008), pp. 109-122.

2. Previous Studies

Since it is difficult to find any difference in terms of semantic content between a postposed and a preposed adverbial clause, previous studies have paid attention to the discourse-pragmatic features of this construction (Kuno, 1978; Takami, 1995).

Takami (1995: ch5), modifying Kuno's (1978) generalization, argues that an adverbial clause can occur after its main clause only if the adverbial clause does not convey the most important information. According to Takami, (3B2) below is unacceptable because the *node* (because) clause, which conveys the most important information (i.e. the focus of the question asked by (3A)), occurs after its main clause.[4]

(3) A; kimi wa, naze arubaito o shiteiru n desu ka.
2SG TOP why part.time.job ACC do:PROG NML COP Q
"Why do you have a part-time job?"

B_1; (boku wa) hokkaido e ryokoo ni iku **node** arubaito o shiteiru n desu.
1SG TOP Hokkaido GOL trip DAT go because part.time.job ACC do:PROG NML COP
"Because (I will) travel to Hokkaido, (I) have a part-time job"

B_2; * (boku wa) arubaito o shiteiru n desu, hokkaido e ryokoo ni iku **node**.
1SG TOP part.time.job ACC do:PROG NML COP Hokkaido GOL trip DAT go because
"(I) have a part-time job because (I will) travel to Hokkaido" (Takami, 1995: 242)

Takami's account nicely explains the difference of acceptability between a preposed adverbial clause and a postposed adverbial clause, as shown in (3). However, there are three interrelated problems as follows. (a) In actual spoken data, there are many cases of postposed adverbial clauses which cannot be explained by his account. (b) Takami's account only states a condition under which an adverbial clause is NOT postposed. That is, it does not explain any motivation for actually-occurred postposing. (c) It is not evident that all postposed adverbial clauses are motivated by the same simple factor. It is likely that different adverbial clauses have different motivations for being postposed. Moreover, even within one type of adverbial clause, there may be multiple factors at work. I suggest that these problems are derived from Takami's methodology, which relies on invented sentences rather than real data (cf. Cumming and Ono, 1997).

3. Corpus Investigation

3.1 Collecting Data

In order to consider the characteristics of postposed adverbial clauses, I examined two types of adverbial clauses: *kara* (because) and *kedo* (though) clauses. I chose these two types

as the targets of this pilot study because they are most frequent among all the adverbial clauses in the corpus.

Tokens of *kara* and *kedo* clauses in both preposed and postposed position were collected from 22 spontaneous conversations (the duration is approximately 130 minutes in total). The distribution is shown in the table below.

Table 1. Distribution of the data

	KARA clause	*KEDO* clause	Total
POSTPOSED	**15 (18.5%)**	**13 (14.8%)**	28 (16.6%)
PREPOSED	66 (81.5%)	75 (85.2%)	141 (83.4%)
	81	88	168

As the table indicates, both postposed *kara* clauses and postposed *kedo* clauses occur much less frequently (under 20 percent) than preposed clauses. These four constructions were analyzed in terms of discourse properties. I present the results in the next two sections.

3.2 Discourse Patterns of Postposed *KARA* Clauses

There are two prominent patterns in the usage of postposed *kara* (because) clauses. First, in 7 of the 15 postposed *kara* clauses, the main clauses serve as the Second Pair Part of an adjacency pair (Schegloff, 2007). By putting the main clause first, the speaker can align her/his action with the preceding speaker's action and achieve a smooth realization of the action sequence. I call this pattern the *SPP type*. Consider the example below.

(4) ((T and K are female students and are talking about their lives and dreams. K states that she would like to go to Brazil, where her (prospective?) boyfriend lives.))

T; itte doo suru? nani suru?

go:CONJ how do what do

"(If you) go (there), then what would you do?"

K; .. itt^e:, sono hito no shigoto o, mitai no ne,

go:CONJ DEM person GEN work ACC see:DES NML PRT

sore dake de mo moo %, nanika ga, kawaru **kara**.

DEM only INST FIL FIL something NOM change because

"(I) wanna go and see his work, because only that will somehow change (my life)."

In this example, the first clause of *K*'s utterance serves as a reply to *T*'s preceding question, and *K* gives an account using the postposed *kara* clause. Since *K* designs the ordering of her

actions (i.e., a reply and an account) to align with *T*'s question, the participants realize the question-answer sequence smoothly.

In many cases of this type, we can see the main clauses also align their syntactic patterns with those of the First Pair Part.[5] In (4), the syntactic pattern which these two utterances share can, as shown in the graph below, be analyzed as [*itte*-[argument]-[verb]-[unit terminal]], which may be recognizable not only by the analyst but also by the participants in the conversation (Du Bois, 2001).

Graph 1. Syntactic Alignment between *T*'s question and *K*'s answer

	itte	[argument]	[verb]	[unit terminal]	
T;	itte	*Doo*	*suru*	?	
		Nani	*suru*	?	
K;	itte	*sono hito no shigoto o*	*mitai*	*none.*	[*KARA* clause]

In addition, it is noteworthy that there is only one token of a preposed *kara* clause that occurs as a Second Pair Part.

In another 7 cases, the main clauses include an anaphoric expression whose antecedent is in the preceding clause and they add new information about it. I call this pattern the *Anaphor type*. Consider the example below.

(5) ((K has shown R's photo to her friends))

K; sore^de:, (H) nanka%, (0.2) raguun, raguun? (H) nanka,
then FIL lagoon lagoon FIL

nikkorito, suggoi kawaiku waratten no ga, atta n da yo[ne:].
brightly very cutely smile:PROG one NOM exist:PST NML COP PRT

"Then, there was a (photo) where (you) smiled brightly and cutely, which was taken, maybe, by the lagoon."

R; [un un].
"Mm-hm"

K; de atashi sore mottetta no. [kawaii **kara**].
so 1SG DEM bring:PST PRT cute because

"So I brought that (photo), because (you were) cute."

R; [un un].
"Mm-hm"

Here, we can see the anaphoric expression, *sore* (that), and its antecedent, *nikkorito suggoi*

kawaiku waratten no (a photo where you smiled brightly and cutely), which are enclosed in rectangles. Speaker *K* introduces a new referent, i.e. "a photo where you smiled brightly and cutely," using an existential construction and then in the next clause, which becomes the main clause of a postposed *kara* clause, makes a predication about the referent. Together, the two main clauses form a Topic-Comment structure. This type tend to occur within a story-telling activity. No instance of this type was found among preposed *kara* clauses.

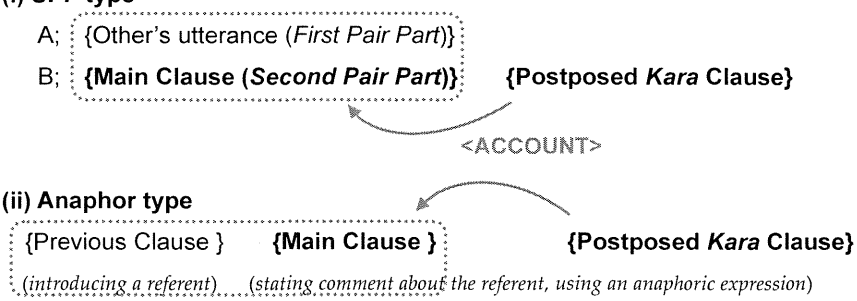
As Table 2 indicates, we can conclude that both the *SPP type* and the *Anaphor type* are characteristic discourse patterns for postposed *kara* clauses.

Table 2. Distribution of SA type and TC type

	SPP type	Anaphor type	Other	Total
POSTPOSED *kara*	**7 (46.7%)**	**7 (46.7%)**	1 (6.7%)	15
PREPOSED *kara*	1 (1.5%)	0 (0%)	**65 (98.5%)**	66

I argue, moreover, that both the *SPP type* and the *Anaphor type* share a common property--the main clause of the *kara* clause has strong cohesion with the previous discourse. Thus, it is the strong cohesion that motivates the speaker to postpose the *kara* clause. The patterns featuring postposed *kara* clauses can be schematized as follows.

(6) **(i) SPP type**



This explanation is also supported by the fact that many instances of preposed *kara* clauses show, semantically or syntactically, a tight relation with their main clauses. In other words, they tend to be treated as a chunk.[6]

3.3 Discourse Patterns of Postposed *KEDO* Clauses

In the previous section, we saw that strong cohesion between the previous clause and the main clause seems to be the motivation for postposing *kara* clauses. Can we then explain the motivation for postposed adverbial clauses *in general* in the same way? As for

postposed *kedo* clauses, I found that neither the *SPP type* nor the *Anaphor type* are prominent in the corpus. We thus should thus look for a different explanation for postposed *kedo* clauses.

What is readily apparent in the data is that 10 cases (76.9%) serve as metacomments on the preceding main clauses. Consider the example below.

(7) ((K is talking about her friend, who lives in London))

M; ryuugakushita no? Rondon ni.
study.abroad:PST NML London GOL
"Did (she) go to London to study?"
(0.4)

K; n:n. dannasan ga, ~Yamamotoshooken, (0.8) no choo eriito de.
no husband NOM ~Yamamotoshooken GEN super elite COP:INF
(0.5) ~Teedai-de no.
~Teedai-from GEN
"No. (That's because) her husband is a rising star who, having graduated from ~Teedai (university), works for ~Yamamotoshooken (securities company) there."
(0.7)

M; ma:jide?
"Really?"

K; un. (0.2) datte, uchi no tomodachi, ~Teedai-de igai no
yeah FIL 1SG GEN friend ~Teedai-from other.than GEN
hito to, kekkonshitenai mon. warrui **kedo**.
person COM marry:PROG:NEG PRT sorry though
"Yeah, you know, none of my friends married a man who is not from ~Teedai. Sorry (for saying such a thing)."
(0.9)

M; °@@@° (1.3) uso:.
lie
"No way!"

In this example, speaker *K* uses a *kedo* clause to express a casual apology for her previous utterance, which may not only be unbelievable to *M* but somewhat offensive. We may consider this kind of *kedo* clause as a metacomment in the sense that it conveys an opinion about or evaluation of the content of the main clause.

There are only 13 cases (17.6%) of preposed *kedo* clauses that serve as metacomments.

The distribution is shown in the table below.

Table 3. Distribution of Metacomment *kedo* clauses

	Metacomment	Other	Total
POSTPOSED *kedo*	**10 (76.9%)**	3 (23.1%)	13
PREPOSED *kedo*	13 (17.6%)	**61 (82.4%)**	74

The distribution indicates that the postposed *kedo* clause is a highly specialized construction for metacomment purposes.

However, this does not mean that we can simply consider the metacomment function as the sole motivation for postposing *kedo* clauses, because a certain percentage of the preposed *kedo* clauses also serve as metacomments. In fact, the example below, which is invented based on (7), shows a preposed *kedo* clause functioning as a metacomment in a quite natural expression.

(8) ((Invented sentence based on (7)))

K: warrui **kedo**, uchi no tomodachi, ~Teedai-de igai no
sorry though 1SG GEN friend ~Teedai-from other.than GEN
hito to, kekkonshitenai mon.
person COM marry:PROG:NEG PRT
"Sorry, but none of my friends married a man who is not from ~Teedai."

In order to clarify the difference between postposed and preposed *kedo* clauses, we should consider the issue not only in terms of the properties of *kedo* clauses and their main clauses, but also in terms of the discourse context in which the *kedo* clauses are embedded.

The data were examined in terms of the hearer's reaction (Clancy et al., 1996; Gardner, 2001) to the main clause; while a construction featuring a preposed *kedo* clause tends to receive a positive reaction, a construction featuring a postposed *kedo* clause tends to receive a negative reaction. Before discussing this point in detail, we must investigate the properties of the hearer's reaction and see what is meant by "positive" and "negative."

Hearers' reactions were classified into six categories; (i) strongly positive reaction, (ii) sentence co-production, (iii) turn taking, (iv) backchannel, (v) no overt reaction, and (vi) strongly negative reaction. The category of *strongly positive reaction* includes expressions of understanding (e.g. *naruhodone* 'it makes sense'), agreement (e.g. *soo soo soo soo* 'yeah, that's right'), surprise (e.g. *hee* 'wow'), and other kinds of positive evaluation (*iina* 'I envy that,' *yokatta* 'that's good' and so on). It also includes laughing aloud, relating similar experiences,

and repetition of what has been said in the main clause. These strongly positive reactions should be distinguished from what I would call *backchannels* (cf. Goodwin, 1986).

The category of *sentence co-production* is a reaction in which the hearer produces a possible predicate of the main clause before the speaker completes the main clause (Lerner, 2002). The example below shows a case of *sentence co-construction* which occurs after a preposed *kedo* clause.

(9) ((A is talking about a funny experience at a shop))

A; soremade, zutto gamanshiteta n da **kedo**, (H) futaride,
until.then all.the.time suppress:PROG:PST NML COP though two.of.us
deru-yainayade, (H) **[moo, oowaraishi]** chatta no.
come.out-as.soon.as FIL laugh.aloud:PST PRT
"Though we two had suppressed (our laughter) all the time (in the shop), as soon as we came out, [(we) finally laughed out loud."

P; **[maa oowaraishite]** @
"[Oh, (you) laughed out loud."

This type of reaction can be seen as reflecting the second speaker's (*P* in this example) positive engagement with the first speaker (*K* in this example).

In the category of *turn taking,* the hearer takes a turn without any direct response to the main clause. In the example below, *T* does not produce any direct response to *C*'s utterance but asks a question on the same topic.

(10) ((T and C are talking about an apartment where C lived before))

T; warito dekai n jan.
fairly big NML PRT
"(It) was fairly big, wasn't it?"
(1.3)

C; dekai **kedo**, semai n da yo. heya ga.
big though narrow NML COP PRT room NOM
"Though (the apartment was) big, (each) room was narrow."
(1.2)

T; ikura?
"How much (was the rent)?"

This type of reaction can be seen as reflecting the fact that the hearer (i.e. the second speaker) has accepted the adequacy of the utterance which the first speaker made (cf. Clark, 1996). Thus, we may consider it as an implicit positive reaction by the hearer.

The category of *backchannel* is a reaction in which only a short word, which has little or no lexical meaning (e.g. *un* 'yeah,' *u:m* 'hmm,' *n::* 'mm' and so on), is used. And the category of *no overt reaction* refers to a situation where no vocal reaction occurs at the end of the main clause of a *kedo* clause and the speaker continues to speak. It is difficult to say whether these categories are positive or not. What we can say is that they are neither very positive nor very negative.

The category of *strongly negative reaction* includes negation of the proposition which the first speaker has said in the main clause, negative evaluation of the utterance which the first speaker has made, or producing a counterargument to it. In (7) above, *M*'s response (i.e. *uso* 'no way!') is an illustration of this type.

Let us now return to the issue of the difference between postposed and preposed *kedo* clauses. All tokens were coded in terms of what type of hearer's reaction the construction featuring a *kedo* clause receives. The assigned values are the six categories introduced above: (i) strongly positive reaction, (ii) sentence co-production, (iii) turn taking, (iv) backchannel, (v) no overt reaction, and (vi) strongly negative reaction. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 4. Distribution of Hearer's Reaction

	Strongly positive	Co-production	Turn taking	Back-channel	No reaction	Strongly negative	Total
POSTPOSED *kedo*	**1** **(7.7%)**	**0** **(0%)**	1 (7.7%)	3 (21.4%)	2 (15.4%)	**6** **(46.2%)**	13
PREPOSED *kedo*	**29** **(39.2%)**	**10** **(13.5%)**	9 (12.2%)	18 (24.3%)	7 (9.5%)	**1** **(1.4%)**	74

As indicated in the table, we can see there are several tendencies. First, while more than half of the preposed *kedo* clauses fall into either the *strongly positive reaction* or *sentence co-production* categories, fewer than 10 percent of the postposed *kedo* clauses do. Second, while almost half of postposed *kedo* constructions receive a *strongly negative reaction*, only 1.4 percent of the preposed *kedo* constructions do. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that while a construction featuring a preposed *kedo* clause tends to receive a positive reaction, a construction featuring a postposed *kedo* clause tends to receive a negative reaction. The examples (7) and (9) above are nice illustrations of these two

phenomena respectively.

What does this observation mean? I would argue as follows. Since a *kedo* clause conveys contrastive/concessive information relative to the main clause, preposing such information makes it easy for the hearer to anticipate what will be said in the main clause, i.e., to grasp the speaker's main point in the unfolding utterance. In other words, preposed *kedo* clauses may "enhance the projectability" (Lerner, 2002) of what comes next in the ongoing turn. This feature of preposed *kedo* clauses gives the hearer an opportunity to share the main point or climax with the speaker. This may be why a preposed *kedo* construction tends to receive a positive reaction.

For example, in (11), the speaker *T*, having heard a *kedo* clause which gives background information for *H*'s story, projects the punchline as "the sister's mistake of putting on the jeans." Then, expressing her envy, she makes a positive assessment of it, although her projection turns out to be a "misprojection." It is noteworthy that *T* retracts her assessment as soon as she recognizes her "misprojection." The retraction is displayed in her short reactive token (*un* 'yeah').

(11) ((H is talking about a younger sister of his friend ~Kubota. T has just mentioned that the sister is almost as tall as ~Kubota))

H; kore wa moo, kookoo no toki no hanashi kana?
DEM TOP EMPH high.school GEN time GEN story Q
[daigaku no] koro no hanashi ka wasureta **kedo**[sa:],
college GEN time GEN story Q forget:PST though PRT
"(I) forgot if this was a story from his high-school days or college days, but,"

T; [u::n.] [un.]
"hmm" *"mm"*

H; (0.5) sono imootosan ga sa:, ~Kubota no sa, nankasa,
DEM younger.sister NOM PRT ~Kubota GEN PRT FIL
(0.3) ji- jiipan kananka [sa:],
jeans or.something.like.that PRT

T; [u:n].
"hmm"

H; (H) koo nanka[koo:, haku no],
FIL FIL put.on PRT
"his younger sister (happened to) put on ~Kubota's jeans or something like that."

T; **[ii na::.]**
good PRT

[$_2$atashi nanka zettai hakenai.] [$_3$u:n].
1SG EMPH absolutely put.on:can:NEG yeah
"(I) envy her! I couldn't put on (my brother's jeans)... Yeah."

H; [$_2$machigaeta kananka shiranai kedo, ha-] ha[$_3$itetara] sa,
mistake:PST or.something.like.that know:NEG though put.on:COND PRT
"(I) don't know if she was confused or not, but, she put (them) on,"

((H finally says that the sister teased ~Kubota about how short the jeans were.))

On the other hand, since *kedo* clauses convey contrastive/concessive information relative to the main clause, postposing them can serve to counterbalance it, so that a speaker can offset a potential exaggeration or offensive assertion. This counterbalancing function may allow the hearer to react negatively to the utterance. This may be why a postposed *kedo* construction tends to receive a negative reaction. In addition, a speaker can postpose a *kedo* clause as soon as he or she recognizes that the hearer is not reacting positively. Therefore, counterbalancing can be seen as both a result of a hearer's negative reaction and as a cause for it.

Moreover, this argument also fits with the fact that many instances of postposed *kedo* clauses constitute metacomments about the main clause, because metacomments are an effective device for counterbalancing a previous utterance.

The observation and discussion concerning *kedo* clauses can be schematized as follows.

Table 5. Comparison between preposed vs. postposed *kedo* clauses

	preposed *kedo* clause	**postposed *kedo* clauses**
Prominent patterns in the data	a) Metacomments are rare. b) Its main clause tends to receive positive reaction from the hearer.	a) Metacomments are pervasive. b) Its main clause tends to receive negative reaction from the hearer.
Function of *kedo* clause	A *kedo* clause enables hearers to project the main point.	A *kedo* clause counterbalances the main clause.
Consequence for the hearer	The hearer can easily share the main point with the speaker.	The hearer can easily react negatively.

4. Conclusion

In this study I examined the motivations for postposed adverbial clauses in Japanese, especially postposed *kara* and *kedo* clauses. I suggest that while the motivation for postposed *kara* clauses may be strong cohesion between the previous clause and the main

clause, the motivation for postposed *kedo* clauses may be counterbalancing the main clause and enabling hearers to react negatively. Thus, I argue that postposed *kara* and *kedo* clauses are both motivated by discourse factors though the motivations differ. Consequently, it is, at least at this point, difficult to identify a unified account for all types of postposed adverbial clauses.

These results are somewhat consistent with the findings on the difference between preposed and postposed adverbial clauses in English conversation (Ford, 1993), despite the fact that the syntactic structure and the relative frequency of postposed and preposed adverbial clauses are drastically different in Japanese and English. This may suggest some cross-linguistic universality in the ordering of adverbial clauses.

However, this is only a pilot study based on two types of adverbial clauses in a small corpus yielding fewer than 30 tokens of postposed adverbial clauses. In addition, in order to better treat the hearer's reaction in a descriptive and explanatory framework, we should examine the non-verbal actions of the conversational participants. Thus, further study on this issue is expected.

Notes

[1] I am grateful to Pat Clancy, Chris Donlay, Jack Du Bois, Natsuko Nakagawa, Nobu Takara, Sandy Thompson and Ryoko Suzuki for their comments and encouragement, although of course I am solely responsible for any errors. Also, I am indebted to Tsuyoshi Ono for providing me with the conversational data. This research was partly supported by the Kyoto University Foundation.

[2] Note that the term "postposed" and "preposed" are used in a neutral, descriptive sense. That is, I do not commit myself to the transformational view of grammar.

[3] Main clauses and adverbial clauses are single and double underlined respectively.

[4] Since *node* is a synonym for *kara*, both are translated as the English word 'because.' Although it has been recognized that there are certain semantic and syntactic differences between them (e.g. Mikami, 1953: 291-299), this may be not relevant to the issue at hand.

[5] The idea of syntactic alignment and social engagement, as well as the notation of the graph which presents this phenomenon, is largely inspired by Du Bois (2001).

[6] I do not describe the usage of preposed *kara* clauses in detail because it goes beyond the scope of this paper. But it is worth noting that the prominent patterns are as follows: (i) the complex of *kara* clause and main clause is embedded in another subordinate clause (32 cases; 48.5%), and (ii) the main clause itself does not convey significant information, that is, it is composed of only a "light" predicate (e.g. *ii* 'good') or just repeats what has been said in the preceding context, so that it does not contain any new information (16 cases; 24.2%).

Appendix

The conventions used for transcription roughly follow those established by Du Bois (2008). The abbreviations and symbols used in this paper are as follows.

,	continuative intonation	CONJ	conjunctive form (te-form)
.	terminative intonation	COP	copula
?	rising intonation	DAT	dative
:	prosodic lengthening	DEM	demonstrative
(0.2)	pause duration	DES	desiderative form
..	micropause (shorter than 180ms)	EMPH	emphasis marker
[ ]	speech overlap	FIL	filler
@	laughter	GEN	genitive
(H)	audible inhalation	GOL	goal
%	glottal stop, creaky voice	INF	infinitive form
°x°	attenuated sound	INST	instrumental
^	primary accent	LOC	locative
~	pseudo-name	NEG	negative morpheme
		NML	nominalizer
1SG	1st person singular	NOM	nominative
2SG	2nd person singular	PROG	progressive form
ACC	accusative	PRT	pragmatic particle
BEN	benefactive morpheme	PST	past form
COM	comitative	Q	question particle
COND	conditional form	TOP	topic particle

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