

AN OVERVIEW OF JAPANESE MODALITIES AND THEIR DEGREE OF PROPOSITION

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ABSTRAK

Tulisan ini mengulas sepuluh kata modalitas dalam bahasa Jepang, yaitu *hazu, ni chigainai, kamoshirenai, daroo, yoo, soo, rashii, beki, nakereba naranai, dan temo ii*. Kesepuluh modal tersebut dikelompokkan berdasarkan sifat dan jenisnya menjadi dua kelompok, yaitu modalitas epistemik dan modalitas deontik. Modalitas epistemik adalah modalitas yang berisi ungkapan keperluan dan kemungkinan, sedangkan modalitas deontik adalah modalitas berhubungan dengan kewajiban dan kebolehan. Yang termasuk dalam modalitas epistemik adalah *hazu, ni chigainai, kamoshirenai, daroo, yoo, soo, rashii*, sedangkan yang termasuk dalam modalitas deontik adalah *beki, nakereba naranai, dan temo ii*.

Kata Kunci: modality, epistemic, deontic, proposition

INTRODUCTION

Modality is one of the important elements in language. It has been the focus of attention of researchers from distinct linguistic approaches over the last thirty years. This paper attempts to discuss Japanese modality in relation to the notion of possibility, necessity, subjectivity and hypotheticality. It consists of four main parts. The first section discusses the concept of modality in English and Japanese. The second section investigates Japanese epistemic modality, and the third section explores Japanese deontic modality. The final section is summary of the foregoing discussion.

THE CONCEPT OF MODALITY IN ENGLISH AND JAPANESE

Modality is concerned with the expression of the speaker's involvement towards the propositional content of an utterance. Modality

is not exclusively restricted to modal auxiliary verbs. Modal elements include adjectives, participles, nouns, lexical verbs, adverbs, articles, tense, aspect, particles, hedging expressions, question tags, intonation, etc.

Lyon (1977:452) defines modality as "the opinion or attitude of the speaker." This definition seems to be widely accepted among linguists. Palmer (1986) has adopted Lyon's definition and in doing so has broadened the field of the study of modality. According to Palmer (1986:23), modality can be expressed by categories other than verbs. The broad definition of modality he proposes thus goes well beyond most traditional treatments of English modals. For example, he broadens the deontic category by including "imperatives", "volitives", and "evaluatives". Additionally, he includes declarative, complement, and oblique clauses, as well as tense, aspect, negation, and gender in his examination. Based on this

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definition it is not too much to say that all language phenomena can be viewed in terms of modality.

Interestingly enough, earlier this century, some Japanese linguists proposed that a sentence has propositional and modal contexts (e.g. Tokieda, 1950, Hashimoto, 1948). This claim seems to adopt the concept of modality in English view, although naturally the linguistic form of Japanese modality is different from that of English. English modals are easy to understand due to their close relationship with auxiliary verbs (e.g. do, have, shall, be, will, may, ought) which are morphologically independent. However, since the Japanese language is "agglutinative" by nature (cf. English is "inflectional"), the Japanese modal auxiliaries are not morphologically independent, but usually attached to the main verbs or adjectives. Because of this, they look like part of the main lexical item's conjugation.

Reviewing Japanese modality, Masuoka (1989:82-84) claims that modality can be found in every constituent of a sentence. This means that modality is not only a matter of auxiliaries but also concerned with propositional content. He proposes that there are two different kinds of modality, that is primary modality and secondary modality. Primary modality expresses subjectivity (the speaker's psychological attitude) at all times, and secondary modality expresses not only subjectivity, but also objectivity (a declarative statement which does not involve a speaker's emotion). Masuoka includes notions such as politeness, conveying thoughts, value judgment, explanation, topicalization, aspect, negation, and tense in the secondary modality category. Masuoka further classifies modal content into two large categories: transmission and judgment, which are similar to the epistemic and deontic categories.

In Japanese, '*hoo joo-dooshi*' (modal auxiliaries) are closest to English auxiliaries in their function. Japanese auxiliaries can be classified into two basic categories: those which can be a constituent of propositional content, and those which always lie outside of

propositional content. Modal auxiliaries (*hoo joo dooshi*) correspond to the latter.

Representative Japanese modal auxiliaries include *hazu* 'must be', *ni chigainai* 'must be', *kamoshirenai* 'may be', *daroo* 'probably', *yoo* 'looks like', *soo* 'appears to be/hearsay', and *rashii* 'seems like'. All of the auxiliaries listed above share the same syntactic behavior in that they all follow a proposition.

EPISTEMIC MODALITY

Epistemic modality is concerned with various attitudes and opinions that a speaker has towards the statement he is making. Epistemic modality marks the information either with stronger or weaker certainty. When the speaker has the highest degree of certainty about the information, or when the information is "nonchallengeable", he can express it in a declarative statement with a finite verb form. When he does not have certainty, he has to qualify the statement as something that is assembled based on his logical statement (judgement) or various type of sources (evidentials).

There are seven main modal auxiliaries in Japanese which express epistemic modality: *hazu* 'must be', *ni chigainai* 'must be', *kamoshirenai* 'may be', *daroo* 'probably', *yoo* 'looks like', *soo* 'appears to be/hearsay', and *rashii* 'seems like'.

Expression of judgment include *hazu*, the auxiliary *daroo* and two periphrastic constructions, *kamoshirenai* (a relatively low certainty) and *ni-chigainai* (a relatively high certainty).

Hazu is a noun which is always accompanied by the copula *desu*, and which may follow a proposition that includes a verb, an adjective, a noun, or an adjectival noun as a predicate. The English equivalents of *hazu* are 'must be', 'is expected to be', and 'is supposed to be'. When *hazu* functions as modal auxiliary, it indicates a high degree of speaker conviction. It is used when the speaker suggests that a proposition is the natural result of what s/he has witnessed. *Hazu* is not found in negative or question forms. Example:

- (1) *Moo ku ji ni natta node, kanojoo wa kaisha ni tsuite iru hazu da.*

Nine o' clock because she TOP office
LOC come MOD COP

'Because the time is already nine o'clock,
she must be at the office.'

Hazu expresses epistemic modality (epistemic necessity) only when it appears in modal content. Here it always requires evidence to back up the claim it makes. The evidence can be what the speaker has just seen or heard, but also could be something which has previously been accepted as fact. Therefore a sentence with *hazu* may often be restated, *koto ni natte iru* 'something has been decided or something is supposed to' if a speaker is in a situation where s/he is to give an actual statement. When *hazu* is changed to negative or past tense forms, it no longer carries the same meaning as the modal auxiliary *hazu*. *Hazu* in a negative sentence is equivalent to the noun "possibility".

Ni chigainai is derived from the phrase *machigai wa nai* 'there is no mistake'. It is interpreted as the English modal "must". It expresses a speaker's strong sense-based reservations about asserting the truth of a proposition. For example:

- (2) *Tabako no suigara ga aru kara, dareka ga ita ni chigai nai.*

Cigarette butt NOM exist because some-
body NOM exist MOD

'Because there is a cigarette butt, there
must be somebody here.'

It can be concluded that *ni chigai nai* is used to express the speaker's conviction, based on outward evidence or the speaker's intuition, that a proposition has a strong possibility of being realized. Since the situation invites the speaker's speculative intuition, it should also be said that compared to *hazu*, *ni chigai nai* involves a greater deal of realization.

Daroo is an informal form of *deshoo* which is itself a transformation of the copula *desu*. Moriyama (1989) posits that *daroo* exhibits two meanings: confirmation of propositions (tag

question), and judgment of probability. *Daroo* simply expresses a speaker's conjecture based on the environment in which the speaker delivers the judgment. The judgment can be based on firm, believable evidence, or it can be a speaker's intuitive judgment. *Deshoo* especially is often heard in TV/radio weather forecasts. For example:

- (3) *Ashita ame ga furu deshoo.*

Tomorrow rain NOM fall MOD

'Tomorrow probably it will rain.'

The function of *daroo* is quite complicated. However, when *daroo* is used as a modal auxiliary, it indicates a relatively wide range of implications, involving both necessity and possibility, in regard to the speaker's confidence in the truth of the proposition.

Kamoshirenai literally means 'it can not be known'. *Kamoshirenai* can be used when a speaker does not possess firm evidence, but rather judges a situation based on his/her intuition and the surrounding environment. A sentence with *kamoshirenai* can be interpreted as 'it is possible that X happens'. *Kamoshirenai* also can emphasize the hypotheticality of an expressed proposition. The judgment leans toward neither realization nor non-realization of the proposition. Example:

- (4) *Jikan ga attara, kare ga paatii ni kuru kamoshirenai.*

Time NOM have-COND he NOM party
LOC come MOD

'If he has time, maybe he will come to the
party.'

According to Palmer (1986:66), there are many languages in which the epistemic system appears to consist of both evidentials and judgments. Barnes (1984:255) states that there are five ways in which information is obtained: visually; through a sense other than the visual; through evidence of the state or event; or by assuming what happened, and there is a hierarchical relation between these terms. The visuals are the preferred evidentials and they are used whenever a speaker has seen, or is looking at, a state or event.

Although Barnes uses the term 'evidential' not 'auxiliaries', these evidential morphemes are very similar to the Japanese auxiliaries *soo*, *rashii*, and *yoo*, all of which indicate how a speaker obtains information. These auxiliaries also express modality since they are all concerned with a speaker's supposition about the possibility and the expressed proposition.

Soo is used to convey secondhand information to another party. Its use, however, does not distinguish between information obtained directly or information from a third party. A sentence with *soo* involves a speaker's judgments which are based on various visual and sensory impressions. Example:

- (5) *Moo sugu ame ga furi soo da ne.*
 Soon rain NOM fall MOD COP PART
 'It appears that it will rain soon.'

This sentence expresses a judgment that something is about to happen in the near future. The speaker is making a judgment based on information gained through observation.

Rashii is a presumptive judgment which is derived from outside information. In many cases *rashii* can be substituted for *yoo*. It can be said that *rashii* is used when an utterance has its roots in obtained information rather than a speaker's supposition based on knowledge s/he acquired. *Rashii* is used with the plain form of all parts of speech and behaves like an adjective. Example:

- (6) *Denki ga tsuite iru node, kare ga heya ni iru rashii.*
 Lamp NOM switch on because, he NOM room LOC exist MOD
 'Because the lamp is switched on, it seems he is in the room.'

The fact that 'the lamp is switched on' in (6) is based on speaker's visual observation from outside the room leads the speaker to presume that somebody is in the room.

It has basically two uses: suppositional judgment and metaphor. Teramura (1984) explains that the central meaning of *yoo* is 'close to the truth', but it can be divided into two

meanings. The first meaning comes about when a situation is such that a speaker is not sure if a proposition is true or not, but supposes it may be very close to the truth based on his/her observation (suppositional judgment). The second meaning occurs when a speaker knows the truth value of the proposition, but recognizes that some other objects have an appearance that is very similar to the subject of the propositions.

Yoo may be added to verbs, adjectives, nouns followed by *no* and adjectival nouns followed by *na*. *Yoo* can occur in past tense and question forms, but not in negative forms. Example:

- (7) *Mirukarani kono ringo wa oishii yoo da.*
 as-it-looks this apple TOP delicious MOD COP.
 'Based on its appearance, this apple seems delicious.'

The use of *yoo* in (7) is based on the appearance of the apple. Because the apple looks red and fresh, for example, the speaker concludes that it is delicious. The use of *yoo* in (7) is for a judgment.

As the degree of necessity increases, a proposition comes more and more to resemble a simple factual statement. The reason modal auxiliaries are used by a speaker is that the speaker wants to append his/her opinion or judgment to a statement in order not to appear to assume that the statement is always necessarily true. If the statement is logically true, there is no necessity for the speaker to append it. This is why, for the most parts, a sentence in the past does not express modality. An event which occurred in the past has become historical truth.

Although modality is concerned with both necessity and possibility, there is a certain range in which these two notions are expressed by modal auxiliaries. The greater the degree of necessity, the closer the sentence comes to being considered as an actual event. Possibility and actuality have a parallel relationship

in that low possibility also indicates low actuality. Hypotheticality increases as the actuality of a propositions decreases.

Subjectivity also increases as the degree of actuality decreases. The following charts summarize this information.

Table 1. Epistemic judgement and the degree of proposition

	Possibility	Necessity	Hypotheticality	Subjectivity
Hazu	+	++++	+	++++
Ni Chigainai	++	+++	++	+++
Daroo	+++	++	+++	++
Kamoshirenai	++++	+	++++	+

Table 2. The degree of proposition of epistemic judgement and evidentials

	Possibility	Necessity	Hypotheticality	Subjectivity
Hazu	+	++++++	+	++++++
Ni Chigainai	++	++++++	++	++++++
Soo	+++	+++++	+++	+++++
Rashii	++++	++++	++++	++++
Daroo	+++++	+++	+++++	+++
Yoo	+++++	++	+++++	++
Kamoshirenai	+++++	+	+++++	+

DEONTIC MODALITY

Deontic modality is concerned with obligation, permission, and prohibition. Deontic modality is quite distinct from epistemic modality in that it is not concerned with a speaker's supposition and in that it is used in propositional content. Since deontic modality can be used to refer to not only the speaker her/himself, but also other individual's action, by obliging or prohibiting others for example, it is natural that deontic modes can become an object for speaker supposition. When the sentence which expresses deontic modality is compatible with an objective statement spoken by the same speaker, the deontic form creates a strong degree of necessity that the proposition will be actualized from the speaker's view point.

Beki means 'duty', or 'obligation'. It is related to what one is supposed to do in the society s/he lives in. Therefore, it seems that when *beki* is used, the feeling is that a judgment is being made based on social expectations. The speaker is trying to convey that the basis

for imposing the obligation on the listener is not due to the speaker's own subjective judgment, but rather to social expectation. Example:

- (8) *Watashitachi wa toshi ue no hito ni kei'i o harau beki da.*
 We NOM elder people DAT respect OBJ pay MOD COP.
 'We should respect the elder people.'

It is well known that respecting elder people is one of the social rules in Japan. The use of *beki* in (8) is to express a judgment based on this social rule.

Similar to this modal are *nakutewa ikenai* or *naito ikenai*. These auxiliaries also express obligation. The difference between *beki* and *nakereba naranai* is that *beki* implies some kind of prerequisite idea or information, while *nakereba naranai* is based purely on the speaker's judgment. The differences can be observed in the following example.

- (9a) *O sewa ni natta sensei ni orei o iu beki da.*
 Indebt-PAST teacher DAT gratitude OBJ
 say MOD COP
 'We must say thanks to the teacher whom we are really indebted to.'
- (9b) *O sewa ni natta sensei ni orei o iwa nakereba naranai.*
 Indebt-PAST teacher DAT gratitude OBJ
 say MOD
 'We must say thanks to the teacher whom we are really indebted to.'

The first sentence gives the impression that the speech action was based on morals and societal expectation; the listener is expected to morally obey what s/he was told. The second sentence also obliges the listener to carry out an action. The sentence, however, does not strongly imply that a societal expectation is involved, but rather that the speech act is the result of the speaker's own subjective judgment. The following table describes how the English language "must" is interpreted in Japanese.

Table 3. The interpretation of the English modal "must" in Japanese

	Epistemic Modality	Deontic Modality
Objective	<i>Hazu</i> Pre-requisite evidence	<i>Beki</i> Social expectation
Subjective	<i>Ni chigainai</i> Intuitive strong assumption	<i>Nakereba naranai</i> Subjective judgment of obligation

The permissive meaning in Japanese is expressed by *te mo ii*. The deontic "may" *te mo ii* involves the second person directly. Just as the English 'may' expresses the possibility of the proposition's realization by the listener, the Japanese *te mo ii* expresses the same notions. *Te mo ii* invites negative form *nakutemo ii* which means 'It's OK if you don't ...'. When *nakutemo ii* is used, it involves not only the notion of possibility, but also of necessity.

- (10a) *Jikan ga attara, itte mo ii.*
 Time NOM exist-COND go MOD
 'If you have time, it's OK if you go.'
- (10b) *Jikan ga nakattara, ikanakute mo ii.*
 Time NOM not exist-COND not go MOD
 'If you don't have time, it's OK if you don't go.'

The first sentence can be restated as "it is possible (for the listener) to go". However, *nakutemo ii* in the second sentence can be restated as 'it is possible (for the listener) not to go' and also 'it is not necessary (for the listener) to go'. Therefore, *na kutemo ii* is related to both necessity and possibility.

Although the meanings associated with deontic modality differ from those of epistemic modality, both of them involve the notions of necessity and possibility. According to Lyon (1977:823), deontic modality is concerned with "the necessity or possibility acts performed by morally responsible agents." The relation of deontic modality and the notion of necessity and possibility is summarized in the following chart.

Table 4. The degree of necessity and probability of Japanese deontic modality

	Possibility	Necessity
Nakereba naranai	+	++++
Beki	++	+++
Nakutemo ii	+++	++
Temo ii	++++	+

SUMMARY

The Japanese modals which express judgement, such as *hazu* 'must be', *ni chigainai* 'must be', *kamoshirenai* 'may be', *daroo* 'probably', and the evidentials modals, such as *yoo* 'looks like', *soo* 'appears to be/hearsay', and *rashii* 'seems like' are categorized as epistemic modalities. However, the Japanese modals *beki* (must), *nakereba naranai* (should), dan *temo ii* (may) can be categorized as deontic modalities.

Epistemic modality involves speaker-oriented notions of possibility and necessity that are not expressed through deontic modality. Deontic modality is always concerned with the realization of some action, while epistemic modality is concerned with the expression of the speaker's view of the degree of a proposition's truth. In examining the Japanese sentence, we find that epistemic modality is expressed by

modal auxiliaries which constitute modal content, while deontic modality is expressed in propositional content.

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