An Examination of Negative Sentences in Japanese: Features of Japanese Adverbial Negative Polarity Items

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Abstract
The goal of this study is to examine the features of selected adverbial negative polarity items (NPIs) of Japanese, which bear more than just a negative feature [+Neg]. The paper is structured as follows: in section 2 and 3, syntactic features of negative structures are explained. Then in section 4, semantic differences among the selected NPI adverbs are depicted by comparing example sentences. Section 5 is the conclusion with implications for future research.

1. Introduction
One of the most obvious struggles of L2 Japanese learners is related to negative concord, which requires negative sentence ending and appears to be a double negative to many non-natives. The reasons for the misuse by L2 Japanese learners are lack of systematic instructions, and confusing dictionary definitions which, in some cases, use each other to explain the meaning even though they are not exactly interchangeable in actual sentences. The feature of Japanese NPI adverbs is more than just [+Neg], and the delicate nuance of each definition in Japanese gets lost in translation.

2. Background
Japanese NPI adverbs imply meanings such as degree of negativity and description of an action, effect and/or situation, and emphatically describe different levels of states. Maynard (2000) clarifies how various expression types are used to describe emotions/feelings through language, and she stated that Japanese expressions are self-centered because the Japanese language allows speakers/writers to convey delicate subjective attitudes toward the world by using various adverbs. Mastering such NPI adverbs is one of the keys to helping L2 Japanese learners refine their fluency. Asada (2007) points out that L2 Japanese learners can be separated into two groups: those who use adverbs often and those who do not use adverbs at all. She claims there are structural differences between adverbs that are easily acquired and those that are harder for L2 learners. She states that her findings are in accordance with Kawaguchi & Sasaki (1996) that L2 Japanese learners seem to more easily acquire adverbs that require a concord structure. Considering how adverbs can increase the depth of expression, and research results indicate that adverbs that require negative concord are easier to acquire than other types of adverbs, NPI adverbs should receive more attention in Japanese pedagogy.
2.1. Negative concord and negative polarity items

When creating a negative sentence in English, the most basic rule is to use the word ‘not’ to indicate negation. There are also phrases such as ‘a red cent’ or ‘a single thing’ that must appear in a negative context and they are, therefore, examples of English NPIs (Carnie, 2013). NPIs are lexical items that appear strictly in a negative context (Matthews, 2014), and negative concord (NC) is a structure in which multiple negative elements appear in a sentence to form a single negation. Unlike English, Japanese NPIs require a negative element such as nai to co-occur to form a single negation. Example (1-2) show Japanese negative sentences without an NPI adverb and with an NPI adverb.

(1) Zyon-wa sakana-o tabe-nai.
John-TOP fish-DO eat-NEG
‘John does not eat fish.’

(2) Zyon-wa kessite sakana-o tabe-nai.
John-TOP never[NPI] fish-DO eat-NEG
‘John never eats fish.’

3. Examination of negative sentences with NPI adverbs

The current study focuses on a few adverbs that co-occur with the overt negative expression – nai. The adverbs selected for study are ikkoo ni, danzite, and taisite, along with more commonly used adverbs (tootei, kessite, amari, and rokuni) that appear in the Japanese grammar dictionaries of Makino & Tsutsui (1995 & 2008). The dictionary definitions of adverbs and Kinsiu et al. (2000)’s adverb categorizations are useful; however, they do not show the differences in meaning among adverbs listed within each category, making them all seem to be interchangeable to L2 Japanese learners.

An examination of NPI adverbs was performed by three native speakers using appropriate example sentences from online dictionaries (Goo Dictionary, Yahoo! Dictionary, and WebSaru Jisho). First, only the NPIs were switched around in each example sentence to determine grammaticality, leaving the rest of the example sentence unchanged. Next, the differences in sentential meaning that resulted were compared. Based on this process, the author judged whether adverbs with similar meanings are always interchangeable and determined the reasons for any resulting ungrammaticality. From an initial examination of tendencies observed in interchangeability, NPIs were separated into groups according to whether they are swapped with each other. In the following sections, comparisons of adverbs are made as follows: 1) ikkoo ni and tootei, 2) tootei and kessite, 3) kessite and danzite, and 4) amari, taisite, and rokuni.

4. Analysis of the meaning and use of NPIs

4.1. Comparison of ikkoo ni with tootei

In this section, we compare the adverb ikkoo ni with tootei. Examples (3-4) below show that ikkoo ni and tootei are interchangeable when the predicate is a verb such as naru ‘become’ or wakaru ‘understand.’
On the contrary, in the following examples (5-8), these adverbs are not interchangeable.

(5) *UFO*-*wa* hikooki-towa* tootei/*ikkoo ni* omoe-nai ziguzaguno
UFO-*TOP* airplane-*TOP* [NPI] think-*NEG* zigzag
ugoki-de higasino yama-ni tonei-tta.
movement-*MAN* east-*GER* mountain-*GT* fly-**PST**
‘The UFO flew away to the mountain in the east as it made a zigzag movement
that one can never mistake it with an airplane.’

The phrase *ikkoo ni* expresses an unchanging situation over some duration of time during which
a change could have occurred but did not. In the case of (5), for a change to occur, the
speaker/writer must have second thoughts about what (s)he saw, which would take some time.
The determination of whether the flying object was an airplane or not is
instantaneous, so a sentence such as (5) cannot co-occur with the adverb *ikkoo ni* implying a
broader time span. Exactly what time span is required for *ikkoo ni* to be grammatical depends on
the situation, something based on the speaker/writer’s judgment or perception of waiting ‘long
enough.’ Another aspect that grammatical sentences with *ikkoo ni* have in common is the
speaker/writer’s expectation of change. Example (5) with *ikkoo ni* is ungrammatical due to the
sense that the expectation of change is absent. This analysis is consistent with Morita’s claim
(1997 & 2008) that *ikkoo ni* implies disappointment of the speaker/writer that something does
not change into a different state, and Hida & Asada’s (1994) claim that *ikkoo ni* is similar to
zenzen ‘at all,’ but *ikkoo ni* is subjective and has the implication of an unfulfilled prediction.

(6) Ano ryoori-no mazusa-wa tootei/*ikkoo ni* kotoba-de-wa
that cuisine-*GEN* unsavoriness-*TOP* [NPI] word-*INS-*TOP
hyoogen deki nai
describe can *NEG*
‘It is impossible to describe the disgusting taste of the dish.’

The expression (6) with *ikkoo ni* is not acceptable because dekinai ‘not be able to’ is a present
state and does not imply the possibility of something changes into another state. Even changing
the predicate to dekiruyooni naranai ‘does not become able to’ does not make the sentence
grammatical because the topic mazusa ‘disgusting taste’ is not something that may undergo a
change in state as is required by *ikkoo ni. Therefore, not only does the verb phrase have to indicate a change, but also the topic of the sentence must be something potentially changeable for the sentence to co-occur with *ikkoo ni.

(7) Ano kireina zyosei-ga anna ranboona koto-o suru nante
that beautiful female-TOP such violent thing-DO do that

\[\text{tootei / *ikkoo ni kangaeru-rare-nai.}\]

\[\text{[NPI] think-can-NEG}\]

‘I can’t imagine that that beautiful lady would do such a violent thing.’

Kangaeru ‘think’ commences subconsciously, which is different from other actions where the volition to perform the action (thinking about doing something) is completely separate from actually carrying out the action. The phrase *ikkoo ni kangaeru-rare-nai indicates that one cannot start thinking. Not only is the time span too short for *ikkoo ni to be used, but kangaeru ‘think/ponder’ itself, being a conscious operation involving facts and logic, is incompatible with the implication of *ikkoo ni that one ‘lets time pass and waits for things to change.’ However, the following sentence (7’) is acceptable.

(7’) Ano kireina zyosei-ga anna ranboona koto-o suru nante
that beautiful female-TOP such violent thing-DO do that

\[\text{ikkoo ni sinzi-rare-nai.}\]

\[\text{[NPI] believe-can-NEG}\]

‘I still can’t believe that that beautiful lady would do such a violent thing.’

The difference between (7) and (7’) is that believing occurs when a certain condition is available; while thinking is a spontaneous action that one can initiate subconsciously. ‘Believe’ is a verb, but it is not an active action. Rather, it is an emotion that wells up, so it can co-occur with *ikkoo ni. Thus, in addition to the earlier constraint that *ikkoo ni requires the implication of an extent of time, *ikkoo ni also requires the resulting event to be incidental or something that is not entirely within one’s control. The grammaticality judgments for (8) below can also be accounted for in terms of the time span that *ikkoo ni requires.

(8) Ano abunai zyookyoo-de kare-o tasukeru nante
that dangerous situation-LOC 3SG.MASC-DO rescue that

\[\text{tootei / *ikkoo ni deki masen desita.}\]

\[\text{[NPI] be able to COP.POL.NEG PST}\]

‘It was impossible to rescue him in such a dangerous situation.’

Example (8) with *ikkoo ni is ungrammatical because not only is dekimasen desita ‘could not do it’ based on logical thought, but it is lacking the presupposition that something can be changed over time. Also, the implication of “it should happen, if I wait a while” is incompatible with two elements present in this example: the ‘dangerous situation’ that requires an active response, and the agentive transitive verb tasukeru ‘help/rescue,’ which indicates active involvement of the
The interpretation of the sentence is that the judgment made of the situation is instantaneous and is therefore incompatible with the duration of time that *ikkoo ni* implies. Also, *ikkoo ni* does not have the implication of helplessness as *tootei* does (Hida & Asada, 1994).

In some expressions, *ikkoo ni* can be replaced with *tootei*, as shown in (9) below; however, as with other adverb pairs, they are not completely interchangeable. The following examples (10-11) show that the opposite direction of change from that seen in earlier examples may also cause the sentences to be ungrammatical, but for different reasons.

(9) *Siranai kotoba-de hanasite-itanaode,* karera-ganani-o
know-NEG language-INS talk-PROG because, 3PL-SUB what-DO
hanasite-iru-no-ka, watasitani-waiikkooni/tooteiwakara-na-katta.
speak-PROG-NOM-Q 1PL-DAT-TOP at all[NPI] understand-NEG-PST
‘Because they are using some unknown language, we could not understand at all.’

(10) *Watasi-wa sorede *ikkiinio/tooteikamaimasen.
1SG-TOP that [NPI] mind NEG.POL
‘I don’t mind that at all’

(11) *Kare-no asi-no kegawa ikkagetutatte mo*
3SG.MASC-GER leg-GER injury-TOP one month pass even though
ikkiinio/tooteiyukunaranaka-katta
in no cases[NPI] well become-NEG-PST
‘Even after one month had passed, his leg injury did not get better.’

Example (10) with *ikkiinio* is grammatical because the expectation of something happening does not come true. That is, the sentence implies that although the speaker understands that the hearer is expecting some change (for the speaker to get bothered by the situation), that does not happen. *Tootei* means ‘something cannot be done despite effort put into it’ and this is not consistent with the meaning of sentences (10) and (11), making (10) and (11) ungrammatical. The presence of *kamaimasen* ‘don’t mind’ in (10) and *ikkagetutatte mo* ‘even after a month had passed’ in (11) creates this mismatch in meaning between *tootei* and the meaning of the sentences. *Kamaimasen* in (10) means the person did not do anything about it, and *ikkagetutatte mo* in (11) suggests that there was no additional treatment during the period of time mentioned. Without explicit mention of such treatment, it is understood that nothing was done after the initial treatment or after the event of injury. The sentence can be grammatical with *tootei* only if the presupposition is something like *ishi-tatiga doredake doryokusitemo* ‘no matter how hard doctors tried.’

From our comparison with *tootei*, *ikkiinio* can be defined as an adverb that is used to express a situation where something does not change despite the speaker’s expectation. In summary, *ikkiinio* requires three elements to be present: some passage of time that the speaker/writer perceives as long enough to wait for a change to occur, a predicate with a changeable element, and a topic or subject with a characteristic that is changeable. *Tootei* can be defined as an adverb that is used to emphasize that something cannot be done despite extensive effort being expended to bring about a change.
4.2. Comparison of *tootei* and *kessite*

This section compares *tootei* with another adverb *kessite*, which Makino & Tsutsui list as an expression related in meaning to *tотemo* [~nai]. The adverbs *tootei* and *kessite* have different implications, but despite such a difference, it is possible to interchange them in some cases, such as (12) below.

(12) *Kono suugaku-no mondai-wa syoogakusee-ni-wa tootei/kessite toku-koto-ga deki-nai mondai da.*

[NPI] solve-NOM-SUB can-NEG problem COP

‘This math problem is the one that elementary school students can never solve.’

Example (12) with *tootei* implies that the action indicated cannot be done despite extended effort, and the same expression with *kessite* simply states emphatically that it cannot be done. These adverbs are not always interchangeable, however, as shown in (13-15).

(13) *Nihongo-ga mada tootei/*kessite wakari-masen.

Japanese language-SUB still [NPI] understand-NEG.POL

‘I still don’t understand Japanese at all. Please speak in English.’

(14) *Kyo-no tosyokan-wa kessite/*tootei sizuka-zyaarimasen-desita.

today-GER library-TOP [NPI] quiet-NEG.POL-PST

noisy-PST COP.POL

‘The library was not quiet at all today. It was noisy.’

(15) *Konna koto sinzi-rare-nai kamosirenai ga, watasi-wa sake-o kessite/*tootei nomai no da.

such thing believe-can-NEG may but 1SG-TOP alcohol-DO [NPI] drink-NEG ASP COP

‘You may not be able to believe this, but I do not drink alcohol at all.’

*Kessite* can be used to negate with a nuance that the situation contradicts a presupposition; the presuppositions of (12), (14) and (15) are ‘there might be a slight chance that this math problem can be solvable for some elementary school students,’ ‘the library should be quiet,’ and ‘you seem to think that I drink liquor’ respectively. *Kessite* along with *wakarimasen* in (13) indicates that the state of non-understanding never ends, and this is not compatible with the adverb *mada* ‘still,’ which carries the lexical implication that the end of the state is imminent or possible. The sentence is ungrammatical because of the mismatch between two adverbs modifying the same verb; ‘*mada wakarimasen*’ implies the speaker’s belief in the possibility of becoming able to
understand Japanese, and ‘kessite wakarimasen’ means (s)he will never understand Japanese. According to Morita (1977) and Hida & Asada (1994), kessite has a nuance of negating something despite the presupposition that it is true and thus, cannot be used when there is no such presupposition. The ungrammaticality of (14) with tootei comes from the lack of a sentence structure that allows the implication of active involvement of the speaker’s effort. Example (14) is a declarative statement about the state of the library and it has nothing to do with the speaker’s ability or effort. From (15) with tootei, we can see that tootei requires a predicate that requires someone’s ability to do something. Since (15) is a statement of a plain fact that is currently true, not implying any preexisting effort, it fails to fulfill the conditions tootei requires to be grammatical. Therefore, for the sentence to be grammatical, a different predicate such as that in (15’) below is required.

(15’) Konna koto sinzi-rare-nai kamosirenai ga,
such thing believe-can-NEG may but
watasi-wa sake-o tootei nom-e-nai no da.
1SG-TOP alcohol-DO [NPI] drink-can-NEG ASP COP
‘You may not be able to believe this, but I cannot drink alcohol at all.’

In summary, kessite is different from tootei in that kessite implies the negation of a presupposition. As previously stated, tootei is different from the other two adverbs in that it carries the implication of extended effort.

4.3. Comparison of danzite and kessite
In this section, we will compare the adverb danzite with kessite. According to Hida & Asada (1994), danzite differs from kessite in that it has a nuance that the strong negation is based on a norm or evidence that was acquired through objective observation; however, below examples (16-17) indicates that is not necessarily so when the sentences are expressing determination. The assumption that can be drawn from this is that kessite may not necessarily be replaceable with danzite, and when it can be replaced by danzite, the nuance of the sentence changes because it would become a stronger negation with added implication of some sort of evidence. On the other hand, replacing danzite with kessite hardly alters the nuance of the sentence other than softening the tone. Example (16) illustrates cases where kessite and danzite are interchangeable and (17) illustrates the case where they are not interchangeable.

(16) Ikura sippaisite mo kessite/danzite akirame-masen.
no matter how fail although by no means[NPI] give up-NEG.POL
‘No matter how many times I fail, I will never give up.’

(17) コンドルは動物園では決して断じて育たない。
condor-TOP zoo-LOC-TOP by no means [NPI] grow NEG
‘Condors can never grow at a zoo.’
Example (17) with *danzite* seems odd because *danzite* adds the nuance that the utterance has a definite cause/reason, therefore (17) with *danzite* implies that the speaker firmly believes that there is a definite reason that condors can never be bred and raised at zoos. The example (17) would be grammatical if the phrase *omou* ‘think’ or *sinziru* ‘believe’ is added to the sentence, which indicates *danzite* is an expression that is based on speakers’ strong beliefs or intentions.

\[
(17)' \quad \text{Kondoru-wa doobutuen-de-wa danzite sodata nai to omou.}
\]

condor-TOP zoo-LOC-TOP by no means [NPI] grow NEG C think

‘I think condors can never grow at a zoo.’

As previously stated, Hida & Asada (1994) states that *danzite* is like *kessite* except in the respect that it has a nuance that the strong negation is based on a norm or evidence that was acquired through objective observation. Therefore, *danzite* is only possible with predicates over which the speaker/writer has some decision-making control. Example (17) with *kessite* sounds natural because *kessite* does not add such implication and the speaker/writer is simply stating the fact; therefore, they can make the statement without any firm evidence or strong belief. However, as shown in (16), *kessite* can express the speakers’ intention, indicating that it has a broader scope of usage. In some cases, *danzite* and *kessite* are not interchangeable, as seen in expressions (18-20).

\[
(18) \quad \text{Kinoo-wa samu-katta desu ga kyoo-wa}
\]
yesterday-TOP cold-PST COP.POL but today-TOP *kessite/*danzite samuku arimasen ne.

[NPI] cold NEG.POL IP

‘It was cold yesterday, but it’s not cold at all today.’

\[
(19) \quad \text{Megane-ga ari-masen kara kessite/*danzite mie-masen.}
\]
glasses-SUB exist-NEG.POL so [NPI] see-NEG.POL

‘I can’t see at all because I don’t have glasses.’

\[
(20) \quad \text{Ano obake-yasiki-wa hontooni kowa-katta. kessite/*danzite wasure –rare-nai daroo.}
\]
that ghost-mansion-TOP really scary-PST [NPI] forget-can-NEG PROV

‘That haunted mansion was really scary. I will never be able to forget it.’

Example (18) with *danzite* shows that the sentence-final particle –*ne* cannot co-exist with *danzite* because of its implication that agreement is being sought from the hearer. The same could be said about (20) with *danzite* because the firmness of *danzite* does not match with the meaning of probability, and consequent lack of certainty, that *daroo* denotes. This implication creates a semantic conflict when the speaker is making a firm statement with *danzite*. *Danzite* ‘decisively never’ in the expression (19) is not a good fit when considering the meaning of the sentence, ‘I cannot see because I do not have glasses.’ Example (19) makes the hearer/reader wonder why it
is necessary to firmly state such a seemingly insignificant thing as ‘I cannot see because I do not have my glasses.’ This leaves the hearer with the impression that the speaker must be in a special situation where it is extremely important for him/her to prove that (s)he cannot see.

4.4. Comparison of taisite and amari with rokuni

In this section we compare taisite with the more frequently used adverbs amari and rokuni. Makino & Tsutsui (1995) stated that rokuni [~nai] is “a structure that is used to indicate that something animate does not or cannot do something satisfactorily, sufficiently or properly.” Because the meaning of amari and taisite do not greatly differ, they are usually interchangeable. Examples (21-22) below are examples of when they are not interchangeable. The examples here involve meanings of prohibition, statement (believing and thinking), ability, and possession. Amari ‘not much’ can refer either to level/degree or countable quantity, as in the case of frequency (of entering the room) in (21). Because taisite only refers to a level or degree that is not considered satisfactory, it cannot replace amari in (21).

(21)  Kono heya-ni-wa amari/^[taisite haitte-wa ikemasen yo.' this room-GT-TOP [NPI] enter-TOP must not ASP
‘You must not enter this room often.’

(22)  Kimi-ga omotteiru hodo taisite (^3)amari okane-o mottei-nai.
2SG-TOP think as much [NPI] money-DO have-NEG
‘I don’t have as much money as you think I do.’

Grammaticality of (22) is questionable with amari because kimi-ga omotteiru-hodo ‘as much as you think’ is already setting a high standard, and the sentence requires an adverb that has the implication of ‘not that much’. The factor that makes switching these adverbs impossible is that the sentence is talking about a specific achievement. Amari can be used to refer to the frequency of an achievement, but taisite cannot be used in that way because it implies dissatisfaction with not reaching an expected level of achievement. To the author’s knowledge, there are no cases where rokuni cannot be replaced by amari or taisite. Example (23) is a case where all three adverbs can be interchanged without a change in meaning; however, rokuni has a smaller overall range of usage, as shown in (24-26).

(23)  Taisite/amari/rokuni yakunitat-anai mono-ga takai nedan-de
[NPI] useful-NEG thing-SUB high price-INS
u-rare-teite odoroita.
sell-PAS-CONT suprize.PST
‘I was surprised that such a useless thing is being sold for a high price.’

(24)  Sityuu-wa taisite/amari /^rokuni warui azi-de-wa nakatta.
stew-TOP not much[NPI] bad taste-COP-TOP NEG.PAST
‘The stew did not taste too bad.’
Rokuni can generally be replaced by amari or taisite but the other way around is rare because the usage of rokuni is limited to cases that imply a negative assessment of the speaker/writer that something is not sufficient to the level of his/her expectation, “not even up to the level of a passing grade.” Amari and taisite, by contrast, can be used without such a negative connotation. The meanings of bad taste, loss of value, and likes/dislikes in (24-26) are not spontaneous volitional or intentional actions, but are rather descriptive statements about things. Makino & Tsutsui (1995) claims that rokuni requires an animate subject, but this principle applies by extension even to cases where there is no explicit animate subject. Although examples (23-26) all take inanimate entities as subjects, (23) is grammatical with rokuni because the phrase yakunitatanai ‘useless’ in (23) elliptically refers to hitono ‘to people,’ or dareno ‘to anyone [NPI]’ and mono ‘thing’ is described as though it is an animate subject. This is a case of personification similar to what Kodama (2009) described in her work. She describes that the English word ‘ready’ is usually used with an animate subject, but the usage can be expanded to a non-animate subject as in ‘The shirt is ready.’ Although rokuni usually requires an animate subject, (23) is grammatical because mono ‘thing’ is metaphorically used as an animate subject.

In summary, amari is used to express low frequency, level, or degree; rokuni is used to express dissatisfaction with things not being enough to satisfy the speaker’s standard. Taisite is used to express low level or degree, as measured against a certain high benchmark. Having a benchmark sets taisite apart from amari, and not having a connotation of strong dissatisfaction sets amari apart from rokuni.

5. Discussion
These comparisons made it clear that these NPIs bear more than just a negative feature [+Neg]. These NPI adverbs also carry various implications related to quality, quantity, willingness of the speaker (active or negative involvement), passage of time, etc. Each of these features requires the speaker or writer’s judgment as to “certainty concerning the statement” (Aikhenvald, 2004), a type of meaning that falls under the category of evidentiality. Cornillie (2007) cites Bybee (1985) and Chafe (1986) in distinguishing narrow and broad definitions of evidentiality. The narrow sense of evidentiality includes words that indicate the source of the information, such as rasii, sooda, and yooda in Japanese (in English ‘it seems like,’ ‘I heard that’ and ‘it looks like,’
respectively). The broad sense of evidentiality\(^1\), by contrast, includes epistemic modality as a subcategory. According to Chafe (1986)’s definition, then, adverbs that reflect the speaker’s judgment as to the truth-value of a proposition (regarding the passage of time, quantity, quality, etc.) can be said to possess the evidential feature. The syntactic structure would require some modification to include this feature. The modification would enable the syntactic structure to not only check for the negative feature, but also for the appropriate evidential feature that reflects differences among various NPI adverbs.

6. Conclusion
This paper focused on selected NPI adverbs. Japanese adverbs are copious; however, previous studies suggest that the adverbs that require correlation structures such as negative concord are easier to learn. The author selected a group of NPI adverbs (ikkoo ni, danzite, and taisite) that have ambiguous dictionary definitions and investigated the semantic differences of those adverbs by comparing them against more commonly used adverbs (tootei, kessite, amari, and rokuni). Japanese NPI adverbs have a weak negative feature that must be checked against the strong negative feature of the explicit negation nai for the sentence to be grammatical; however, if the syntax structure only checks for the negative feature, it will allow any kind of NPI adverb to appear in a sentence. Through a comparison of NPI adverbs in various example sentences, it became clear that the features involved are diverse: quality, quantity, passage of time, level, degree, dissatisfaction, unfulfilled prediction, etc., and the common element underlying these features is evidentiality. Evidentiality in Japanese linguistics has been regarded as a feature related only to sentence final expressions that indicate a source of information, such as rasii, sooda, and yooda (in English ‘it seems like,’ ‘I heard that’ and ‘it looks like,’ respectively); however, in the broad sense, evidentiality reflects the speaker’s judgment as to the truth-value of a proposition. The presence of an [+evidentiality] feature associated with Japanese NPI adverbs in syntax can appropriately capture the speaker’s subjective view of the world that is relevant to restricting the range of grammatical usages of NPI adverbs.

It is beneficial to include such evidential features in the instruction of NPI adverbs in the future, for it would enable L2 Japanese learners to acquire the necessary insight to distinguish such differences to become able to communicate more precisely. Although acquisition of NPI adverbs would be a good start, L2 learners also need to acquire many other kinds of adverbs as well to refine their Japanese ability. The need for further research on adverbs is therefore great, together with the development of instructional strategies on how to use them strategically and effectively.

References


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\(^1\) Molina (2012) states that, “Evidentiality not only refers to source of information but also to speaker’s “epistemological stance.” and “Speaker stance also involves attitudinal stance, which indicates feelings or judgments about what is said.”


