

Systematic teaching of Japanese grammar

There are, no doubt, various goals in the teaching of Japanese as a foreign language, and the goal varies depending on the needs of the learners and also of the society. In my view there is a goal which has not been achieved in textbooks for Japanese language teaching.

The problem is that textbooks do not provide a systematic account of related expressions/ constructions. Generally they present related types of expressions/ constructions separately, and they do not present them as a system. For each one of related types of expressions/ constructions, they provide a number of example sentences and give accounts as to how to use them. But they do not show systematically in what respects these related constructions are similar, and in what respects they are different.

It is important to provide a systematic account of related expressions/ constructions. This is particularly useful for advanced learners, for it enables them to synthesize what they have already learned and to comprehend the system that underlies related expressions/ constructions.

The present paper argues for the importance of the inclusion of such a systematic account in the teaching of Japanese grammar.

Japanese has many clause-linkage markers (or subordinate-clause markers), e.g. those for conditional, causal, adversative, and so on. In Tsunoda (2001, 2003, 2004), I proposed a five-level classification of clause linkage of Japanese, in terms of (i) the semantic and/or pragmatic relationship between the subordinate and the main clauses, and (ii) the modality of the main clause.

The five levels are characterized below.

Level I: subordinate clause - [situation]; main clause - [situation] (Both the subordinate and the main clauses describe a situation.)

Level II: subordinate clause - [situation]; main clause - [situation+judgment] (The main clause describes a situation and so does the subordinate clause. In addition, the main clause expresses what may be termed "the speaker's judgment" in a broad sense.)

Level III: subordinate clause - [situation]; main clause [situation+interpersonal effect] (The main clause describes a situation and so does the subordinate clause. In addition, the main clause expresses an interpersonal effect, directed from the speaker to the hearer, e.g. request, command, and question.)

Level IV: subordinate clause - [premise]; main clause - [judgment] (The main clause expresses the speaker's judgment such as inference, conjecture, and conclusion, while the subordinate clause presents a premise on which the judgment is based.)

Level V: subordinate clause - [premise]; main clause - [speech act] (The main clauses expresses a speech act, e.g. statement, command, request, and question, while the subordinate clause presents a premise to the speech act expressed by the main clause.)

Tsunoda (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c) showed that this five-level classification systematically accounts for the use/ non-use of various clause-linkage markers of Japanese: causal (*tame(ni)*, *node*, *kara*), conditional (*to*, *-eba*, *-tara*, *nara*), adversative (*nimokakawarazu*, *noni*, *ga*), and also other clause-linkage markers.

The present paper argues that the inclusion of (i) this five-level classification of clause linkage and (ii) a systematic account of these clause-linkage markers in textbooks for Japanese language teaching, will greatly facilitate the learning of subordinate clauses of Japanese, and this will be particularly useful for advanced learners.

References

- Tsunoda Mie. 2001. Nihongo no nekusasu to modariti ('Nexus and modality in Japanese'). In the preprints of Kokugogakkai 2001 autumn meeting, 24-31.
- _____. 2002. Setsuzoku-hyouden oyobi fukushi-ku to modariti ('Modality in relation to clause-linkage markers and adverbial phrases'). In *Nihongo Kyouiku Houhou Kenkyuu Kaishi*, Vol. 9, No. 2: 6-7.
- _____. 2003. *Nihongo no setsu-bun no rensetsu to modariti* ('Clause-linkage and modality in Japanese'). Ph.D. dissertation, Ochanomizu University.
- _____. 2004a. 'Hanako wa yorokon-de-iru kara, ii koto ga at-ta no darou' no kara ('Kara in the sentence 'Since Hanako looks happy, there must be something good to her'). In *Nihongo Kyouiku Houhou Kenkyuu Kaishi*, Vol. 11, No. 1.
- _____. 2004b. *Nihongo no setsu-bun no rensetsu to modariti* ('Clause-linkage and modality in Japanese'). Tokyo: Kurosio Publishers.
- _____. 2005. Clause-linkage in Japanese language teaching. Paper presented at the 11th International Conference of the European Association for Japanese Studies, held at the University of Vienna.
- _____. 2006a. Doushi: *kagiru* to sono haseikei: Setsuzoku-hyouden, bunmatsu-hyouden, modariti to bunpouka ('The verb *kagiru* and derived expressions: Their finite and non-finite uses, modality and grammaticalization). *Ningenbunka Ronsou* 8, 297-305. Ochanomizu University.
- _____. 2006b. 'Setsu-rensetu to modariti no kaisou' to sono ouyou ('The hierarchy of clause-linkage and modality' and its application'). *Nihongogaku*, 25-6, 30-39. Tokyo: Meiji Shoin.
- _____. 2006c. Jouho-setsu to 'Setsu-rensetsu to modariti no kaisou' (sono 1) (Concessive clauses in relation to 'the hierarchy of clause-linkage and modality.' (part 1)). Forthcoming.