

SEMANTIC NEGATION IN SPEECH MANIFESTATION

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Abstract: This article analyzes the grammatical and semantic features of negation in the Japanese language. The study examines the formation and usage of negative forms in verbs, adjectives, and nouns with the help of illustrative examples. In addition to the standard negative form *-nai*, the article discusses the functional characteristics of the literary and nonstandard negative forms *-zu* and *-nu*. The research also focuses on negative questions and their responses in Japanese, the relationship between the *shika* construction and negation, intensifying negative expressions, and the expression of obligation through double negation. The morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic aspects of negation in Japanese are explored, alongside comparative observations with similar phenomena in the Uzbek language.

Keywords: Japanese language, negation category, grammatical negation, semantic negation, *-nai*, *-zu*.

Introduction

Having examined the attachment of negation and the degree of meaning in both types of adjectives, we may now turn our attention to nouns. As mentioned above, noun negation is expressed either in the same way as na-adjectives or through the use of a negative verb together with nominative and topic-marking particles. In Japanese, nouns are negated differently depending on whether existential negation or non-existential negation is intended. I will attempt to explain this distinction through the following examples.

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| a. テレビがありません | terebi ga arimasen |
| b. テレビがあります | terebi ga arimasu |
| c. テレビじゃありません | terebi ja arimasen |
| d. テレビです | terebi desu |

Through these examples, the theory discussed above may be clarified. Example (a) represents existential negation and functions as the negative counterpart of example (b). In this case, the meaning indicates that everything exists except for this particular object, namely the television. On the other hand, example (c) expresses complete non-identity or categorical negation and serves as the negative form of example (d). Therefore, while existential negation focuses on the absence or non-existence of an entity, the latter construction negates the nominal predicate itself.

When discussing other literary negative suffixes, it should be noted that Japanese literary language possesses two major suffixes expressing negation, namely *-zu* and *-nu*. The standard negative form *-nai*, which has been examined up to this point, is considered the common or standard negation and is used in both spoken and written discourse.

The negative suffix -zu is attached directly to the verb stem. Similar to the formation of the -nai form, the vowel preceding -masu changes into the a-row vowel, after which the suffix -zu is added, resulting in an infinitive-like construction.

人ともわからずです

hitotomo wakarazu desu

Generally, the negative suffix -zu may be translated as “without doing,” and it frequently functions as a subordinating connector. In terms of meaning, it can be regarded as similar to nakute, functioning as an adjectival gerund, while in the sense of naide it carries a meaning equivalent to the verbal gerund used in spoken language.

夕べは、寝ないで、勉強しました。 Yuube wa, nenai de benkyō shimashita.

“Last night, I studied without sleeping.”

食べずに、寝た。 tabezu ni neta. “I went to sleep without eating.”

Thus, the -zu construction demonstrates both grammatical and semantic similarities with the forms nakute and naide, although it is stylistically more formal and literary in usage.

As Martin states, the -zu form carries a rather rigid and formal tone and is therefore mainly restricted to written discourse. Another literary negative form is -nu. Similar to -zu and the standard negative suffix -na-, it is attached directly to the verb stem through morphophonological changes. However, -nu is even more restricted in usage than -zu and is found almost exclusively in a limited number of expressions, idioms, and literary constructions.

火のない所に煙は立たぬ。

Hi no nai tokoro ni kemuri wa tatanu.

“There is no smoke where there is no fire.”

Martin further demonstrates that the negative suffix -nu performs the same grammatical function as the standard negative suffix -na- in the following examples:

a. そう言わぬ

sō iwanu

b. そう言わない

sō iwanai

As can be observed from these examples, both constructions convey the same negative meaning, although the -nu form is stylistically more literary and archaic compared to the standard -nai form commonly used in contemporary Japanese.

Literature

Review

These non-standard negative constructions possess limited formal usage and are mainly encountered in literary works, idiomatic expressions, and fixed phrases. Furthermore, Martin notes that during the periods examined in his research, these negative suffixes were also used in Kansai dialect speech. Negative questions and the ways they are answered represent a distinctive communicative feature of Japanese society and language. In Japanese, affirmative and agreement expressions such as hai, un, sō, and ee are commonly used. Likewise, one encounters negative response forms such as uun, iie, and iya. Speakers of Uzbek and other languages may initially interpret these expressions according to the norms of their native languages. However, when examined more carefully from the Japanese perspective, the matter appears considerably more complex.

Before answering a question, it is necessary to distinguish what type of question is being asked. In Japanese, there are generally two types of questions: neutral questions and questions that presuppose or expect an affirmative response. Neutral questions are typically formed with the particle ka. Within this category, there are questions that do not inherently anticipate a specific answer. Questions expecting affirmation, on the other hand, are often expressed through negative constructions.

One-word responses to negative questions demonstrate a unique linguistic behavior. When compared with Uzbek, situations in which Uzbek speakers would normally expect the answer “yes” may correspond to *ie* in Japanese, while situations where Uzbek would expect “no” may instead require *hai*.

東京へ行きませんでしたか。 Tōkyō e ikimasen deshita ka?

“Didn’t you go to Tokyo?”

はい、行きませんでした。 Hai, ikimasen deshita.

“No, I did not go.”

いいえ、行きました。 Iie, ikimashita.

“Yes, I went.”

However, one-word responses may also function similarly to Uzbek, where *hai* corresponds to “yes” and *ie* to “no.” What becomes decisive in such constructions is the element being negated within the discourse. Therefore, it may be argued that the speaker’s affirmative or negative response reflects not merely syntactic negation, but rather semantic negation. The particle *shika* carries meanings such as “only,” “nothing except,” “nothing other than,” “besides this nothing else,” or “hardly anything.” The particle *shika* inherently requires the predicate to be negated. Therefore, it must always occur together with explicit negative markers such as *-na*, *-nu*, *-zu*, *-mai*, or with negative-like adjectival expressions such as *dame*. In essence, *shika* indicates the exclusion or negation of everything other than the element with which it appears. For example:

なにか食べた。 Nanika tabeta?

“Did you eat something?”

バナナしか。 Banana shika.

“Nothing but bananas.”

From this example, it may be observed that even though explicit negative forms such as *-masen* or *-nai* are absent, the overall meaning of the utterance remains semantically negative. The particle *shika* may also occur together with overt negative constructions. For example:

家に三人しかいない。 Uchi ni sannin shika inai.

“There are only three people at home.”

Furthermore, when *shika* follows other particles, those particles may be omitted.

若者はハンバーガーやピザを食べる。 Wakamono wa hanbāgā ya piza o taberu.

“Young people eat hamburgers and pizza.”

若者はハンバーガーやピザしか食べない。 Wakamono wa hanbāgā ya piza shika tabenai.

“Young people eat nothing except hamburgers and pizza.”

As can be seen from the example above, the object marker *o* disappears after the introduction of *shika*. This omission occurs in both spoken and written discourse. In sentences containing *shika*, the negative marker generally appears at the end of the clause.

名前しか書く必要はない。

Namae shika kaku hitsuyō wa nai.

“There is no need to write anything except the name.”

By attaching *shika* to different parts of a sentence, the meaning of the sentence changes accordingly.

a. ミラーがビールを飲む。 Mīra ga bīru o nomu.

“Miller drinks beer.”

b. ミラーしかビールを飲まない。 Mīra shika bīru o nomanai.

“No one except Miller drinks beer.”

c. ミラーがビールしか飲まない。 Mīra ga bīru shika nomanai.

“Miller drinks nothing except beer.”

d. ミラーがビールを飲むしかない。 Mīra ga bīru o nomu shika nai.

“There is no choice but for Miller to drink beer.”

These examples clearly demonstrate that the semantic focus of negation changes depending on the syntactic position of shika within the sentence.

The particle shika cannot be used together with other negative pronouns such as daremo. The reason for this restriction is that, both grammatically and semantically, the sentence would lose its coherence and intended meaning. Another interesting characteristic of shika is that, in certain contexts, its semantic meaning may appear to contradict its formal negative structure. This can be observed in the following example:

この本しかだめだ。 Kono hon shika dame da.

“Only this book is acceptable.”

As can be seen, the construction formally contains a negative element through dame, yet the overall meaning of the sentence is affirmative rather than negative. It is also necessary to discuss words that intensify negation in Japanese. Adverbial expressions such as 本当に (hontōni), 一向に (ikkō ni), ねっから (nekkara), and ぜんぜん (zenzen) strengthen the force of negation and allow the speaker to express denial more explicitly. Through the use of these expressions, the negated element may appear in various parts of the sentence depending on the intended emphasis.

Among these intensifying expressions, zenzen frequently appears in conversational discourse, especially together with verbs expressing cognition or understanding, such as “to know” or “to understand.” Another important expression is とんでもない (tondemonai), which carries meanings such as “absolutely not,” “impossible,” or “unthinkable,” and is likewise used in negative contexts. In Japanese, obligation is often expressed through constructions containing double negation.

Results

And

Discussion

The expression of obligation in Japanese can be described through several grammatical patterns, the first of which is formed using a negative verb construction. In this structure, the standard negative form -na- combines with the conjunctive form -kute. The particle wa is then added for topicalization or emphasis, resulting in the form nakute wa. This construction can be translated as “if not” or “unless.” Subsequently, a further negative or prohibitive element is added, yielding expressions such as nakute wa naranai. This structure conveys the meaning that one “cannot avoid doing something” or “must do something.” The second method involves conditional constructions. This pattern is similar to the one described above, but differs in that the particle to is used to express a natural consequence or inevitable result. Negation is again formed using -nai. In addition, expressions such as ikenai, naranai, or dame may appear as prohibitive elements. The resulting structure V-nai to naranai conveys the meaning that “if one does not perform action X, it will lead to an undesirable or disadvantageous outcome.”

The third method is also based on conditional construction, but employs a different structural form. In this case, the conditional suffix -kereba is used, which attaches to the verb stem and

forms a conditional meaning similar to “if.” Within this structure, expressions such as *dame*, *naranai*, or *ikenai* may also be used. In spoken language, these constructions are often shortened for ease of communication: *nakute wa* becomes *nakucha*, while *nakereba* becomes *nakya*. These reduced forms generally do not convey strict compulsion, but rather indicate that an action is required or expected. There are also several modal elements that carry specific semantic functions. For example, *hazu* expresses obligation or expectation, *wake* expresses reason, and *koto* expresses factuality. From this it can be observed that when double negation occurs, the resulting meaning may become affirmative in interpretation. For instance, the negative form *nai hazu wa nai* corresponds to the affirmative form *aru hazu da*.

Conclusion

The standard negative form in Japanese is constructed by attaching the suffix *-na* directly to the verb stem. Negation through suffixation is one of the most widely used derivational processes in the language. Politeness levels also play an important role and differ significantly from plain (non-polite) verb forms. In polite speech, negation is expressed using the suffix *-en*, which is attached after the verb stem. Two major types of adjectives have also been described in detail. *i*-adjectives form negation in a manner similar to verbs in their plain forms. The negative marker *-na* functions consistently, while it is attached to the adjective stem in its inflected form. There is also a stem alternation process in which the adverbial suffix *-ku* appears between the adjective stem and the negative marker. Tense marking follows a pattern similar to that of verbs in the plain form. *na*-adjectives are negated using the copular negative form *ja nai*, which demonstrates behavior similar to structural or constituent negation. Nouns are also negated in a similar way to *na*-adjectives. However, there is another method of negating nouns through existential constructions: using the verb *aru* for inanimate objects and *iru* for animate beings. Additional aspects include the negation of non-verbal predicates and indefinite pronouns. Various other phenomena have also been examined. After analyzing Japanese negation patterns and their typological features, this dissertation aims to cover a sufficiently broad range of topics and thereby contribute meaningfully to the existing literature on this subject.

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