

MAKING SENSE OF Japanese Grammar

A Clear Guide Through Common Problems



ZELJKO CIPRIS AND SHOKO HAMANO



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and
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Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
<i>Introduction</i>	xi

Part 1. Grammatical Categories and the Basic Architecture of a Sentence 1

1	The subject corresponds to an item around which an event evolves	3
2	Use the verb at the end!	5
3	An explicit subject is optional	6
4	Pay attention to the last part of a sentence	7
5	There are three types of verb-like constituents	9
6	The noun in the sentence <i>gakusei-desu</i> is not the subject!	11
7	Japanese speakers avoid certain pronouns	13
8	You cannot always guess the grammatical category of a Japanese form from the grammatical category of its English counterpart	15
9	Dictionary forms of all Japanese adjectives end with <i>-ii</i> , <i>-ai</i> , <i>-oi</i> , or <i>-ui</i>	16
10	“Noun” is an open category in Japanese	17
11	Use the same word order for questions. Attach <i>-ka</i> to a statement to turn it into a question	19
12	Do not hesitate to use the same verb over and over again	22
13	Japanese particles are postpositions	23
14	Classification of particles	25

Part 2. Phrase Particles: Marking the Functions of Noun Phrases in a Sentence 29

15	A phrase particle determines the function of the noun	31
16	The particle <i>-wa</i> identifies what the sentence is about and urges the listener to pay attention to the part that follows	33
17	The particle <i>-mo</i> adds the preceding noun phrase to a list of objects	36
18	Use of <i>-wa</i> and <i>-mo</i> presupposes a contextual set	38
19	<i>-ga</i> is the subject marker; <i>-o</i> is the direct object marker	40
20	<i>-ga</i> and <i>-o</i> mark a fresh participant; <i>-wa</i> marks a familiar participant already anchored in a context	43
21	Do not attach <i>-wa</i> to interrogative WH-phrases	46
22	Only one direct object particle <i>-o</i> appears per verb	48

23	The subject and the direct object are the primary grammatical categories	50
24	Two types of locational particles: <i>-de</i> and <i>-ni</i>	53
25	Three reasons not to use phrase particles	57
26	“Exceptional” uses of <i>-ga</i>	60
27	Grammatical reasons for alternations of particles	64
28	The person marked with the particle <i>-ni</i> is an active participant in an interaction	66
29	The person marked with the particle <i>-to</i> is a “reciprocal” participant in an interaction	71
30	Certain auxiliary verbs take the non-subject participant particle <i>-ni</i>	73
31	The auxiliary verb <i>-morau</i> comes with <i>-ni</i> ; the auxiliary verbs <i>-ageru</i> and <i>-kureru</i> do not	76
32	Another consequence of the double- <i>o</i> constraint	79
33	Phrase particles are powerful!	80
Part 3. Expanding Noun Phrases		83
34	The particle <i>-no</i> between two nouns turns the first noun into a modifier	85
35	A noun modified by an adjective functions like a noun	87
36	The modifier consistently precedes the modified	88
37	Spatial relationships are expressed with stacked nouns	90
38	The particle <i>-no</i> mediates a wide range of relationships. <i>Mekishiko-jin-no tomodachi</i> , for instance, means either “a friend of a Mexican” or “a friend who is Mexican”	92
39	The particle <i>-to</i> connects noun phrases representing separate objects	94
40	<i>Na</i> -nouns behave like nouns, but they have “fuzzy” meanings	96
41	To say something more complex, use complex noun phrases	99
42	The head noun of a complex noun phrase carries with it only the particle which marks its function in a larger sphere	101
43	Japanese does not employ WH-phrases for creating complex noun phrases	103
44	<i>Mekishiko-jin-no tomodachi</i> “a Mexican friend” is a complex noun phrase	105
45	<i>Atarashii tomodachi</i> “a new friend” is also a kind of complex noun phrase	107
46	One more way to create a complex noun phrase	109
47	<i>No</i> is for a familiar event; <i>koto</i> is for an abstract idea	111
Part 4. Tense and Events		115
48	There are only two tenses in Japanese: non-past and past	117
49	Special use of past tense forms	119

50	<i>Te</i> -forms connect very closely related events	121
51	Tense markers separate events	124
52	Events are tied with varying degrees of cohesion inside a sentence	129
53	Two perspectives for tense inside a subordinate clause	133
54	The main clause perspective means involvement	137
55	The speaker's perspective means incidental connection, speaker's recollection, or speaker's reasoning	140
Part 5. Miscellaneous Topics		143
56	<i>Hai</i> and <i>ee</i> mean "I agree" or "I hear you"; <i>iie</i> means "I disagree"	145
57	<i>Are</i> "that" is for things known to both speaker and hearer; <i>sore</i> "that" is for something just mentioned	149
58	The longer and vaguer, the more polite	152
59	Polite forms and direct forms	153
60	Reality consists of continuous-grade scales; language makes things discrete	156
61	Interpretations of <i>-te-kuru/-te-iku</i>	159
62	Expressing solidarity with <i>-te-kuru/-te-iku</i>	163
63	<i>-n-da</i> expresses expectation of mutual understanding	165
64	<i>-n-da-kara</i> does not provide personal information. Do not overuse it!	167
65	There are ways to identify hidden subjects	170
66	Do not be intimidated by apparent complexity	175
<i>Answers to the Questions</i>		179
<i>Glossary</i>		193
<i>Index</i>		197

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Introduction

The purpose of this book is to explain basic principles underlying a wide range of phenomena in Japanese. We hope that our readers will realize that many phenomena which at first look idiosyncratic and Japanese-specific are closely connected to general principles which are not so exotic.

The audience we target is people who have little or no linguistic training and who may be unfamiliar with grammatical concepts. If you have never heard of the difference between transitive and intransitive verbs, but are genuinely interested in learning the Japanese language, this book is for you. We hope that even if you hated your English grammar in high school, you will still find the explanations in this book comprehensible.

With this objective in mind, we have limited the use of grammatical terms to the minimum. This means that, whenever possible, we have opted for simple, non-technical terms that an average English speaker knows. We have not used terms like “verbal aspect” or “modality,” which linguists prefer. Instead, we have talked of “speaker’s perspective,” “simple vs. complex event,” etc.

Although we assume very little knowledge of Japanese grammar, we do assume some familiarity on your part with the Japanese language. You need not be an advanced student. You can have started learning Japanese only a few weeks ago. You can begin reading this book while continuing your language study. But the book does not teach you specific expressions or patterns in Japanese. For example, it does not teach you how to say “Good morning” or how to create past tense forms. You need to learn those with an introductory textbook. Neither will the book teach you how to study Japanese. We focus on things that might puzzle you and things that might cause you a variety of problems in the future. For example, we explicitly explain that the noun before the form *-desu* is not the subject of a sentence. This is to prevent various difficulties which might arise later and persist if not properly handled at an early stage.

Intermediate and advanced students who have been accumulating questions about the structure of Japanese will also benefit from *Making Sense of Japanese Grammar*, because it gives coherence to many features of Japanese that are treated separately in existing textbooks or resource books.

The knowledge that we rely on in this book is the accumulated knowledge of linguists specializing in Japanese and comparative grammar. We differ from them in addressing non-specialists. We do not tax you with superfluous information. Even though some linguistic facts are of extreme interest to professional linguists, if we think that you intuitively understand and utilize them in learning or processing Japanese, we do not burden you or ourselves with the tedious task of explaining them. We provide only those pieces of information which are essential to understanding Japanese. In other words, we are trying to help you **make sense of Japanese grammar** in order to master the language.

We believe that, when apparent differences between Japanese and English are resolved using universal principles, true intercultural communication takes place. All of us will become more tolerant of surface differences, with the understanding that we are all humans with same cognitive processes. Our ostensible differences are only skin deep, or language deep. We believe that this message transcends the realm of language acquisition.

Now, how to use this book. Since any grammar book, alas, is far from a thriller, we do not recommend that you read ours from cover to cover on a rainy afternoon. (If you tried, your eyes would swiftly glaze over, especially if you like to read in a reclining position!). It is far more effective to absorb its contents a little at a time.

You will notice that the book is divided into five parts consisting of short units, with a great deal of cross-referencing. Each unit begins with a maxim-like heading such as “Do not hesitate to use the same verb over and over again” or “*Te*-forms connect closely related events.” The glossary provides short definitions of terms which might require clarification. Indexed items lead you to the pages where they are discussed and explained.

You might choose to think of this manual as a bowl of highly potent, knowledge-enhancing nuggets which should be thoughtfully chewed, one at a time. The order in which you ingest them is not crucial. Feel free to range back and forth, or to dip into the book at random. Glance over the table of contents, or leaf through the pages, to find items that strike you as intriguing, and start reading. Or go to the index to find the pages where something you are interested in is explained. When you wish to test your understanding, do the mini-exercises found at the end of each unit. The keys to the exercises are at the end of the book.

If you find a unit beyond your level, simply go to one of the earlier units on related topics, which are suggested at the end of each unit. If a unit is unclear at first reading, do not give up but read through it once more, slowly and attentively. When the Zen master Ikkyu was asked to write a maxim of the highest wisdom, he wrote a single word: “Attention.” We cannot improve on old Ikkyu’s advice,

and are confident that a relaxed and focused approach will enable you to attain grammatical enlightenment. Once internalized, the information contained in these pages will illuminate Japanese grammar with surprising clarity.

Enjoy your study, and please keep in mind that anyone can master Japanese grammar and the Japanese language itself. All it takes is good humor and perseverance.

Good luck!

A note to teachers

Making Sense of Japanese Grammar will also be of interest to Japanese-language teachers whose specialty is not necessarily linguistics. We hope the book will clarify some points which they have been teaching over the years but which still trouble them because they are difficult to explain to students. Even instructors with a linguistics background may find some parts helpful in their teaching because of the accessible way the concepts are explained.

We encourage teachers of Japanese to utilize *Making Sense of Japanese Grammar* as supplementary reading for students at all levels. The teacher may choose to assign a few units as early as the first weeks of a beginning class. Additional units can be assigned whenever they help to clarify what is being studied. We hope that this approach will prove beneficial throughout the student's formal learning career, and well beyond it. Even a perfectly fluent speaker of Japanese may find the book a useful reference from time to time.

We strongly encourage both teachers and students to write to us with their comments and suggestions, in order to help us make the book's future editions ever more readable and helpful.

A note on romanization and notation

The romanization in transliterations follows the Hepburn style, except for long vowels, which are marked by doubling the vowel rather than by a long mark. Asterisks mark ungrammatical sentences.

Part 1

Grammatical Categories and the Basic Architecture of a Sentence

1

The subject corresponds to an item around which an event evolves

We perceive the physical world as sequences of processes or conditions, which we broadly call “events” in this book. We typically think of an event as one evolving around a single entity—possibly a person, an object, or a group of people or objects. This type of perception has a linguistic counterpart. We express an event as a sentence, and its key component as the subject of a sentence, as in the following English sentences, where the items in boldface are the subjects:

After a moment of hesitation, **Genji** offered his hand to Murasaki.

The leaves swayed in the gentle breeze.

For centuries, **Kyoto** was the capital of Japan.

In the case of sentences describing a process, like the first two sentences above, the subject typically corresponds to the agent which acts or moves. In the case of a sentence describing a condition, as in the last sentence, the subject is the item the sentence is about.

As is clear from the examples above, subjects in simple English declarative sentences usually appear immediately before verbs. In Japanese, this criterion of position is not relevant for identifying a subject, but for the moment, it is sufficient to get us started. You will at least have an idea of what prototypical subjects look like in English sentences, and you will also be able to identify the subject in Japanese sentences like the following:

絵本が	棚から	落ちました。
Ehon-ga	tana-kara	ochimashita.
picture book-Subject	shelf-from	fell
“A picture book fell from the shelf.”		

No doubt, you correctly chose 絵本 *ehon* “picture book” as the subject.

Almost as important as the subject is the concept of the direct object. A prototypical direct object is an item whose condition the subject changes by his/her action, like the items in boldface below:

I tore **the letter** in half.

Ryoko woke **her brother** before dawn.

The target of the subject’s action in the following examples is slightly less prototypical, but is still treated as a direct object:

I checked **the train schedule**.

Ryoko saw **her brother** among the crowd.

The direct object, then, is the second most important party in an event after the subject. This is reflected in English by the fact that direct objects typically appear immediately after the verb in declarative sentences, as central to events. Again, position is not a reliable criterion for identifying a direct object in Japanese, but it will suffice for the moment.

For related topics, see also Units 3, 6, and 23.

2

Use the verb at the end!

The basic word order in English is Subject-Verb-direct Object (SVO). The basic word order in Japanese, on the other hand, is Subject-direct Object-Verb (SOV), as shown by the following examples:

	S	O	V
今日は	さちこが	この話を	読みます。
Kyoo-wa	Sachiko-ga	kono hanashi-o	yomimasu.
today	Sachiko-Subject	this story-Object	(will) read

“Today, Sachiko will read this story.”

	S	V
今日は	さちこが	行きます。
Kyoo-wa	Sachiko-ga	ikimasu.
today	Sachiko-Subject	(will) go

“Today, Sachiko will go.”

The SO sequence, however, is not always observed in practice. You can switch the subject and the direct object around. What you **must** do is to place a verb (or something like a verb—see Unit 5) at the end of a sentence. Linguists call this property of Japanese right-headedness, because if you write a sentence from left to right, you put the verb—the most important part of the sentence—at the end of a sentence.

You need not worry about the order of the other elements as long as you put the verb at the end. You can use either SOV or OSV, although the emphasis is slightly different depending on which one comes first. The following sentence is also grammatical:

	O	S	V
今日は	この話を	さちこが	読みます。
Kyoo-wa	kono hanashi-o	Sachiko-ga	yomimasu.
today	this story-Object	Sachiko-Subject	(will) read

“Today, Sachiko will read this story.”

For related topics, see also Units 3, 4, 5, 6, and 36.

3

An explicit subject is optional

English requires an explicit subject in every sentence except imperative sentences (e.g., “Stop!”). In Japanese, however, the subject is optional for any type of sentence. So you hear minimal sentences like the following:

食べます。

Tabemasu.

eat

“I will eat.”

おいしいです。

Oishii-desu.

delicious-Copula

“It is delicious.”

If you know Spanish, you might say that Spanish operates the same way, but there is a difference. In Spanish, the verb agrees with the person and the number of the subject (for example, [*yo*] *voy* “I go,” but [*ella*] *va* “she goes”). Person and number are crucial concepts determining the subject in English as well. For this reason, if a Spanish sentence has no explicit subject, it is relatively easy for an English speaker to guess who or what its subject is.

By contrast, a Japanese verb is insensitive to such distinctions; the identical verb form is used for all persons and numbers. For instance, the sentence 食べます *tabemasu* may mean “I will eat,” “we will eat,” “you will eat,” “he will eat,” “she will eat,” “they will eat,” or “it will eat.”

This is not to say that a Japanese verb provides no information about the identity of the subject. The types of information, however, are quite different from those you are familiar with, as we explain in Unit 65. For the moment, try to recover an appropriate subject from the context.

Checking your comprehension: Try to identify from the context the subject for each of the following sentences:

(1) 昨日アニメを見ました。(2) とてもおもしろかったです。

(1) Kinoo anime-o mimashita. (2) Totemo omoshirokatta-desu.

For related topics, see also Units 2, 4, 6, 7, and 65.

4

Pay attention to the last part of a sentence

English speakers tend to pay attention to the initial part of a sentence. This is because the subject and the verb appear at the beginning in English, providing core information early.

Also, although English speakers have the option of dropping a significant portion of a sentence in responding to a question, the initial part of the sentence remains.

Would you have been able to see *Bread and Roses* if you had known it was showing in town?

Yes, I would have been able to see it if I had known it was showing in town.

Yes, I would have been able to see it if I had known it was showing.

Yes, I would have been able to see it if I had known.

Yes, I would have been able to see it.

Yes, I would have been able to.

Yes, I would have been.

Yes, I would have.

Yes, I would.

In Japanese, the verb appears at the end. Since tense information appears with the verb at the very end, until you hear the last part, you do not necessarily know if an event has already happened or is yet to happen. Nor can you tell whether an event is happening at all until you hear the last part, because a negative marker appears at the end of a sentence. This results in a corresponding difference in strategy in answering a question. For Japanese speakers, everything but the **last** part of a sentence can be dropped.

君もきのうの六時にハチ公前にいたんですか。

Kimi-mo kinoo-no rokuji-ni Hachikoo-mae-ni **ita-n-desu-ka**.

“Were you in front of [the statue of] Hachiko at 6 yesterday, too?”

ええ、（僕も）ハチ公前にいたんです。

Ee, (boku-mo) Hachikoo-mae-ni **ita-n-desu**.

“Yes, I was in front of [the statue of] Hachiko, too.”

ええ、（僕も）いたんです。

Ee, (boku-mo) **ita-n-desu**.

“Yes, I was, too.”

Always pay attention to the last part of a sentence. Make a habit of repeating the same final pattern that your teacher uses. Since a question and a statement in Japanese differ only with respect to the presence or absence of the last particle ～か *-ka* (see Unit 11), by repeating essentially the last part, you will produce grammatical and highly natural exchanges.

Checking your comprehension: Now you can answer the following question grammatically even without necessarily knowing its meaning:

週末にワシントンで反戦デモがあるという話を聞いたんですけど、参加しますか。

Shuumatsu-ni Washinton-de hansen-demo-ga aru-to iu hanashi-o kiita-n-desu-kedo, sanku-shimasu-ka.

For related topics, see also Units 2, 3, 5, 11, and 36.

5

There are three types of verb-like constituents

When we say that a verb appears at the end of a Japanese sentence, we actually mean by the word “verb” one of the following three types of verb-like minimal sentences:

1. Verb
2. Adjective + copula (～です *-desu* and its variations)
3. Noun + copula

There are four conjugational forms for each type. The first type, verb, is exemplified by:

飲みます nomimasu “drink”	飲みません／飲まないです nomimasen/nomanai-desu “do/does not drink”
飲みました nomimashita “drank”	飲みませんでした／飲まなかったです nomimasen-deshita/nomanakatta-desu “did not drink”

The second type, adjective + copula, is exemplified by:

楽しいです tanoshii-desu “am/is/are enjoyable”	楽し {くありません／くないです} tanoshi {ku-arimasen/ku-nai-desu} “am/is/are not enjoyable”
楽しかったです tanoshikatta-desu “was/were enjoyable”	楽し {くありませんでした／くなかったです} tanoshi {ku-arimasen-deshita/ku-nakatta-desu} “was/were not enjoyable”

The last type, noun + copula, is exemplified by:

学生です gakusei-desu “am/is/are (a) student(s)”	学生 {じゃありません／じゃないです} gakusei- {ja-arimasen/ja-nai-desu} “am/is/are not (a) student(s)”
学生でした gakusei-deshita “was/were (a) student(s)”	学生 {じゃありませんでした／じゃなかったです} gakusei- {ja-arimasen-deshita/ja-nakatta-desu} “was/were not (a) student(s)”

Can you tell which types the following sentences represent?

すごかったです。
Sugokatta-desu.
“It was awesome.”

違いました。
Chigaimashita.
“It was different.”

The parts in boldface would have indicated that they are type 2 (adjective + copula) and type 1 (verb), respectively.

This unit uses polite verb forms. For direct forms, see Unit 59. Forms such as 飲まないです *nomanai-desu* “do/does not drink” and 飲まなかったです *nomanakatta-desu* “did not drink” derive from direct forms and are gaining acceptance as alternative polite forms.

Checking your comprehension: Which type does each of the following sentences represent? Pay attention to boldface.

食べさせませんでした。
Tabesasemasen-deshita.
“I didn’t let him eat.”

起きたくなかったです。
Okitaku-nakatta-desu.
“I didn’t want to get up.”

行きたくなくなりました。
Ikitaku-naku narimashita.
“I lost interest in going.”

あまり分かりやすいアイデアじゃないです。
Amari wakari-yasui aidea-ja-nai-desu.
“It is not an idea that is very easy to understand.”

For related topics, see also Units 6 and 59.

6

The noun in the sentence 学生です *gakusei-desu* is not the subject!

The noun in the sentence 学生です *gakusei-desu* is not the subject of the sentence. It is part of the verb-like element. An explicit subject being optional in a Japanese sentence (see Unit 3), no subject is spelled out in this particular sentence. Its subject will be “he,” “she,” “they,” etc., depending on the context. Thus the sentence corresponds to something like “he/she is a student” or “they are students.” Pay attention to the meaning of the following sentences.

12世紀です。
Juuni-seiki-desu.
“It is the 12th century.”

旅人です。
Tabibito-desu.
“He is a traveler.”

詩人です。
Shijin-desu.
“He is a poet.”

You can combine sentences of this type using ～で *-de*, a conjugated form of ～です *-desu*:

旅人で、詩人です。
Tabibito-**de**, shijin-desu.
“He, **being** a traveler, is a poet” or “He is a traveler **and** (is) a poet.”

It is very important to remember that 旅人で *tabibito-de* is like a verb, **not** the subject of the sentence. You cannot translate the sentence as “The traveler is a poet.” If you want to say this, you need the following:

旅人は、詩人です。
Tabibito-wa shijin-desu.
“The traveler is a poet.”

Checking your comprehension: Translate the following sentences into English:

チームのキャプテンは、三年生です。
Chiimu-no kyaputen-wa, sannensei-desu.

チームのキャプテンで、三年生です。
Chiimu-no kyaputen-de, sannensei-desu.

おもしろいアイデアで、分かりやすいです。
Omoshiroi aidea-de, wakari-yasui-desu.

For related topics, see also Units 2, 3, and 5.

7

Japanese speakers avoid certain pronouns

Pronouns such as “he,” “she,” and “it” are very useful in languages like English which require an explicit subject in almost all sentences. They enable speakers to refer to subjects efficiently. But in languages like Japanese, in which an explicit subject is optional (see Unit 3), pronouns are not as important.

The same thing holds true for the direct object. An explicit direct object is not necessary in a Japanese sentence. In its absence, a proper direct object is identified from the context. This greatly reduces the frequency of pronouns in Japanese. In addition to these grammatical factors, there is a social factor which contributes to the reduction of pronouns in Japanese.

In Japanese, it is often considered rude to use second person pronouns (like “you”), particularly for people with whom you are not on intimate terms. Two ways in which Japanese speakers avoid second person pronouns are shown below:

どうしますか。

Doo shimasu-ka.

“What will (you) do?”

広田さんは、どうしますか。

Hirota-san-wa doo shimasu-ka.

“What will Ms. Hirota do?” = “What will (you) do, Ms. Hirota?”

In the first sentence, the subject, which is optional, is dropped. In the second, a proper noun is used instead of the second person pronoun あなた *anata* “you.” Why is this done?

Japanese has never had second person pronouns like English “you” or Spanish *usted*, which date back to old Indo-European pronouns. Forms like あなた *anata* (literally “that way”) and お前 *omae* (literally “the one in front”), which nowadays are considered pronouns, originated in ordinary nouns referring to directions or locations. Use of such terms was motivated by the desire to avoid direct reference to the addressee. Reference to locations around the addressee was a type of euphemistic substitution for direct reference. Ironically, such terms were doomed to become conventional pronouns through repeated use. As soon as this happened, the terms were considered too direct to be used for respected parties. Only close equals and younger people or social inferiors came to be addressed with these terms.

Therefore, unless intending a deliberate insult, do not ever address your teacher as あなた *anata*! Teachers enjoy a privileged status in Japanese society, and are always considered superior to students. Remember: either drop the subject, or use 先生 *sensei* “teacher,” as shown below, at all times when you feel the urge to use あなた *anata*. And **never** use お前 *omae* unless you are looking for a fight!

きのうの夕方、駅の前で先生を見ました。
Kinoo-no yuugata eki-no mae-de **sensei**-o mimashita.
“I saw **you** (= teacher) in front of the station yesterday evening.”

先生と、一度お話ししたいのですが。
Sensei-to ichido ohanashi shitai no-desu-ga.
“I want to talk to **you** (= teacher) once.”

(先生は、) 午後研究室にいらっしゃいますか。
(**Sensei**-wa) gogo kenkyuushitsu-ni irasshaimasu-ka.
“Will **you** (= teacher) be in your office in the afternoon?”

先生に、これをさしあげましょう。
Sensei-ni kore-o sashiagemashoo.
“I will give **you** (= teacher) this.”

これは、先生の本ですか。
Kore-wa **sensei**-no hon-desu-ka.
“Is this **your** (= teacher’s) book?”

Checking your comprehension: Translate the following sentence into Japanese:

Professor, which is your book?

For related topics, see also Unit 3.

8

You cannot always guess the grammatical category of a Japanese form from the grammatical category of its English counterpart

In English, “different” and “same” are adjectives, but their Japanese counterparts 違います *chigaimasu* and 同じ (です) *onaji-(desu)* are a verb and a noun, respectively. You cannot always tell what part of speech (verb, adjective, noun, etc.) a form belongs to from its translation. The following is a list of some noteworthy forms which are treated differently in English and Japanese:

different (adjective)	違います <i>chigaimasu</i> (verb)
beautiful (adjective)	きれい (です) <i>kirei-(desu)</i> (noun)
rude (adjective)	失礼 (です) <i>shitsurei-(desu)</i> (noun)
useless (adjective)	だめ (です) <i>dame-(desu)</i> (noun)
fine (adjective)	大丈夫 (です) <i>daijobu-(desu)</i> (noun)
healthy (adjective)	元気 (です) <i>genki-(desu)</i> (noun)
regrettable (adjective)	残念 (です) <i>zannen-(desu)</i> (noun)
same (adjective)	同じ (です) <i>onaji-(desu)</i> (noun)
ordinary (adjective)	普通 (です) <i>futsuu-(desu)</i> (noun)

Make sure that you conjugate these forms properly according to their Japanese classification. (Not sure what conjugation is? See Unit 5.)

きれい *kirei*, 失礼 *shitsurei*, etc., belong to a category known as *na*-nouns, *na*-adjectives, nominal adjectives, or adjectival nouns. This category is a sub-category of the noun in terms of its conjugational pattern and history (briefly discussed in Unit 10). We will call it the *na*-noun in this book.

Checking your comprehension: Can you conjugate 違います *chigaimasu* and 同じです *onaji-desu*?

For related topics, see also Units 5, 9, 10, and 40.

9

Dictionary forms of all Japanese adjectives end with *-ii*, *-ai*, *-oi*, or *-ui*

No dictionary form of an adjective in Japanese ends with a single vowel or the sequence *-ei*. Dictionary forms of all adjectives in Japanese end with *-ii*, *-ai*, *-oi*, or *-ui*. The first vowel of these sequences is part of the “root,” and the second vowel is the present tense marker. (The fact that no dictionary form of an adjective ends with *-ei* has something to do with the history of Japanese: /e/ has been least utilized throughout the history of Japanese, and some linguists suggest that old Japanese had only four vowels /i, a, o, u/.)

By knowing that dictionary forms of all adjectives in Japanese end with *-ii*, *-ai*, *-oi*, or *-ui*, you can tell that a certain form is **not** an adjective. きれい *kirei* “beautiful” and 失礼 *shitsurei* “rude,” for instance, have *-ei* at the end. You can safely conclude that they are not adjectives. Likewise, you can tell that だめ *dame* “useless,” 大丈夫 *daijoubu* “fine,” and 元気 *genki* “healthy” are not adjectives, because they have only one vowel at the end. 普通 *futsuu* “ordinary” is not an adjective because the last vowel is not *-i*. And, 残念 *zannen* “regrettable” is not an adjective because it does not end with a vowel.

A word of caution, however. You cannot be certain that a form **is** an adjective from the way it sounds because some non-adjectives also end with *-ii*, *-ai*, *-oi*, or *-ui*. For example, 反対 *hantai* “opposite” has *-ai* at the end, but it is not an adjective; it is a noun.

Checking your comprehension: Identify which of the following words is definitely not an adjective. Explain why.

適当	tekitoo	“appropriate”
冷静	reisei	“composed”
正しい	tadashii	“correct”
高度	koodo	“advanced”

For related topics, see also Units 8 and 10.

10

“Noun” is an open category in Japanese

Languages accommodate newly introduced or newly created forms by assigning them to a certain class. In Japanese, most new words are classified as nouns and conjugate as nouns. Consequently, Japanese borrowings of English adjectives like ハンサム *hansamu* “handsome” and クール *kuuru* “cool” conjugate as nouns:

ハンサムです
hansamu-desu
“(he) is good-looking”

ハンサムでした
hansamu-deshita
“(he) was good-looking”

ハンサムじゃないです／ハンサムじゃありません
hansamu-ja-nai-desu/hansamu-ja-arimasen
“(he) is not good-looking”

ハンサムじゃなかったです／ハンサムじゃありませんでした
hansamu-ja-nakatta-desu/hansamu-ja-arimasen-deshita
“(he) was not good-looking”

This is one reason that the category “noun” in Japanese has so many and such diverse forms. It is an open category. By contrast, verbs and adjectives form closed, conservative categories in Japanese. They resist intrusion by new forms and retain older features. This means that it is more difficult to identify nouns than adjectives or verbs in Japanese. Recall that you cannot tell the part of speech for 反対 *hantai* “opposite” from its sound alone, although it does have *-ai* at the end. A form does not have to conform to a fixed pattern to qualify as a noun.

In the boxes below, we summarize the relationship between forms and their class assignment:

Adjectives

ookii	“big”
akai	“red”
koi	“thick”
furui	“old”

Nouns

nii	“second place”
ai	“love”
koi	“carp”
funzui	“fountain”
sensei	“teacher”
mae	“front”
migi	“right”
ushiro	“back”
jama	“interference”

Checking your comprehension: In the case of words having *-ii*, *-ai*, *-oi*, or *-ui* at the end, the form alone does not allow you to determine which word class they belong to. However, there is an additional contextual cue which enables you to achieve just that (see Unit 5). Determine whether ゆうがい *yuugai* “harmful” is an adjective or a noun from the following sentence:

タバコは、ゆうがいじゃありませんか。

Tabako-wa yuugai-ja-arimasen-ka.

“Isn’t tobacco harmful?”

For related topics, see also Units 5, 8, 9 and 40.

11

Use the same word order for questions. Attach ～か *-ka* to a statement to turn it into a question

An interrogative sentence in Japanese keeps the same word order as its declarative counterpart. As a result, it is very easy to form a question in Japanese. To form a yes-no question, all you have to do is to attach ～か *-ka* to the end of a declarative sentence.

すわります。
Suwarimasu.
“I will sit down.”

すわりますか。
Suwarimasu-ka.
“Will you sit down?”

面白いです。
Omoshiroi-desu.
“It is interesting.”

面白いですか。
Omoshiroi-desu-ka.
“Is it interesting?”

知り合いです。
Shiriai-desu.
“She is an acquaintance.”

知り合いですか。
Shiriai-desu-ka.
“Is she an acquaintance?”

You can produce negative or past tense questions equally easily:

すわりませんか。
Suwarimasen-ka.
“Won’t you sit down?”

面白かったですか。
Omoshirokatta-desu-ka.
“Was it interesting?”

知り合いじゃありませんでしたか。
Shiriai-ja-arimasen-deshita-ka.
“Wasn’t she an acquaintance?”

When you produce WH-questions (questions containing WH-phrases such as “who,” “what,” “which,” “where,” “when,” “how,” etc.) in English, you must move the WH-phrases to the beginning of the sentences, as shown below:

What did you buy? (cf. I bought **a camera**.)

In Japanese, because a WH-phrase remains in the same place as its counterpart in a corresponding declarative sentence, it is very easy to produce WH-questions.

All you need to do is: (1) insert an appropriate WH-phrase where a noun phrase is expected; and (2) attach the particle ～か *-ka* at the end. For instance:

「スワヒリ語の辞書は、いくらですか。」 「スワヒリ語の辞書は、6500円です。」

Suwahiri-go-no jisho-wa **ikura**-desu-ka. Suwahiri-go-no jisho-wa **roku-sen-go-hyaku-en**-desu.

“**How much** is the Swahili dictionary?” “The Swahili dictionary is **6,500 yen**.”

「それは、誰の着物ですか。」 「それは、私の着物です。」

Sore-wa **dare**-no kimono-desu-ka. Sore-wa **watashi**-no kimono-desu.

“**Whose** kimono is that?” “That is **my** kimono.”

「箱は、三階のどこですか。」 「箱は、三階の後ろの方です。」

Hako-wa san-gai-no **doko**-desu-ka. Hako-wa san-gai-no **ushiro-no hoo**-desu.

“**Where** on the third floor are the boxes?” “The boxes are **in the back** of the third floor.”

「ラオスの人口は、どのくらいですか。」 「ラオスの人口は、500万人くらいです。」

Raosu-no jinkoo-wa **dono-gurai**-desu-ka. Raosu-no jinkoo-wa **gohyaku-man-nin-gurai**-desu.

“**What** is the population of Laos?” “The population of Laos is **around five million**.”

Conversely, when answering a WH-question, all you have to do is replace the WH-phrase with a piece of new information and delete ～か *-ka*. This principle operates no matter how complex the sentence might be, as in the case below:

「あの手紙は、いつ届いたと思いますか。」 「（あの手紙は、）きのう届いたと思います。」

Ano tegami-wa **itsu** todoita-to omoimasu-ka. (Ano tegami-wa) **kinoo** todoita-to omoimasu.

“**When** do you think that letter arrived?” “I think that the letter arrived **yesterday**.”

A word of advice. Omit superfluous words if you like, but use the same final form so as to avoid inadvertently deleting important information. In fact, the simplest strategy in answering a WH-question is to keep essentially everything after a WH-phrase intact. Do not hesitate to use the same verb. The following question can thus be answered in any of a number of ways:

君はきのうの六時頃どこにいたんですか。
Kimi-wa kinoo-no rokuji-goro **doko**-ni ita-n-desu-ka.
“**Where** were you around 6 yesterday?”

きのうの六時頃ハチ公前にいたんです。
Kinoo-no rokuji-goro **Hachikoo-mae**-ni ita-n-desu.
“I was **in front of [the statue of] Hachiko** around 6 yesterday.”

六時頃ハチ公前にいたんです。
Rokuji-goro **Hachikoo-mae**-ni ita-n-desu.
“I was **in front of [the statue of] Hachiko** around 6.”

ハチ公前にいたんです。
Hachikoo-mae-ni ita-n-desu.
“I was **in front of [the statue of] Hachiko**.”

Checking your comprehension: How would you answer the following questions?

誰がいつどこで誰から何を聞いたんですか。
Dare-ga itsu doko-de dare-kara nani-o kiita-n-desu-ka.

明日のマラソンはどこからスタートする予定だと言っていましたか。
Ashita-no marason-wa **doko-kara** sutaato-suru yotei-da-to itte imashita-ka.

For related topics, see also Units 12 and 21.

12

Do not hesitate to use the same verb over and over again

In Unit 11, we saw that answers in Japanese retain the same word order and the same verb as questions. This means that an exchange like the following is quite common:

「きのう行きましたか。」 「ええ、行きました。」

Kinoo ikimashita-ka. Ee, ikimashita.

“Did you go yesterday?” “Yes, I went.”

In English, on the other hand, answers tend to retain only auxiliary verbs such as “do,” “can,” and “must.” For instance: “Did you go yesterday?” “Yes, I did.”

Do not hesitate to repeat the same verb in answering a question in Japanese. Unlike English auxiliary verbs, Japanese auxiliary verbs are not separate words; you cannot use them without verbs. Hence it is both necessary and quite natural in Japanese to repeat identical verbs. In fact, it is not just answers that repeat an identical verb. There are many combinations like the following where the same verb is repeated across the subordinate and main clause:

言いたくないから、言わない。

Iitaku-nai-kara, iwanai.

“Since I don’t want to say it, I won’t.”

使えたら、使ってください。

Tsukaetara, tsukatte-kudasai.

“If you can use it, please do so.”

寝ようとしたけど、寝られなかった。

Neyoo-to shita-kedo, nerarenakatta.

“I tried to sleep, but I couldn’t.”

飲みたくないのに、飲ませられた。

Nomitaku-nai-noni, nomaserareta.

“Even though I didn’t want to drink, I was forced to.”

漢字は、覚えようと思えば、覚えられる。

Kanji-wa oboeyoo-to omoeba, oboerareru.

“If you try to memorize kanji, you can.”

For related topics, see also Unit 11.

13

Japanese particles are postpositions

In Unit 11 we saw that the particle ～か *-ka* turns a preceding sentence into a question. Like this ～か *-ka*, all Japanese particles mark the functions of elements immediately before them. In other words, they are postpositions as opposed to prepositions (e.g., “at,” “from,” and “to” in English).

Make sure that you pronounce a particle tightly with whatever precedes it, not with what follows it. If you are to pause once, pause after the particle, not before:

私は 日本人です。
Watashi-**wa** Nihon-jin-desu.
“I am a Japanese.”

日本人ですが 漢字は弱いです。
Nihon-jin-desu-**ga**, kanji-wa yowai-desu.
“I am a Japanese, but I am not good at Chinese characters.”

Do not pause like the following:

*私 は日本人です。
*日本人です が漢字は弱いです。

Particles as Bridges

The majority of particles link elements within a sentence. For instance, the particle ～の *-no* connects a modifying noun to a head noun—the core of a noun phrase. And the particle ～けど *-kedo* connects a subordinate clause to a main clause. Just as a name tag is attached to a suitcase rather than to its owner, particles are attached to dependent elements like modifying nouns and subordinate clauses. Further, particles appear between connected units, like a bridge. The following examples illustrate these properties of particles.

[参加者の] [名前]
[sankasha-**no**] [namae]
[participant-**of**] [name]
“names **of** the participants”

[名前を呼びましたけど]、[返事がなかったです]。
[Namae-o yobimashita-**kedo**], [henji-ga nakatta-desu].
[Name-Object called-**but**], [answer-Subject did-not-exist].
“**Although** they called her name, there was no answer” *or*
“They called her name, **but** there was no answer.”

There is nothing peculiar about these properties of particles. Except for the direction, the expressions above are just like their English counterparts. Reverse the order of an English expression, and you usually get its Japanese version. Japanese, in other words, is almost a mirror image of English.

Where then does the difference in direction come from? It originates in the fact that Japanese is postpositional and English is prepositional. A postpositional language like Japanese naturally prefers to be right-headed. In Unit 2, we said that right-headedness means that you place a verb at the end of a sentence. Right-headedness more broadly means that the head noun appears at the end of a noun phrase, a verb at the end of a clause or sentence, and a main clause at the end of a sentence.

In the above, 名前 *namae* and 返事がなかったです *henji-ga nakatta-desu* appear on the right side. This order is optimal for a postpositional language because particles prefer to be in the middle. If Japanese were left-headed like English, unnatural sequences like the following would be produced, in which the connecting elements appear at the end.

*[名前][参加者の]
*[namae][sankasha-**no**]

*[返事がなかったです][名前を呼びましたけど]
*[henji-ga nakatta-desu][namae-o yobimashita-**kedo**]

Such sequences do not form natural units and are usually avoided except when adding an afterthought or calling attention to a special focus.

Checking your comprehension: How would you form a sentence corresponding to “You will see a park when you turn right” using the following?

公園が見えます *kooen-ga miemasu* “you will see a park”
右に曲がる *migi-ni magaru* “you turn right”
〜と *-to* “when”

For related topics, see also Units 2, 11, and 14.

14

Classification of particles

We can classify particles roughly into the following categories:

- those indicating the function of the sentence: ～か *-ka*; ～よ *-yo*; ～ね *-ne*
- those subordinating a clause to the main clause: ～から *-kara*; ～が *-ga*; ～けど *-kedo*; ～と *-to* “when”
- those marking the topic of a sentence: ～は *-wa*; ～も *-mo*
- those connecting a noun to a verb: ～が *-ga*; ～を *-o*; ～に *-ni*; ～へ *-e*; ～で *-de*; ～から *-kara*; ～まで *-made*; ～までに *-made-ni*; ～と *-to* “with”
- those connecting a noun to another noun: ～の *-no*; ～な *-na*; ～と *-to* “and”

Sentence-Final Particles

Sentence-final particles such as ～か *-ka*, ～よ *-yo*, and ～ね *-ne* indicate the function of the preceding sentence. The question particle ～か *-ka* indicates that the sentence to which it attaches is a question.

What then are the functions of ～よ *-yo* and ～ね *-ne*? Here it is useful to think a little more about what it means for a particle to turn a sentence into a question. The question particle ～か *-ka* indicates that the information that the speaker is seeking is in the “territory” of the listener; the listener is in an authoritative position about the information. From this point of view, the particle ～よ *-yo* means that the information the sentence conveys belongs to the territory of the speaker; the speaker maintains an authoritative position about the information:

遠いですよ。

Tooi-desu-yo.

“It is far, **I assure you.**”

きれいですよ。

Kirei-desu-yo.

“It is beautiful, **I assure you.**”

変わりましたよ。

Kawarimashita-yo.

“It has changed, **I assure you.**”

The particle ～ね *-ne* means that the information belongs to the shared territory of the speaker and the listener, or at least that the speaker wants to pretend the information is shared. This is a very good mechanism for creating a mood of

understanding or sympathy. The longer form 〜ねえ *-nee* emphasizes the sense of sharing and the strength of the emotion:

遠いですね。
Tooi-desu-**ne**.
“It is far, **isn’t it?**”

きれいですね。
Kirei-desu-**ne**.
“It is beautiful, **isn’t it?**”

変わりましたね。
Kawarimashita-**ne**.
“It has changed, **hasn’t it?**”

遠いですねえ。
Tooi-desu-**nee**.
“It is **really** far, **isn’t it?**”

きれいですねえ。
Kirei-desu-**nee**.
“It is **really** beautiful, **isn’t it?**”

変わりましたねえ。
Kawarimashita-**nee**.
“It has **really** changed, **hasn’t it?**”

Clause-Final Particles

Clause-final particles indicate that the clause to which they are attached provides background information such as cause or reason.

日本に行きたいから、日本語を勉強している。
Nihon-ni ikitai-**kara**, Nihon-go-o benkyoo-shite-iru.
“**Because** I want to go to Japan, I am studying Japanese.”

日本に行きたいが、日本語は勉強したくない。
Nihon-ni ikitai-**ga**, Nihon-go-wa benkyoo-shitaku-nai.
“**Although** I want to go to Japan, I don’t want to study Japanese.”

Such clauses that provide background information are known as “subordinate clauses” because they are secondary to main clauses. In English, subordinate clauses can appear either before or after the main clauses.

Because I want to go to Japan, I am studying Japanese.
I am studying Japanese, **because I want to go to Japan**.

In Japanese, subordinate clauses can only appear before main clauses. That is, within a single sentence, background information, such as cause or reason, always precedes foreground information, such as effect or result. The following is acceptable as two separate utterances, but not as a single sentence:

日本語を勉強している。日本に行きたいから。
Nihon-go-o benkyoo-shite-iru. Nihon-ni ikitai-kara.
“I am studying Japanese. Because I want to go to Japan.”

There is a good reason for this contrast between Japanese and English. The most natural order for a subordinate clause and a main clause is [subordinate + main], precisely because the subordinate clause provides background information such as cause or reason.

Language universally has another strong preference: it is more natural for an element that links two parts to appear between them (see Unit 13).

English, which is a prepositional language, has two possible ways to connect the subordinate clause and the main clause: [preposition-subordinate + main] and [main + preposition-subordinate].

The [preposition-subordinate + main] order keeps the first preference while violating the second preference. The [main + preposition-subordinate] order keeps the second preference while violating the first preference. Both have one positive point and are accepted.

By contrast, the only acceptable order in Japanese, which is a postpositional language, is the [subordinate-postposition + main] order, which happens to satisfy both preferences. The other order, *[main + subordinate-postposition], violates both of these preferences, making it difficult for the two parts to get integrated into a single sentence.

Remember: **background** (cause, reason, etc.) **first** in Japanese.

Phrase Particles

Phrase particles connect noun phrases to something else. We will deal with these in Part 2 and Part 3 in more detail. Here is a rough overview of them.

The phrase particles connecting a noun to another noun create an expanded noun phrase. The following is an example consisting of a string of nouns connected with such particles.

弟と私の高校の時の数学の先生
ototoo-**to** watashi-**no** kookoo-**no** toki-**no** suugaku-**no** sensei
“our math teacher from the time my brother and I were in high school”

Other phrase particles cannot be used in a parallel manner. The following is ungrammatical:

*母から手紙
*haha-**kara** tegami

It needs to be changed to the following:

母からの手紙
haha-**kara-no** tegami
“letter from my mother”

or turned into a sentence, such as the following:

母から手紙をもらいました。
Haha-**kara** tegami-o moraimashita.
“I received a letter from my mother.”

Checking your comprehension: Suppose you believe that the test is tomorrow. To reconfirm it, what would you say?

For related topics, see also Units 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 28, 29, and 33.

Part 2

Phrase Particles: Marking the Functions of Noun Phrases in a Sentence

15

A phrase particle determines the function of the noun

In English, the difference between the meanings of the following two sentences depends on where the nouns (or noun phrases) appear. Word order is very important in English:

Momotaro (Subject) chased the demon (Object).
The demon (Subject) chased Momotaro (Object).

In Japanese, the word order is not as fixed. Although the emphasis may be placed on different elements depending on the word order, the basic meaning of the sentence is unaffected as long as you keep the verb at the end. This is because the phrase particles, which attach to noun phrases, mark the functions of noun phrases in a sentence. For instance, in the following, the particle ～は *-wa* indicates that the noun preceding it is the topic of the sentence:

桃太郎は あっという間に 大きく になりました。
Momotaroo-wa atto-iu-ma-ni ookiku narimashita.
Momotaro-Topic in no time big became
“Speaking of Momotaro, he grew up in no time.”

Since the function of 桃太郎 *Momotaroo* above is marked by the particle ～は *-wa*, you can move it around without changing the meaning of the sentence, as shown below:

あっという間に 桃太郎は 大きく になりました。
Atto-iu-ma-ni **Momotaroo-wa** ookiku narimashita.
in no time **Momotaro-Topic** big became
“Speaking of Momotaro, he grew up in no time.”

Likewise, the following two sentences mean the same thing, because the particle ～が *-ga* follows the subject 桃太郎 *Momotaro* and the particle ～を *-o* follows the direct object 鬼 *oni* “demon,” regardless of which comes first:

桃太郎が 鬼を 追いかけました。
Momotaroo-ga oni-o oikakemashita.
Momotaro-Subject demon-Object chased
“Momotaro chased the demon.”

鬼を 桃太郎が 追いかけました。
Oni-o Momotaroo-ga oikakemashita.
demon-Object Momotaro-Subject chased
“**Momotaro** chased the demon.”

Checking your comprehension: Change the word order of the following sentence without changing its basic meaning:

私はインターネットで朝日新聞を読みます。
Watashi-wa intaanetto-de Asahi-shinbun-o yomimasu.
“I read *Asahi* (a daily paper) on the internet.”

For related topics, see also Units 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 24, 28, 29, 34, and 42.

16

The particle 〜は *-wa* identifies what the sentence is about and urges the listener to pay attention to the part that follows

The particle 〜は *-wa* means something like “speaking of” or “as for.” It identifies the topic which the sentence is about and urges the listener to pay attention to the part that follows. Observe the following example first:

新聞は、来ませんでした。

Shinbun-wa kimasen-deshita.

“Speaking of the newspaper, it didn’t come.”

In this sentence, 新聞 *shinbun* “newspaper” is the topic of the sentence because 〜は *-wa* is attached to it. This sentence is used when the speaker thinks that the listener is interested in what happened to the newspaper. For example, an observant office worker might notice that her distraught co-worker is helplessly looking for the morning newspaper. Now, with 新聞は *shinbun-wa*, the speaker alerts her co-worker that she is going to provide new information pertaining to his concern.

This type of sentence pattern, in which new information is provided toward the end of the sentence (the old-to-new sequence), is quite common in Japanese. For instance, the Japanese counterparts of “What is your name?” and “Who is this?” turn up in the following way:

お名前は、何ですか。

Onamae-wa nan-desu-ka.

“What is your name?”

こちらは、どなたですか。

Kochira-wa donata-desu-ka.

“Who is this?”

The answers to these questions also conform to this pattern, in which information flows from the known item to the unknown:

名前は、木村です。

Namae-wa Kimura-desu.

“My name is Kimura.”

こちらは、木村先生です。

Kochira-wa Kimura-sensei-desu.

“This is Professor Kimura.”

Given this explanation, can you tell the difference between the following two sentences?

あれは、東京タワーです。
Are-wa Tookyoo-tawaa-desu.
“That is Tokyo Tower.”

東京タワーは、あれです。
Tookyoo-tawaa-wa are-desu.
“Tokyo Tower is that one.”

The first of these is the answer to the following question:

あれは、何ですか。
Are-wa **nan-desu-ka**.
“**What** is that?”

The second is the answer to the following question:

東京タワーは、どれですか。
Tookyoo-tawaa-wa **dore-desu-ka**.
“**Which** is Tokyo Tower?”

The parts in boldface ask for new information, which their declarative counterparts provide.

The verb-like parts of these questions can be omitted, too, leaving just a noun phrase with ～は *-wa* accompanied by a rising intonation. Such utterances function equally well as questions:

「あれは？」 「（あれは、）東京タワーです。」
Are-wa? (Are-wa) Tookyoo-tawaa-desu.
“(What is) that?” “(That) is Tokyo Tower.”

「東京タワーは？」 「（東京タワーは、）あれです。」
Tookyoo-tawaa-wa? (Tookyoo-tawaa-wa) are-desu.
“(Which is) Tokyo Tower?” “(Tokyo Tower) is that one.”

Note that these questions are different from questions like the following:

「あれですか。」 「はい。」
Are-desu-ka. Hai.
“Is it that one?” “Yes.”

「エッフェル塔ですか。」 「いいえ。」

Efferu-too-desu-ka. Iie.

“Is it the Eiffel Tower?” “No.”

These are yes-no questions consisting of a verb-like element, as explained in Units 5 and 6. What they elicit is quite different from what topic phrases alone elicit. This is because yes-no questions merely seek a validation, while lone topic phrases invite the listener to supply the missing information, just like WH-phrases.

More explanations of the topic particle will be provided in Units 18, 20, and 21 in comparison with other particles. For the moment, study these additional examples.

名前は、知りませんでした。

Namae-wa shirimasen-deshita.

“Speaking of the name, I didn’t know it.”

東京タワーは、行きませんでした。

Tookyoo-tawaa-wa ikimasen-deshita.

“Speaking of Tokyo Tower, I didn’t go there.”

For related topics, see also Units 15, 18, 20, and 21.

17

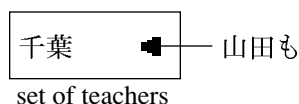
The particle 〜も *-mo* adds the preceding noun phrase to a list of objects

The particle 〜も *-mo* presupposes a set of things or people which fits the description and adds an additional member to the set:

千葉さんは先生です。山田さんも先生です。

Chiba-san-wa sensei-desu. **Yamada-san-mo** sensei-desu.

“Mr. Chiba is a teacher. **Ms. Yamada too** (in addition to Mr. Chiba) is a teacher.”



新聞を買いました。雑誌も買いました。

Shinbun-o kaimashita. **Zasshi-mo** kaimashita.

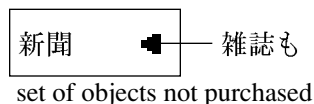
“I bought a newspaper. I **also** bought **a magazine** (in addition to a newspaper).”



新聞は買いませんでした。雑誌も買いませんでした。

Shinbun-wa kaimasen-deshita. **Zasshi-mo** kaimasen-deshita.

“I didn’t buy a newspaper. I didn’t buy **a magazine, either.**”



Note that while the English sentence “Ms. Yamada too is a teacher” is as unambiguous as its Japanese counterpart 山田さんも先生です *Yamada-san-mo sensei-desu*, the English sentences “Ms. Yamada is also a teacher” and “Ms. Yamada is a teacher, too” are ambiguous between two readings: “Ms. Yamada is a teacher in addition to being something else” and “Ms. Yamada is a teacher in addition to someone else.” The expression “also” can be interpreted with either of the noun phrases, “Ms. Yamada” or “a teacher,” because it is not directly attached to either of them; “too” also can be interpreted with either of the noun

phrases when it is placed at the end of a sentence. On the other hand, the particle ～も *-mo* always attaches directly to something that is added, and there is no ambiguity. For this reason, the second sentence in the following pair does not make sense in this sequence, although it is grammatical by itself:

山田さんは大学院生です。*山田さんも先生です。

Yamada-san-wa daigakuinsei-desu. *Yamada-san-mo sensei-desu.

“Ms. Yamada is a graduate student. *Ms. Yamada too is a teacher (in addition to someone else).”

The use of the particle ～も *-mo* with 山田さん *Yamada-san* in the second sentence above forces the interpretation that there is another person like Ms. Yamada who is a teacher, rather than adding new information to Ms. Yamada’s description. To approximate “Ms. Yamada is a graduate student; she is also a teacher,” use the following as an alternative:

山田さんは大学院生で、(同時に)先生です。

Yamada-san-wa daigakuinsei-de, (dooji-ni) sensei-desu.

“Ms. Yamada is a graduate student and (at the same time) a teacher.”

Checking your comprehension: Consider what sentence could precede the following sentence:

織田さんもカナダへ行きました。

Oda-san-mo Kanada-e ikimashita.

“Mr. Oda too went to Canada.”

For related topics, see also Units 15 and 18.

18

Use of ～は *-wa* and ～も *-mo* presupposes a contextual set

We have seen that the speaker refers to a previously mentioned thing or person using the particle ～は *-wa*, as shown below :

一時頃誰か来ましたよ。その人は、また来ると言いました。

Ichi-ji-goro **dareka** kimashita-yo. Sono hito-wa mata kuru-to iimashita.

“Someone came around one. That person said that she will come again.”

One can also use ～は *-wa* to refer to a thing or person which is presumed to be part of the context. For example, if an absent-minded customer knocks on the locked door of a small shop on a holiday, the owner might come out and say the following:

すみません。今日は、休みです。

Sumimasen. **Kyoo-wa** yasumi-desu.

“I am sorry. Today is a holiday.”

In this case, the day is part of the shared context.

Or, one can also use ～は *-wa* to single out one member of a contextual set, implying that the statement does not hold for the other members. This is known as the contrastive use of the particle ～は *-wa*:

月曜日は、休みです。(その他は、休みじゃないです。)

Getsuyoobi-wa yasumi-desu. (Sono hoka-wa yasumi-ja nai-desu.)

“Monday is a day off. (The other days are not.)”

Generally speaking, the use of ～は *-wa* and ～も *-mo* presupposes a contextual set of things or people. The difference is that ～は *-wa* identifies the thing or person as the only member of a set which meets the description, while ～も *-mo* identifies the thing or person as part of a larger set whose members all meet the description:

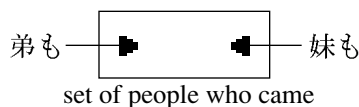
一時頃誰か来ましたよ。それから、あなたの妹も、来ました。

Ichi-ji-goro **dareka** kimashita-yo. Sore-kara anata-no imooto-mo kimashita.

“Someone came around one. And then, your sister also came.”

Note that ～も *-mo* may appear several times in a single sentence. In such cases, each *mo*-marked phrase meets the description separately:

弟さんも、妹さんも、来ました。
 Ototoo-san-mo imotoo-san-mo kimashita.
 “Your brother as well as your sister came.”

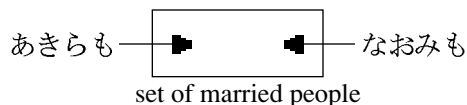


This sentence is actually the result of collapsing the following two sentences:

弟さんも、来ました。妹さんも、来ました。
 Ototoo-san-mo kimashita. Imotoo-san-mo kimashita.
 “Your brother (also) came. Your sister also came.”

The two individuals are subjects of two separate (though identical) events above. This is why, for example, the following sentence means that the individuals are married, but not to each other:

あきらも、なおみも、結婚しています。
 Akira-mo Naomi-mo kekkon-shite imasu.
 “Both Akira and Naomi are married.”



This is of course different from the following sentence, just as the English equivalents differ from each other:

あきらと なおみは、結婚しています。
 Akira-to Naomi-wa kekkon-shite imasu.
 “Akira and Naomi are married (either to each other or to different individuals).”

Checking your comprehension: What is the meaning of the following sentence?

鈴木さんも、田中さんも、中田さんも、結婚しています。
 Suzuki-san-mo Tanaka-san-mo Nakada-san-mo kekkon-shite-imasu.

For related topics, see also Units 16 and 17.

19

～が *-ga* is the subject marker; ～を *-o* is the direct object marker

In this unit, we study the basic contrast between transitive verbs and intransitive verbs and the question of how to use the subject and direct object particles. The best place to start this discussion, however, is not with Japanese. We need to understand how (in)transitivity works in English before we try to understand it in Japanese. First, compare the following two sentences.

The boy **hit** the ball.

The boy **slept** for three days.

The first of these sentences contains a transitive verb; the second sentence, an intransitive verb. The prototypical contrast between the transitive verb and the intransitive verb is this: a transitive verb describes an event in which one party, or agent, necessarily affects another party, or target. An intransitive verb by contrast describes a stable condition in which no change takes place or an event in which one party acts or undergoes change on its own.

The most typical examples of transitive verbs are verbs of violence such as “kill,” “kick,” and “hit.” By contrast, verbs of biological functions such as “sleep,” “blossom,” and “die” are intransitive. What other verbs can you think of as good examples of transitive verbs in English? How about intransitive verbs?

The semantic contrast between transitivity and intransitivity is reflected in the number of noun phrases you must use with a verb: a transitive verb requires a subject noun phrase (agent) and a direct object noun phrase (target); an intransitive verb requires only a subject noun phrase. In the following pair of sentences, for instance, the first sentence is ungrammatical because it lacks the direct object noun phrase required by the transitive verb:

*The boy hit.

The boy hit it.

In the following pair, on the other hand, the second sentence is ungrammatical, because it has an extra noun phrase which the intransitive verb cannot take:

The boy slept.

*The boy slept it.

Let us summarize the points so far. A transitive verb requires a subject and a direct object; an intransitive verb requires only a subject. The subject of a

transitive sentence typically affects the direct object in such a way as to change its status. The subject of an intransitive sentence, on the other hand, does not undergo a change, or undergoes a change on its own, or acts without affecting another party. To make sure you understand these concepts, identify the subject and the direct object in each of the following sentences. Watch out for intransitive sentences which do not have a direct object!

The baby had milk.
Who is using the telephone?
Which did you make?
The newspaper is there.
I went by taxi yesterday.

Did you identify “the baby,” “who,” “you,” “the newspaper,” and “I” as the subject, and “milk,” “the telephone,” and “which” as the direct object?

Subject and Direct Object Particles in Japanese

We can now move on to the explanation of the subject particle ～が *-ga* and the direct object particle ～を *-o*. The particle ～が *-ga* signals that the preceding noun phrase is the subject of the sentence; the particle ～を *-o* signals that the preceding noun phrase is the direct object. (For the moment, we set aside the question of what the topic marker ～は *-wa* is. In order to understand this question, see Unit 20, the unit on the contrast between the topic marker and other particles.)

Whereas English depends on word order to distinguish between the subject and the direct object, as shown below,

The toddler chased the puppy.
The puppy chased the toddler.

Japanese is quite unconstrained with respect to word order within a single sentence. Recall that the basic rule of Japanese is that the verb appears at the end of the sentence. Other elements can be switched around without changing the meaning of the sentence. This applies to the subject as well as to the direct object noun phrase. The subject may appear before the direct object, or it may follow the direct object, as in the following examples:

学生が先生を招待しました。
Gakusei-ga sensei-o shootai-shimashita.
“The students invited the teachers.”

先生を学生が招待しました。
Sensei-o gakusei-ga shootai-shimashita.
“The students invited the teachers.”

In such examples, semantic confusion does not arise because the sentences distinguish the subject and the direct object by marking them with the particles ～が *-ga* and ～を *-o*, respectively. Once a particle is attached to a noun phrase and marks its function, the unit moves together, keeping the function of each noun phrase transparent wherever it may be.

Checking your comprehension: Identify the subject and the direct object in each of the following Japanese sentences and translate them into English.

誰が今日林さんを見ましたか。

Dare-ga kyoo Hayashi-san-o mimashita-ka.

今日林さんを見ましたか。

Kyoo Hayashi-san-o mimashita-ka.

This time, identify the subject and the direct object in the following English sentence and translate it into Japanese.

The teachers invited the students.

For related topics, see also Units 1, 15, 20, 23, and 26.

20

～が *-ga* and ～を *-o* mark a fresh participant; ～は *-wa* marks a familiar participant already anchored in a context

In the previous discussion of the contrast between the subject and the direct object (Unit 19), we avoided reference to the topic particle ～は *-wa*. In this unit, we study the contrast between the topic and other noun phrases, specifically the subject and the direct object. A good way to begin this task is by examination of a story like *Kintaro*, which might go as follows:

Once upon a time, there was a **chubby little boy named Kintaro**. **He** was very strong. In fact, **he** was so strong **he** often wrestled with his friend the bear. . . .

In this passage, Kintaro appears four times as the subject of a clause. The first reference introduces him to the reader as a fresh participant. Once this is accomplished, he is no longer a fresh participant; he is anchored in the context, and the focus of the story shifts to what he does. This change in status is reflected in this story in the shift from an indefinite noun phrase “a chubby little boy” to a pronoun “he.”

In Japanese, this contrast is reflected in the use of the particles, ～が *-ga* and ～は *-wa*. The subject particle ～が *-ga*, introduces a thing or person into a story; the topic marker ～は *-wa* reintroduces this item as a familiar participant already anchored in the context. A typical organization of a narrative in Japanese is exemplified by the following short passage:

今日、宮本さんが来ました。宮本さんは日本語の先生です。宮本さんは私とサッカーの試合を見ました。

Kyoo **Miyamoto-san-ga** kimashita. **Miyamoto-san-wa** Nihon-go-no sensei-desu. **Miyamoto-san-wa** watashi-to sakkaa-no shiai-o mimashita.

“**Ms. Miyamoto** came today. **She** is a Japanese teacher. **She** watched a soccer game with me.”

Notice that the first reference to Ms. Miyamoto is accompanied by the subject particle ～が *-ga*, while the second and the third references are accompanied by the topic particle ～は *-wa*.

The change of status that we are studying here is almost like that of an initially newsworthy rocket settling into an orbit and functioning as a station for future scientific observations that will be more newsworthy. If we use this analogy, the *ga*-marked noun phrase is a rocket before it settles into an orbit; the *wa*-marked noun phrase is its condition after it is in orbit. Until something unusual happens

to it, and it becomes newsworthy again, it carries the topic particle 〜は *-wa*. Some objects are from the very outset “in an orbit” or in a stable condition without being newsworthy. One example is a participant in an unchanging condition or in a general truth, as in the case of the topic noun phrase 日本 *Nihon* “Japan” in the following sentence:

日本は、島国です。
Nihon-wa shimaguni-desu.
“Japan is an island nation.”

Another is the speaker himself/herself, as in the case of 私 *watashi* “I” in the following sentence, an individual naturally anchored in his or her universe and taken for granted:

私は、あさって日本へ帰ります。
Watashi-wa asatte Nihon-e kaerimasu.
“I am going home to Japan the day after tomorrow.”

Such entities are always marked with the topic marker unless they become newsworthy, as in the following exchange:

「だれが、あさって日本へ帰りますか。」 「私が、あさって日本へ帰ります。」
Dare-ga asatte Nihon-e kaerimasu-ka. **Watashi-ga** asatte Nihon-e kaerimasu.
“Who is going home to Japan the day after tomorrow?” “I am going home to Japan the day after tomorrow.”

So far, we have been contrasting the subject and the topic. The discussion might have given you the impression that the topic always has something to do with the subject. This is not the case. Take a look at a concrete example below:

Topic	Time	Subject	Direct Object	Verb
	きのう kinoo	金太郎が Kintaroo-ga	おもちを omochi-o	作りました。 tsukurimashita
きのうは		金太郎が	おもちを	作りました。
金太郎は	きのう		おもちを	作りました。
おもちは	きのう	金太郎が		作りました。

“Kintaro made a rice cake yesterday.”

These four sentences are related. The latter three sentences are generated from the first sentence by turning different noun phrases into the topic of the sentence. This process involves attaching the topic particle and (usually) moving the noun phrase to the beginning of the sentence. It is not just the subject that turns into a topic; the temporal phrase can turn into the topic, and so can a direct object. We can think of a story line such as the following, in which the first sentence introduces a new participant using the direct object particle while the second sentence marks its direct object with the topic particle:

金太郎が直径2メートルのおもちを作りました。それは、熊と一緒に食べました。

Kintaroo-ga **chokkei 2-meetoru-no omochi-o** tsukurimashita. **Sore-wa** kuma-to issho-ni tabemashita.

“Kintaro made **a rice cake two meters in diameter**. He ate **it** together with the bear.”

Checking your comprehension: In the following exchanges, あれ *are* “that” can be dropped in the first answer, while it cannot be in the second. Why?

「あれは何ですか。」 「(あれは) 法隆寺です。」

Are-wa nan-desu-ka. (Are-wa) Hooryuuji-desu.

“What is that?” “That is Horyuji Temple.”

「どれがいいですか。」 「あれがいいです。」

Dore-ga ii-desu-ka. Are-ga ii-desu.

“Which one is good?” “That one is good.”

For related topics, see also Units 19 and 21.

21

Do not attach 〜は *-wa* to interrogative WH-phrases

A declarative sentence hardly ever becomes ungrammatical just because of a wrong use of the topic particle. It might sound slightly odd, but most of the time you can find a reasonable interpretation for it. This is because the use of the topic particle is conditioned by contextual factors beyond the sentence. Thus, you might be tempted to use the topic particle everywhere in order to circumvent the problem of having to choose correct particles. This strategy, however, may result in ungrammatical sentences with WH-questions.

Recall that WH-questions are those questions which contain phrases such as the following:

誰	dare	who
何	nani	what
何語	nani-go	which language
何人	nani-jin	which nationality
何ページ	nan-peeji	which page
どれ	dore	which one
どの (本)	dono (hon)	which (book)
いくら	ikura	how much
いつ	itsu	when
どう	doo	how

These items are known as WH-phrases. A WH-phrase stands for an unknown piece of information. For this reason, you cannot attach the topic particle, which marks a person or thing already anchored in the context, to a WH-phrase. If necessary, attach other particles to WH-phrases. Some examples are given below:

Grammatical

誰がやってきましたか。
Dare-ga yatte-kimashita-ka.
“Who came over?”

何をしましたか。
Nani-o shimashita-ka.
“What did you do?”

何ページを読みましたか。
Nan-peeji-o yomimashita-ka.
“Which page did you read?”

Ungrammatical

*誰はやってきましたか。
***Dare-wa** yatte-kimashita-ka.

*何はしましたか。
***Nani-wa** shimashita-ka.

*何ページは読みましたか。
***Nan-peeji-wa** yomimashita-ka.

どれを食べますか。
Dore-o tabemasu-ka.
“Which one will you eat?”

*どれは食べますか。
*Dore-wa tabemasu-ka.

どの辞書を買いますか。
Dono jisho-o kaimasu-ka.
“Which dictionary will you buy?”

*どの辞書は買いますか。
*Dono jisho-wa kaimasu-ka.

Can you now supply possible answers to these questions? One answer to the first question might be the following:

「誰がやって来ましたか。」 「近所の子供達がやって来ました。」
Dare-ga yatte-kimashita-ka. Kinjo-no kodomo-tachi-ga yatte-kimashita.
“Who came over?” “The neighborhood children came over.”

Note that the same particle is used in the question and the answer. Pattern your answers after this example and maintain the same particle for the question and the answer.

By the way, note that we are not saying that you cannot use ～は *-wa* with WH-questions. Early on, you learned questions like the following:

お名前は、何ですか。
Onamae-wa nan-desu-ka.
“What is your name?”

This WH-question is grammatical, even though it contains ～は *-wa*, because the particle ～は *-wa* is not attached to 何 *nan*. The point we are trying to bring home is that you may not attach ～は *-wa* to a WH-phrase.

Checking your comprehension: Fill in the parentheses with appropriate particles, and translate the sentences into English. Remember not to use ～は *-wa*.

これは、誰（ ）使いますか。
Kore-wa dare-() tsukaimasu-ka.

日本人は、どんな本（ ）読みますか。
Nihon-jin-wa donna hon-() yomimasu-ka.

どれ（ ）一番安いですか。
Dore-() ichiban yasui-desu-ka.

For related topics, see also Units 11, 16, and 20.

22

Only one direct object particle ～を *-o* appears per verb

The grammatical constraint known as the “double-*o* constraint,” that only one direct object particle may appear with one verb, has interesting consequences in Japanese grammar.

So-called verbal nouns such as 勉強 *benkyoo* “study,” 電話 *denwa* “telephone,” 研究 *kenkyuu* “research,” 調査 *choosa* “investigation,” and テニス *tenisu* “tennis,” which express activities, are used in two patterns, as shown below:

勉強します。
Benkyoo-shimasu.
“I study.”

勉強をします。
Benkyoo-o shimasu.
“I study.”

Although both patterns are equally grammatical, when adding a direct object noun phrase, the double-*o* constraint limits the manner in which the extra noun phrase appears in the sentence. That is, an additional direct object noun phrase along with the direct object particle ～を *-o* can only be added to the first pattern. Adding one to the second pattern results in an ungrammatical sentence:

日本語を勉強します。
Nihon-go-o benkyoo-shimasu.
“I will study Japanese.”

*日本語を勉強をします。
*Nihon-go-o benkyoo-o shimasu.

A correct way to add a direct object noun phrase to the second pattern is to turn it into a modifier of a noun, as shown below:

日本語の勉強をします。
Nihon-go-no benkyoo-o shimasu.
“I will study Japanese.”

If a sentence contains more than one direct object particle, either one verb has been omitted because it is identical to the other verb, or the sentence is complex and contains more than one verb. The following exemplifies the first case:

石川さんは、韓国語を、私は、中国語を、勉強しました。
Ishikawa-san-wa Kankoku-go-o, watashi-wa Chuugoku-go-o benkyoo-shimashita.
“Ms. Ishikawa studied Korean, and I, Chinese.”

The second type is exemplified by the following:

韓国語を勉強した人を知っていますか。
Kankoku-go-o benkyoo-shita hito-o shitte-imasu-ka.
“Do you know a person who studied Korean?”

In this case, 韓国語 *Kankoku-go* “Korean language” is the direct object of 勉強した *benkyoo-shita* “studied,” while 人 *hito* “person” is the direct object of 知っています *shitte-imasu* “know.”

Checking your comprehension: Translate “I did research on Japanese newspapers” in two ways.

For related topics, see also Unit 32.

23

The subject and the direct object are the primary grammatical categories

The subject and the direct object are the most basic grammatical categories for the interpretation of sentences in any language. They are so basic that there is little need to specially mark them as such. That is, they are “default” grammatical categories. In the absence of a special marking, a noun phrase is interpreted as either the subject or the direct object. This is why, for instance, English has no such thing as a preposition for a subject or direct object noun phrase, although it does have many specialized prepositions such as “to,” “from,” “at,” “on,” “in,” and “by.”

The same principle operates in Japanese. Although Japanese has the subject particle ～が *-ga* and the direct object particle ～を *-o*, they can be dropped in speech as shown below:

郵便(が)、来ましたか。
Yuubin-(ga) kimashita-ka.
“Did the mail come?”

今朝の新聞(を)、読みましたか。
Kesa-no shinbun-(o) yomimashita-ka.
“Did you read this morning’s newspaper?”

Particles such as ～から *-kara* “from” and ～まで *-made* “until” cannot be dropped under any circumstance, as the contrast between the following two sentences demonstrates:

二時から三時までいます。
Niji-**kara** sanji-**made** imasu.
“I will be there **from** two **to** three.”

*二時、三時、います。
*Niji, sanji, imasu.

Dropping of the subject and the direct object particles occurs in other contexts, too. Other particles may be combined with ～は *-wa* or ～も *-mo*, as seen below.

盛岡からは、車を使いました。
Morioka-**kara-wa** kuruma-o tsukaimashita.
“**From** Morioka, we used a car.”

秋田へは、車で行きました。
Akita-**e-wa** kuruma-de ikimashita.
“**To** Akita, I went by car.”

沖縄からも、代表が来ました。
Okinawa-**kara-mo** daihyoo-ga kimashita.
“Representatives **also** came **from** Okinawa.”

長野へも、代表が行きました。
Nagano-**e-mo** daihyoo-ga ikimashita.
“Representatives **also** went **to** Nagano.”

But the subject and the direct object particles usually cannot be combined with
～は *-wa* or ～も *-mo*:

自転車も便利です。
Jitensha-mo benri-desu.
“Bicycles are also convenient.”

*自転車**が**も便利です。
*Jitensha-**ga-mo** benri-desu.

自転車も使いました。
Jitensha-mo tsukaimashita.
“I also used a bicycle.”

*自転車**を**も使いました。
*Jitensha-**o-mo** tsukaimashita.

Likewise, other particles can be combined with ～の *-no* before a noun, as shown below.

広島への道
Hiroshima-**e-no** michi
“the road **to** Hiroshima”

広島からの道
Hiroshima-**kara-no** michi
“the road **from** Hiroshima”

広島での時間
Hiroshima-**de-no** jikan
“the time **in** Hiroshima”

But there is no corresponding pattern such as the following:

*私**が**の勉強
*watashi-**ga-no** benkyoo

*日本語**を**の勉強
*Nihon-go-**o-no** benkyoo

Checking your comprehension: Which particle is being omitted in the following sentence?

これ、使いましたか。
Kore, tsukaimashita-ka.

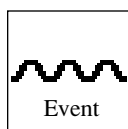
For related topics, see also Units 1, 19, and 25.

24

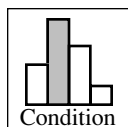
Two types of locational particles: ～で *-de* and ～に *-ni*

The particle ～で *-de* marks the domain (including, but not limited to, location) in which the totality of an event takes place or in which a condition holds true, as in the following:

チョムスキー先生のセミナーは、四階であります。
Chomusukii-sensei-no seminaa-wa **yonkai-de arimasu.**
“Professor Chomsky’s seminar **meets on the fourth floor.**”

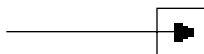


エベレストは、世界で一番高い山です。
Eberesuto-wa **sekai-de ichiban takai** yama-desu.
“Mt. Everest is **the tallest mountain in the world.**”



On the other hand, the particle ～に *-ni* is a placement particle. It marks the point where some object is located, or into which some object is placed, as in the following:

九時ごろに大学に着きます。
Kuji-goro-ni **daigaku-ni tsukimasu.**
“I **arrive at the university** around 9.”



五時ごろまで大学にいます。
Goji-goro-made **daigaku-ni imasu.**
“I **stay at the university** until around 5.”



六時ごろに家に帰ります。
Rokuji-goro-ni uchi-ni kaerimasu.
“I **return home** around 6.”



車をホテルの駐車場にとめました。
Kuruma-o hoteru-no chuushajoo-ni tomemashita.
“I **parked** the car **in the parking lot of the hotel**.”

本を机の上に置きました。
Hon-o tsukue-no ue-ni okimashita.
“I **placed** the book **on the desk**.”

プレゼントを箱の中に入れました。
Purezento-o hako-no naka-ni iremashita.
“I **put** the present **in a box**.”

Since ～に *-ni* is specifically for placement, the range of verbs which can appear with *ni*-marked noun phrases is rather limited. Some more examples are:

図書館に、行きます。
Toshokan-ni ikimasu.
“I **go to the library**.”

図書館に、着きます。
Toshokan-ni tsukimasu.
“I **arrive at the library**.”

図書館に、います。
Toshokan-ni imasu.
“I **am at the library**.”

図書館に、あります。
Toshokan-ni arimasu.
“It **is in the library**.”

On the other hand, ～で *-de* marks the sphere of any event, and many verbs of action which you learn early on can be used with ～で *-de*.

図書館で、勉強します。
Toshokan-de benkyoo-shimasu.
“We **study in the library**.”

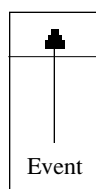
図書館で、コンピューターを使います。
Toshokan-de konpyuutaa-o tsukaimasu.
“We use a computer in the library.”

図書館で、古いレコードを聞きます。
Toshokan-de furui rekoodo-o kikimasu.
“We listen to old records in the library.”

図書館で、寝ます。
Toshokan-de nemasu.
“I sleep in the library.”

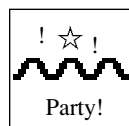
In fact, the following is also possible because the totality of the event of going to the fourth floor takes place within the library, although the action of going has the fourth floor as the destination:

図書館で、四階に行きます。
Toshokan-de yonkai-ni ikimasu.
“I go to the fourth floor in the library.”



Note, also, that あります *arimasu* “to exist” does not necessarily occur with ～に *-ni*. If the subject is an event such as a party, a class, or a meeting, it means “to take place,” and ～で *-de* is used, as in the following:

今晚、友だちの家でパーティがあります。
Konban tomodachi-no ie-de paatii-ga arimasu.
“There is a party at a friend’s house tonight.”



1988年のオリンピックは韓国のソウルでありました。
1988-nen-no Orinpikku-wa Kankoku-no Souru-de arimashita.
“The 1988 Olympic Games took place in Seoul, South Korea.”

Checking your comprehension: Which particle should you use for the following?

今日の歴史のクラスは図書館の四階（ ）あります。

Kyoo-no rekishi-no kurasu-wa toshokan-no yonkai-() arimasu.

“Today’s history class will be held on the fourth floor of the library.”

日本語のクラスの教室は図書館の二階（ ）あります。

Nihon-go-no kurasu-no kyooshitsu-wa toshokan-no ni-kai-() arimasu.

“The classroom for the Japanese class is located on the second floor of the library.”

日本（ ）どこ（ ）行きましたか。

Nihon-() doko-() ikimashita-ka.

“Where did you go [while] in Japan?”

For related topics, see also Units 15 and 60.

25

Three reasons not to use phrase particles

Most noun phrases in Japanese seem to require phrase particles, in particular in writing, but there are cases where phrase particles are optional (as we have seen in Unit 23) or may not be used. We summarize the reasons here.

Reason One: Clear Functions

Phrase particles are optional when the functions of the noun phrases are clear from the context:

千葉さん、来ましたか。
Chiba-san, kimashita-ka.
“Did Mr. Chiba come?”

千葉さん、見ましたか。
Chiba-san, mimashita-ka.
“Did you see Mr. Chiba?”

The subject and direct object particles and some uses of ～に *-ni* are particularly likely to be dropped in speech because their grammatical functions are so fundamental that they can be easily recovered from the context. (For this reason, they are also dropped when followed by ～は *-wa* or ～も *-mo*.) Other phrase particles, such as ～から *-kara* and ～まで *-made*, are not likely to be skipped even in fast speech, because the meanings of the phrases are difficult to recover without them.

Reason Two: Expressions of Quantity

In two cases, phrase particles are not allowed. Expressions of quantity appear without particles, as shown below:

二枚下さい。
Nimai kudasai.
“Please give me **two sheets** (e.g., of paper).”

ちょっと食べました。
Chotto tabemashita.
“I ate a **small amount**.”

二日いました。
Futsuka imashita.
“I was there **for two days**.”

This is because phrase particles make noun phrases refer to specific items. In the above sentences, the expressions of quantity do not refer to specific items. When you ask for two sheets of paper as in the first example above, you will happily accept any two sheets. Particles are incompatible in such cases. On the other hand, when quantity expressions modify or represent a specific item in the context, phrase particles are in fact used. This is shown below:

その二枚の紙を下さい

Sono nimai-no kami-o kudasai.

“Please give me **those two** sheets of paper.”

その二日は、楽しかったです。

Sono futsuka-wa tanoshikatta-desu.

“**Those two** days were enjoyable.”

Likewise, in the following examples, the particle 〜に *-ni* must be used because the noun phrases refer to specific points in time:

1953年に生まれました。

Sen-kyuuhyaku-gojuu-san-nen-ni umare mashita.

“I was born **in the year 1953.**”

三時に来てください。

Sanji-ni kite-kudasai.

“Please come **at three.**”

Reason Three: Expressions Relative to the Present

Interestingly, expressions in which the speaker’s point of reference is the present are incompatible with the particle 〜に *-ni*. Examples:

今 *ima* “now”

おととい *ototoi* “the day before yesterday”; きのう *kinoo* “yesterday”; 今日 *kyoo* “today”; 明日 *ashita* “tomorrow”; あさって *asatte* “the day after tomorrow”

先週 *senshuu* “last week”; 今週 *konshuu* “this week”; 来週 *raishuu* “next week”

先月 *sengetsu* “last month”; 今月 *kongetsu* “this month”; 来月 *raigetsu* “next month”

おとし *otoshi* “the year before last”; 去年 *kyonen* “last year”; 今年 *kotoshi* “this year”; 来年 *rainen* “next year”

This situation is the same in English: temporal expressions normally require prepositions such as “at,” “on,” and “in,” unless the present is the point of reference. “Tomorrow” and “yesterday,” for example, are incompatible with “at,” “on,” and “in.”

Of course, these expressions do require a particle in order to express additional concepts such as “from X,” “by X,” etc., as in the following.

今から二時間
ima-**kara** ni-jikan
“for two hours **from** now”

今日からあさってまで
kyoo-**kara** asatte-**made**
“**from** today **through** the day after tomorrow”

Checking your comprehension: What is the difference between the following two sentences?

ハワイに十日いました。
Hawai-ni **took**a imashita.

ハワイに十日にいました。
Hawai-ni **took**a-ni imashita.

And which assignment would you like better? Why?

明日までに100ページを読んでください。
Ashita-made-ni **hyaku-peeji-o** yonde-kudasai.

明日までに100ページ読んでください。
Ashita-made-ni **hyaku-peeji** yonde-kudasai.

For related topics, see also Unit 23.

26

“Exceptional” uses of 〜が *-ga*

We studied the basic contrast between transitive verbs and intransitive verbs in Unit 19. Some examples of transitive verbs and intransitive verbs are given below:

Transitive

友だちがオートバイを買いました。

Tomodachi-ga ootobai-o kaimashita.

“A friend of mine bought a motorcycle.”

私はエスカレーターを使いました。

Watashi-wa esukareetaa-o tsukaimashita.

“I used the escalator.”

誰がここにジュースをこぼしましたか。

Dare-ga koko-ni juusu-o koboshimashita-ka.

“Who spilled the juice here?”

Intransitive

やっとバスが来ました。

Yatto basu-ga kimashita.

“A bus finally came.”

私が兄のかわりに行きます。

Watashi-ga ani-no kawari-ni ikimasu.

“I will go in place of my elder brother.”

日本文学にはすばらしい女性作家がたくさんいます。

Nihon-bungaku-ni-wa subarashii josei-sakka-ga takusan imasu.

“There are many excellent women authors in Japanese literature.”

In this unit, we deal with a set of verbs which at first appear to diverge from the basic pattern shown above. Observe the following sentences, with their English translations:

息子が二人あります。

Musuko-ga futari arimasu.

“I have two **sons**.”

セルボクロアチア語が分かります。
Serubo-Kuroachia-go-ga wakarimasu.
“I understand **Serbo-Croatian**.”

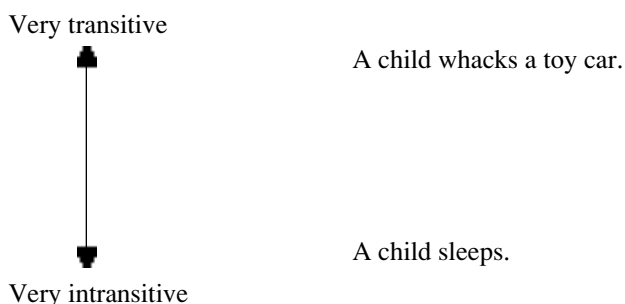
バドミントンが出来ます。
Badominton-ga dekimasu.
“I can play **badminton**.”

新しいパソコンがいます。
Atarashii pasokon-ga irimasu.
“I need **a new computer**.”

The English translations indicate that these sentences involve transitive events rather than intransitive events. And, in fact, each of the English sentences has a subject and a direct object. Strangely, however, the direct objects of the English sentences are expressed as the subjects in the Japanese counterparts. Is Japanese then inconsistent? Are we dealing with an irrational language? Definitely not. There is a reason behind this apparent inconsistency.

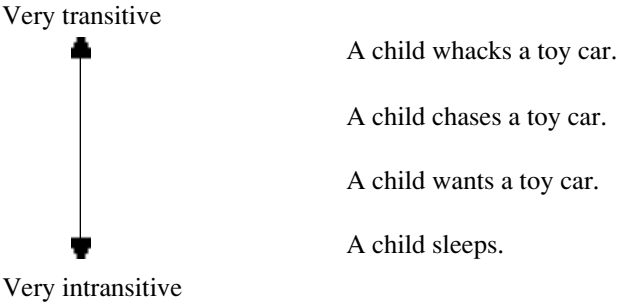
The Transitivity Scale

The phenomenon is caused by the intermediate nature of these exceptional verbs on the scale of transitivity. Transitivity forms a scale from the prototypically transitive to the prototypically intransitive event. Acts of violence cluster around the most transitive end of the scale: the agent in such events brings about definite changes to the target. Events like existing, sleeping, and dying, on the other hand, are very low on the scale of transitivity; they do not have to involve a second party. Other events are spread out between the two extreme ends. Where would you place events such as “a child chases a toy car” and “a child looks for a toy car” on the following scale?



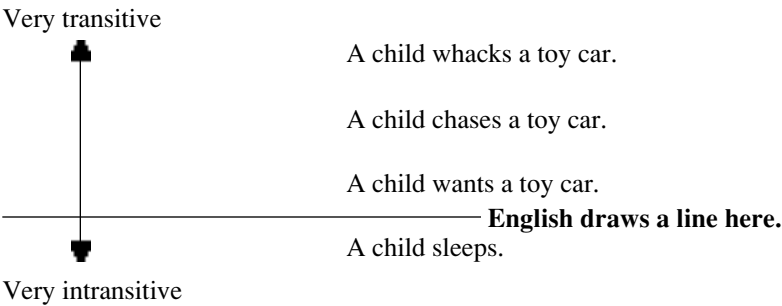
How about events like “a child likes a toy car,” “a child wants a toy car,” and “a child has a toy car”? Would you place these events above “a child chases a toy car”? Or would you place them below “a child chases a toy car”?

Interestingly, regardless of their language background, most people agree on the placement of these events on the scale of transitivity. Most people would find the following scale quite natural:



This means that transitivity is a scalar phenomenon and that people have an intuitive understanding of it regardless of their language background.

Concerning the peculiar behavior of some Japanese verbs, consider now where they would be placed on the scale of transitivity. You will notice that they are close to the case of “a child wants a toy car.” They are low-transitivity events and belong to the ambiguous area between the transitive prototype and the intransitive prototype. A language, however, must draw a line somewhere; a verb must function either as a transitive verb or as an intransitive verb. English, therefore, draws the line between “a child wants a toy car” and “a child sleeps,” and makes “want” a transitive verb:



Japanese draws the line between “a child chases a toy car” and “a child wants a toy car” and makes “want” an intransitive verb as shown below:

Very transitive



A child whacks a toy car.

A child chases a toy car.

Japanese draws a line here.

A child wants a toy car.

A child sleeps.

Very intransitive

This is why “I need a computer” in Japanese is パソコンがいります *pasokon-ga irimasu*. One might say that the Japanese language classifies only very transitive events as transitive enough.

Checking your comprehension: There are two ways to translate “I want to drink water” into Japanese as shown below. What do you think allows this alternation?

水を飲みたいです。

Mizu-*o* nomitai-desu.

“I want to drink water.”

水が飲みたいです。

Mizu-*ga* nomitai-desu.

“I want to drink water.”

For related topics, see also Units 19, 27, and 60.

27

Grammatical reasons for alternations of particles

Certain types of grammatical constructions allow multiple choices of particles. One type, with little consequence in the meaning, is given below:

私 {が／の} 言ったこと
watashi-{ga/no} itta koto
“what I said”

The alternation is possible because 私 *watashi* “I” may be analyzed either as the subject of the modifying sentence, as in the following:

[私が言った] こと
[watashi-ga itta] koto
“what I said”

or as the modifier of the noun phrase 言ったこと *itta koto* “what (someone) said,” as in the following:

私の [言ったこと]
watashi-no [itta koto]
“what I said”

A similar phenomenon is observed in the following, in which the noun すし *sushi* “sushi” may be treated as the direct object of 食べ *tabe* “eat,” as in the first example, or as the grammatical subject of the complex, intransitive verb 食べたい *tabetai* “want to eat,” as in the second:

[すしを食べ]たい。
[Sushi-o tabe]tai.
“I want to eat sushi.”

すしが [食べたい]なあ。
Sushi-ga [tabetai]-naa.
“I really want to eat sushi.”

There is a subtle difference in the meaning of the second example. The first option expresses a controlled desire, while the second expresses a much stronger desire. The emotive particle ～なあ *-naa* is more natural with the second option.

A similar phenomenon occurs in the following construction, in which 本 *hon* “book” may be treated as the direct object as in the first example, or as the subject of a complex, intransitive verb as in the second:

[本を置いて]ある。

[Hon-o oite]-aru.

“I have placed a book. (I intend to keep it there.)”

本が [置いてある]。

Hon-ga [oite-aru].

“There is a book. (The person who placed it there is not around.)”

Notice that the bracketed part in the first option has a transitive verb 置く *oku* “to place.” Its implicit subject, therefore, is a person, with the implication that the one who placed the book somehow controls the situation. The second option, on the other hand, has the book as the grammatical subject of the intransitive verb; this reduces the role of the person who placed it there.

Checking your comprehension: Explain why all of the following noun phrases are grammatical:

谷崎の小説を置いてある棚

Tanizaki-no shoosetsu-o oite-aru tana

“the shelf where I have placed novels by Tanizaki”

谷崎の小説が置いてある棚

Tanizaki-no shoosetsu-ga oite-aru tana

“the shelf where novels by Tanizaki have been placed”

谷崎の小説の置いてある棚

Tanizaki-no shoosetsu-no oite-aru tana

“the shelf where novels by Tanizaki have been placed”

How about the following, then?

キムチの食べたい人

kimuchi-no tabetai hito

“the person who wants to eat kimchi”

For related topics, see also Units 26 and 60.

28

The person marked with the particle 〜に *-ni* is an active participant in an interaction

Do you remember the time when you first tried to say something like “I saw my friend inside the movie theater” in the sense of “I met my friend inside the movie theater”? You might have said the following:

映画館の中で友だちを見た。

Eigakan-no naka-de **tomodachi-o mita.**

And when the teacher corrected you with the following, explaining that “to meet” in Japanese is 〜に会う *-ni au*,

映画館の中で友だちに会った。

Eigakan-no naka-de **tomodachi-ni atta.**

you might have wondered why you could not say the following:

*映画館の中で友だちを会った。

*Eigakan-no naka-de **tomodachi-o atta.**

Here is the answer. The particle 〜を *-o* is a direct object marker, but it also reduces the object into a non-participatory being. That is, the person marked with 〜を *-o* either does not socially interact with the actor-subject (no social relation) or has a lesser social status or is at the mercy of the actor-subject (subordinate relationship). A person marked with the particle 〜に *-ni*, on the other hand, is a non-subject participant (equal relation), who is actively involved as a partner in a social interaction. So, while the phrase 友だちを見る *tomodachi-o miru* “to see a friend” means that you see your friend but do not greet him/her, the phrase 友だちに会う *tomodachi-ni au* “to meet a friend” means that you greet or talk to your friend.

Note that the crucial factor in the choice of the particle is whether interaction is a necessary component of the event expressed by the sentence. This is largely determined by the nature of the verb. Of the following pair of sentences, the first one describes the subject speaking to Hirota. This requires 〜に *-ni*. The second sentence, on the other hand, describes the subject calling for Hirota, who is not in the subject’s view. This requires 〜を *-o*. Whether Hirota eventually responds to the call is irrelevant to the choice of the particle.

広田さんに呼びかけた。
Hirota-san-ni yobikaketa.
“I addressed **Mr. Hirota**.”

広田さんと呼んだ。
Hirota-san-o yonda.
“I called **for Mr. Hirota**.”

Likewise, the following sentence requires ～を -o, because at the time of waiting, there is no social interaction:

広田さんを待った。
Hirota-san-o matta.
“I waited **for Mr. Hirota**.”

The cases so far concern the question of whether or not there is social interaction. In the following sentence, the subordinate status of the person is the key factor in the choice of the particle ～を -o:

医者が患者を診た。
Isha-ga **kanja-o** mita.
“The doctor saw/examined **the patient**.”

In this case, the doctor could be speaking to the patient, but there is a distinctively unequal relationship between them, because a patient is not considered an equal participant in a physical examination.

Additional Examples

This contrast between a non-participatory person and a participatory person explains many intriguing contrasts. Of the following pair of sentences, the first sentence means that Yamamoto was harshly handled by police and was not granted the status of a cooperative citizen; this sentence requires the particle ～を -o. The second sentence, on the other hand, means that Yamamoto’s cooperation was expected by the police; therefore, the sentence requires the particle ～に -ni. In other words, in the first sentence, Yamamoto is not an active participant in the event; in the second, Yamamoto is a more or less free agent.

警察は、山本を詰問した。
Keisatsu-wa **Yamamoto-o** kitsumon-shita.
“The police interrogated **Yamamoto**.”

警察は、山本さんに質問した。

Keisatsu-wa **Yamamoto-san-ni** shitsumon-shita.

“The police (benignly) questioned **Mr. Yamamoto.**”

Some verbs allow both participatory and non-participatory interpretations. For such verbs, the particles alone make a difference. For instance, there is a clear difference between the following two sentences, even though an identical verb is used. The particle ～を *-o* in the first forces the interpretation that Morita was not a participant in the event. In fact, he/she was a helpless scapegoat, being reduced in status. On the other hand, the particle ～に *-ni* in the second forces the interpretation that the social interaction with Morita was benign and social.

森田を笑った。

Morita-o waratta.

“They laughed **at** (= made fun of) **Morita.**”

森田に笑った。

Morita-ni waratta.

“They smiled **at Morita.**”

The contrast turns up in the form of the contrast between a socially lower individual (the case of ～を *-o*) and a socially equal individual (the case of ～に *-ni*) in the following pair of sentences:

横山さんを教えた。

Yokoyama-san-o oshieta.

“He/She (as teacher) taught **Ms. Yokoyama** (as student).”

横山さんにゲームのルールを教えた。

Yokoyama-san-ni geemu-no ruuru-o oshieta.

“He/She taught the rules of the game **to Ms. Yokoyama.**”

In these, when the particle ～を *-o* is used, the individual must necessarily be a student of the subject, a lower status than that of the subject. In the second sentence, on the other hand, ～に *-ni* is used, and there is no need for such an unequal relationship to exist.

The generalization that ～に *-ni* is for an interactional participant is also valid in other cases such as the following:

柴田さんに聞いた。

Shibata-san-ni kiita.

“I asked **Ms. Shibata** about it.”

柴田さんに教わった。

Shibata-san-ni osowatta.

“I learned (something) **from Ms. Shibata.**”

柴田さんにもらった。

Shibata-san-ni moratta.

“I received (something) **from Ms. Shibata.**”

In these, ～に *-ni* acknowledges the person as a cooperative source person. When the source is not a cooperative social partner, as in the following example, ～に *-ni* may not be used; instead, ～から *-kara* is used with the verb:

すりは、青木さんからさいふを奪った。

Suri-wa **Aoki-san-kara** saifu-o ubatta.

“The pickpocket robbed **Mr. Aoki** of his wallet.”

*すりは、青木さんにさいふを奪った。

*Suri-wa **Aoki-san-ni** saifu-o ubatta.

警察は、話しながらない馬場さんから聞き出した。

Keisatsu-wa **hanashitagaranai Baba-san-kara** kiki-dashita.

“The police got the information **from Mr. Baba, who did not want to talk.**”

*警察は、話しながらない馬場さんに聞き出した。

*Keisatsu-wa **hanashitagaranai Baba-san-ni** kiki-dashita.

Also, when the source is not a person, ～に *-ni* cannot be used:

会社から退職金をもらった。

Kaisha-kara taishokukin-o moratta.

“He received a retirement bonus **from his company.**”

*会社に退職金をもらった。

***Kaisha-ni** taishokukin-o moratta.

Checking your comprehension: Can you explain the use of ～に *-ni* and ～を *-o* in the following sentences?

井上は、山下に勝った。

Inoue-wa **Yamashita-ni** katta.

“Inoue won **against Yamashita.**”

山下は、井上に負けた。
Yamashita-wa **Inoue-ni** maketa.
“Yamashita lost **to Inoue.**”

井上は、山下を負かした。
Inoue-wa **Yamashita-o** makashita.
“Inoue defeated **Yamashita.**”

For related topics, see also Unit 29.

29

The person marked with the particle ～と *-to* is a “reciprocal” participant in an interaction

There are two ways to use the phrase particle ～と *-to*. In one use, it corresponds to “and” and connects two nouns to create an extended noun phrase (see also Unit 39):

広島と長崎
Hiroshima-**to** Nagasaki
“Hiroshima **and** Nagasaki”

なおみとあきら
Naomi-**to** Akira
“Naomi **and** Akira”

In the other use, ～と *-to* connects a noun phrase to a verb, as in the following, and corresponds to “with”:

なおみが、あきらと話した。
Naomi-ga Akira-**to** hanashita.
“Naomi talked **with** Akira.”

なおみが、あきらと会った。
Naomi-ga Akira-**to** atta.
“Naomi met **with** Akira.”

なおみが、あきらと相談した。
Naomi-ga Akira-**to** soodan-shita.
“Naomi consulted **with** Akira.”

What is the difference between this use of ～と *-to* and the use of the particle ～に *-ni* in the following?

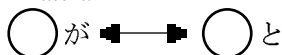
なおみが、あきらに話した。
Naomi-ga Akira-**ni** hanashita.
“Naomi talked **to** Akira.”

なおみが、あきらに会った。
Naomi-ga Akira-**ni** atta.
“Naomi met **Akira**.”

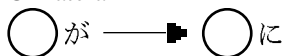
なおりがが、あきらに相談した。
Naomi-ga **Akira-ni** soodan-shita.
“Naomi consulted **Akira**.”

The difference is that the *to*-marked person contributes to the interaction as a co-participant with the subject; the action is bilateral, or reciprocal. The *ni*-marked person interacts with the subject, but the subject is the primary actor; the action is unilateral, or one-sided. These two types of relationships may be graphically represented as:

Bilateral



Unilateral



Actions such as consultation and talking can be either unilateral or bilateral. When the action is inherently bilateral, as in the case of fighting or marriage, only the option with ～と *-to* is possible:

なおりがあきらとけんかした。
Naomi-ga **Akira-to** kenka-shita.
“Naomi quarrelled **with Akira**.”

なおりがあきらと結婚した。
Naomi-ga **Akira-to** kekkon-shita.
“Naomi married **Akira**.”

Checking your comprehension: What might be the function of the auxiliary verb ～合う *-au* below? (Why can you not use it with the particle ～に *-ni*?)

なおりがあきらと話し合った。
Naomi-ga **Akira-to** hanashi-atta.
“Naomi talked **with Akira**.”

*なおりがあきらに話し合った。
*Naomi-ga **Akira-ni** hanashi-atta.

For related topics, see also Units 28 and 39.

30

Certain auxiliary verbs take the non-subject participant particle 〜に *-ni*

In Unit 28, we studied the meaning of the particle 〜に *-ni* that is attached to a person, and we said that it turns the person into an active non-subject participant. This characterization of 〜に *-ni* also explains why certain auxiliary verbs require 〜に *-ni*. Observe the following.

私は、弟に泣かれた。

Watashi-wa **otooto-ni** nakareta.

“My younger brother cried (and I got into trouble).”

私は、姉と一緒に来てもらった。

Watashi-wa **ane-ni** issho-ni kite-moratta.

“I had my elder sister come with me (and I was grateful)” or “I asked my elder sister to come with me.”

私に先に行かせて下さい。

Watashi-ni saki-ni ikasete-kudasai.

“Please let me go first.”

The first sentence involves the construction known as “affective passive,” “suffering passive,” or “adversative passive.” In the affective passive construction, the true subject of the sentence is the one who is personally affected by the event (私 *watashi* in this case). The person who executes the action (弟 *otooto*) is a non-subject participant and is marked by the particle 〜に *-ni*.

Likewise, the auxiliary verb 〜もらう *-morau* “to have someone do something” in the second sentence introduces a non-subject participant (姉 *ane*). This person is also marked by 〜に *-ni*.

The last sentence involves the causative verb 〜せる *-seru*. The true subject of this sentence is the listener, who is expected to give the permission. The causative verb introduces an active non-subject participant (私 *watashi*), and sure enough, this non-subject participant is marked by 〜に *-ni*.

The causative construction has an interesting property by which we can distinguish it from the other two constructions. Provided that there is no other *o*-marked noun phrase (see Unit 32), it allows the marking of a non-subject participant by 〜を *-o*, as shown below:

私を先に行かせて下さい。
Watashi-o saki-ni ikasete-kudasai.
 “Please let **me** go first.”

This causative sentence looks virtually identical to the *ni*-marked one, but there is a subtle difference between the two causative sentences. The *ni*-marked participant is considered to retain control over his/her action. The *o*-marked participant is considered to submit to the authority of the subject.

The other two constructions do not allow the use of ～を *-o*, making the following sentences ungrammatical.

*私は、弟を泣かされた。
 *Watashi-wa **otooto-o** nakareta.

*私は、母を一緒に来てもらった。
 *Watashi-wa **haha-o** issho-ni kite-moratta.

This also reflects the difference in the subject’s control over the non-subject participant. In the affective passive construction, the subject in fact has no effective control over the action of the non-subject participant. In the case of the auxiliary verb ～もらう *-morau*, the subject is grateful or owes consent to the non-subject participant and does not feel that he/she has control over the non-subject. The causative construction, on the other hand, allows two degrees of control. When the non-subject retains some control over his/her action, ～に *-ni* is used. When the non-subject submits to the subject, ～を *-o* is used. The following graphically summarizes this:

Subject’s control over non-subject

less ■ | ————— | ■ more

～に泣かれる
 -ni nakareru
 (subject adversely affected by non-subject)

～に来てもらう
 -ni kite-morau
 (subject grateful to non-subject)

～に行かせる
 -ni ikaseru
 (subject concedes control to non-subject)

～を行かせる
 -o ikaseru
 (subject has full control over non-subject)

Checking your comprehension: Can you now explain the contrast between the following uses of ～を *-o* and ～に *-ni*?

神様、雨を降らせて下さい。
Kamisama, **ame-o** furasete-kudasai.
“God, please make it rain.”

雄二は、雨に降られた。
Yuuji-wa **ame-ni** furareta.
“Yuji was rained on.”

And which particles should you use for the following? Why?

友だち（ ）一緒に行ってもらいたい。
Tomodachi-() issho-ni itte-moraitai.
“I would like my friend to go with me.”

友だち（ ）一緒に行ってほしい。
Tomodachi-() issho-ni itte-hoshii.
“I would like my friend to go with me.”

For related topics, see also Units 28 and 31.

31

The auxiliary verb **～もらう** *-morau* comes with **～に** *-ni*; the auxiliary verbs **～あげる** *-ageru* and **～くれる** *-kureru* do not

The non-subject participant particle **～に** *-ni* is associated with many main verbs, but only a handful of auxiliary verbs take this particle. They are the causative form, the passive form, **～もらう** *-morau*, and **～ほしい** *-hoshii*, all of which have an agent of action different from the subject:

私はあきらに先に行かせた。

Watashi-wa **Akira-ni** saki-ni ikaseta.

“I had **Akira** go ahead.” = “**Akira** went ahead. I had **him** do so.”

私はあきらに先に行かれた。

Watashi-wa **Akira-ni** saki-ni ikareta.

“I was inconvenienced by **Akira**’s going ahead.” = “**Akira** went ahead, and I was inconvenienced by it.”

私はあきらに先に行ってもらった。

Watashi-wa **Akira-ni** saki-ni itte-moratta.

“I had **Akira** go ahead (and was grateful).” = “**Akira** went ahead. I asked **him** to do so.”

私はあきらに先に行ってほしい。

Watashi-wa **Akira-ni** saki-ni itte-hoshii.

“I want **Akira** to go ahead.” = “**Akira** goes ahead. That is what I want.”

The auxiliary verbs **～あげる** *-ageru* (out-bound favor) and **～くれる** *-kureru* (in-bound favor) may appear similar to the auxiliary **～もらう** *-morau*, but they are quite different from the latter. The auxiliary verb **～もらう** *-morau* is similar to the causative form in that it has a *ni*-marked agent-benefactor different from the grammatical subject. The auxiliary verbs **～あげる** *-ageru* and **～くれる** *-kureru*, on the other hand, do not come with the particle **～に** *-ni*, as their grammatical subject is the agent-benefactor of an action:

私は先に行ってあげた。

Watashi-wa saki-ni itte-ageta.

“I went ahead (for someone).”

あきは先に行ってくれた。
Akira-wa saki-ni itte-kureta.
“Akira went ahead (for me).”

It sometimes appears as if the auxiliary verbs ～あげる *-ageru* and ～くれる *-kureru* also come with the particle ～に *-ni*:

私はあきに本を買ってあげた。
Watashi-wa **Akira-ni** hon-o katte-ageta.
“I bought a book **for Akira**.”

あきは私に本を買ってくれた。
Akira-wa **watashi-ni** hon-o katte-kureta.
“Akira bought a book **for me**.”

This type of ～に *-ni*, however, is not associated with auxiliary verbs. It marks a goal and is associated with a verb of transaction, as the following examples with the verb 買う *kau* “to buy” demonstrate:

私はあきに本を買った。
Watashi-wa **Akira-ni** hon-o katta.
“I bought **Akira** a book.”

あきは私に本を買った。
Akira-wa **watashi-ni** hon-o katta.
“Akira bought **me** a book.”

A verb like 行く *iku* “to go,” which does not mean a transaction, does not allow *ni*-marked noun phrases, as the following examples demonstrate:

*私はあきに先に行った。
*Watashi-wa **Akira-ni** saki-ni itta.

*あきは私に先に行った。
*Akira-wa **watashi-ni** saki-ni itta.

Adding ～あげる *-ageru* or ～くれる *-kureru* does not make them grammatical:

*あきは私に先に行ってくれた。
*Akira-wa **watashi-ni** saki-ni itte-kureta.

*私はあきに先に行ってあげた。
*Watashi-wa **Akira-ni** saki-ni itte-ageta.

Make sure that you do not confuse the main verbs あげる *ageru* “to give (out-bound)” and くれる *kureru* “to give (in-bound)” with their auxiliary counterparts; the former allow the use of ～に *-ni*:

私はあきらに本をあげた。
Watashi-wa **Akira-ni** hon-o ageta.
“I gave **Akira** a book.”

あきは私に本をくれた。
Akira-wa **watashi-ni** hon-o katta.
“Akira gave **me** a book.”

Checking your comprehension: Explain why the following sentence is ungrammatical:

*私はあきらに勉強を見てあげた。
*Watashi-wa Akira-ni benkyoo-o mite-ageru.

For related topics, see also Unit 30.

32

Another consequence of the double-*o* constraint

In Unit 30, we saw that the causative construction allows both ～を *-o* and ～に *-ni* for a non-subject participant. The following two sentences are both grammatical, though slightly different in meaning.

子ども達に前の方にすわらせた。

Kodomo-tachi-ni mae-no hoo-ni suwaraseta.

“I let **the children** sit in the front.”

子ども達を前の方にすわらせた。

Kodomo-tachi-o mae-no hoo-ni suwaraseta.

“I made **the children** sit in the front.”

Actually, these two options are possible because the verb すわる *suwaru* “to sit” is an intransitive verb, and there is no direct object associated with it. When the verb is a transitive verb, the double-*o* constraint, which we studied in Unit 22, is activated, as shown below, and only the particle ～に *-ni* can be used with the non-subject participant regardless of the subject’s control over him/her. This sentence is ambiguous.

子ども達にごはんを食べさせた。

Kodomo-tachi-ni gohan-o tabesaseta.

“I let/made **the children** eat the meal.”

Checking your comprehension: Which particle should you use with the following, ～に *-ni* or ～を *-o*?

なおみ () 家に帰らせた。

Naomi-() uchi-ni kaeraseta.

なおみ () 本を買わせた。

Naomi-() hon-o kawaseta.

What is wrong with the following sentence?

子ども達を食べさせた。

Kodomo-tachi-o tabesaseta.

For related topics, see also Units 22 and 30.

33

Phrase particles are powerful!

Once you master the functions of phrase particles, Japanese sentences become much easier to process either when listening or when reading. This is because phrase particles duplicate part of the information of the verb and give clues as to what type of verb to anticipate. For instance, when you read or hear a phrase like the following,

東京へ _____。
Tookyoo-e _____.

you can predict that a verb of directional movement such as 行きます *ikimasu* “to go” or 来ます *imasu* “to come” will follow. And when you read or hear a phrase like the following,

東京に _____。
Tookyoo-ni _____.

you will anticipate a verb of placement such as あります *arimasu* “to exist (inanimate),” います *imasu* “to exist (animate),” 着きます *tsukimasu* “to arrive,” 行きます *ikimasu* “to go,” and 来ます *imasu* “to come.” Particles thus compensate for the vagueness caused by placing the verb at the end of the sentence. In fact, verbs can be omitted in speech, as in the following, if they are predictable from the combination of the particle and the context:

どうぞ、こちらへ。
Doozo, kochira-e.
“Please (come) this way.”

三時までこちらでどうぞ。
San-ji-made kochira-de doozo.
“Please (do something) here until three o’clock.”

こちらからどうぞ。
Kochira-kara doozo.
“Please (enter/exit/start) from here.”

Or, an all-purpose verb お願いします *onegai-shimasu* “I request” can substitute for many different verbs:

宮下さんをお願いします。

Miyashita-san-to onegai-shimasu.

“I request (that you do it) with Ms. Miyashita.”

宮下さんからをお願いします。

Miyashita-san-kara onegaishimasu.

“I request (that you start) with Ms. Miyashita.”

宮下さんをお願いします。

Miyashita-san-o onegaishimasu.

“I request (that you take care of, look for, etc.) Ms. Miyashita.”

宮下さんにこれをお願いします。

Miyashita-san-ni kore-o onegai-shimasu.

“I request (that you give) this to Ms. Miyashita.”

Similarly, the interpretation of the following type of sentence depends mostly on the particles:

宮下さんです。

Miyashita-san-to-desu.

“It is **with Ms. Miyashita.**” = “You are paired **with Ms. Miyashita.**”

一時からです。

Ichi-ji-kara-desu.

“It is **from one o’clock.**”

駅までです。

Eki-made-desu.

“It is **as far as the station.**” = “I am going **as far as the station.**”

Although the combination of the subject or the direct object particle with this pattern is less frequent, those particles can appear in questions whose purpose is to verify part of the information:

宮下さんがですか。

Miyashita-san-ga-desu-ka?

“You mean **Ms. Miyashita** (did that, etc.)?”

宮下さんをですか。

Miyashita-san-o-desu-ka?

“You mean (we will take/nominate/invite, etc.) **Ms. Miyashita?**”

As you see, particles are powerful. Treat them with attentive respect, and they will greatly help you.

Checking your comprehension: Guess what verbs *お願いします* *onegai-shimasu* “I request” substitutes for in the following sentences:

お名前をお願いします。
Onamae-o **onegai-shimasu**.

10ページから20ページまでお願いします。
10-peeji-kara 20-peeji-made **onegaishimasu**.

日本語でお願いします。
Nihon-go-de **onegai-shimasu**.

明日までをお願いします。
Ashita-made-ni **onegai-shimasu**.

For related topics, see also Unit 15.

Part 3

Expanding Noun Phrases

34

The particle ～の -no between two nouns turns the first noun into a modifier

A simple device enables you to expand noun phrases indefinitely in theory, if not in practice. This is accomplished by inserting the particle ～の -no between two nouns.

主人公の猫

shujinkoo-no neko

“the protagonist cat (i.e., the feline protagonist)”

The first noun 主人公 *shujinkoo* “protagonist” modifies the second noun 猫 *neko* “cat,” which is to say that 主人公の猫 *shujinkoo-no neko* is a noun phrase meaning a certain cat who happens to be a protagonist. (This phrase also means “the protagonist’s cat.” See Unit 38.) We can expand this noun phrase further as in the following:

[小説の主人公]の猫

[shoosetsu-no shujinkoo]-no neko

“the cat who is the protagonist of the novel”

A new noun, 小説 *shoosetsu* “novel,” modifies 主人公 *shujinkoo* “protagonist.” Note that the entire noun phrase describes a cat because the noun 猫 *neko* “cat” is on the rightmost edge.

Let us see next what happens when we put the original noun phrase before another noun. Observe the following:

[主人公の猫]の名前

[shujinkoo-no neko]-no namae

“the protagonist cat’s name”

This expanded noun phrase means a kind of name rather than a kind of cat, because 名前 *namae* “name” appears on the rightmost edge.

Once you form an expanded noun phrase using this method, you can use it anywhere a single noun can be used. That is, if you can say:

主人公は猫です。名前は分かりません。

Shujinkoo-wa neko-desu. Namae-wa wakarimasen.

“The protagonist is a cat. Its name is unknown.”

you can also say:

小説の主人公は猫です。主人公の猫の名前は分かりません。

Shoosetsu-no shujinkoo-wa neko-desu. Shujinkoo-no neko-no namae-wa
wakarimasen.

“The protagonist of the novel is a cat. The protagonist cat’s name is
unknown.”

Checking your comprehension: Can you now tell what the following noun
phrase means?

{[(漱石の小説)の主人公]の猫}の名称

{[(Sooseki-no shoosetsu)-no shujinkoo]-no neko}-no namae

(漱石 = Natsume Soseki (1867-1916), a novelist)

Can you also figure out what the following sentence means?:

漱石の小説の主人公の猫の名称は何でしたか。

Sooseki-no shoosetsu-no shujinkoo-no neko-no namae-wa nan-deshita-ka.

For related topics, see also Units 14, 37, and 38.

35

A noun modified by an adjective functions like a noun

A noun modified by an adjective, for instance 新しい学生 *atarashii gakusei* “a new student,” forms a noun phrase just like a noun modified by a noun. As in the case of noun phrases expanded by the use of 〜の *-no*, you can use this type of expanded noun phrase anywhere a single noun can be used. Consequently, if you can say:

パチンコ屋の客は、学生じゃなかったです。

Pachinkoya-no kyaku-wa **gakusei**-ja nakatta-desu.

“The customers in the pachinko (i.e., pinball) parlor were not **students**.”

学生は、パチンコ屋へ来ませんでした。

Gakusei-wa pachinkoya-e kimasen-deshita.

“**Students** didn’t come to the pachinko parlor.”

you can also say:

パチンコ屋の客は、新しい学生じゃなかったです。

Pachinkoya-no kyaku-wa **atarashii gakusei**-ja nakatta-desu.

“The customers in the pachinko parlor were not **new students**.”

新しい学生は、パチンコ屋へ来ませんでした。

Atarashii gakusei-wa pachinkoya-e kimasen-deshita.

“**New students** didn’t come to the pachinko parlor.”

Do not try to insert the particle 〜の *-no* between the adjective and the noun. The combination *新しいの学生 **atarashii-no gakusei* is unacceptable. Adjectives are like self-adhesive stamps; 〜の *-no* is like glue. Just as you should not apply glue to self-adhesive stamps, you should not use 〜の *-no* to attach an adjective to a noun.

Checking your understanding: Can you tell what the following noun phrase means? Also, can you use it in a sentence?

日本人の友だちの新しい英語の先生

Nihon-jin-no tomodachi-no atarashii Eigo-no sensei

For related topics, see also Units 34, 36, and 45.

36

The modifier consistently precedes the modified

In Japanese, the core element of the sentence—the verb—appears at the end of the sentence. Likewise, the core of the noun phrase—the head noun—appears at the end of the noun phrase:

先生は、二日酔いで今日来ません。

Sensei-wa futsukayoi-de kyoo **kimasen**.

“The teacher **is not coming** today due to a hangover.”

酒飲みの英語の先生

sakenomi-no Eigo-no **sensei**

“the tipling English **teacher**”

This property is also part of the right-headedness of Japanese that we introduced in Unit 2. That is, if you write a sentence from left to right, you put a head noun at the end of a noun phrase and a verb at the end of a sentence. English is almost the mirror image of Japanese in that it is generally left-headed; a verb in English appears before the direct object, an adverbial phrase, etc., as shown below:

Put the *Playboy* back in the trash.

With respect to noun phrases, the left-headedness of English means that the head noun appears before the modifier, as shown below:

picture of the president who ruled the company with terror

shoreline beautiful enough to be praised by a poet

the restaurant which was formerly rated four-star

Although simple modifiers appear before the head noun in English as in “your book,” “beautiful shoreline,” “Tokyo’s Shinjuku district,” and “cheap and good restaurant,” when the modifier becomes long, English speakers prefer the method of modification in which the modifier follows the head noun:

restaurants in the Shinjuku district of Tokyo

And if you are to use a slightly more complex modifier containing auxiliary verbs, the head noun **must** appear first:

shoreline that was once beautiful (cf. *was-once-beautiful **shoreline**)

shoreline that is no longer beautiful (cf. *is-no-longer-beautiful **shoreline**)

English thus is left-headed in general. Japanese, on the other hand, is consistently right-headed. The head noun follows every kind of modifier, as shown below:

東京の**新宿**
Tookyoo-no **Shinjuku**
“Tokyo’s **Shinjuku district**”

東京の**新宿の**レストラン
Tookyoo-no Shinjuku-no **resutoran**
“**restaurants** in the Shinjuku district of Tokyo”

安くておいしい**レストラン**
yasukute oishii **resutoran**
“a cheap and good **restaurant**”

いつも若い人でいっぱい**の安くておいしいレストラン**
itsumo wakai hito-de ippai-no yasukute oishii **resutoran**
“a cheap and good **restaurant** always full of young people”

For this reason, no matter how long the modifier is, resist the temptation to place the modifier after the head noun in Japanese. You will see the importance of this principle again in Unit 37.

Checking your comprehension: What is the head noun in the following phrase? Does it mean a kind of university, or a kind of name?

大学の英語の教授の**名前**
daigaku-no Eigo-no kyooju-no namae

How about the following? Is the head noun the town or the station?

となりの町の**大きくて新しい駅**
tonari-no machi-no ookikute atarashii eki

How would you translate the following into Japanese? Consider what modifies “friend,” what modifies “university,” and what modifies “professors”:

psychology professors at my friend’s university

For related topics, see also Units 2, 34, 35, 37, and 41.

37

Spatial relationships are expressed with stacked nouns

Spatial relationships in Japanese are expressed with stacked nouns, the last—or the right-most—one being modified by the rest. This is an application of the modification pattern explained in Unit 34.

本田さんの右

Honda-san-no **migi**

“(to the) **right** of Ms. Honda”

本田さんの右の学生

Honda-san-no migi-no **gakusei**

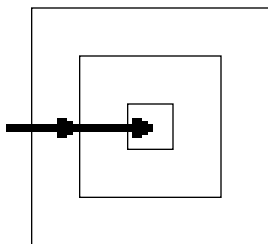
“**the student** to the right of Ms. Honda”

東京の新橋のホテルの一室

Tookyoo-no Shinbashi-no hoteru-no **issitsu**

“**a room** in a hotel in Shinbashi district in Tokyo”

The direction of modification is the opposite of English spatial expressions. In Japanese you begin with a salient landmark—a larger or outer object, or an object closer to you. If we use the analogy of film-making, English zooms out or pans away from the core object you want to describe; Japanese zooms in or pans onto the core object. From the point of view of the listeners, Japanese is also like a gift boxed in multiple boxes or a treasure chest behind many closed doors; you are led through the environment to the object in question.



salient landmark
(larger/outer object)



salient landmark
(object closer to you)

what you want to describe

Now imagine yourself guiding a book lover to a copy of the *Man'yooshuu*, an anthology of ancient Japanese poetry. Start with a **reference point close to you**, as in the following:

このドアの向こうの部屋の一番奥の本棚の上
kono doa-no mukoo-no heya-no ichiban oku-no hondana-no ue
“on top of the bookcase at the farthest end of the room behind this door”

If the closer reference points are clear to the listener, you can omit them, of course, as in the following:

一番奥の本棚の上
ichiban oku-no hondana-no ue
“on top of the bookcase at the farthest end (of the house, etc.)”

右の部屋
migi-no heya
“the room to the right (of you, this room, etc.)”

Checking your comprehension: Suppose that you are working on the first floor of Independent Thought Bookstore, and a customer who has enjoyed several cups of green tea asks where the nearest bathroom is. You know that it is behind a glass door in the back of the second floor. What would be the first landmark you should mention? How would you describe the location of the bathroom?

For related topics, see also Units 34 and 41.

38

The particle 〜の -no mediates a wide range of relationships. メキシコ人の友だち *Mekishiko-jin-no tomodachi*, for instance, means either “a friend of a Mexican” or “a friend who is Mexican”

As we have seen in Units 34 and 37, the particle 〜の -no makes the preceding noun or noun phrase the modifier of the following noun. Many resulting noun phrases resemble the English possessive construction containing a possessive -'s or -s'.

広子の靴
Hiroko-no kutsu
“Hiroko’s shoes”

京都の地下鉄
Kyooto-no chikatetsu
“Kyoto’s subway”

きのうの新聞
kinoo-no shinbun
“yesterday’s newspaper”

大学の学長
daigaku-no gakuchoo
“university president”

日本のテレビ
Nihon-no terebi
“Japanese TV”

The relation between the modifying noun and the modified head noun is not uniform, however. Just as the English possessive construction covers a range of relationships wider than the possessive relationship (“yesterday” in “yesterday’s newspaper,” for instance, is not the owner of a newspaper), the Japanese use of 〜の -no ranges over diverse relationships. Take, for example, the following:

アラビア語の先生
Arabia-go-no sensei
“teacher of Arabic”

In this, アラビア語 *Arabia-go* “Arabic language” certainly modifies 先生 *sensei* “teacher,” but the relationship between the two nouns is not that of “belonging.”

アラビア語 *Arabia-go*, unlike 広子 *Hiroko* “Hiroko” or 京都 *Kyoto* “Kyoto” is not an entity which can possess or contain 先生 *sensei*. Rather, アラビア語 *Arabia-go* is the target of the activity which 先生 *sensei* carries out.

Although the particle ～の *-no* mediates various relationships, each of the above expressions has one English counterpart. An identical expression containing the particle ～の *-no*, however, may have more than one English counterpart depending on the nature of the nouns involved, as in the following case:

インド人の友だち

Indo-jin-no tomodachi

“a friend of an Indian” or “a friend who is Indian”

The expression インド人 *Indo-jin* “Indian” can mean either a specific Indian who has a friend or can be interpreted as a feature of a friend. Hence, we get the two interpretations. Likewise the following expressions have two interpretations each:

友だちの医者

tomodachi-no isha

“a friend’s physician” or “a physician who is a friend”

医者の母親

isha-no hahaoya

“a physician’s mother” or “a mother who is a physician”

Checking your comprehension: The following expression has two meanings. What are they?

医者の友だち

isha-no tomodachi

Only one interpretation is available for each of the following expressions. Can you explain why?

私の大学

watashi-no daigaku

“my university”

友だちのロシア人

tomodachi-no Roshia-jin

“a Russian who is a friend”

For related topics, see also Units 34 and 37.

39

The particle ～と -to connects noun phrases representing separate objects

Unlike “and” in English, the particle ～と -to connects only nouns or noun phrases representing separate objects. It does not connect two adjectives, two verbs, two verb phrases, or two sentences. See the following examples of cases for which you can and cannot use ～と -to.

Can use ～と -to

コーヒーとお茶があります。

Koohii-to ocha-ga arimasu.

“There are **coffee and tea**.“

これとそれは、どう違いますか。

Kore-to sore-wa doo chigaimasu-ka.

“What’s the difference between **this and that**?”

今日は一年生のクラスと二年生のクラスがあります。

Kyoo-wa **ichinensei-no kurasu-to ninensei-no kurasu-ga** arimasu.

“There are **first- and second-year classes** today.”

Cannot use ～と -to

地下鉄は安全で安いです。

Chikatetsu-wa **anzen-de yasui-desu**.

The subway is **safe and cheap**.

名前を読んで覚えました。

Namae-o **yonde oboemashita**.

I **read and memorized** the name.

ベンチにすわって雀にえさをやりました。

Benchi-ni suwatte suzume-ni esa-o yarimashita.

I **sat on a bench and fed** sparrows.

Pay special attention to the meaning of the following sentence:

教師と大学院生です。

Kyooshi-to daigakuinsei-desu.

“They are **teachers and graduate students**.“

This Japanese sentence does not correspond to its apparent English counterpart “she/he is a teacher and (is) a graduate student” because 教師と大学院生 *kyooshi-to daigakuinsei* can only refer to two separate entities, not features of a single person or group. For the latter sense, use the following instead:

教師で、（同時に）大学院生です。

Kyooshi-de, (dooji-ni) daigakuinsei-desu.

“She/He is a teacher and (is simultaneously) a graduate student.”

You can also rephrase this with a more advanced sentence, which contains 教師と大学院生 *kyooshi-to daigakuinsei*, the very phrase that we said you must watch out for:

教師と大学院生の両方をこなしています。

Kyooshi-to daigakuinsei-no ryooohoo-o konashite imasu.

“She/He is handling **the roles of both a teacher and a graduate student.**”

Note, however, that 教師と大学院生 *kyooshi-to daigakuinsei* in this sentence has the sense of “two **separate** roles of a teacher and a graduate student.” It is precisely because of this sense of “separate objects” that 教師と大学院生 *kyooshi-to daigakuinsei* is acceptable here.

Incidentally, in order to connect two sentences, use expressions like それから *sore-kara* “and then,” それで *sore-de* “therefore,” それに *sore-ni* “furthermore,” etc. Never ever use ～と *-to* in initial position in a sentence in the sense of “and.”

Checking your comprehension: Which of the following sentences can be translated with ～と *-to*?

I cooked spinach and potatoes.

He is an accomplished violinist and a novice chess player.

The violinist and the chess player sat across the table.

British merchants and manufacturers used state power in their interest.

I was watching TV. And I didn’t see them come in.

For related topics, see also Units 29 and 50.

40

Na-nouns behave like nouns, but they have “fuzzy” meanings

At the end of a sentence, you cannot distinguish between ordinary nouns and so-called *na*-nouns (also known as *na*-adjectives because they resemble adjectives in terms of what they mean). However, when expanding a noun phrase, you must be able to tell the two classes apart. This is because *na*-nouns take 〜*な* *-na* instead of 〜*の* *-no* before another noun. Let us compare *na*-nouns with other nouns.

Japanese nouns include, among others: (1) proper nouns, demonstratives, and pronouns; (2) common nouns; (3) abstract *no*-nouns; and (4) *na*-nouns, in a descending order of abstractness or “fuzziness.” Examples are given below.

concrete	proper nouns; demonstratives	原田 <i>Harada</i> “Harada”; 東京大学 <i>Tookyoo-daigaku</i> “Tokyo University”; これ <i>kore</i> “this”
	common nouns	日本人 <i>Nihon-jin</i> “Japanese”; 学生 <i>gakusei</i> “student”; へや <i>heya</i> “room”
	abstract <i>no</i> -nouns	病気 <i>byooki</i> “sickness”; 本当 <i>hontoo</i> “true”; ただ <i>tada</i> “free”
abstract	<i>na</i> -nouns	健康 <i>kenkoo</i> “health”; 大変 <i>taihen</i> “awful”; 便利 <i>benri</i> “convenient”

The most concrete of these, proper nouns, refer to unique, real objects or events. Common nouns refer to classes of objects, rather than unique individuals. *Na*-nouns are at the other end of the scale and behave slightly differently from other nouns with respect to the selection of the particle: while all other nouns take 〜*の* *-no* when modifying another noun, *na*-nouns take 〜*な* *-na*, as shown below:

原田さんの学生
Harada-san-no gakusei
 “Ms. Harada’s student”

日本人の学生
Nihon-jin-no gakusei
“a Japanese student”

病気の学生
byooki-no gakusei
“sick student”

健康な学生
kenkoo-na gakusei
“**healthy** student”

Most Japanese language textbooks instruct students to memorize *na*-nouns as a special category as if they consist of an arbitrary set of words. This view is not entirely accurate, nor is it very helpful.

Since *na*-nouns occupy one extreme end of the concrete-abstract continuum, the better approach is first to assume that abstract concepts are expressed as *na*-nouns. The next thing to do is to separate abstract *no*-nouns such as 病気(の) *byooki-(no)* “sick(ness)” from *na*-nouns. This certainly requires fine-tuning, but it can be done.

Abstract *no*-nouns occupy the range bordering *na*-nouns, but they relate to non-gradient or “non-fuzzy” properties such as absoluteness, uniqueness, individuation, authenticity, sameness, membership in a set, points on a scale, standard, inevitability, quantity, and concrete physical property. (No need to memorize each of these!) Representative examples are given below:

ゆいつの証人
yuitsu-no shoonin
“the sole witness”

最高のレストラン
saikoo-no resutoran
“the best restaurant”

絶対の信頼
zettai-no shinrai
“absolute trust”

必然の結果
hitsuzen-no kekka
“inevitable consequence”

逆の方向
gyaku-no hookoo
“the opposite direction”

別々のグループ
betsubetsu-no guruupu
“separate groups”

灰色の壁
haiiro-no kabe
“gray wall”

三冊の本
sansatsu-no hon
“three books”

The peculiar contrast between 病気の学生 *byooki-no gakusei* “sick student” and 健康な学生 *kenkoo-na gakusei* “healthy student” can also be systematically explained. In our normal view of events, 病気 *byooki* “sickness” is a restricted condition, as opposed to the general condition 健康 *kenkoo* “health.” We also tend to identify 病気 *byooki* with specific symptoms; 健康 *kenkoo*, on the other hand, is a condition lacking such specific symptoms. In other words, 病気 *byooki* is “non-fuzzy” compared to “fuzzy” 健康 *kenkoo*. Hence the ranking of 病気 *byooki* above 健康 *kenkoo* on the scale and the assignment of 〜*の* -*no* and 〜*な* -*na*, respectively.

Checking your comprehension: Can you explain why we must say 戦争の時 *sensoo-no toki* “wartime,” but 平和な時 *heiwa-na toki* “peacetime”?

For related topics, see also Unit 8.

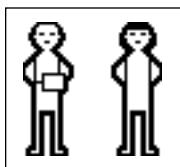
41

To say something more complex, use complex noun phrases

A child first learns sentences like “Jenny hit me,” which consists of a simple subject, a verb, and a direct object. As a child grows up, he/she starts using sentences such as “The girl who was sitting next to me hit me.” This is precisely what you want to do in Japanese, and in order to do so, you need to learn how to make more complex noun phrases. Analyzing complex noun phrases in English makes the process easier:

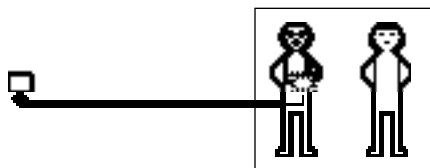
the photo Akira showed to Naomi
the video I borrowed from the public library

How are these phrases made? Imagine the following situation, which can be expressed with the sentence “Akira showed the photo to Naomi.”



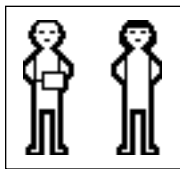
Akira showed the photo to Naomi.

In order to describe “the photo,” you would take “the photo” out of the event and describe it with the rest of the event, as in the following:

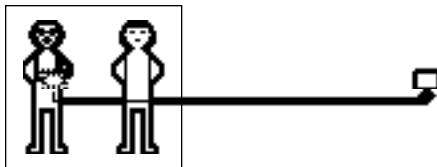


the photo [Akira showed () to Naomi]

The same operation takes place in Japanese, except that the direction in which we move “the photo” is the opposite, because a head noun must be final in a Japanese noun phrase (see Unit 36), or because the order of modification is from outer context to inner item (see Unit 37).



あきらが写真をなおみに見せた。
Akira-ga shashin-o Naomi-ni miseta.



[あきらが () なおみに見せた] 写真
[Akira-ga () Naomi-ni miseta] **shashin**

The particle ～を -o disappears in the resultant complex noun phrase (see Unit 42 for an explanation). You can now use this noun phrase in a sentence in place of a simple noun. That is, if you can say,

これは、写真じゃない。
Kore-wa **shashin**-ja nai.
“This is not a **photo**.”

then you can also say,

これは、あきらがなおみに見せた写真じゃない。
Kore-wa **Akira-ga Naomi-ni miseta shashin**-ja nai.
“This is not **the photo Akira showed Naomi**.”

Note that you must use a direct-style verb in a modifier (e.g. *miseta* instead of *misemashita*), because indication of politeness is irrelevant in the middle of a sentence.

Checking your comprehension: What is the meaning of the following sentence?

あきらがなおみに見せた写真は、どれですか。
Akira-ga Naomi-ni miseta shashin-wa dore-desu-ka.

For related topics, see also Units 36, 37, 38, 42, 43, 44, 45, and 59.

42

The head noun of a complex noun phrase carries with it only the particle which marks its function in a larger sphere

The first of the following pair of sentences contains a noun phrase which is derived from the second sentence by way of the procedure explained in Unit 41. You might wonder what has happened to the particle ～を *-o* that follows 写真 *shashin* “photo” in the second sentence:

あきらがなおみに見せた写真がなくなった。

Akira-ga Naomi-ni miseta shashin-ga nakunatta.

“The photo that Akira showed Naomi disappeared.”

あきらがなおみに写真を見せた。

Akira-ga Naomi-ni shashin-o miseta.

“Akira showed Naomi a photo.”

In order to understand this, you need to recall the structure of a Japanese sentence and the function of particles. A Japanese sentence ends with a verb. In a way, a sentence is a verb’s territory, and the noun phrases before a verb are within the verb’s territory. Particles such as ～が *-ga*, ～を *-o*, and ～に *-ni* indicate how a noun is related to a verb, as shown below:

あきらが なおみに 写真を 見せた。



Akira-ga Naomi-ni shashin-o miseta.

“Akira showed Naomi a photo.”

Specifically, in this sentence ～を *-o* links the noun 写真 *shashin* “photo” to the verb 見せた *miseta* “showed.” However, when you take 写真 *shashin* “photo” out of a sentence to create a complex noun phrase, the particle ～を *-o*, which no longer is in a position to link the noun to the verb, must go away, as shown below:

あきらが なおみに ~~を~~ 見せた写真



Akira-ga Naomi-ni miseta shashin

“a photo that Akira showed Naomi”

And because 写真 *shashin* “photo” is no longer within the territory of 見せた *miseta* “showed,” what particle appears after 写真 *shashin* depends on what function 写真 *shashin* has within a larger sentence.

Checking your comprehension: How would you translate the following noun phrases into Japanese?

the person to whom Akira showed a photo

the person who showed Naomi a photo

For related topics, see also Units 15 and 41.

43

Japanese does not employ WH-phrases for creating complex noun phrases

In English, formation of complex noun phrases involves not only placing a modifying sentence after the modified noun but also inserting WH-phrases or the form “that” between them, as shown below:

the homeless person **whom** I saw in front of the Shinjuku station
the train schedule **that** I picked up at the tourist information center

Of course, “which” and “that” are optional in the case of these particular noun phrases, and the following noun phrases are equally grammatical:

the homeless person I saw in front of the Shinjuku station
the train schedule I picked up at the tourist information center

However, deletion of a WH-phrase or “that” is possible only if it corresponds to a direct or indirect object. In other cases, some types of WH-phrase or “that” must appear, as shown below:

the business hotel **where** I stayed last night
the suitcase **that** was left behind the seat
a dog **whose** owner lives in a shack in Ueno Park

WH-phrases and “that” make the connections easier to see. Corresponding forms without a WH-phrase or “that” are ungrammatical or are not noun phrases:

- *the business hotel I stayed last night
- *the suitcase was left behind the seat (grammatical as a sentence)
- *a dog owner lives in a shack in Ueno Park (grammatical as a sentence)

Japanese does not have such a mechanism. Nothing overt intervenes between the modifier and the modified:

昨晚泊ったビジネスホテル
sakuban tomatta bijinesu hoteru
“the business hotel where I stayed last night”

網棚に置いた荷物
amidana-ni oita nimotsu
“the luggage which I placed on the overhead baggage net”

荷物を置いた網棚
nimotsu-o oita amidana
“the overhead baggage net on which I placed the luggage”

Hence, you need to make semantic connections on your own. Among the trickiest would be these:

とってがこわれた傘
totte-ga kowareta kasa
“an umbrella whose handle is broken”

小指がないやくざ
koyubi-ga nai yakuza
“a *yakuza* (i.e. gangster) whose little finger is missing ”

Another tricky type would be the following. Which interpretation to choose depends on the context:

道を聞いた人
michi-o kiita hito
“the person *who* asked me for the direction” or “the person *whom* I asked for the direction”

Checking your comprehension: How would you interpret the following noun phrases?

タクシーを待つ所
takushii-o matsu tokoro

電話をかけた人
denwa-o kaketa hito

名前を忘れた人
namae-o wasureta hito

For related topics, see also Unit 41.

44

メキシコ人の友だち *Mekishiko-jin-no tomodachi* “a Mexican friend” is a complex noun phrase

In Unit 38, we saw that メキシコ人の友だち *Mekishiko-jin-no tomodachi* has two interpretations: “a friend of a Mexican” and “a friend who is Mexican.” We explained that the second interpretation is possible because メキシコ人 *Mekishiko-jin* “Mexican” can be interpreted as a feature of a friend. There is more to say about this.

The ambiguity of メキシコ人の友だち *Mekishiko-jin-no tomodachi* derives from two different grammatical structures: [noun-*no* noun] and [direct-style sentence + noun]. The first structure corresponds to the interpretation “a friend of a Mexican,” and the second to the interpretation “a friend who is Mexican.” This second structure is a type of what we call the complex noun phrase, but it looks different from the type of complex noun phrase we have considered thus far.

The complex noun phrases so far studied clearly appear to have the structure [direct-style sentence + noun]:

あきらがなおみに見せた写真
Akira-ga Naomi-ni miseta shashin
“the photo that **Akira showed Naomi**”

昨晚泊ったビジネスホテル
sakuban tomatta bijinesu hoteru
“the business hotel where **I stayed last night**”

The following additional examples also match the description:

ソウル大学の学生じゃない人
Souru-daigaku-no gakusei-ja nai hito
“a person who **is not a student at Seoul National University**”

ソウル大学の学生だった人
Souru-daigaku-no gakusei-datta hito
“a person who **was a student at Seoul National University**”

ソウル大学の学生じゃなかった人
Souru-daigaku-no gakusei-ja nakatta hito
“a person who **was not a student at Seoul National University**”

Note that the non-past positive counterpart is missing from the above. Should we not expect something like *ソウル大学の学生だ人 **Souru-daigaku-no gakusei-da hito* to fill the gap? Actually, this expression is ruled out by a constraint prohibiting 〜だ *-da* anywhere except in sentence-final position. As a result, the default 〜の *-no* appears, resulting in the familiar pattern:

ソウル大学の学生の人 ← *ソウル大学の学生だ人
Souru-daigaku-no gakusei-no hito
“a person who **is a student at Seoul National University**”

The second meaning of メキシコ人の友だち *Mekishiko-jin-no tomodachi* can be explained in the same way:

メキシコ人の友だち ← *メキシコ人だ友だち
Mekishiko-jin-no tomodachi
“a friend who **is Mexican**”

In fact, the same analysis can be applied to cases where *na*-nouns modify nouns:

大変な日 ← *大変だ日
taihen-na hi
“a day which **is overwhelming**”

Given this explanation, the appearance of the phrase particle 〜が *-ga* in the following sentence is not mysterious:

母親が日本人のアメリカ人 ← *母親が日本人だアメリカ人
hahaoya-ga Nihon-jin-no Amerika-jin
“an American whose **mother is a Japanese**”

仕事が大変な日 ← *仕事が大変だ日
shigoto-ga taihen-na hi
“a day when **the work is overwhelming**”

Checking your comprehension: How would you interpret the following noun phrases?

帯広の大学で一年生のおとうと
Obihiro-no daigaku-de ichinensei-no ototoo

父親がケニアで大学教授の友だち
chichioya-ga Kenia-de daigaku-kyooju-no tomodachi

For related topics, see also Units 38, 41, and 45.

45

新しい友だち *atarashii tomodachi* “a new friend” is also a kind of complex noun phrase

Just as there are three basic types of sentence (see Unit 5), there are three types of modifiers for complex noun phrases, namely those containing a verb, a noun plus the copula, and an adjective. In Units 41, 42, 43, and 44, we primarily dealt with the first two types. In this section, we will study the third type.

A few examples of complex noun phrases containing adjectives in their modifiers are given below:

風が強い日
kaze-ga tsuyoi hi
“a day when the wind is strong”

あまり熱くないスープ
amari atsuku-nai suupu
“soup which is not too hot”

二人がまだ若かった頃
futari-ga mada wakakatta koro
“when the two were still young”

Clearly, these also have the structure [direct-style sentence + noun]. Now, in spite of its deceptively simple appearance, a noun modified by an adjective, like 新しい学生 *atarashii gakusei* “a new student,” studied in Unit 35, is a complex noun phrase. That is, it consists of a very simple adjectival sentence and a head noun, and its strict English counterpart is “a student who is new.” So it turns out that you have been using complex noun phrases for quite some time! Expand your repertoire with such types as the following:

会いたい人
aitai hito
“a person whom I want to meet”

会いたかった友だち
aitakatta tomodachi
“a friend whom I wanted to meet”

会ってほしい人
atte-hoshii hito
“a person whom I want you to meet”

書きにくいペン

kaki-nikui pen

“a pen which is difficult to write with”

人間らしい生き方

ningen-rashii iki-kata

“a way of life worthy of human beings”

日本へ行く前にしておいた方がいいこと

Nihon-e iku mae-ni shite oita hoo-ga ii koto

“things which I had better do before going to Japan ”

A tricky type is the following:

首が長い女

kubi-ga nagai onna

“a woman *whose* neck is long”

持ち物が少ない人

mochimono-ga sukunai hito

“a person with few possessions”

The difficulty with this type arises because, as explained in Unit 43, Japanese does not employ WH-phrases such as “whose” and “where” in order to clarify the relationship between the head noun and its modifier. Practice this type particularly carefully.

Checking your comprehension: How would you interpret the following noun phrases?

耳が大きい犬

mimi-ga ookii inu

手が小さい子ども

te-ga chiisai kodomo

For related topics, see also Units 35, 41, 43, and 44.

46

One more way to create a complex noun phrase

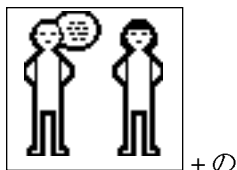
In Unit 41, we suggested a way to express more complex thoughts. That was to create a complex noun phrase standing for a person or a thing. There is one more way to create a complex noun phrase. This is to make a noun phrase stand for an event rather than a thing or a person. Grammatically speaking, you turn a whole sentence into a noun phrase without moving anything. In English, there are basically three patterns which achieve this objective:

that Akira told Naomi the truth
Akira's telling Naomi the truth
for Akira **to** tell Naomi the truth

And you can use them in larger sentences, as shown below:

It is surprising [**that** Akira told Naomi the truth].
[**Akira's telling** Naomi the truth] shocked everyone.
It was critical [**for** Akira **to** tell Naomi the truth].

We can achieve the same effect in Japanese by placing の *no* (to be distinguished from the particle 〜の *-no*) at the end:



あきらがなおみに本当のことを言ったの
Akira-ga Naomi-ni hontoo-no koto-o itta no
“that Akira told Naomi the truth”

あきらがなおみに本当のことを言ったのはおどろきだ。
Akira-ga Naomi-ni hontoo-no koto-o itta no-wa odoroki-da.
“That Akira told Naomi the truth is surprising.”

This device enables you to say a wide range of things:

私は、あきらがなおみに本当のことを言うのを聞いた。
Watashi-wa Akira-ga Naomi-ni hontoo-no koto-o iu no-o kiita.
“I heard Akira tell Naomi the truth.”

なおみに本当のことを言うのは、こまります。
Naomi-ni hontoo-no koto-o iu no-wa komarimasu.
“It will pose a problem for you to tell Naomi the truth.”

Note that the constraint on the appearance of 〜だ *-da*, which we saw operating in Unit 44, again changes the surface form of a sentence which ends with a noun plus 〜だ *-da*:

あきらが実直な男な (← だ) のは、知っている。
Akira-ga jitchoku-na otoko-na no-wa, shitte-iru.
“I know that Akira is a conscientious man.”

あきらが正直な (← だ) のは、分かっている。
Akira-ga shoojiki-na no-wa, wakatte-iru.
“I am aware that Akira is honest.”

The difference from the previous case is that 〜な *-na* appears whether the noun is a regular noun (e.g., 男 *otoko* “man,” 学生 *gakusei* “student”) or a *na*-noun (e.g., 正直 *shoojiki* “honest,” 勤勉 *kinben* “hard-working”).

Checking your comprehension: Can you guess the meanings of the following sentences?

あきらは、なおみに本当のことを言うのを忘れた。
Akira-wa Naomi-ni hontoo-no koto-o iu no-o wasureta.

なおみに本当のことを言うのはやめた方がいい。
Naomi-ni hontoo-no koto-o iu no-wa yameta hoo-ga ii.

For related topics, see also Units 41 and 44.

47

の *no* is for a familiar event; こと *koto* is for an abstract idea

In Unit 46, we saw that の *no* turns a sentence into a noun phrase. の *no*, however, is not the only word which has this function. The noun こと *koto* also has the function of turning a sentence into a noun phrase, as shown below:

ブラジルでもポルトガル語が話されていることを知っていますか。
Burajiru-de-mo Porutogaru-go-ga hanasarete iru koto-o shitte-imasu-ka.
“Do you know **that Portuguese is spoken in Brazil, too?**”

What is the difference between の *no* and こと *koto*? The difference is that の *no* is used for concrete actions and personal or familiar knowledge, while こと *koto* is used for more abstract properties such as ability, notable experience, habit, decision, and significant knowledge.

Examples of の no

The boldface in the following sentence describes a concrete event:

5ページの原稿を書き上げるのに、一週間もかかった。
5-peeji-no genkoo-o kakiageru no-ni isshuukan-mo kakatta.
“It took me a week **to write up a five-page manuscript.**”

In the following two examples, the parts in boldface type describe personal knowledge of concrete events registered by seeing or hearing:

遠くで子ども達がたこを揚げているのが見えます。
Tooku-de kodomo-tachi-ga tako-o agete-iru no-ga miemasu.
“I can see **children flying kites in the distance.**”

夜中に通りで誰かが大声で言いあらそっているのを聞きました。
Yonaka-ni toori-de dareka-ga oogoe-de iiarasotte-iru no-o kikimashita.
“I heard **someone arguing loudly in the street at night.**”

The parts in boldface in the following describe a personal circumstance:

のどが痛かったので、インタビューをキャンセルした。
Nodo-ga itakatta no-de, intabyuu-o kyanseru-shita.
“Since **I had a sore throat**, I cancelled the interview.”

In the following examples, the speaker comments on familiar experiences:

新聞を読みながらコーヒーを飲むのが好きだ。
Shinbun-o yomi-nagara koohii-o nomu no-ga suki-da.
“I like **drinking coffee while reading a newspaper.**”

今から今晚の切符をとるのは、無理ですよ。
Ima-kara konban-no kippu-o toru no-wa muri-desu-yo.
“It is too late **to secure tickets for tonight now.**”

Examples of こと koto

By contrast, in the following examples, the parts in boldface type are the contents of decisions, more abstract properties than personal experiences. This is why こと *koto* is used.

来年日本に行くことになりました。
Rainen nihon-ni iku koto-ni narimashita.
“It has been decided **(for me) to go to Japan next year.**”

毎日運動することになっています。
Mainichi undoo-suru koto-ni shite-imasu.
“I am making a point of **exercising every day.**”

ここでは、たばこはすってはいけないことになっています。
Koko-de-wa tabako-wa sutte-wa ikenai koto-ni natte-imasu.
“There is a rule **that one cannot smoke here.**”

And in the following, the part in boldface describes a purported ability—again, a more abstract property than an actual event:

目をあけたまま、くしゃみをする事が出来ますか。
Me-o aketa mama kushami-o suru koto-ga dekimasu-ka.
“Can you **sneeze with your eyes open?**”

We have said that の *no* is for a personal experience. You might then wonder why the following sentence employs こと *koto*. Isn't it an expression of personal experience?

エチオピア料理を食べたことがありますか。
Echiopia-ryoori-o tabeta koto-ga arimasu-ka.
“Have you ever **eaten Ethiopian food?**”

The reason why こと *koto* is used here is related to the deeper meaning of this sentence. This sentence is not about a mundane experience; it treats the part in boldface as a memorable, noteworthy event. This construction cannot be used in

order to translate a sentence describing a familiar event such as “Have you eaten dinner already?” which must be translated into もう晩ご飯食べましたか *Moo ban-gohan tabemashita-ka*.

Individual Decision

The fact that the distinction between の *no* and こと *koto* depends on the concept of noteworthiness has an interesting consequence. In the following sentences, both options are possible. This is because the sentences pertain to personal knowledge or ideas, and individuals can decide for themselves if the knowledge is mundane or notable.

ブラジルでもポルトガル語が話されている{の／こと}を知っている？
Burajiru-de-mo Porutogaru-go-ga hanasarete-iru {no/koto}-o shitte-iru?
“Do you know **that Portuguese is spoken in Brazil, too?**”

あの橋を渡った{の／こと}を覚えている？
Ano hashi-o watatta {no/koto}-o oboete-iru?
“Do you remember **crossing that bridge?**”

学生は授業料を上げる{の／こと}に反対した。
Gakusei-wa jugyoo-ryoo-o ageru {no/koto}-ni hantai-shita.
“The students opposed **raising tuition rates.**”

誰かが外で待っている{の／こと}に気がついた。
Dareka-ga soto-de matte-iru {no/koto}-ni ki-ga tsuita.
“I noticed **that someone was waiting outside.**”

その人が南米各地に何度も行って来た{の／こと}が分かった。
Sono hito-ga nanbei kakuchi-ni nando-mo itte-kita {no/koto}-ga wakatta.
“It became clear **that the person had been to various places in South America many times.**”

Checking your comprehension: Translate the following sentences into Japanese.

I decided to go to graduate school.
I can see someone standing in front of the house.
Have you ever read about Paul Robeson?

For related topics, see also Unit 46.

Part 4

Tense and Events

48

There are only two tenses in Japanese: non-past and past

The Japanese language distinguishes between only two basic tenses: non-past and past. Non-past tense is also known as “present tense,” but its use is not limited to present events or conditions; it covers present events or conditions, future or yet unrealized events, and general or habitual conditions:

日本は今不景気だ。

Nihon-wa ima fukeiki-da.

“Japan is now in a recession.” (present condition)

経済はいずれは回復するが、やがてまた不況が訪れる。

Keizai-wa izure-wa kaifuku-suru-ga, yagate mata fukyoo-ga otozureru.

“The economy will eventually recover, but a slump will come again.” (future event)

現在の経済システムでは、この繰り返しは必然だ。

Genzai-no keizai shisutemu-de-wa kono kurikaeshi-wa hitsuzen-da.

“Under the current economic system, this repetition [of booms and slumps] is inevitable.” (general condition)

中村さんは失業中でも毎日六時に起きます。

Nakamura-san-wa shitsugyoo-chuu-de-mo mainichi roku-ji-ni okimasu.

“Mr. Nakamura gets up at six every day even when he is unemployed.” (habitual condition)

Note that the subject’s plans about his/her future action are also expressed with a non-past tense form, as shown below.

中村さんは、午後、職安へ行きます。

Nakamura-san-wa gogo shokuan-e ikimasu.

“Mr. Nakamura is going to an employment security office in the afternoon.”

今月中に新しい仕事を見つけます。

Kongetsu-chuu-ni atarashii shigoto-o mitsukemasu.

“He (hopes he) will find a new job within this month.”

A word of caution: Although the progressive construction “be . . . -ing” is sometimes used in colloquial English to talk about intention, as in “We are going to the beach tomorrow,” this option does not exist in Japanese. Instead, use ordinary non-past tense, as in:

明日海に行きます。
Ashita umi-ni ikimasu.
“We will go to the beach tomorrow.”

The Japanese progressive construction 〜ている／〜ています *-te-iru/ te-imasu*, describes a condition or an action in progress, as in:

仕事をさがしています。
Shigoto-o sagashite-**imasu**.
“I **am looking** for a job (now).”

Checking your comprehension: Translate the following into Japanese:

What are you doing tomorrow?

Can you tell the difference between the following sentences?

明日の午後図書館で勉強しています。
Ashita-no gogo toshokan-de benkyoo-shite-**imasu**.

明日の午後図書館で勉強します。
Ashita-no gogo toshokan-de benkyoo-shi**masu**.

For related topics, see also Units 49, 51, and 53.

49

Special use of past tense forms

In the case of action verbs such as 留学します *ryuugaku-shimasu* “to study abroad” and 行きます *ikimasu* “to go,” the past tense marker indicates whether the action took place in the past or not:

去年タイに留学しました。

Kyonen Tai-ni ryuugaku-shimashita.

“Last year I **went** to Thailand for a study abroad program.”

日本には行きませんでした。

Nihon-ni-wa ikimassen-deshita.

“I **didn’t** go to Japan.”

In the case of stative verbs like 留学生です *ryuugakusei-desu* “to be an exchange student,” on the other hand, the past tense marker indicates whether the condition held true in the past:

留学生でした。

Ryuugakusei-deshita.

“I **was** an exchange student.”

留学生生活は楽しかったです。

Ryuugaku-seikatsu-wa tanoshikatta-desu.

“The student life abroad **was** enjoyable.”

In addition, the past tense forms of stative verbs have an extra function: they can signify that an assertion about a present or future condition was made in the past:

「締切は、いつでしたか。」「来週の金曜日です。」

Shimekiri-wa itsu-deshita-ka. Raishuu-no kinyoobi-desu.

“When **did you say** the deadline would be?” “It’s next Friday.”

「締切は、明日ですよ。」「ああ、そうでしたね。」

Shimekiri-wa kinyoobi-desu-yo. Aa, soo-deshita-ne.

“The deadline is tomorrow.” “Right, that is what **she said**.”

「今日はまだ締切じゃありませんでしたね。」「そうです。」

Kyoo-wa mada shimekiri-ja-arimasen-deshita-ne. Soo-desu.

“**You said** today is not yet the deadline, right?” “Right.”

Another special use of the past tense marker involves verbs expressing gratitude or apology, as shown below. In such cases, the past tense marker indicates that the interaction for which the feeling is expressed was completed some time ago or has come to a conclusion. The non-past tense marker, on the other hand, means that the interaction is still in progress:

ありがとうございました。

Arigatoo-gozaimeshita.

“Thank you (for what you did some time ago/for an entire transaction).”

ありがとうございます。

Arigatoo-gozaimasu.

“Thank you (for what you are doing/for what you have just done).”

すみませんでした。

Sumimasen-deshita.

“I apologize (for what I did some time ago).”

すみません。

Sumimasen.

“I apologize (for what I am doing/for what I have just done).”

This distinction is utilized to mark interactional units in an interesting way. When, for instance, an attendant receives money from a customer, she/he first says *ありがとうございます arigatoo-gozaimasu*, and proceeds with her/his task, but at the end of the total transaction, that is, when the customer leaves, she/he says *ありがとうございました arigatoo-gozaimeshita*.

Checking your comprehension: Suppose that you just asked your instructor to write a letter of recommendation for a study abroad program and she/he agreed to do it. How would you thank her/him?

Now suppose that your instructor asks the following about the letter when you meet her/him in a couple of weeks. What does it mean?

締切はあさってでしたね。

Shimekiri-wa asatte-deshita-ne.

How would you thank her/him later when you find out that you have been admitted to the program?

For related topics, see also Unit 48.

50

Te-forms connect very closely related events

A *te-form* coordinates two verbs or sentences like the following,

横綱は、29才です。

Yokozuna-wa nijuu-kyuu-sai-desu.

“The [sumo] grand champion is 29 years old.”

横綱は、ハワイの出身です。

Yokozuna-wa Hawaii-no shusshin-desu.

“The grand champion is from Hawai‘i.”

to produce a sentence like the following:

横綱は、29才で、ハワイの出身です。

Yokozuna-wa nijuu-kyuu-sai-de, Hawaii-no shusshin-desu.

“The grand champion is 29 years old and is from Hawai‘i.”

There are three types of *te-form* corresponding to three types of verb. Examples appear below:

Verbal type	食べて <i>tabete</i>	“eat and . . .”
Adjectival type	強くて <i>tsuyoku-te</i>	“be strong and . . .”
Nominal type	力士で <i>rikishi-de</i>	“be a sumo wrestler and . . .”
	丈夫で <i>joobu-de</i>	“be sturdy and . . .”

Interpreting Tense with Te-Forms

The tense interpretation of a *te-form* depends on the context, because a *te-form* does not have its own tense (it is neither a past nor a non-past form):

相撲の世界は保守的で、古いしきたりがたくさんあります。

Sumoo-no sekai-wa hoshuteki-de, furui shikitari-ga takusan arimasu.

“The world of sumo is conservative, and contains many old customs.”

相撲の世界は保守的で、古いしきたりがたくさんありました。

Sumoo-no sekai-wa hoshuteki-de, furui shikitari-ga takusan arimashita.

“The world of sumo was conservative, and contained many old customs.”

The tenseless nature of *te-forms* has a further consequence. The use of a *te-form* imposes an interpretation that the two parts before and after it are very closely related rather than two distinct events. One typical way in which the two parts are closely related is when they refer to co-existent characteristics of a person or

a thing, as in the examples above. Another is when two events are taking place simultaneously or in parallel, as below:

弟弟子は、稽古場を掃除して、兄弟子の世話をします。
Ootoo-deshi-wa keikoba-o sooji-shite, ani-deshi-no sewa-o shimasu.
“Lower-ranking sumo wrestlers clean the practice room and take care of higher-ranking wrestlers.”

Another case is when the second immediately follows the first:

力士は、6時半に起きて、10時半ぐらいまで稽古をします。
Rikishi-wa 6-ji-han-ni okite, 10-ji-han-gurai-made keiko-o shimasu.
“Sumo wrestlers get up at 6:30 and practice until about 10:30.”

A closely related case is when the first is the cause of the second:

横綱が転んで、足の骨を折りました。
Yokozuna-ga koronde, ashi-no hone-o orimashita.
“The grand champion fell and broke a leg bone.”

Yet another case is when the first is the means for achieving the second:

力士は、稽古場の柱を使って、技を練習します。
Rikishi-wa keikoba-no hashira-o tsukatte waza-o renshuu-shimasu.
“Wrestlers use a pillar in the training room to practice a technique.”

Or, the first part may be the basis of the judgment in the second:

あの力士は脚が強く、いいです。
Ano rikishi-wa ashi-ga tsuyokute, ii-desu.
“That wrestler has strong legs, which is good.”

In the above, the subjects of the two parts are mostly identical. The subjects can be different, too, as shown below:

一番軽い力士は、100キロで、一番重い力士は、284キロです。
Ichiban karui rikishi-wa 100-kiro-de, ichiban omoi rikishi-wa 284-kiro-desu.
“The lightest wrestler is 100 kg, and the heaviest wrestler is 284 kg.”

However, the semantic restriction of having two closely related parts holds. The two parts form a pair of contrastive statements.

Checking your comprehension: Translate the following sentences into English:

今朝は、雪で、電車が遅れました。

Kesa-wa yuki-de, densha-ga okuremashita.

キムさんは、辞書を使って、漢字の意味を調べました。

Kimu-san-wa jisho-o tsukatte, kanji-no imi-o shirabemashita.

For related topics, see also Units 39, 51, 61, and 62.

51

Tense markers separate events

In Unit 50, we saw that *te*-forms connect closely related features or events as in the following:

山の夏の朝は、涼しくて、さわやかだ。

Yama-no natsu-no asa-wa suzushikute, sawayaka-da.

“Summer mornings in the mountains are cool and refreshing.”

三船さんは右の方に立って、山田さんは左の方に立ってください。

Mifune-san-wa migi-no hoo-ni tatte, Yamada-san-wa hidari-no hoo-ni tatte-kudasai.

“Mr. Mifune, please stand on the right, and Ms. Yamada, please stand on the left.”

Immediate causes also are likely to be expressed with *te*-forms:

冬が来て、シベリアは雪に覆われた。

Fuyu-ga kite, Shiberia-wa yuki-ni oowareta.

“Winter came, and Siberia was covered by snow.”

写真集を見て、冬のシベリアへ行きたくなった。

Shashin-shuu-o mite, fuyu-no Shiberia-e ikitaku natta.

“I looked through a photo book and became interested in going to Siberia in winter.”

推薦状を書いてくださって、ありがとうございます。

Suisenjoo-o kaite-kudasatte, arigatoo gozaimasu.

“Thank you for writing a letter of recommendation.”

遅れて、すみません。

Okurete, sumimasen.

“Sorry to be late.”

This is because *te*-forms do not carry their own tense information. They do not separate events in ways forms containing tense information (e.g., 食べる *taberu* “eat,” 食べた *tabeta* “ate,” 食べない *tabenai* “do not eat,” 食べなかった *tabenakatta* “did not eat”) do. When a sentence containing its own tense marker occurs within a larger sentence, the relationship between the two sentences is more complex than in the case of a sentence containing a *te*-form. Even far-fetched causal relationships can be expressed as in the following:

藤原さんがかさを持って来なかったから、今日は雨になったのよ。
Fujiwara-san-ga kasa-o motte konakatta-kara, kyoo-wa ame-ni natta no-yo.
“Because Ms. Fujiwara didn’t bring her umbrella, it started to rain today.”

Complex Event vs. Simple Event

This contrast between tensed forms and tenseless forms is a pervasive one. Of a pair of similar patterns, the one with an additional tense marker always has a more complex event structure than the one without. For instance, observe the following:

高橋さんが行くでしょう。
Takahashi-san-ga iku-deshoo.
“I suppose that Ms. Takahashi will go.”

行きましょう。
Ikimashoo.
“Let’s go.”

The form 行く *iku* “go” in the first pattern is tensed. As a result, the sentence contains two separate events, one of Takahashi going somewhere and another of the speaker adding his/her judgment. In other words, the embedded event, which carries an extra tense marker, is an objectified event separate from the judgment. In fact, because of this objectification, the embedded part can carry even a past tense marker, as in 高橋さんが行ったでしょう *Takahashi-san-ga itta-deshoo* “I suppose that Ms. Takahashi went.” In the second pattern, on the other hand, 行き *iki* “go” is a stem form, a tenseless form. So, 行きましょう *ikimashoo* “let’s go” can only refer to one point in time and has a much simpler meaning.

A similar contrast is observed between the following two sentences:

ベトナムへ旅行するために、お金をためた。
Betonamu-e ryokoo-suru tame-ni okane-o tameta.
“In order to travel to Vietnam, I saved money.”

旅行ガイドを買いに、本屋に行った。
Ryokoo-gaido-o kai-ni hon-ya-ni itta.
“In order to buy a travel book, I went to a bookstore.”

At first glance these patterns may look similar, but there is an important difference stemming from the difference in the event structure. In the first sentence, which has an extra tense marker, traveling to Vietnam is a long-term objective of saving money. The two events are clearly separated. In the second, which has only one tense marker, buying a travel book is an immediate objective of going to a bookstore, and the events are very closely connected.

The contrast between the following sentences can also be explained in the same way:

靴をはいたまま、上へあがった。

Kutsu-o haita mama, ue-e agatta.

“I went up (still) wearing my shoes.”

靴をはいて、上へあがった。

Kutsu-o haite, ue-e agatta.

“I went up wearing my shoes./I put on my shoes and went up.”

These are difficult to tell apart from their English translations, but there are differences between them which derive from the fact that one has an additional tense marker and the other does not.

The first sentence above contains an additional tense marker, so the two sub-events are more independent of each other than those in the second sentence. The subject put on the shoes long before he/she went up. Because of this lapse of time, this sentence is often interpreted with the sense of negligence.

In the second sentence, on the other hand, the two events take place closer together or simultaneously. Furthermore, since the two events are closely connected, the first event is interpreted as the means for the second.

The contrast between the following sentences also stems from the presence or absence of an extra tense marker:

毎日新しい漢字を覚えるのは、大変だ。

Mainichi atarashii kanji-o oboeru no-wa taihen-da.

“Memorizing new kanji every day is difficult.”

漢字は、覚えにくい。

Kanji-wa **oboe**-nikui.

“Kanji are difficult to memorize.”

Note that the contrast is that of a judgment about an event versus a judgment about an inherent property of a thing.

A parallel contrast distinguishes two types of conditionals, ～たら *-tara* “if/when” and ～れば *-reba* “if.” ～たら *-tara* is historically related to the past tense marker, while ～れば *-reba* is not. A condition expressed with ～たら *-tara* is more likely to happen than one expressed with ～れば *-reba*, which is more hypothetical. In fact, a condition expressed with ～たら *-tara* can already have happened, as in the following:

窓を開けたら、明るい日差しが入って来た。

Mado-o aketara, akarui hizashi-ga haitte-kita.

“When I opened the window, bright sunlight shone in.”

A conditional with 〜れば *-reba* does not have such a meaning.

Objective Judgment vs. Intuitive Judgment

The temporal contrast may figure as the contrast between objective judgment and intuitive judgment. Pairs of Japanese sentences translated into similar English sentences may be subtly different on this point. The case of 〜でしょう *-deshoo* “probably” above also has something to do with this. Another example is the following pair of sentences:

雨が降るようです。

Ame-ga furu yoo-desu.

“It appears that it will rain.”

雨が降りそうです。

Ame-ga furi-soo-desu.

“It looks like it is going to rain (any moment).”

These sentences are similar in that both predict a future event, but there is a significant difference attributable to the difference in the timing of the judgment relative to the predicted event. In the first, the judgment is not immediate. The speaker’s deduction, therefore, can analytically be based on various types of objective information. For example, the speaker might have heard a weather forecast on the radio. Or he/she might have read the morning newspaper. Or he/she might have observed many people carrying umbrellas. The prediction that the first sentence conveys, therefore, is an objective one.

In the case of the second sentence, the judgment is immediate, based on perceptible cues closely linked to the predicted event. The speaker must have observed signs of imminent rain in the form of an ominous cloud, a sudden gust of wind, etc., for him/her to use this sentence. The prediction, in other words, is an intuitive or subjective one.

Another case in point is the contrast between two types of potential expressions, shown below:

(この植物はどのように加工しても) 食べることができない。

(Kono shokubutsu-wa dono yoo-ni kakoo-shite-mo) **taberu** koto-ga dekinai.

“(No matter how we might process this plant,) it is impossible to eat it.”

もう食べられない！

Moo **taberarenai**.

“I cannot eat any more.”

Note that the embedding of a tensed sentence within another sentence, observed for the first sentence, makes the entire sentence more objective compared to the second sentence, which expresses a personal ability.

Checking your comprehension: Can you tell why you are more likely to hear the second sentence than the first at the sight of an impending accident?

大変、天井が崩れ落ちるようです。

Taihen, tenjoo-ga **kuzure-ochiru** yoo-desu.

“Oh-oh. It appears that the ceiling will collapse.”

大変、天井が崩れ落ちそうです。

Taihen, tenjoo-ga **kuzure-ochi-soo**-desu.

“Oh-oh. It looks like the ceiling is collapsing.”

For related topics, see also Units 48, 50, and 52.

52

Events are tied with varying degrees of cohesion inside a sentence

Two events are of course least connected when they are expressed with two separate sentences:

岸田さんが笑いました。有吉さんも笑いました。
Kishida-san-ga waraimashita. Ariyoshi-san-mo waraimashita.
“Ms. Kishida laughed. Ms. Ariyoshi also laughed.”

A language user can present two events as related events, in which case a clause-final particle such as ～から *-kara* or ～けど *-kedo* connects the events:

岸田さんが笑ったから、有吉さんも笑いました。
Kishida-san-ga waratta-kara, Ariyoshi-san-mo waraimashita.
“Because Ms. Kishida laughed, Ms. Ariyoshi also laughed.”

Since these are separate events and only connected by speakers, each part has its own tense marker, and the subjects of the two parts are often different. Furthermore, each part may carry its own politeness marker *-mas(h)-*:

岸田さんが笑いましたから、有吉さんも笑いました。
Kishida-san-ga waraimashita-kara, Ariyoshi-san-mo waraimashita.
“Because Ms. Kishida laughed, Ms. Ariyoshi also laughed.”

Integrating Smaller Events into a Larger Event

An event may be considered part of a larger event as its condition, objective, or sub-event. Various constructions for subordinate clauses are used for integrating such events:

右から二番目のボタンを押すと、ディスクが出てきます。
Migi-kara ni-ban-me-no botan-o osu-to, disuku-ga dete-kimasu.
“When you press the second button from the right, the disk will come out.”

みんなに聞こえるように、大きな声で話してください。
Minna-ni kikoeru yoo-ni ookina koe-de hanashite-kudasai.
“Please speak up so that everyone can hear you.”

バスを待っていた人は、なおみの方をちらりと見た。
Basu-o matte-ita hito-wa Naomi-no hoo-o chirari-to mita.
“The person who was waiting for a bus flashed a glance toward Naomi.”

The subject's own reason for action (or inaction) is also integrated as part of a larger event:

なおみは、頭が痛いから、映画に行かないことにした。

Naomi-wa atama-ga itai-kara eiga-ni ikanai koto-ni shita.

“Naomi decided not to go to the movies because she had a headache.”

Such subordinate clauses have their own tense marker separate from that of the main clause, and can have their own subject separate from that of the main clause. However, they are considered more dependent on the main clauses than are clauses containing the speaker's reasons, and are less likely to carry politeness markers. Sentences containing politeness markers in such subordinate clauses are considered hyperpolite:

右から二番目のボタンを押しますと、ディスクが出てきます。

Migi-kara ni-ban-me-no botan-o oshimasu-to, disuku-ga dete-kimasu.

“When you press the second button from the right, the disk will come out.”

Closely Related Sub-Events

Some sub-events are conceived to be even more closely connected. *Te*-forms and stem forms, which are tenseless, connect them:

私が、電話帳で調べ(て)、電話をかけたんです。

Watashi-ga denwachoo-de shirabe(te), denwa-o kaketa-n-desu.

“I checked [the number] in the telephone book and made a phone call.”

私が、電話帳で調べ(て)、島村さんが、電話をかけたんです。

Watashi-ga denwachoo-de shirabe(te), Shimamura-san-ga denwa-o kaketa-n-desu.

“I checked [the number] in the telephone book, and Ms. Shimamura made a phone call.”

The subject of the *te*-form or the stem form and the subject of the final verb are typically identical, because the two events are closely connected (see Units 50 and 51). When the subjects are different, they form a pair of contrastive statements (see Unit 50) or are conceived as steps toward a common objective, as in the last example above.

One of the sub-events may be subordinated to the other semantically as the means:

高校まで毎日歩いて行った。

Kookoo-made mainichi aruite-itta.

“I went to high school on foot every day.”

かさを持って出かけた。
Kasa-o motte dekaketa.
“I went out carrying an umbrella.”

Such *te*-forms are often translated into English adverbial phrases.

Further Integration of Events

The subordination of *te*-forms and stem forms can proceed further, and you may not perceive two sub-events at all in the following examples:

食べて来た。
Tabete-kita.
“I came having eaten (and I am ready).”

食べてくれた。
Tabete-kureta.
“He ate (for my sake).”

食べてみた。
Tabete-mita.
“I ate (to see if I like it).”

食べておいた。
Tabete-oita.
“I ate (in preparation).”

食べはじめた。
Tabe-hajimeta.
“I started to eat.”

食べつづけた。
Tabe-tsuzuketa.
“I continued eating.”

In these, the first verb and the second verb are so closely connected that the second functions as an auxiliary verb to the first. Interestingly, there is a subtle difference between these uses of *te*-forms and stem forms in terms of the event structure. The *te*-form type construction carries the sense of consequence or impact; the stem form type does not. For instance, contrast the following two:

食べてしまった。
Tabete-shimatta.
“I finished eating (too soon, the whole thing, when I shouldn’t have, etc.).”

食べ終わった。
Tabe-owatta.
“I finished eating.”

Both of these are commonly translated as “I finished eating,” but the first one means more; it has a judgmental sense of “out of control, deviation from the norm.” The second one does not carry any such judgmental sense. In other words, no consequence or impact is implied in the case of a stem form.

Similarly, of the following pair of sentences, which are both translated as “it started to rain,” the first has the sense of an external event approaching and affecting the speaker’s personal space. The second is merely an objective statement without reference to where the speaker is:

雨が降ってきた。
Ame-ga futte-kita.
“It started to rain (affecting my space).”

雨が降りはじめた。
Ame-ga furi-hajimeta.
“It started to rain.”

Thus, even though these uses of *te*-forms and stem forms may look quite similar, there still is a considerable difference between the two. *Te*-forms retain the trace of two separate events. This difference has a curious consequence in ordering stem forms and *te*-forms. Since the construction involving a stem form is more tightly integrated as a single event than one involving a *te*-form, the stem form precedes the *te*-form if they are combined; the opposite order is ungrammatical:

読みはじめてみた。
Yomi-hajimete-mita.
“I started to read (to see what would happen).”

*読んでみはじめた。
*Yonde-mi-hajimeta.

Checking your comprehension: How would you translate the following sentence which combines the two auxiliary verbs meaning “to finish”?

食べおわってしまった。
Tabe-owatte-shimatta.

For related topics, see also Units 50, 51, and 61.

53

Two perspectives for tense inside a subordinate clause

Consider how you might translate the following English sentences, in particular the highlighted parts:

Before I **expressed my opinion**, I gave it careful thought.

I will express my opinion after I **give it careful thought**.

Did you come up with something like the following?

意見を言う前に、よく考えた。

Iken-o iu mae-ni yoku kangaeta.

“Before I **expressed my opinion**, I gave it careful thought.”

よく考えた後で、意見を言う。

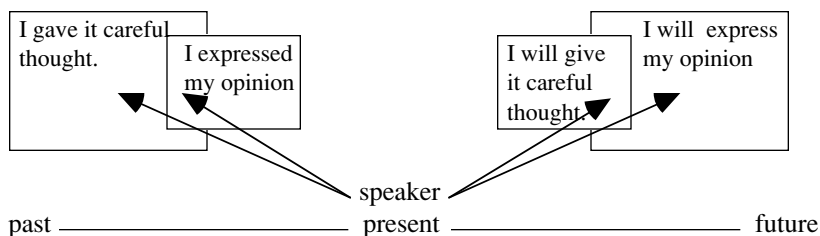
Yoku kangaeta ato-de iken-o iu.

“I will express my opinion after I **give it careful thought**.”

Note that the tense marking in the subordinate clauses of these Japanese sentences is the opposite of English: non-past in Japanese while past in English, and past in Japanese while non-past in English. This section is for those of you who find this puzzling.

English Perspective

Tense marking in English is determined relative to the point of speech alone, whether in the main clause (large box below) or in the subordinate clause (small box below). In other words, one uniform perspective—the speaker’s—is adopted for tense marking in English:

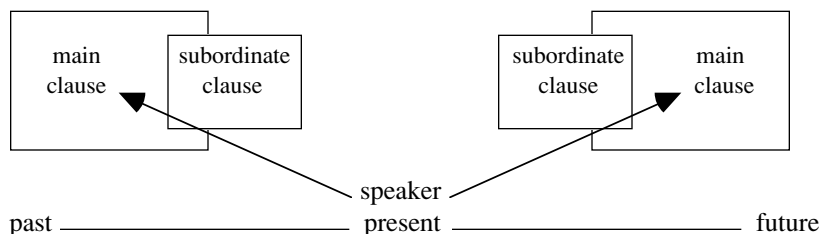


The speaker’s perspective provides no direct temporal linkage between the subordinate clause and the main clause. The actual sequence is determined by various other factors, which are outside the scope of this book.

Japanese Perspectives

In Japanese, there are two possible perspectives for tense: the speaker's perspective and the main clause perspective, the perspective relative to the main clause. In this unit, let us distinguish between the two perspectives.

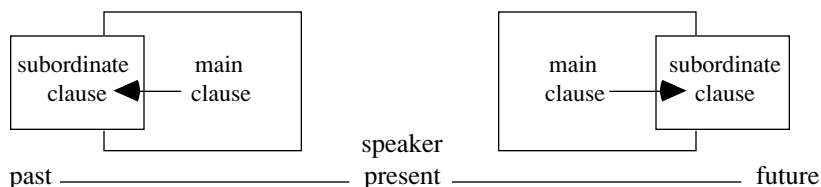
The tense of every main clause is of course expressed from the perspective of the speaker. This is graphically represented as follows:



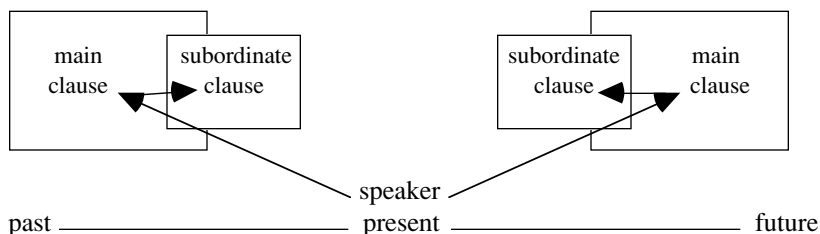
The subordinate clause, on the other hand, may be expressed through the main clause perspective as in the following sentences:

誰かが歌を歌っているのが聞こえた。
Dareka-ga uta-o utatte-iru no-ga kikoeta.
 “I could hear **someone singing a song**.”

The subordinate clause in this sentence has a non-past verb 歌っている *utatte-iru* “(someone) is singing” even though the event of singing took place in the past. This is because the subordinate clause of this sentence adopts the main clause perspective: the event of singing is viewed as taking place in the main clause participant’s “present.” This perspective, the main clause perspective, is the one adopted for the subordinate clauses of the first two Japanese sentences in this unit as well. It is graphically represented as follows:



And the perspectives employed for the whole sentences can be graphically represented as follows:



Note that this perspective fixes the order of the subordinate clause and the main clause, although the time of the subordinate clause is indeterminate with respect to the speaker's present.

The other perspective, the speaker's perspective, is also used in some Japanese subordinate clauses, as in the following:

子どもの頃住んでいた家は、社宅だった。

Kodomo-no koro sunde-ita ie-wa shataku-datta.

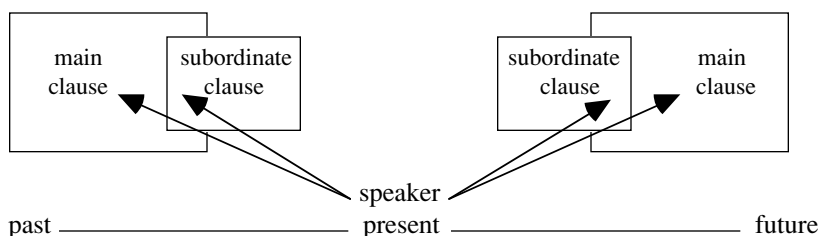
"The house in which **I was living in my childhood** was a company house."

今から復習するところを、テストに出します。

Ima-kara fukushuu-suru tokoro-o tesuto-ni dashimasu.

"I will put on the test the part that **we will review now**."

The perspective for these sentences is identical to the one adopted in English. It is graphically represented as follows:



Checking your comprehension: Which perspective is used for the subordinate clauses of the following sentences, the main clause perspective or the speaker's?

教師は、テストに使う問題を考えた。

Kyooshi-wa **tesuto-ni tsukau** mondai-o kangaeta.

"The teacher made up the problems **he would use for the test**."

デモの先頭にいた人は、渡辺さんだった。

Demo-no sentoo-ni ita hito-wa Watanabe-san-datta.

“The person who was **at the head of the demonstration** was Ms. Watanabe.”

飛行機が着陸する時に機内放送があった。

Hikooki-ga chakuriku-suru toki-ni kinai hoosoo-ga atta.

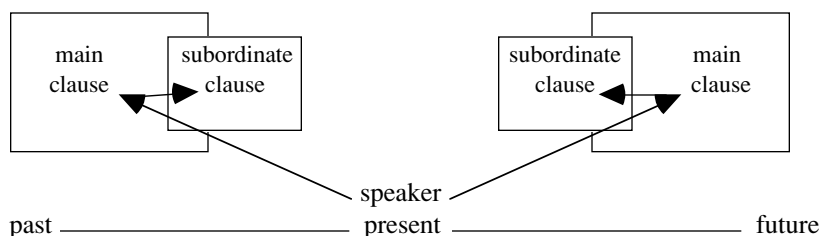
“There was an in-flight announcement when **the airplane was about to land.**”

For related topics, see also Units 48, 54, and 55.

54

The main clause perspective means involvement

In Unit 53, we said that there are two possible perspectives for tense marking in Japanese subordinate clauses. In this unit, we will study when to adopt the main clause perspective, graphically represented as follows:



Simply stated, the main clause perspective is adopted when there is a strong semantic linkage between the main clause event and the subordinate clause event in terms of involvement.

Entering the Mind of the Main Clause Participant

When the subordinate clause expresses the main clause participant's objective, purpose, expectation, knowledge, ability, emotion, reason, or condition, this participant's temporal perspective is adopted for the subordinate clause. It is as if the speaker enters the main clause participant's mind:

なおみは、あきらの両親と話すために、手話を習った。

Naomi-wa Akira-no ryooshin-to hanasu tame-ni shuwa-o naratta.

"In order to talk with Akira's parents, Naomi learned sign language."
(objective)

なおみは、あきらから手紙が届くのを待った。

Naomi-wa Akira-kara tegami-ga todoku no-o matta.

"Naomi waited for Akira's letter to arrive." (expectation)

なおみは、あきらがまだ家にいると思った。

Naomi-wa Akira-ga mada uchi-ni iru-to omotta.

"Naomi thought that Akira was still at home." (thought)

佐藤さんは、樋口さんが日本に帰ることを知っていた。

Satoo-san-wa Higuchi-san-ga Nihon-ni kaeru koto-o shitte-ita.

"Ms. Sato knew that Mr. Higuchi was going back to Japan." (knowledge)

食べられるものは、全部食べた。

Taberareru mono-wa zenbu tabeta.

“They ate everything they **could**.” (ability)

母親は、かわいいわが子を抱きしめた。

Hahaoya-wa **kawaii** wagako-o dakishimeta.

“The mother tightly hugged her **dear** child.” (emotion)

パーティーは、遅すぎるので、行かなかった。

Paatii-wa **oso-sugiru** no-de, ikanakatta.

“Because **it was too late (for her)**, she did not go to the party.” (reason)

一番早く出来た人にこれをあげます。

Ichiban hayaku dekita hito-ni kore-o agemasu.

“I will give this to the one who **finishes it first**.” (condition)

Intervention by the Main Clause Participant

The main clause perspective is also adopted when the main clause participant interferes with or facilitates the course of an event in the subordinate clause. Some examples are given below:

環境保護団体は、工場が廃棄物を海に流すのをやめさせた。

Kankyoo-hogo-dantai-wa **koojoo-ga haikibutsu-o umi-ni nagasu** no-o yamesaseta.

“Environmental groups stopped **factories’ dumping waste into the ocean**.”

市民団体は、住民が公害訴訟を起すのをサポートした。

Shimin-dantai-wa **juumin-ga koogai-soshoo-o okosu** no-o sapooto-shita.

“Citizens’ groups supported **the residents’ starting legal action against polluters**.”

Stable Condition

The main clause perspective is also adopted when the subordinate clause describes a stable condition or quality of an element within the main clause:

樋口さんが通っている学校は街の真ん中にあった。

Higuchi-san-ga kayotte-iru gakkoo-wa machi-no mannaka-ni atta.

“The school **Ms. Higuchi was commuting** to was in the center of the town.”

樋口さんが住んでいるアパートでは、よく火災報知器が鳴った。

Higuchi-san-ga sunde-iru apaato-de-wa yoku kasai hoochiki-ga natta.

“In the apartment building where **Ms. Higuchi was living**, the fire alarm went off frequently.”

妹は、尻尾の短い犬を拾ってきた。
Imooto-wa **shippo-no mijikai** inu-o hirotte-kita.
“My sister brought a (stray) dog which **had a short tail.**”

Explicit Temporal Markers

Subordinate clauses that are attached to temporal elements such as 前 *mae* “before” and 時 *toki* “when” fall within the main clause perspective as well. Some examples follow:

樋口さんが来る前に、私は部屋のそうじをしておいた。
Higuchi-san-ga kuru mae-ni watashi-wa heya-no sooji-o shite-oita.
“I had cleaned my room before **Ms. Higuchi came.**”

子どもたちは、爆撃が終わるまでじっとうずくまっていた。
Kodomo-tachi-wa **bakugeki-ga owaru**-made jitto uzukumatte-ita.
“Until **the bombing stopped**, the children kept crouching.”

田辺さんは、テヘランへ着いた直後に電話するでしょう。
Tanabe-san-wa **Teheran-e tsuita** chokugo-ni denwa-suru-deshoo.
“Mr. Tanabe will call you immediately after **he arrives in Teheran.**”

この頃急に立ちあがった時にめまいがすることがあります。
Kono goro **kyuu-ni tachiagatta** toki-ni memai-ga suru koto-ga arimasu.
“Recently, when **I stand up suddenly**, I sometimes feel dizzy.”

飛行機が着陸する時に機内放送があった。
Hikooki-ga chakuriku-suru toki-ni kinai hoosoo-ga atta.
“There was an in-flight announcement when **the airplane was about to land.**”

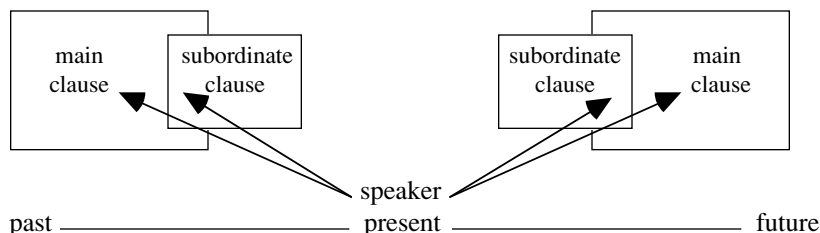
Checking your comprehension: Translate the following sentences into Japanese:

She gave it careful thought before she read the book.
She will give it careful thought after she reads the book.

For related topics, see also Units 53 and 55.

55

The speaker's perspective means incidental connection, speaker's recollection, or speaker's reasoning



Incidental Relationship

The speaker's perspective is used when the events in the subordinate clause and the main clause are only incidentally linked, as in the following:

これをゆるす人は、それもゆるすだろう。

Kore-o yurusu hito-wa sore-mo yurusu-daroo.

“People who **will tolerate this** will also tolerate that.”

Likewise, the connection between the subordinate clause and the main clause in the following sentence is incidental:

米倉さんは、お母さんが作る服を卒業式に着て行く。

Yonekura-san-wa **okaasan-ga tsukuru** fuku-o sotsugyooshiki-ni kite-iku.

“For graduation, Ms. Yonekura will wear the dress that **her mother will make.**”

This sentence clearly adopts the speaker's perspective, because a non-past form is used for the subordinate event (making the dress) even though it precedes the main clause event (wearing it). This sentence is in sharp contrast with the following sentence, which adopts the main clause perspective because of the sense of purpose:

米倉さんのお母さんは、米倉さんが卒業式に着て行く服を作る。

Yonekura-san-no okaasan-wa **Yonekura-san-ga sotsugyooshiki-ni kite-iku** fuku-o tsukuru.

“Ms. Yonekura's mother will make the dress that **Ms. Yonekura will wear for her graduation.**” (purpose)

米倉さんのお母さんは、米倉さんが卒業式に着て行く服を作った。
Yonekura-san-no okaasan-wa **Yonekura-san-ga sotsugyooshiki-ni kite-iku**
fuku-o tsukutta.

“Ms. Yonekura’s mother made the dress that **Ms. Yonekura would wear for her graduation.**” (purpose)

Note that in these sentences, regardless of the tense of the main clause, a non-past form is used for the subordinate event (wearing the dress) which follows the main clause event (making it) .

Event Independent of Main Clause Participant’s Awareness

As explained in Unit 54, generally speaking, when the subordinate clause describes knowledge or perception, the main clause perspective is adopted for the tense of the subordinate clause. The following are the sentences predicated on the principles given in Unit 54:

若者たちは、地雷が埋まっていることを知っていた。
Wakamono-tachi-wa **jirai-ga umatte-iru** koto-o shitte-ita.
“The youths knew that **the land mines were buried.**”

若者たちには、地雷が爆発する瞬間は見えなかった。
Wakamono-tachi-ni-wa **jirai-ga bakuhatsu-suru** shunkan-wa mienakatta.
“The youths could not see the instant **the land mine exploded.**”

However, if the event in the subordinate clause is simultaneous with the event in the main clause, and if the subordinate event can be presumed to have happened irrespective of the participant’s awareness of it, the speaker’s perspective is also allowed. This is why the following pair is also grammatical:

若者たちは、地雷が埋っていたことを知っていた。
Wakamono-tachi-wa **jirai-ga umatte-ita** koto-o shitte-ita.
“The youths knew that **the land mines were buried.**”

若者たちには、地雷が爆発した瞬間は見えなかった。
Wakamono-tachi-ni-wa **jirai-ga bakuhatsu-shita** shunkan-wa mienakatta.
“The youths could not see **the instant the land mine exploded.**”

Speaker’s Recollection or Temporal Framework

Another category of sentences which take the speaker’s perspective is exemplified by the following sentences:

子どもの頃住んで {いた/*いる} 家には、大きな桜の木があった。
Kodomo-no koro sunde-{**ita/*iru**} uchi-ni-wa ookina sakura-no ki-ga atta.
 “In the house in which **we were** living **in my childhood**, there was a big cherry tree.”

これから勉強 {する/*した} ところは、テストに出るかもしれない。
Kore-kara benkyoo-{**suru/*shita**} tokoro-wa tesuto-ni deru-ka-mo shirenai.
 “The part that **we will** study **now** might appear on the test.”

This type of sentence contains either a temporal expression like 子どもの頃 *kodomo-no koro* “in my childhood,” which indicates that the subordinate clause represents the speaker’s recollection, or a temporal expression like これから *kore-kara* “from now on,” きのう *kinoo* “yesterday,” or 明日 *ashita* “tomorrow,” which is defined relative to the speaker. Such elements directly link the subordinate clause to the speaker, forcing the speaker’s perspective.

Speaker’s Reasoning

If the subordinate clause reflects the main clause participant’s reasoning, the main clause perspective is adopted, as we have seen in Unit 54:

あきは、面倒なので、書類を提出しなかった。
 Akira-wa **mendoo-na** no-de, shorui-o teishutsu-shinakatta.
 “Because **it was bothersome**, Akira did not submit the documents.”

But if the subordinate clause reflects the speaker’s reasoning, the speaker’s temporal perspective is adopted:

書類は、遅すぎたので、受理されなかった。
 Shorui-wa **ososugita** no-de, juri-sarenakatta.
 “Because they **were too late**, the documents were not accepted.”

Checking your comprehension: Why must the boldface part in the following sentence be a past form?

その当時家庭教師に **来ていた** 大学生の名前は、斉藤だった。
Sono tooji katei-kyooshi-ni kite-ita daigakusei-no namae-wa Saitoo-datta.
 “The name of the college student who **was coming to tutor me at the time** was Saito.”

For related topics, see also Units 53 and 54.

Part 5

Miscellaneous Topics

56

はい *hai* and ええ *ee* mean “I agree” or “I hear you”; いいえ *ie* means “I disagree”

Hearing the news that school has been canceled due to snow, English-speaking children might delightedly exclaim “Yes!” even though no one has asked them a question. Likewise, after realizing he has forgotten to answer an essay question on a test, a schoolchild might cry out “Oh, no!” in the backseat of a homebound school bus. By contrast, a native speaker of Japanese never uses はい／ええ *hai/ee* or い(い)え *i(i)e* in similar contexts. Instead, a Japanese speaker might shout やった *yatta* in triumph or しまった *shimatta* in dismay. Where does this difference come from?

“Yes” and “no” in English have a positive and a negative meaning like a positive and a negative sentence. Japanese はい／ええ *hai/ee* and いいえ *ie*, on the other hand, are primarily interactional; they are always directed to other people. This is the source of the contrast observed above and has interesting consequences, which we will now briefly examine.

When a question is neutral and does not assert anything, はい／ええ *hai/ee* and いいえ *ie* simply affirm or negate it just like “yes” and “no”:

「いいですか。」 「はい／ええ、いいですよ。」

Ii-desu-ka. Hai/ee, ii-desu-yo.

“Is it OK?” “Yes, it is OK.”

「行きますか。」 「いいえ、行きません。」

Ikimasu-ka. Iie, ikimasen.

“Are you going?” “No, I am not going.”

However, はい／ええ *hai/ee* and いいえ *ie* have an additional function which “yes” and “no” do not exhibit. When a question contains a strong sense of assertion, はい／ええ *hai/ee* and いいえ *ie* function to confirm or correct the assertion. They mean something like “you are right” and “you are mistaken,” respectively. The contrast between Japanese and English is shown below:

Japanese

「行きますか。」 「はい、行きます。」

Ikimasu-ka. Hai, ikimasu.

“Are you going?” (The speaker suspects that the addressee will go.)

“You are right. I am going.”

「行きますか。」 「いいえ、行きません。」

Ikimasu-ka. Iie, ikimasen.

“Are you going?” (The speaker suspects that the addressee will go.)

“You are mistaken. I am not going.”

「行きませんか。」 「はい／ええ、行きません。」

Ikimasen-ka. Hai/ee, ikimasen.

“Aren’t you going?” (The speaker suspects that the addressee will not go.)

“You are right. I am not going.”

「行きませんか。」 「いいえ、行きます。」

Ikimasen-ka. Iie, ikimasu.

“Aren’t you going?” (The speaker suspects that the addressee will not go.)

“You are mistaken. I am going.”

English

“Are you going?” “Yes, I am going.”

“Are you going?” “No, I am not going.”

“Aren’t you going?” “No, I am not going.”

“Aren’t you going?” “Yes, I am going.”

Note that はい／ええ *hai/ee* are used to affirm someone else’s assertion, while いいえ *iie* is used to correct it. They are interactional units. They have nothing to do with the positive/negative contrast of the following sentences, which should be treated as additional, independent comments. By contrast, their apparent English counterparts “yes” and “no” are more closely connected to the following sentences because they center on the positive/negative contrast.

This explanation of the interactional nature of はい／ええ *hai/ee* and いいえ *iie* accounts equally well for cases where a negative question is used to invite the addressee to do something:

「行きませんか。」 「ええ、行きましょう。」

Ikimasen-ka. Ee, ikimashoo.

“Won’t you go?” (The speaker wants the addressee to go.)

“Sure, let’s go.”

「行きませんか。」 「いえ、ちょっと。」

Ikimasen-ka. Ie, chotto.

“Won’t you go?” (The speaker wants the addressee to go.)

“No, I’m afraid not.”

The meaning of はい／ええ *hai/ee* and いいえ *iie* here is “abiding by” or “not abiding by” the wishes of the speaker. This use is an extension of the sense of “(dis)agreement.” The grammatical forms of the questions have nothing to do with the responses. Pay attention rather to **what is meant**.

The practice of using はい *hai* in the sense of “I hear you,” as in the following exchange, also makes sense when we take into account its interactional nature:

「これ、出来ました。」 「はい、じゃあ、次はこれをしてください。」

Kore, dekimashita. Hai, jaa, tsugi-wa kore-o shite-kudasai.

“I finished this.” “OK, please do this next then.”

This interactional aspect of はい *hai* culminates in its special uses as shown below:

(Customer) 「はい、三百円。」 (Clerk) 「はい、おつりです。」

Hai, sanbyakuen. Hai, otsuri-desu.

“Here you are, three hundred yen.” “Here you are, your change.”

(Teacher) 「はい、次。」

Hai, tsugi.

“OK, next.”

(Newscaster) 「はい、次です。」

Hai, tsugi-desu.

“Well, the next topic.”

In the first example, はい *hai* is used to call attention to the exchange of service and money. In the second and third examples, はい *hai* is used to regulate interactions by clearly marking major turns. Incidentally, ええ *ee* is not used this way. It is limited to affirming or confirming.

Checking your comprehension: Confirm that the following assertions are right:

バナナはないですね。

Banana-wa nai-desu-ne.

“You have no bananas, right?”

この台風は鹿児島へは来ませんね。

Kono taifuu-wa Kagoshima-e-wa kimasen-ne.

“This typhoon is not coming to Kagoshima, right?”

Now agree to do what the speaker wishes for you to do:

被災地の救援活動のために寄付をしてくださいませんか。

Hisaichi-no kyuen-katsudoo-no tame-ni kifu-o shite-kudasaimasen-ka.

“Won’t you please donate some money for disaster relief work?”

57

あれ *are* “that” is for things known to both speaker and hearer; それ *sore* “that” is for something just mentioned

Imagine you and your friend sitting on the grass in a sunny park. A small, solitary dog shows up in the distance. You might remark:

あの犬、かわいいね。

Ano inu, kawaii-ne.

“**That** dog is cute, isn’t it?”

The dog runs to your friend and licks him/her and romps around, keeping a playful distance from you. You might now say:

その犬、誰のだろう。

Sono inu, dare-no daroo.

“I wonder whose **the** dog is.”

The dog now comes to you and licks you. Its owner is still nowhere to be seen. You might wonder aloud:

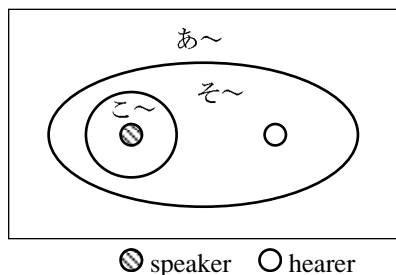
この犬、どうしよう。

Kono inu, doo shiyoo.

“What shall we do with **this** dog?”

In the Physical Context

When pointing at things in the physical context, the *a*-series (あの *ano*, あれ *are*, etc.) refers to a thing far from both the speaker and the hearer, as in the case of the dog in the distance. The *ko*-series (この *kono*, これ *kore*, etc.) refers to a thing in the immediate proximity of the speaker, as in the case of the dog when it is near the speaker in the above episode. The *so*-series (その *sono*, それ *sore*, etc.) refers to a thing in the remaining area, as in the case of the dog romping around. This can be represented graphically as follows:



In the Speech Context

These demonstrative expressions can also be used for things not in the physical context, that is, when they are introduced in speech. The use of the *ko*-series is similar to the use of “this” in English in this context. The use of the *a*-series and the *so*-series needs closer attention. Let us use the episode of the mystery dog for this, too.

Suppose that the owner finally appears and leaves with the dog. You and your friend may exchange the following remarks:

「あの犬、かわいかったね。」 「うん、ほんとにあの犬、かわいかったねえ。」

Ano inu, kawaikatta-ne. Un, honto-ni **ano** inu, kawaikatta-nee.

“**That** dog was cute, wasn’t it?” “Yeah, **that** dog was really cute.”

Next you might go home and explain what happened in the park to your roommate.

さっきすごくかわいい犬、公園で見たよ。その犬、どっかから逃げてきたんだ。

Sakki sugoku kawaii inu, kooen-de mita-yo. **Sono** inu, dokka-kara nigete-kita-n-da.

“I saw a really cute dog in the part a little while ago. **The** dog had run away from somewhere.”

To which your roommate might reply:

それ、どんな犬だった?

Sore, donna inu-datta?

“What kind of dog was **that**?”

The difference between the *a*-series and the *so*-series can be summarized as follows:

The *a*-series is for things the speaker believes to be known to both speaker and hearer, as in the above case of the two friends talking about the same experience. In other words, the *a*-series expressions refer to things related to shared experience or matters previously discussed between the speaker and the hearer. The *a*-series expressions, therefore, can be brought up without any introduction so long as the speaker assumes that the hearer will know what is meant:

(a daughter to her mother)

あれ、もう出来てる?

Are, moo dekiteru?

“Is **it** already done?”

Because of this assumption of common experience or shared information, some *a*-series expressions can also be used as a kind of euphemistic code between close friends, as in the case of あの^あ人 *ano hito* “that person” in the sense of “my boyfriend” or “my husband,” あれ^あ *are* “that” in the sense of “menstrual period,” and あそこ^あ *asoko* “there” in the sense of “intimate part of the body.”

The *so*-series, on the other hand, is for something just mentioned, as in the case of the conversation between the roommates above, and derives no such euphemistic expressions.

Checking your comprehension: You and a friend are talking about a theatrical production of *Mother Courage and Her Children* which you saw together last month. How would you translate the word “that” in each of the following sentences where it appears?

A: **That** was an excellent play, wasn’t it?”

B: Yes, **that** is my favorite Brecht play.

A: Have you seen his *Galileo*?

B: **That** too is wonderful!

A: Did you like *The Good Woman of Setzuan*?

B: I haven’t seen **that**. What is it about?

58

The longer and vaguer, the more polite

This principle seems to be universal. Polite expressions are often either long or vague; they allow us to avoid coming to the point quickly and to leave the listener with alternative options or the possibility of different interpretations. Direct expressions which are to the point can be expressions of total trust, but they can also be expressions of rudeness. Which of the following English request forms is the politest?

Sign the petition.

Please sign the petition.

Won't you sign the petition?

Would you please sign the petition?

I would appreciate it if you would sign the petition.

Now you know why, of the following two Japanese questions, the negative option is used as a polite form of invitation.

すわりますか。

Suwarimasu-ka.

“Will you sit down?”

すわりませんか。

Suwarimasen-ka.

“Won't you sit down?”

Checking your comprehension: これ *kore* means “this (one).” こちら *kochira* literally means “this direction.” Which of the following sentences can you use when introducing someone? Which can you use only when pointing at a person in a picture in his/her absence?

これは、高木さんです。

Kore-wa Takagi-san-desu.

“This is Mr./Ms. Takagi.”

こちらは、高木さんです。

Kochira-wa Takagi-san-desu.

“This is Mr./Ms. Takagi.”

For related topics, see also Unit 59.

59

Polite forms and direct forms

Early on in your study of Japanese, you learned polite verbal forms like the following:

食べます	tabemasu	I'll eat.
高いです	takai-desu	It's expensive.
きれいです	kirei-desu	It is clean/beautiful.

You also learned how to form direct forms like the following:

食べる	taberu	I'll eat.
食べない	tabenai	I won't eat.
食べた	tabeta	I ate.
食べなかった	tabenakatta	I didn't eat.
高い	takai	It's expensive.
高くない	takaku-nai	It isn't expensive.
高かった	takakatta	It was expensive.
高くない	takaku-nakatta	It wasn't expensive.
きれいだ	kirei-da	It is clean/beautiful.
きれいじゃない	kirei-ja-nai	It isn't clean/beautiful.
きれいだった	kirei-datta	It was clean/beautiful.
きれいじゃなかった	kirei-ja-nakatta	It wasn't clean/beautiful.

You might still be wondering where to use polite and direct forms. The distinction boils down to whether or not the situation calls for you to behave with a semblance of respect. Polite forms are interpersonally polite patterns. They are used when it is socially wise (or advantageous) for you to be polite. These include the following situations:

- when talking to a stranger
- when talking to a person socially “superior” to you (teacher, older acquaintance, etc.)
- when addressing an audience in public
- when addressing consumers (in an advertisement, an instruction, etc.)
- when writing letters (because you need to be slightly more formal when writing letters)

By contrast, direct forms are used where acknowledgment of personal respect is irrelevant or is not necessary, as in the following cases:

- when thinking or talking to yourself
- when writing for yourself (diary, notes, etc.)
- when talking to your friends or family privately and intimately
- when talking to a baby
- when talking to animal companions
- when writing a casual message to your friends or family
- when writing an objective article (academic report, newspaper article, term paper, thesis, etc.)
- when writing a literary narrative, such as a novel

An objective article or a novel is judged on its own scientific or artistic merit, not on whether its writer demonstrates respect to readers appropriately. This is why direct forms are used for them.

Interpersonal respect is most effectively conveyed at the end of a sentence. Inside a sentence, it becomes less visible and is not called for; direct forms suffice in the following:

- in a modifier of a noun (e.g., 行く時に *iku toki-ni* “when going”; 行く人 *iku hito* “person who goes”)
- before “source of information” markers and “likelihood” markers such as ～そうです *-soo-desu* (unverified information), ～ようです *-yoo-desu* (deduction), ～でしょう *-deshoo* “probably,” and ～かもしれません *-ka-mo shiremasen* “may be” or “maybe” (e.g., 行くようです *iku yoo-desu* “it looks like they are going”; 行くでしょう *iku-deshoo* “I suppose they will go”)
- in embedded questions (e.g., 行くか知りません *iku-ka shirimasen* “I don’t know if they will go”)
- for a thought inside a sentence (e.g., 行くと思います *iku-to omoimasu* “I think they will go”)

Sentences containing polite forms in such contexts may be considered too compliant. It is therefore safer to avoid them.

Polite and direct forms are optional in semi-independent clauses such as the following:

明日試験が {ある／あります} から、今晚勉強します。
 Ashita shiken-ga {aru/arimasu}-kara, konban benkyoo-shimasu.
 “Because I have a test tomorrow, I am going to study tonight.”

明日試験が {ある／あります} けど、今晚は勉強しません。
 Ashita shiken-ga {aru/arimasu}-ga, benkyoo-shimasen.
 “Although I have a test tomorrow, I am not going to study tonight.”

田中さんは、明日試験が {ある／あります} と言いました。
Tanaka-san-wa ashita shiken-ga {aru/arimasu}-to iimashita.
“Ms. Tanaka said that she has a test tomorrow.”

Checking your comprehension: Which forms would you use, polite or direct, for the following situations?

when you give a report in class
when you take notes in class

For related topics, see also Units 52 and 58.

60

Reality consists of continuous-grade scales; language makes things discrete

By now, we have appealed to the concept of scale more than once. It is time to articulate this more clearly.

A variety of linguistic phenomena makes sense when we take into account the concept of scale and prototypes. Reality may be said to consist of continuous-grade scales. For example, even though a year is conventionally divided into four seasons, there is little or no physical difference between the last day of summer and the first day of fall. We might in fact have fall days which look like summer. In other words, a year is a continuous-grade scale. Nevertheless, we divide the year into seasons.

This is possible because we know that, in the northern hemisphere, most days around January or February are typically winter-like, with low temperatures and snow, while most days around July and August are typically summer-like, with high temperatures, high humidity, and afternoon thunderstorms. A year, then, contains seasonal prototypes. It is on the basis of these prototypes that we conceive of discrete categories.

Transitivity Scale

Similar cognitive processes operate throughout language. The transitivity scale is one of them. As we saw in Unit 26, there are some very transitive verbs. At the other end of the scale, there are some very intransitive verbs. Between these two ends, there are verbs of different degrees of transitivity. They, along with the prototypical ones, form a continuum.

Each language draws a line somewhere to form conceptually discrete categories. Thus in Japanese, stative verbs such as いる *iru* “to need” and 分かる *wakaru* “to understand” are classified as intransitive verbs, while their English counterparts “need” and “understand” are classified as transitive verbs. Various grammatical operations, such as the choice of a particle or the number of noun phrases associated with a verb, are determined on the basis of membership in one of these discrete categories.

Apparent discreteness of the classification should not mislead you into believing that things are either black or white. There is a large gray area near the borderline. Prototypical verbs behave as expected of their class, but near the borderline, things are more fluid. For instance, of the verbs いる *iru* “to need” and 分かる *wakaru* “to understand,” the second is slightly more transitive, so that, depending on the other elements in the environment, it can function as a transitive verb:

あなたのことを分かろうとした。

Anata-no koto-o wakaroo-to shita.

“I tried to understand you.”

In this case, the intention to bring about change makes the verb more transitive.

Nominal Continuum

The nominal continuum (proper nouns, common nouns, attributive nouns, and *na*-nouns) is another case in point. As we saw in Unit 40, the difference between attributive abstract *no*-nouns like 病気の *byooki-no* “sick” and *na*-nouns like 健康な *kenkoo-na* “healthy” is very subtle, and there are borderline nouns that behave as both *na*- and *no*-nouns, as shown below:

いろいろ {な／の} 国

iro-iro-{**na/no**} kuni

“various countries”

独特 {な／の} 性格

dokutoku-{**na/no**} seikaku

“unique character”

～に **-ni** and ～で **-de**

Another example is the choice of the particles ～に *-ni* and ～で *-de* (see Unit 24), which are typically distinguished as in the following:

図書館にいる。

Toshokan-ni iru.

“I am **in the library**.” (placement)

図書館で昼寝する。

Toshokan-de hirune-suru.

“I take a nap **in the library**.” (activity)

A verb such as 止める *tomeru* “to stop,” which borders placement and activity, can appear with either of the two particles, with slightly different meanings:

駅の前にオートバイを止めた。

Eki-no mae-ni ootobai-o tometa.

“I parked the motorcycle **in front of the station**.” (placement)

駅の前でオートバイを止めた。

Eki-no mae-de ootobai-o tometa.

“I stopped the motorcycle **in front of the station**.” (temporary action)

Or, some borderline activity verbs like 生まれる *umareru* “to be born” and 流

行する *ryuukoo-suru* “to go around/to be fashionable,” which normally appear with 〜で *-de*, can appear with 〜に *-ni* when describing historical events from a long time ago. This is because such events lose the vividness of a recent event:

キリストはベツレヘムに生まれた。

Kirisuto-wa **Betsurehemu-ni** umareta.

“Jesus was born **in Bethlehem**.”

18世紀ごろ朝顔作りが江戸の町に流行していた。

Juuhasseiki-goro asagao-zukuri-ga **Edo-no machi-ni** ryuukoo-shite-ita.

“Growing morning glories was popular **in the city of Edo** around the 18th century.”

Checking your comprehension: Can you explain why the verb 分かる *wakaru* “to understand” takes 〜を *-o* in the following sentence?

私の気持ちを分かってください。

Watashi-no **kimochi-o** wakatte-kudasai.

“Please understand **my feelings**.”

For related topics, see also Units 24, 26, 27, and 40.

61

Interpretations of ～て来る／～て行く *-te-kuru/-te-iku*

The expressions ～て来る *-te-kuru* and ～て行く *-te-iku* may seem to have too many and too different meanings to discuss, but what look like unrelated meanings are actually extensions of the verbs' core meaning of "directional movement" along with the meanings of *te*-forms (Unit 50).

Of the many varied meanings of *te*-forms, those of simultaneous interpretation and sequential interpretation play key roles in the interpretation of ～て来る／～て行く *-te-kuru/-te-iku*.

Sequential Interpretation

In the following sentences, the sense of readiness derives from sequential interpretation:

今日はクイズですから、漢字を覚えて来ました。

Kyoo-wa kuizu-desu-kara, kanji-o oboete-kimashita.

"We have a quiz today, so I came having memorized kanji."

明日は、クイズですから、漢字を覚えて行きます。

Ashita-wa kuizu-desu-kara, kanji-o oboete-ikimasu.

"We have a quiz tomorrow, so I will go having memorized kanji."

These can be graphically represented as follows:

覚えて 来る 覚えて 行く
_____ ■ here _____ ■

Simultaneous Interpretation

Simultaneous interpretation is relevant in such cases as the following, in which the *te*-forms are interpreted as manners of coming or going:

花を持って来た。

Hana-o motte-kita.

"I brought flowers."

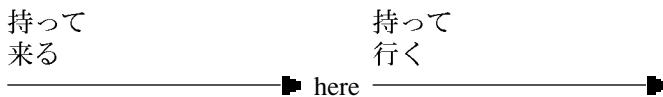
花を持って行った。

Hana-o motte-itta.

"I took flowers."

帽子をかぶって行った。
Booshi-o kabutte-itta.
“I went wearing a hat.”

These can be graphically represented as follows:



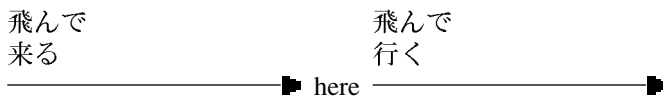
Directional Interpretation

Directional interpretation is a variation of simultaneous interpretation, in which the auxiliary verbs ～来る *-kuru* “to come” and ～行く *-iku* “to go” simply add the sense of direction:

鳥が飛んで来た。
Tori-ga tonde-kita.
“A bird flew over (this way).”

鳥が飛んで行く。
Tori-ga tonde-iku.
“A bird is flying away.”

These can be graphically represented as follows:

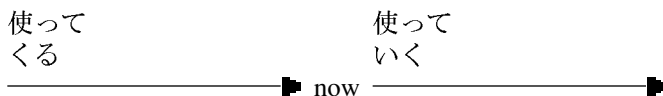


This directional use of ～て来る／～て行く *-te-kuru/-te-iku* is metaphorically extended to include time, as shown below:

日本人は漢字を使ってきた。
Nihon-jin-wa kanji-o tsukatte-kita.
“Japanese people have been using Chinese characters (up to now).”

これからも漢字を使っていくだろう。
Kore-kara-mo kanji-o tsukatte-iku-daroo.
“They will go on using Chinese characters from now on, too.”

These can be graphically represented as follows:



Many native speakers feel that this use of ～てくる／～ていく *-te-kuru/-te-iku* is sufficiently different from the other cases that they do not use the Chinese characters that mean “to come” and “to go,” but write them in hiragana instead.

Perceptual Change

In addition, ～てくる *-te-kuru* has a use which is often translated “to start”:

雨が降ってきた。
Ame-ga futte-kita.
“It started to rain.”

頭が痛くなってきた。
Atama-ga itaku natte-kita.
“I started to have a headache.”

左の方に山が見えてくるでしょう。
Hidari-no hoo-ni yama-ga miete-kuru-deshoo.
“Mountains will come into your view on your left.”

Verbs that can appear in this construction with this particular sense are limited to those that describe events uncontrollable by the speaker or the listener. In other words, the underlying meaning is that “an external event enters the speaker’s or the listener’s perceptual world.”

There is naturally no counterpart in ～ていく *-te-iku* for this usage because a perceptual change is interpreted as approaching someone who experiences it. It can be graphically represented as follows:

降って
くる
—————▶ speaker

Most native speakers do not use the Chinese character meaning “to come” for this case, either.

Checking your comprehension: Translate the following sentences into English:

今まで3年ぐらい日本語を勉強してきた。
Ima-made san-nen-gurai Nihon-go-o benkyoo-shite-kita.

暑くなってきた。
Atsuku natte-kita.

日本で日本語を勉強して来た。
Nihon-de Nihon-go-o benkyoo-shite-kita.

日本語が分かってきた。
Nihon-go-ga wakatte-kita.

月が出て来た。
Tsuki-ga dete-kita.

For related topics, see also Units 50, 52, and 62.

62

Expressing solidarity with ～て来る／～て行く *-te-kuru/-te-iku*

On a school day, a Japanese parent would exhort his/her children with the first of the following sentences rather than the second:

ちゃんと朝御飯食べて行きなさい。

Chanto asagohan tabete-ikinasai.

“Eat breakfast properly (and go).”

ちゃんと朝御飯食べなさい。

Chanto asagohan tabenasai.

“Eat breakfast properly.”

Or, a Japanese teacher would prefer the first of the following two sentences when assigning homework:

宿題は、15ページを読んで来てください。

Shukudai-wa 15-peeji-wo yonde-kite-kudasai.

“As for the assignment, please read page 15 (and come).”

宿題は、15ページを読んでください。

Shukudai-wa 15-peeji-o yonde-kudasai.

“As for the assignment, please read page 15.”

These uses of ～て来る *-te-kuru* and ～て行く *-te-iku* originate in the sequential use of *te*-forms, and they literally mean that someone comes or goes after having done something. Some more examples are:

クラスの前に漢字を覚えて来ました。

Kurasu-no mae-ni kanji-o oboete-kimashita.

“I came [to class] having memorized the kanji before class.”

今晚のパーティには何を作って行きましょうか。

Konban-no paatii-ni-wa nani-o tsukutte-ikimashoo-ka.

“For tonight’s party, what shall we make (and go)?”

頭が痛いんですか。薬を買って来ましょうか。

Atama-ga itai-n-desu-ka. Kusuri-o katte-kimashoo-ka.

“Do you have a headache? Shall I go get some medicine [at the drugstore]?”

These can be graphically represented as follows:

覚えて 来る 作って 行く
 ────────── here ──────────

買って 来る
 ────────── here

Note that the English counterpart of 買って来る *katte-kuru* “to buy and come” is “go get.” English focuses on the beginning of an action; Japanese focuses on the ending of an action.

Group Orientation

These *te*-form constructions mean more than just that a sequence of events happens. They are used so frequently because they have come to express that one person’s action has consequences for other people. The activities preceding the coming or going are considered important to what happens at the destination, hence of interest to the party at the destination.

In this sense, the use of these constructions implies foresight, preparedness, or concern for the common interest of a group. Such constructions are better suited to enhancing the sense of group solidarity than their more detached counterparts without *～て来る* *-te-kuru* and *～て行く* *-te-iku*. They are in tune with the group orientation of much of Japanese society.

To go back to the first examples of this unit, in the case of a parent who admonishes the children, the parent’s interest is in communicating to the children his/her concern about the consequence of not eating breakfast to what happens at school.

In the case of a teacher assigning homework, it is in his/her best interest that the students come to class well prepared, because the quality of their class interactions depends on it. Thus, doing homework is not conceived of as a lone individual’s activity; it is considered an integral part of a group activity. The constructions which incorporate the sense of consequence are best suited for expressing such a situation.

These expressions then are similar in function to the *～てくれる* *-te-kureru* “(someone) does a favor for me” and *～てあげる* *-te-ageru* “(I) do a favor for someone” constructions, which also encode directionality of favorable actions.

Checking your comprehension: How would you ask your friend to go get aspirin for you in Japanese?

For related topics, see also Units 50, 52, and 61.

63

～んだ -n-da expresses expectation of mutual understanding

The so-called extended predicate (～んだ／～んです／のだ／のです -n-da/-n-desu/no-da/no-desu) has “the circumstance” as its implicit subject. Its basic function is communicative; it reinforces mutual understanding about a certain situation:

好きになってしまったんです。

Suki-ni natte-shimatta-**n-desu**.

“**The circumstance** (that I would like you to understand) is that I fell in love with him.” = “**I would like you to understand that** I fell in love with him.”
= “**I am saying that** I fell in love with him.”

好きになってしまったんですか。

Suki-ni natte-shimatta-**n-desu-ka**.

“**Is the circumstance** (that you would like me to understand) **that** you fell in love with him?” = “**Am I right in assuming that** you fell in love with him?”
= “**Are you saying that** you fell in love with him?”

なぜあんな人を好きになってしまったんですか。

Naze anna hito-o suki-ni natte-shimatta-**n-desu-ka**.

“**I want to know** why you fell in love with such a person.”

～んだ -n-da is often described as having varied communicative functions such as explanation, persuasion, building rapport, and accusation, some of which seem even contradictory. All of these derive from the core function of ～んだ -n-da, which is to reinforce communication.

For instance, when one seeks or checks understanding at a stage where one cannot yet assume full understanding, the act is considered courteous or solicitous. In other words, it builds rapport:

すみません。郵便局へ行きたいんですけど、どちらの方でしょうか。

Sumimasen. Yuubinkyoku-e ikitai-**n-desu-kedo**, dochira-no hoo-deshoo-ka.

“Excuse me. (**I would like you to understand**) I want to go to the post office. Can you tell me in which direction it is?”

どうしたんですか。

Doo-shita-**n-desu-ka**.

“(I would like to understand) what happened?”

When communication is questioned or demanded at a stage where one is likely to assume mutual understanding, a sense of insinuation results which implies that the listener is evasive or dense, as in the following:

「本当に分かったんですか。」 「分かったんです！」

Hontoo-ni wakatta-**n-desu**-ka. Wakatta-**n-desu**!

“Did you really understand? (**I am suspicious.**)” “I did! (**Give me a break!**)”

The communicative nature of 〜んだ -*n-da* has another consequence: it is often used to ask or explain about personal situations, as in the following:

きのうは、どうしたんですか。

Kinoo-wa doo-shita-**n-desu**-ka.

“(I am concerned.) What happened yesterday?”

熱があつたんです。

Netsu-ga atta-**n-desu**.

“(I would like you to understand) I had a fever.”

Checking your comprehension: On a sunny afternoon, a man walks out the door with an umbrella. His neighbor asks:

雨が降るんですか。

Ame-ga furu-**n-desu**-ka.

Explain why 〜んだ -*n-da* is used in this context. Also, explain why 〜んだ -*n-da* cannot be used in the following context:

(Touching the rim of a pot)

あ、熱い！

A, atsui!

“Oh, it’s hot!”

For related topics, see also Unit 64.

64

～んだから *-n-da-kara* does not provide personal information.
Do not overuse it!

In Unit 63, we said that ～んだ *-n-da* is frequently used to explain or ask about personal situations. This means that you often hear ～んだ *-n-da* in a passage like the following:

熱があつたんです。だから、きのう休みました。

Netsu-ga atta-**n-desu**. Dakara, kinoo yasumimashita.

“(I would like you to understand that) I had a fever. So I took a day off yesterday.”

Curiously, this particular combination of ～んです *-n-desu* and だから *dakara* cannot be replaced by ～んだから *-n-da-kara*. The following sentence is extremely awkward:

??熱があつたんだから、きのう休みました。

??Netsu-ga atta-**n-da-kara**, kinoo yasumimashita.

However, ～んだから *-n-da-kara* is quite natural on other occasions. Sentences like the following abound:

熱があつたんだから、きのう休んだのは、しかたがありません。

Netsu-ga atta-**n-da-kara**, kinoo yasunda no-wa shikata-ga arimasen.

“Since I had a fever, I could not help taking a day off.”

How do these differ? Here is the answer.

In the unconnected, acceptable type, the speaker first solicits the listener's understanding using ～んだ *-n-da*. He/she then adds a consequence in the form of a separate sentence, assuming that the listener has accepted the validity of the first sentence.

By contrast, when using ～んだから *-n-da-kara*, the speaker short-circuits the interaction by skipping the critical stage of establishing understanding; the circumstance is treated as something which has already been agreed on. The particle ～から *-kara* is a logical conjunction; it adds the sense of inevitable consequence. Sentences with ～んだから *-n-da-kara*, therefore, must have the following structure: a sufficiently compelling circumstance + its inevitable/self-evident/natural consequence. Observe more examples of the acceptable type:

せっかく淡路まで来た**んだから**、浄瑠璃でも見て行きましょう。
Sekkaku Awaji-made kita-**n-da-kara**, jooruri-de-mo mite-ikimashoo.
“We took the trouble of coming to Awaji, so let’s go see the puppet theater or something [a reasonable choice because the island of Awaji is renowned for it].”

もう言ってしまった**んだから**、今さらおそいよ。
Moo itte-shimatta-**n-da-kara**, ima-sara osoi-yo.
“You’ve already said it, so it’s (of course) too late now [to take it back].”

雨が降った**んだから**、地面が濡れていて当然でしょ。
Ame-ga futta-**n-da-kara**, jimen-ga nurete ite toozen-desho.
“It rained, so it is of course natural that the ground is wet.”

In acceptable *n-da-kara*-sentences, the circumstances are often marked as special—and therefore compelling—by expressions such as せっかく *sekkaku* “with considerable trouble,” わざわざ *waza-waza* “especially,” ～さえ *-sae* “even,” and various other emphatic expressions. Alternatively, the outcome parts may emphasize the sense of being inevitable, self-evident, or natural with the use of evaluative expressions like 当然だ *toozen-da* “it is natural,” もちろん *mochiron* “of course,” and 言うまでもない *iu-made-mo nai* “needless to say.”

The unacceptable type of sentence lacks the above semantic structure. Neither are the circumstances special enough, nor are the consequences marked as inevitable. Deleting ～んだ *-n-da* makes the sentences acceptable, as shown below:

熱があった**から**、きのう休みました。
Netsu-ga atta-**kara**, kinoo yasumimashita.
“Because I had a fever, I took a day off yesterday.”

Checking your comprehension: The following sentences appear to be almost identical. Yet, the first one is acceptable while the second one is unacceptable. Explain why:

熱があった**ので**、きのう休んだ。
Netsu-ga atta no-**de**, kinoo yasunda.

??熱があった**のだから**、きのう休んだ。
??Netsu-ga atta no-**da-kara**, kinoo yasunda.

The following sentences are grammatically incomplete; the listeners are supposed to guess the request. How would you complete the sentences? Why does the second one sound rude?

悪いけど、頭が痛いから。

Warui-kedo, atama-ga itai-kara.

“I am sorry, but I have a headache, so . . .”

悪いけど、頭が痛いんだから。

Warui-kedo, atama-ga itai-n-da-kara.

“I am sorry, but I have a headache, so . . .”

For related topics, see also Unit 63.

65

There are ways to identify hidden subjects

As you probably know from your own experience, English speakers often find it difficult to identify the subject of a Japanese sentence. This is not only because a Japanese sentence may lack an explicit subject but also because Japanese verbs are insensitive to such distinctions as person and number, which can be helpful in English in identifying the subject. Japanese verbs do, however, provide different types of information about the identity of the subject.

Personal Expressions

Verbs of desire, feelings, sensations, and thought constrain the range of possible subjects in a systematic way. When they appear in their bare forms in a descriptive context, their subject is generally “I,” as shown below. This is because direct expressions of such personal properties are considered the privilege of those who actually experience them:

食べたい。

Tabetai.

“I want to eat.”

悲しかった。

Kanashikatta.

“I felt sad.”

眠い。

Nemui.

“I am sleepy.”

そう思う。

Soo omou.

“I think so.”

The only other person who can become the subject of these verbs is the second person, “you,” in questions:

食べたい？

Tabetai?

“Do you want to eat?”

悲しかった？

Kanashikatta?

“Did you feel sad?”

眠いですか。
Nemui-desu-ka.
“Are you sleepy?”

そういませんか。
Soo omoimasen-ka.
“Don’t you think so?”

For a third person, these verbs require special devices which make the expressions indirect:

あの子は食べたがっている。
Ano ko-wa tabeta-gatte-iru.
“The child (acts like he) wants to eat.”

あの子は食べたいようだ。
Ano ko-wa tabetai yoo-da.
“The child looks like he wants to eat.”

あの子は食べたいと言っている。
Ano ko-wa tabetai-to itte-iru.
“The child is saying that he wants to eat.”

斉藤さんもそう思っている。
Saitoo-san-mo soo omotte-iru.
“Ms. Saito is also thinking that way.” = “Ms. Saito also thinks so.”

斉藤さんもそう思うと言っている。
Saitoo-san-mo soo omou-to itte-iru.
“Ms. Saito also says that she thinks so.”

This means that when the subjects of such constructions are hidden, as in the following, we can recover them fairly accurately:

食べたがっていますよ。
Tabeta-gatte-imasu-yo.
“She/he wants to eat.”

食べたいと言っている。
Tabetai-to itte-iru.
“She/he is saying that she/he wants to eat.”

そう思うと言っている。
Soo omou-to itte-iru.
“She/he says that she/he thinks so.”

Verbs of Giving and Honorific Expressions

The second type of cue for identifying the subject is directional verbs such as あげる *ageru* “to give (out-bound),” くれる *kureru* “to give (in-bound),” もらう *morau* “to receive,” and their auxiliary counterparts.

The subject of あげる *ageru* and もらう *morau* must be either the speaker or someone close to the speaker.

プレゼントをあげた。
Purezento-o ageta.
“I gave him/her a present.”

プレゼントを買ってあげた。
Purezento-o katte-ageta.
“I bought him/her a present.”

プレゼントをもらった。
Purezento-o moratta.
“I received a present.”

プレゼントを買ってもらった。
Purezento-o katte-moratta.
“I had him/her buy me a present.”

The subject of くれる *kureru* cannot be the speaker.

プレゼントをくれた。
Purezento-o kureta.
“He/she gave me a present.”

プレゼントを買ってくれた。
Purezento-o katte-kureta.
“He/she bought me a present.”

Honorific expressions are also helpful cues for identifying the subject because they point to someone respected:

プレゼントをお買いになった。
Purezento-o okai-ni natta.
“He/she (someone respected) bought a present.”

Contextual Cues

When verbs do not give away the identity of the subject, the alternative is to look for a clue in the context. The hidden subject of a declarative sentence is usually identical to the subject of the previous sentence:

雨宮さんは外科医だ。青森の病院につとめている。

Amamiya-san-wa gekai-da. Aomori-no byooiin-ni tsutomete-iru.

“Ms. Amamiya is a surgeon. *She* is working at a hospital in Aomori.”

If the declarative sentence is the first sentence and there is no explicit subject, the subject is usually “I.”

食べました。

Tabemashita.

“I ate.”

If the sentence is a question, an invitation, or a suggestion, as in the following, the hidden subject is usually “you”:

食べましたか。

Tabemashita-ka.

“Did you eat?”

食べませんか。

Tabemasen-ka.

“Won’t you eat?”

食べたらどうですか。

Tabetara, doo-desu-ka.

“How about if you eat?”

Another type of contextual clue is the subject of the main clause. When the subordinate clause lacks an explicit subject, it is usually the same as the subject of the main clause:

リーさんは、日本に行く前に日本語を勉強した。

Rii-san-wa nihon-ni iku-mae-ni Nihon-go-o benkyoo-shita.

“Mr. Lee studied Japanese before *he* went to Japan.”

Checking your comprehension: What could be the subject that corresponds to the verb in boldface below?

中に入りたい。

Naka-ni **hairitai**.

中に入ったらどうですか。

Naka-ni **haittara** doo-desu-ka.

中に入りたがっていますよ。
Naka-ni **hairita-gatte-imasu**-yo.

中に入ったそうだ。
Naka-ni **haitta** soo-da.

中にお入りになりました。
Naka-ni **ohairi-ni narimashita**.

For related topics, see also Unit 3.

66

Do not be intimidated by apparent complexity

All apparently complex sentences consist of simple sentences, clauses, and phrases. So do not be intimidated when you encounter a long sentence while reading an article or a story. In this unit, we learn how to divide long sentences into manageable chunks of information as quickly as possible. (It is not our objective to come up with a linguistically perfect analysis. Rather, comprehension is our objective, and small technical details are omitted in favor of practical solutions.)

A long Japanese sentence typically breaks down in the following way:

Sentence = idea + idea

Idea = major event + (judgmental element)

Major event = event + event

Event = subject + (direct object) + (supplemental elements) + verb

Subject/direct object = (modifier) + noun

Given a sentence like the following,

神話によると、日本人の祖先は神々によって日本列島と同時に創造されたことになっているが、実際はもちろん列島がはじめに存在し、後に日本民族を形成する人々は、北アジア、東南アジア、太平洋の島々から移住したのに違いない。

Shinwa-ni yoru-to, Nihon-jin-no sosen-wa kamigami-ni yotte Nihon-rettoo-to dooji-ni soozoo-sareta koto-ni natte-iru-ga, jissai-wa mochiron rettoo-ga hajime-ni sonzai-shi, nochi-ni Nihon-minzoku-o keisei-suru hitobito-wa, kita-Ajia, toonan-Ajia, Taiheiyoo-no shimajima-kara ijuu-shita no-ni chigai-nai.

(*shinwa* “myth”; *sosen* “ancestor”; *kamigami* “gods”; *-ni yotte* “by”; *rettoo* “archipelago”; *dooji-ni* “at the same time”; *soozoo-suru* “to create”; *koto-ni natte-iru* “be supposed to”; *jissai* “in fact”; *mochiron* “of course”; *sonzai-suru* “to exist”; *nochi-ni* “later”; *minzoku* “ethnic group”; *keisei-suru* “to form”; *kita-Ajia* “North Asia”; *toonon-Ajia* “Southeast Asia”; *Taiheiyoo* “Pacific”; *shimajima* “islands”; *ijuu-suru* “to migrate”; *no-ni chigai-nai* “there is no doubt”)

the first task is to separate major ideas. Find logical conjunctions, ～から *-kara* “because,” ～けれど *-keredo* “although,” ～が *-ga* “although,” ので *no-de* “because,” and のに *no-ni* “although.” They connect major ideas. This enables us to separate the above sentence into two major ideas:

(1) 神話によると、日本人の祖先は神々によって日本列島と同時に創造された（ことになっている）が、

(1) Shinwa-ni yoru-to, Nihon-jin-no sosen-wa kamigami-ni yotte Nihon-rettoo-to dooji-ni soozoo-sareta (koto-ni natte-iru)-ga,

(2) 実際はもちろん列島がはじめに存在し、後に日本民族を形成する人々は、北アジア、東南アジア、太平洋の島々から移住した（のに違いない）。

(2) jissai-wa mochiron rettoo-ga hajime-ni sonzai-shi, nochi-ni Nihon-minzoku-o keisei-suru hitobito-wa, kita-Ajia, toonan-Ajia, Taiheiyoo-no shimajima-kara ijuu-shita (no-ni chigai-nai).

Note that the last element of each major idea, like the parts in parentheses, typically is a judgmental element; it indicates the speaker's attitude toward the event or how he/she acquired the information.

In order to identify events, locate *te*-forms, stem forms, and the verb immediately before the judgmental element. You will see that (1) consists of a single major event, and (2) of two smaller events, as shown below:

(1) 神話によると、日本人の祖先は神々によって日本列島と同時に**創造された**（ことになっている）が、

(1) Shinwa-ni yoru-to, Nihon-jin-no sosen-wa kamigami-ni yotte Nihon-rettoo-to dooji-ni **soozoo-sareta** (koto-ni natte-iru)-ga,

(2a) 実際はもちろん列島がはじめに**存在し**、(2b) 後に日本民族を形成する人々は、北アジア、東南アジア、太平洋の島々から**移住した**（のに違いない）。

(2a) jissai-wa mochiron rettoo-ga hajime-ni **sonzai-shi**, (2b) nochi-ni Nihon-minzoku-o keisei-suru hitobito-wa, kita-Ajia, toonan-Ajia, Taiheiyoo-no shimajima-kara **ijuu-shita** (no-ni chigai-nai).

Boldface verbs mark the end of each event. These are main verbs. You can now identify the subject corresponding to each main verb. Find either the farthest noun phrase marked by ～は *-wa* or ～も *-mo* or the closest noun phrase marked by ～が *-ga* which is not associated with an intervening verb. The subjects and the main verbs of (1), (2a), and (2b) are marked by boldface below:

(1) 神話によると、日本人の祖先は神々によって日本列島と同時に創造された（ことになっている）が、

(1) Shinwa-ni yoru-to, **Nihon-jin-no sosen-wa** kamigami-ni yotte Nihon-rettoo-to dooji-ni **soozoo-sareta** (koto-ni natte-iru-ga),

(2a) 実際はもちろん列島がはじめに存在し、(2b) 後に日本民族を形成する人々は、北アジア、東南アジア、太平洋の島々から移住した（のに違いない）。

(2a) jissai-wa mochiron **rettoo-ga** hajime-ni **sonzai-shi**, (2b) **nochi-ni Nihon-minzoku-o keisei-suru hitobito-wa**, kita-Ajia, toonan-Ajia, Taiheiyo-no shimajima-kara **ijuu-shita** (no-ni chigai-nai).

If you cannot find a noun phrase with ～は *-wa*, ～も *-mo*, or ～が *-ga*, identify the subject from the context in the manner explained in Unit 65.

Now you can interpret each event by first connecting the subject and the main verb (in boldface above) and next incorporating the rest of information:

(1) The ancestors of Japanese people were created at the same time as the Japanese archipelago by gods, according to myth.

(2a) The archipelago existed first in fact.

(2b) The people who would later form the Japanese ethnic group migrated from North Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands.

One final adjustment to make: incorporate the judgmental elements, connect (1), (2a), and (2b), and adjust the sentences if necessary. Now you have:

According to myth, the ancestors of the Japanese people are supposed to have been created by gods at the same time as the archipelago of Japan, but in fact there is no doubt that the archipelago existed first and that the people who would later form the Japanese ethnic group migrated from North Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands.

Final Note

The reading method in this unit takes advantage of the fact that Japanese and English are almost mirror images of each other. In translating Japanese sentences into English, this method is the simplest. Also, at an early stage of your study, you will find this method easier than the alternative, the forward or read-down method, which requires a solid understanding of the functions of particles and a lot of parallel processing. Obviously, however, when you are listening, this

method does not work. Nor is it the best method when you want to get the information without translating. We hope that you will eventually develop skills to perceive each part of a sentence as it comes to you and will transfer to the Japanese way of language processing. Exposure is the surest way to guarantee this transfer. Keep on studying. With perseverance, you will not only succeed in making sense of Japanese grammar, but come to feel at home within the Japanese language itself.

Checking your comprehension: Apply the method to read the following sentence:

この本を読む前は日本語の文法はむずかしいと思っていたけど、この本を読んであまりむずかしくないことが分かった。

Kono hon-o yomu mae-wa Nihon-go-no bunpoo-wa muzukashii-to omotte ita-kedo, kono hon-o yonde amari muzukashikunai koto-ga wakatta.

Answers to the Questions

Unit 3

The following is the translation. The subjects are given in boldface.

(1) **I/we** watched an *anime* (Japanese animated film) yesterday. (2) **It** was very interesting.

Unit 4

You can answer the question by repeating the last part (minus ～か -ka):

参加します。
Sanka-shimasu.

You have just confirmed that you are going to participate in an anti-war demonstration in Washington, DC.

Unit 5

The sentences are respectively of type 1 (verb), type 2 (adjective + copula), type 1 (verb), and type 3 (noun + copula).

Unit 6

The team captain is a junior.
She is a team captain and (is) a junior.
It is an interesting idea and is easy to understand.

Unit 7

If you came up with either of the following, you got the point.

先生、先生の本は、どちらですか。
Sensei, sensei-no hon-wa dochira-desu-ka.

先生、どちらが先生の本ですか。
Sensei, dochira-ga sensei-no hon-desu-ka.

Unit 8

違います、違います、違いました、違いませんでした
chigaimasu, chigaimasen, chigaimashita, chigaimasen-deshita

変わらないです *tigawanai-desu* and 変わなかったです *tigawanakatta-desu* are also acceptable.

同じです、同じ{じゃないです／じゃありません}、同じでした、同じ{じゃなかったです／じゃありませんでした}
onaji-desu, onaji-{ja-nai-desu/ja-arimasen}, onaji-deshita, onaji-{ja-nakatta-desu/ja-arimasen-deshita}

Unit 9

Only 正しい *tadashii* “correct” can be (and indeed is) an adjective, because it has *-ii* at the end. The other forms are definitely not adjectives, because they do not have *-ii*, *-ai*, *-oi*, or *-ui* at the end.

Incidentally, one extra clue in telling the class identity of a form is whether it is written totally in kanji or not. Adjectives have at least the last *い* written in hiragana. If everything is written in kanji, you can be sure that a word is a noun.

Unit 10

ゆうがい *yuugai* “harmful” is a noun because the negative sentence follows the pattern for a noun.

Unit 11

You could answer the questions as follows:

先生が昨日教室で学生から変な話を聞いたんです。

Sensei-ga kinoo kyooshitsu-de gakusei-kara hen-na hanashi-o kiita-n-desu.

“The teacher heard a strange story from the students in class yesterday.”

明日のマラソンは病院の前からスタートする予定だと言っていました。

Ashita-no marason-wa byooiin-no mae-kara sutaato-suru yotei-da-to itte-imashita.

“They were saying that tomorrow’s marathon is planned to start in front of the hospital.”

Unit 13

右に曲がると、公園が見えます。

Migi-ni magaru-to, kooen-ga miemasu.

Unit 14

テストは明日ですね。

Tesuto-wa ashita-desu-ne.

You can also say:

テストは明日でしたね。
Tesuto-wa ashita-deshita-ne.

To understand why this past tense option is allowed, see Unit 49.

Unit 15

Here are five other variations:

私は朝日新聞をインターネットで読みます。
Watashi-wa Asahi-shinbun-o intaanetto-de yomimasu.

インターネットで私は朝日新聞を読みます。
Intaanetto-de watashi-wa Asahi-shinbun-o yomimasu.

インターネットで朝日新聞を私は読みます。
Intaanetto-de Asahi-shinbun-o watashi-wa yomimasu.

朝日新聞を私はインターネットで読みます。
Asahi-shinbun-o watashi-wa intaanetto-de yomimasu.

朝日新聞をインターネットで私は読みます。
Asahi-shinbun-o intaanetto-de watashi-wa yomimasu.

Unit 17

Since 織田さん *Oda-san* “Mr. Oda” is introduced as an addition to the list of people who went to Canada, the preceding sentence must have referred to someone else who went to Canada, as in the following:

明智さんはカナダへ行きました。
Akechi-san-wa Kanada-e ikimashita.
“Mr. Akechi went to Canada.”

Unit 18

“Mr. Suzuki, Ms. Tanaka, and Mr. Nakada are all married.”

This is definitely not a case of group marriage involving three people!

Unit 19

誰が (= subject) 今日林さんを (= direct object) 見ましたか。
Dare-ga (= subject) kyoo Hayashi-san-o (= direct object) mimashita-ka.
“Who (= subject) saw Ms. Hayashi (= direct object) today?”

今日林さんを (= direct object) 見ましたか。
Kyoo Hayashi-san-o (= direct object) mimashita-ka.
“Did you (= subject) see Ms. Hayashi (= direct object) today?”

先生が (= subject) 学生を (= direct object) 招待しました。
Sensei-ga (= subject) gakusei-o (= direct object) shootai-shimashita.
“The teachers (= subject) invited the students (= direct object).”

If you translated this last one with 先生は *sensei-wa*, you are not wrong. Read Unit 20 to understand the difference.

Unit 20

「あれは何ですか。」 「（あれは）法隆寺です。」
Are-wa nan-desu-ka. (Are-wa) Hooryuuj-i-desu.
“What is that?” “That is Horyuji Temple.”

あれ *are* in this exchange is the topic of the conversation, as is clear from the use of the particle ～は *-wa*. The second speaker would use あれ *are* to make certain that there is no misunderstanding about the topic. When she is sure that there is no misunderstanding, she can safely omit it.

「どれがいいですか。」 「あれがいいです。」
Dore-ga ii-desu-ka. Are-ga ii-desu.
“Which one is good?” “That one is good.”

In this exchange, on the other hand, the first speaker is asking the second speaker to select one item from a number of candidates, and あれ *are* provides the answer, so it cannot be dropped.

Unit 21

これは誰が使いますか。
Kore-wa dare-ga tsukaimasu-ka.
“Who will use this?”

日本人はどんな本を読みますか。
Nihon-jin-wa donna hon-o yomimasu-ka.
“What type of books do Japanese people read?”

どれが一番安いですか。
Dore-ga ichiban yasui-desu-ka.
“Which one is the cheapest?”

Unit 22

日本の新聞を研究しました。
Nihon-no shinbun-o kenkyuu-shimashita.

日本の新聞の研究をしました。
Nihon-no shinbun-no kenkyuu-o shimashita.

Unit 23

A more bookish counterpart is:

これを、使いましたか。

Kore-o, tsukaimashita-ka.

“Did you use this?”

In speech, however, the direct object marker ～を *-o* is more likely to be omitted after *これ kore*, as in the exercise.

Unit 24

今日の歴史のクラスは図書館の四階であります。

Kyoo-no rekishi-no kurasu-wa toshokan-no yon-kai-**de** arimasu.

日本語のクラスの教室は図書館の二階にあります。

Nihon-go-no kurasu-no kyooshitsu-wa toshokan-no ni-kai-**ni** arimasu.

日本でどこに行きましたか。

Nihon-**de** doko-**ni** ikimashita-ka.

Unit 25

Of the sentences,

ハワイに十日いました。

Hawai-ni **took**a imashita.

ハワイに十日にいました。

Hawai-ni **took**a-**ni** imashita.

the first means that someone was in Hawai'i for ten days, while the second means that she/he was in Hawai'i on the tenth.

Between the two options,

明日までに100ページを読んでください。

Ashita-made-ni **hyaku-peeji-o** yonde-kudasai.

明日までに100ページ読んでください。

Ashita-made-ni **hyaku-peeji** yonde-kudasai.

you would probably want your teacher to give the first assignment, because it requires you to read only one page (page 100). If your teacher said the second, you would have to read 100 pages.

Unit 26

Because 飲みたい *nomitai* “want to drink” consists of the transitive verb 飲む *nomu* “drink” and the intransitive auxiliary verb ～たい *-tai* “want to,” it has the characteristics of both a transitive and an intransitive verb. See also Unit 27.

Unit 27

Because 置く *oku* “to place” is a transitive verb, 小説を *shoosetsu-o* is allowed; because ～てある *-te-aru* creates the intransitive expression 置いてある *oite-aru*, 小説が *shoosetsu-ga* is allowed; because 小説が置いてある *shoosetsu-ga oite-aru* modifies a noun, 小説の *shoosetsu-no* is also allowed.

Likewise, because 食べる *taberu* “to eat” is a transitive verb, キムチを *kimuchi-o* is a grammatical option; the auxiliary verb ～たい *-tai* optionally converts キムチを *kimuchi-o* to キムチが *kimuchi-ga*, which in turn can be converted to キムチの *kimuchi-no* because it can be interpreted as modifying the noun phrase 食べたい人 *tabetai hito* “the person who wants to eat.”

Unit 28

The expressions with ～に *-ni* present the winner and the loser as worthy competitors. The expression with ～を *-o* presents the winner as the dominating and the loser as the dominated.

Unit 29

～合う *-au* makes the interaction a reciprocal one.

Unit 30

God is supposed to have full control over rain when it rains; a mortal like Yuji is not. Hence the contrast.

友だちに一緒に行ってもらいたい。

Tomodachi-**ni** issho-ni itte-moraitai.

“I would like my friend to go with me.”

友だちに一緒に行ってほしい。

Tomodachi-**ni** issho-ni itte-hoshii.

“I would like my friend to go with me.”

In the case of sentences containing ～もらいたい *-moraitai* “would like” or ～ほしい *-hoshii* “want,” the non-subject participants have more control over the events than the subjects who are merely desirous of favorable outcomes; therefore, the particle ～に *-ni* rather than ～を *-o* must be used.

Unit 31

The use of あきらかに *Akira-ni* “to Akira” requires a transfer of an object to Akira. 勉強を見る *benkyoo-o miru* “to help with someone’s homework” does not involve such an event. Therefore, there is a clash.

Unit 32

Either ～に *-ni* or ～を *-o* is possible for the first; only ～に *-ni* is allowed for the second:

なおみ {に／を} 家に帰らせた。

Naomi-**{ni/o}** uchi-ni kaeraseta.

なおみに本を買わせた。

Naomi-**ni** hon-o kawaseta.

You are unlikely to need the sentence,

子ども達を食べさせた。

Kodomo-tachi-o tabesaseta.

unless you enjoy shocking people or narrating grim fairy tales, because it means “I fed the children (to something or someone).”

Unit 33

書いてください *kaite-kudasai* “please write,” 言ってください *itte-kudasai* “please say,” etc.

勉強してください *benkyoo-shite-kudasai* “please study,” 読んでください *yonde-kudasai* “please read,” etc.

書いてください *kaite-kudasai* “please write,” 話してください *hanashite-kudasai* “please speak,” etc.

してください *shite-kudasai* “please do,” 出してください *dashite-kudasai* “please submit,” etc.

Unit 34

the name of the feline protagonist in a novel by Soseki

What was the name of the feline protagonist in a novel by Soseki?

Unit 35

It means “my Japanese friend’s new English teacher.” You might use it in sentences like the following:

日本人の友だちの新しい英語の先生に会いました。
Nihon-jin-no tomodachi-no atarashii Eigo-no sensei-ni aimashita.
“I met my Japanese friend’s new English teacher.”

日本人の友だちの新しい英語の先生はおもしろいです。
Nihon-jin-no tomodachi-no atarashii Eigo-no sensei-wa omoshiroi-desu.
“My Japanese friend’s new English teacher is funny.”

Unit 36

The head nouns are 名前 *namae* “name” and 駅 *eki* “station,” respectively; so they are a kind of name and a kind of station; they mean “the name of the university’s English professor” and “the big (and) new station in the next town” respectively.

The Japanese counterpart of “psychology professors at my friend’s university” is (私の)友だちの大学の心理学の教授(達) (*watashi-no tomodachi-no daigaku-no shinrigaku-no kyooju(-tachi)*)

Unit 37

The first landmark that you would indicate as you zoom in would be “the second floor.” You would then be leading the customer through the back area, the glass door, and beyond. Therefore, you could describe the location of the bathroom as follows:

二階の奥のガラスのドアのむこう
nikai-no oku-no garasu-no doa-no mukoo

or

二階の後ろの方のガラスのドアのむこう
nikai-no ushiro-no hoo-no garasu-no doa-no mukoo

Unit 38

The first expression means either “the physician’s friend” or “a friend who is a physician.”

The expression 私の大学 *watashi-no daigaku* can have only the meaning “my university” because there is no such thing as “a university which is me.”

The expression 友だちのロシア人 *tomodachi-no Roshia-jin*, on the other hand, can only mean “a Russian who is a friend” because “Russian” is not a relational term unlike “father,” “child,” or “teacher,” and it is strange to conceive of “a friend’s Russian” as something along the line of “a friend’s father,” “a friend’s child,” or “a friend’s teacher.”

Unit 39

I cooked spinach and potatoes.

The violinist and the chess player sat across the table.

British merchants and manufacturers used state power in their interests.

Unit 40

The contrast is similar to the contrast between 病気の *byooki-no* and 健康な *kenkoo-na*. We want to conceive of 戦争 *sensoo* “war” as a more limited state than 平和 *heiwa* “peace.” We also characterize 戦争 *sensoo* with destructive events, while 平和 *heiwa* is characterized only as a state lacking such events. Thus 戦争 *sensoo* is “non-fuzzy” compared to “fuzzy” 平和 *heiwa*.

Unit 41

Which is the photo Akira showed Naomi?

Unit 42

あきらが写真を見せた人

Akira-ga shashin-o miseta hito

なおみに写真を見せた人

Naomi-ni shashin-o miseta hito

Unit 43

the place to wait for a taxi

the person whom I called/the person who made a phone call

the person whose name I forgot/the person who forgot the name

Unit 44

my brother, who is a first-year student at a university in Obihiro

a friend whose father is a university professor in Kenya

Unit 45

a dog whose ears are big

a child whose hands are small

Unit 46

Akira forgot to tell the truth to Naomi.

It is better to refrain from telling Naomi the truth.

Unit 47

大学院に行くことにした。

Daigakuin-ni iku koto-ni shita.

誰かが家の前に立っているのが見える。

Dareka-ga ie-no mae-ni tatte-iru no-ga mieru.

ポール・ローブソンについて読んだことがありますか。
Pooru Roobuson-ni tsuite yonda koto-ga arimasu-ka.

Unit 48

明日何をしますか。
Ashita nani-o shimasu-ka.

The first of the two Japanese sentences corresponds to “I will be studying in the library tomorrow afternoon.” The use of the progressive construction emphasizes that the speaker will be in the library for an extended period of time. This, therefore, might be followed by an invitation for the listener to join the speaker while she is there, as in the following:

明日の午後図書館で勉強しています。来ませんか。
Ashita-no gogo toshokan-de benkyoo-shite-imasu. Kimasen-ka.
“I will be studying in the library tomorrow afternoon. Won’t you come (to the place where I am studying)?”

The second, on the other hand, means “I am going to study in the library tomorrow afternoon.” The speaker does not focus on the duration; instead, she emphasizes that an event will take place. This sentence, therefore, is difficult to follow up with a sentence like the one above. It is better followed by an invitation to come with the speaker when she goes, as in the following:

明日の午後図書館で勉強します。一緒に行きませんか。
Ashita-no gogo toshokan-de benkyoo-shimasu. Issho-ni ikimasen-ka.
“I am going to study in the library tomorrow afternoon. Won’t you come with me?”

Unit 49

You would thank the instructor with the following first:

ありがとうございます。
Arigatoo gozaimasu.

The instructor’s question means “(You said that) it is due the day after tomorrow, right?”

When the selection process is over, you would thank him/her in the following way:

ありがとうございました。
Arigatoo gozaimashita.

Unit 50

The train was delayed because of snow this morning.

Mr./Ms. Kim checked the meaning of a Chinese character using the dictionary.

Unit 51

The first sentence gives the impression that the speaker is a detached observer.

The second gives the impression that the speaker is right there experiencing the fear of the ceiling collapsing.

Unit 52

I finished eating (surprisingly).

Unit 53

the main clause perspective

the speaker's perspective

the main clause perspective

Unit 54

本を読む前によく考えた。

Hon-o yomu mae-ni yoku kangaeta.

本を読んだ後でよく考える。

Hon-o yonda ato-de yoku kangaeru.

Unit 55

The subordinate clause contains an expression of recollection, その当時 *sono tooji* "at the time." Therefore, the speaker's perspective is adopted.

Unit 56

はい／ええ、ないです。

Hai/ee, nai-desu.

"Right; we have no [bananas]."

はい／ええ、来ません。

Hai/ee, kimasen.

"Right; it won't come."

はい／ええ、もちろん。

Hai/ee, mochiron.

"Yes, of course."

Unit 57

For the first and the second "that," use あれ *are*, because both A and B are talking about the play they saw together.

For the third “that,” use *それ sore*, because A has just mentioned the play, or *あれ are*, because B has seen it and knows that A also knows about it.

For the fourth “that,” use *それ sore*, because A has just mentioned it, and B does not know what it is about.

Unit 58

これ kore may be used to indicate a person in a picture or in a photograph. When introducing someone who is present, however, a less direct—and hence more polite—word like *こちら kochira* must be used. Therefore, use the second sentence when introducing someone, and the first sentence for pointing at a person in a picture.

Unit 59

Polite forms when you give a report in class; direct forms when you take notes in class.

Unit 60

Just as in the case of *あなたのことを分かろうとした anata-no koto-o wakaroo-to shita*, the added meaning of volitional control makes the verb more transitive.

Unit 61

I have been studying Japanese for about three years up to this point.

It has become hot.

I studied Japanese in Japan (before coming here).

I have started to understand Japanese.

The moon has come out.

Unit 62

アスピリン(を)買って来てくれない？

Asupirin(-o) katte-kite-kurenai?

Unit 63

His neighbor would have looked at him inquisitively. He is therefore trying to communicate to the neighbor that his apparently erratic behavior has a good reason.

The statement that the pot is hot is made at the time of discovery and cannot be an explanation for a previous or preexisting condition. So, *熱いんだ atsui-n-da* is odd in this context. It would be all right when offered as an explanation for your having stopped short of holding an apparently harmless pot. In that case, it might be rendered as, “It is hot, you see.”

Unit 64

The speaker's intention in such a case is to provide a reason for her absence, not to argue that it was an unavoidable consequence. To do the latter, one needs to say something like the following:

熱があったのだから、きのう休んだのは当然ですよ。

Netsu-ga atta-n-da-kara, kinoo yasunda no-wa toozen-desu-yo.

"It's natural that I took yesterday off, because I had a fever."

The first of the second pair could be used as a request to turn down the volume of the TV. You could complete the sentence in the following way:

悪いけど、頭が痛いから、テレビの音を小さくして。

Warui-kedo, atama-ga itai-kara, terebi-no oto-o chiisaku-shite.

"I am sorry, but I have a headache, so please turn down the volume of the TV."

The second option, on the other hand, indicates that the outcome is self-explanatory and therefore implies that the listener is not sensitive.

Unit 65

speaker (**I** want to go inside.)

listener (How about if **you** come inside?)

third party (**She** wants to go inside.)

third party (I heard **she** went in.)

respected person (**She** went in.)

Unit 66

Before reading this book I had thought that Japanese grammar was difficult, but (from) reading this book, I (have) realized that it is not really difficult.

Glossary

adverb — A form that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb.

affective passive — A type of passive sentence in which the subject is emotionally or adversely affected by the action of another party.

agent — A person (or an animal) who performs an act or brings about change.

auxiliary verb — A verb that adds a supplementary meaning to the meaning supplied by a main verb, for example, *can*, *may*, and *will* in English.

causative — A linguistic pattern which indicates that the subject causes an act to be performed or a condition to be brought about.

clause — A sentence that is part of a larger sentence.

conjugate — To change the form of a verb or a verb-like unit in order to add the meaning of tense, negation, etc.

contrastive use of -wa — A use of the topic particle to single out certain members of a contextual set, implying that the statement does not hold with the other members.

copula — A linking, verb-like form.

declarative sentence — A sentence in the form of a statement.

demonstrative — A class of words that are used to point out a person or a thing, such as *this*, *that*, *here*, and *there*.

direct object — The party that is directly affected by the action of a verb within a sentence.

double-*o* constraint — The grammatical constraint that only one direct object particle may appear with one verb.

head noun — The core of a noun phrase. The head noun of the noun phrase *a rainy day* for instance, is *day*.

indirect object — The party that is indirectly affected by the action of a verb within a sentence. It is usually the party that receives a thing, as *me* in *give me some money*.

intransitive verb — A verb that typically describes a stable condition in which no change takes place, or an event in which one party acts or undergoes a change on its own.

left-headedness — The condition in which a core item appears at the beginning of a unit. English is left-headed.

main clause — The clause that is central to a sentence.

na-noun — A sub-category of noun, also known as *na*-adjective, nominal adjective, or adjectival noun, which shows up with *-na* instead of *-no* when modifying a noun.

noun phrase — A noun or a noun with a modifier.

number — The indication of the singularity or plurality of a linguistic form.

particle — A linguistic form that marks the function of an element to which it is attached.

passive sentence — A sentence whose subject receives the action denoted by the verb. *The picture was painted by Van Gogh* is the passive counterpart of the active sentence *Van Gogh painted the picture*.

person — The distinction between the speaker (first person), the individual addressed (second person), and the individual or thing spoken of (third person).

postposition — A linguistic form that marks the function of an element immediately before. Japanese particles are postpositions.

preposition — A linguistic form that marks the function of an element immediately after, such as *to*, *from*, *in*, and *at* in English.

pronoun — A class of words used as substitutes for nouns or noun phrases, such as *he*, *she*, and *it* in English.

right-headedness — The condition in which a core item appears at the end of a unit. Japanese is right-headed.

semantic — Of or relating to meaning.

SOV — A shorthand way to refer to the typical word order of a Japanese sentence. S stands for subject, O for direct object, and V for verb.

stative verb — A verb expressing existence or a condition, such as *exist* and *need*.

stem form — A tenseless form of a verb, such as *tabe*- “to eat” and *iki*- “to go,” used before *-masu*, *-tai*, and a number of other constructions.

subject — A noun or noun phrase corresponding to an agent which acts or moves, or the item the sentence is about (in the case of a sentence describing a condition).

subordinate clause — A clause that is secondary to the main clause of a sentence and that cannot stand alone.

SVO — A shorthand way to refer to the typical word order of an English sentence. S stands for subject, V for verb, and O for object.

***te*-form** — A form of a verb containing *-te* or *-de*, used to continue a sentence.

tense — The indication of the time, such as past, present, or future.

transitive verb — A verb that typically describes an event in which one party affects another party.

verbal noun — A noun which has the meaning of a verb, such as *benkyoo* “study” and *ryokoo* “travel.”

WH-phrase — A linguistic form or phrase, such as *who*, *what*, *which*, *where*, *when*, *how*, *which floor*, and *how many*.

WH-question — A question containing a WH-phrase.

Index

- a*-series, 149-151
active participant, 66-69, 73. *See also*
 agent
adjectival noun. *See na*-noun
adjective, 9-10, 15, 16, 87, 107
affective passive, 73, 74
agent, 40, 61, 67, 76
ageru, 78, 172
-ageru, 72, 76-77, 164
ano, 149-150
are, 149-151
asoko, 151
auxiliary verb, 73-74, 76-77, 88,
 131-132
- causative, 73-74, 76, 79
clause-final particle, 26
complex noun phrase, 99-110
copula, 9
- daroo*. *See -deshoo*
-de (copula), 11, 95. *See also* copula
-de (phrase particle), 25, 50, 53, 54-
 55, 80, 157-158
declarative sentence, 3, 4, 19
demonstrative, 149-151
-deshoo, 125, 154
direct form, 153-155. *See also* direct-
 style sentence; direct-style verb
direct object, 3-4, 5, 40-44, 48-52, 66-
 67, 81, 88, 99, 103, 175. *See*
 also -o
direct-style sentence, 105, 107. *See*
 also direct form; direct-style verb
direct-style verb, 100. *See also* direct
 form; direct-style sentence
- double-*o* constraint, 48-49, 79
-e, 25, 51, 80
ee, 145-147
event, 3-4, 99, 109, 111-113, 121-
 142, 175, 176, 177
expression of quantity, 57-58
- ga* (clause-final particle), 23, 25, 26,
 175-176
-ga (phrase particle), 25, 31, 32, 40-
 44, 47, 50-51, 60-63, 64-65, 106,
 176. *See also* subject
-garu, 171
- hai*, 145-147
-hajimeru, 131, 132
head noun, 23, 24, 88-89, 92-93, 99,
 101, 107-108
honorific expression, 172
-hoshii, 76, 108
- iie*, 145-147
intransitive verb, 40-41. *See also*
 transitivity scale
- ka*, 8, 19-21, 23, 25
-ka-mo-shirenai, 154
-kara (clause particle), 22, 25, 26-27,
 129, 167-168, 175
-kara (phrase particle), 25, 28, 50, 51,
 57, 59, 69, 80, 81
-kedo, 22, 23, 24, 25, 129. *See also*
 -keredo
-keredo, 175. *See also -kedo*
kono, 149

- kore*, 149
ko-series, 149
koto, 111-113, 137
kureru, 78, 172
-kureru, 76-77, 131, 164, 172
- left-headedness, 24, 88-89
- made*, 25, 50, 57, 59, 80, 81, 139
-made-ni, 25
main clause, 25, 26-27, 173
main clause perspective, 134, 137-139
mama, 126
-mashoo, 125
-mo, 25, 36-37, 38-39, 50-51, 57, 176-177
modifier, 88-89, 92, 100, 103, 107-108, 175
morau, 172
-morau, 73, 74, 76, 172
- na*, 25, 96-97, 110, 157. *See also na-noun*,
na-adjective. *See na-noun*
na-noun, 15, 96-97, 106, 110, 157
-n-da, 165-166
-n-da-kara, 167-168
-ne, 25, 26
-ni, 53-54, 57, 58, 66-68, 71-72, 73-74, 76-78, 79, 80, 81, 157-158
-nikui, 108, 126
no, 109-110, 111-112, 113, 137, 138
-no, 23, 25, 51, 85-86, 87, 88, 90-93, 96-98, 105, 106, 157
no-de, 138, 142, 175
nominal adjective. *See na-noun*
nominal continuum, 157
no-ni, 22, 175
non-past tense, 117-118. *See also tense*
noun, 9, 11, 15, 17-18
noun phrase, 20, 23, 27-28, 85-113
-o, 25, 31, 40-44, 48-52, 64-65, 66-67, 73-74, 79, 100, 101, 156-157. *See also direct object*
-owaru, 132
- particle, 19-21, 23-28, 31-82, 85-86, 90-98
particle alternation, 64-65, 157-158
past tense, 117, 119-120. *See also tense*
perspective. *See main clause perspective*; speaker's perspective
phrase particle, 31-82, 85-98
polite expression, 13-14, 152. *See also polite form*
polite form, 153, 154-155
postposition. *See particle*
postpositional, 24, 27. *See also particle*
preposition, 23, 27, 50, 59
prepositional, 24, 27. *See also preposition*
present tense. *See non-past tense*
pronoun, 13-14
prototype, 62, 156
- reba*, 22, 126
reciprocal participant, 71-72
right-headedness, 24, 88-89, 99
- scale, 61-63, 96, 156-158
sentence-final particle, 25-26
sono, 149-150
-soo-da (intuitive judgment), 127
-soo-da (unverified information), 154
sore, 149-150
so-series, 149-151
SOV (Subject-Object-Verb), 5
spatial expression, 90-91
speaker's perspective, 133-134, 135, 140-142
stem form, 125, 130, 131-132

subject, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 31, 40-45,
 50, 72, 73, 74, 76, 81, 165, 170-
 173. See also *-ga* (phrase particle)
 subordinate clause, 26-27. *See also*
 main clause perspective; speaker's
 perspective
 SVO (Subject-Verb-Object), 5

-ta-garu. See *-garu*
-tai, 107, 170
tame-ni, 125, 137
-tara, 126-127, 173
te-form, 121-122, 124, 125, 126,
 130-132
-te-ageru. See *-ageru*
-te-hoshii. See *-hoshii*
-te-iku, 159-164
-te-kureru. See *-kureru*
-te-kuru, 131, 132, 159-164
-te-miru, 131, 132
-te-morau. See *-morau*
-te-oku, 131
-te-shimau, 131
 tense, 7, 16, 19, 117-142

-to (clause-final particle), 25
-to (phrase particle), 25, 71-72, 94-95
 topic. See *-wa*
 transitive verb, 40-41. *See also*
 transitivity scale
 transitivity scale, 61-63, 156-157. *See*
 also intransitive verb; transitive
 verb
-tsuzukeru, 131

verb, 5, 9-10. *See also* direct form;
 polite form
 verbal noun, 48-49

-wa, 25, 31, 33-35, 38, 43-45, 46-47,
 176-177
 WH-phrase, 19-21, 35, 46-47,
 103-104
 WH-question, 19-21, 46-47

yes-no question, 19, 34-35
-yo, 25-26
-yoo-da, 127, 154, 171

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