UNDERSTANDING SPEAKERS’ VIEWS: A COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC APPROACH TO LEARNING EVIDENTIALS

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1. INTRODUCTION

Expressing and understanding speakers’ stance is an integral part of communication. In the Japanese language, speakers’ inference based on evidence, or evidential concepts, are expressed through various predicative endings, -mitaida, -yooda, -rashii and -sooda, which are translated in English as ‘seem’, ‘look like’ and ‘appear.’ While we essentially share the same pedagogical goal of developing learners’ communication skills as is currently available in instruction textbooks, they often do not specify what sorts of information are included in markers of grammatical concepts such as these evidential markers. In this study, we propose a conceptual schema consisting of EVIDENCE, KNOWLEDGE and JUDGMENT to understand motivations behind the usage of these markers, which has been argued to be rooted in human cognition, as stipulated in Cognitive Linguistics. It is thus suggested that attaining knowledge about these concepts is bound to be beneficial for the effective teaching of grammatical concepts, such as evidentials, which are typically context-sensitive. The idea underlying this paper correlates with the idea of ‘explicit instruction’ in foreign language pedagogy, which has been demonstrated in studies of different disciplines, such as Boers et al. (2010), whose mission is directed towards the application of cognitive-linguistic methods, Ellis (2002), whose focus is on ‘consciousness-raising’ in second language acquisition, and Borg (1996), whose approach represents the view of another direction of language pedagogy called ‘language awareness,’ to name just a few.

In the field of linguistics, Aikhenvald states that evidential markers are considered to signal “the source of information” (2004:1), which suggests that evidential markers serve to show how, or in what manner, the intended information is transferred based on a piece of evidence from the speaker to the hearer, and we normally obtain such information through our five senses, sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste. The evidential markers in question are often taken up in Japanese textbooks as the tools to express a speaker’s commitment to the sort of evidence (e.g. ‘x is lying’) upon which the speaker infers further messages (e.g. ‘x is tired/feeble’). It is worth mentioning here that it is a fact across languages that evidential markers often go beyond the role as a source of information, carrying, in effect, epistemic meanings or extensions (most recently see Hennemann 2012) which relies on our experiential knowledge. To borrow Aikhenvald’s words, they gain additional extensions, such as “the probability of event or the reliability of information” (2004: 2). Applying these ideas to the case in question, evidential markers in Japanese are not merely evidentials, but are closely linked to the sort of epistemic meaning rooted in our experience. The aforementioned schema incorporates the component of epistemicity, and it is essential in order to elaborate on this schema and to deepen our understanding of the concept of evidentials. There are two vital reasons for this. One reason is that the ways explanations are provided in currently available instruction textbooks need, as viewed from a conceptual perspective, to be reconsidered.
to varying degrees. Another reason is that evidential markers have not been researched actively for the purpose of Japanese pedagogy in comparison to topics such as discourse markers or modality markers. An exception might be Huang (2003), who has employed an approach that is close to traditional grammatical description as a way to understand evidential markers.

This paper is structured as follows. In Section 2, we briefly summarize the overview of Cognitive Linguistics and its significance in language pedagogy. Section 3 presents manga strips, extracted from Doraemon, to show how evidential concepts are integrated and under what circumstances they are used. Based on this description, we propose what we call ‘conceptual schema’ for evidential markers. In Section 4, we analyse Nakama 1 and 2 (2011), a widely-adopted Japanese instruction textbook in North America, and compare and contrast their explanations with our proposal introduced in Section 3. Section 5 discusses some pedagogical implications we can draw from our study, followed by concluding remarks.

2. COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS AND ITS APPLICATION TO LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

Cognitive Linguistics (CL hereafter) is a relatively new field that promotes the analysis of language based on non-linguistic conceptual and perceptual human capacities. CL is composed of multiple theoretical and methodological approaches. One central tenet is that linguistic meaning is grounded in everyday human experiences, or more precisely, what cognitive linguists often call ‘encyclopaedic knowledge’ or ‘experiential knowledge’. CL asserts that this knowledge, that is, the complex body of the human knowledge system, is crucial to human thinking and its description, enables us to locate the meaning of lexical and grammatical words in actual communicative situations. And more importantly, the activation of this knowledge often involves inferencing. In other words, access to encyclopaedic knowledge is not confined to one interpretation, but open to multiple interpretations as it depends on what the speaker has in mind. A well-known classical example is the meaning of the English word, bachelor. Understanding bachelor goes beyond the semantics of ‘being an unmarried male,’ and it evokes different aspects of our encyclopaedic knowledge, allowing us to consider that not all unmarried males can be categorized as bachelors. This knowledge tells us that Pope Francis is not properly thought of as a bachelor. Neither is a male who has been living with a woman without being married is not intuitively called a bachelor. This example represents the idea that what constitutes the meaning of words or grammatical items cannot be captured by a mere description one would find in a dictionary, but rather lies in our mental representation induced from our experience of encountering who we may categorize as bachelors in varying degrees of typicality. As Hudson (2004: 108-109) pointedly discusses, the theoretical modelling of language systems, which is the ultimate goal of linguistics, is too overwhelming to incorporate into language teaching, but what he calls the “general ideas” of language systems as one kind of knowledge that linguistics can offer may be useful for language teachers to establish systematic knowledge about the architecture of language. A case in point is the meaning of bachelor, as discussed just above. Thus, we view that principles of CL are especially suited for consolidating Hudson’s “general ideas.”
In recent years, principles of CL have been applied to some aspects of foreign language pedagogy. To the best of our knowledge, all the studies are concerned with the meaning of linguistic forms, seeking in particular to refine the existing description of the target language. Scholars put extra effort in bringing learners’ attention to the semantics underpinning the structure of the language they are learning. Tyler (2012: 214), quoting Achard (2004), notes that this cognitive approach enables us to teach words and grammatical elements in similar ways, and through this approach, they may not be taught as context-independent items, as is often the case with existing instruction textbooks. Let us briefly mention some previous studies that have sought to introduce aspects of CL in language pedagogy. Boers and Demecheleer (1998) deal with the polysemous nature of English prepositions. Similarly, Verspoor and Lowie (2003) provide new insight into vocabulary learning by demonstrating how sense relations of a polysemous word can be represented. Another study of polysemy is Tyler and Evans (2004) who apply the principle of force dynamics to the sense of the preposition over in English, proposing a new technique in describing pedagogical grammar. Cardierno (2008) examines motion events on the basis of their conceptual components of motion and how they are presented in different languages. While these studies are geared toward the construction of theoretical underpinnings, Tyler’s recent book (2012), which summarizes experimental studies based on different principles of CL, offers a new empirical perspective to a CL-oriented study of language pedagogy.

3. CONCEPTUAL SCHEMA AND MANGA EXAMPLES

The conceptual schema is illustrated in Figure 1. We propose that evidential markers in Japanese are used to express the speaker’s judgments drawing upon the evidence available to the speaker (A) and the encyclopedic knowledge he has at his disposal associated with this evidence (B). The resultant stage of the entire procedure is judgement (C), the expression containing evidential markers in spoken or written usage. Two arrows indicate the speaker’s inferential procedures. Example in Box C is taken from Doraemon: Nobita Grafitii hen ‘The edition of Nobita Grafity’). Yamaguchi (2007: 14-23) takes into account the notion JUDGMENT as a cover term to embrace evidential and epistemic concepts.

Figure 1: The Conceptual Schema for Evidential Markers

A. EVIDENCE
What is the evidence the speaker bases his message on?
e.g. ‘Non-chan (my friend) is not around.’

B. KNOWLEDGE
What encyclopaedic knowledge does the speaker have at his disposal to process evidence?
e.g. ‘People don’t go out when they are ill.’

C. JUDGMENT
The expressed idea with an evidential marker.
e.g. Non-chan wa byooki-rashii
Non-chan TOP ill-RASHII
‘Non-chan (my friend) is ill, “looks
We maintain that this conceptual schema is applicable to all cases that contain evidential markers; however, the range of its applicability may vary in accordance with how EVIDENCE is channelled into KNOWLEDGE and leads to JUDGMENT. The four selected comic strips shown below (Figures 2-5) are extracted from Doraemon.

Figure 2: -mitaida (Vol. 10, p. 320)

\begin{align*}
\text{ano} & \quad \text{hito} & \quad \text{okane} & \quad \text{o} & \quad \text{motte-ru-mitai} \\
\text{that} & \quad \text{person} & \quad \text{money} & \quad \text{ACC} & \quad \text{have-be-MITAI}
\end{align*}

Figure 3: -yooda (Vol. 7, p. 414)

\begin{align*}
\text{hoshi} & \quad \text{ga} & \quad \text{futte-kuru-yoo-da} \\
\text{star} & \quad \text{NOM} & \quad \text{fall-come-YOO-COP}
\end{align*}

In Figure 2, the judgment is made by drawing upon the visual image the speaker gains from the situational input (the appearance of the man) supported by his knowledge (about people who dress like the man). In Figure 3, inference is made drawing upon the situational input in which the speaker takes part (the appearance of the clear sky

Figure 4: -rashii (Vol. 10, p. 61)

\begin{align*}
\text{denwa} & \quad \text{o} & \quad \text{kakeru-rashii} \\
\text{phone} & \quad \text{ACC} & \quad \text{call-RASHII}
\end{align*}

Figure 5: -sooda (Vol. 7, p. 103)

\begin{align*}
\text{not-tara} & \quad \text{tsubure-soo-da} \\
\text{ride-if} & \quad \text{smash-SOO-COP}
\end{align*}

(Note: ACC = accusative [object] marker, COP=copula, NOM = nominative [subject] marker. Evidential markers are capitalized without translations. See JUDGMENT in Table 1.)
above/surrounding the speaker), supported by his knowledge (about the connection between a clear sky and the way stars look). In Figure 4, judgment is made drawing upon the speaker’s assumption of the situational input (the boy pulling out his wallet in front of the telephone booth) supported by his knowledge (that one needs some money to make a call in a public place). In Figure 5, judgment is made drawing upon the speaker’s anticipation of the situational input (the appearance of the animal) supported by his knowledge (about animals that look like this particular one).

Table 1 demonstrates how the conceptual schema operates for each frame and explains why a certain evidential marker is used in a given communicative situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig.</th>
<th>EVIDENCE (SITUATIONAL INPUT)</th>
<th>KNOWLEDGE</th>
<th>JUDGMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Appearance of the man in formal attire carrying a big bag, coming out of an office building</td>
<td>A person who looks like this is likely to be rich.</td>
<td>The man (I see) is rich.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Appearance of the sky with stars clearly seen</td>
<td>The clear sky normally has stars shining.</td>
<td>The sky is falling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The boy pulling out his wallet in front of the telephone booth</td>
<td>In order to make a call, one needs coins.</td>
<td>He is about to make a call.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Appearance of the small animal</td>
<td>An animal like this is too small and weak to hold me if I were to ride it.</td>
<td>If I ride it, it will collapse.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. EVIDENTIAL MARKERS IN TEXTBOOKS

We will examine one of the most widely-used textbooks in North America, Nakama 1 (2011) and Nakama 2 (2011). The former introduces one of the four evidential markers, -sooda and the latter, -mitaida, -yooda and -rashii. The explanations they offer are quoted in the box below. (Superscripts and bolds are added by the present authors.)

そうだ (1, Chapter 9): expresses an impression or an inference based on what the speaker has seen or felt. The degree of certainty in such statements is fairly low (p. 369). そうだ indicates that the speaker is making a **guess** based on the his or her sensory input (what the speaker sees or felt), so in this case the reliability of the speaker’s **guess** will vary (2, p. 364).
らしい (2, Chapter 8): expresses conjectures\(^2\) made by the speaker on the basis of information obtained indirectly\(^4\) such as through print or word of mouth. … らしい implies that the conjecture has been based on a more careful observation\(^8\) (p. 363). らしい usually expresses a conjecture based on second-hand information\(^3\) obtained from reading or hearsay (p. 364). Expressing conjecture based on indirect\(^5\) evidence (p. 363).

みたいだ・ようだ (2, Chapter 8): expresses a conjecture\(^2\) based on first hand\(^4\), reliable information\(^9\) (usually visual information) and the reasonable knowledge of the speaker. This expression is thus used when the likelihood of a specific action … is the greatest in the speaker’s mind (p. 364). It implies that the conjecture has come from first-hand information\(^4\) and the speaker’s knowledge (p. 364). みたいだ is a colloquial version of ようだ. The degree of the speaker’s confidence in his or her conjecture is less with みたいだ than with ようだ (p. 364). Expressing conjecture based on direct\(^6\) evidence (p. 363).

These descriptions are focused more on how the speaker makes conjectures (or guesses, as used twice in the textbook) and does not refer to what are comparable to evidence and experiential knowledge. To put it in our schema, the aspects dealt with in the materials above may fall under the inferential procedure, whose role would be to combine three components and only partially touch upon EVIDENCE. It is partial because there is no clear mention of evidence as the source of information. For instance, for -sooda, ‘sensory input’ (superscript number 7) may conform to EVIDENCE, but it is not explicit as to how it is combined with the speaker’s guess. For -rashii, various expressions, such as ‘indirect information’ and ‘careful observation’ (superscript numbers 5 and 8 and 3), may correspond to EVIDENCE, but again it is not clear what these notions refer to. Likewise, for -mitaida/-yooda, ‘first-hand information’ (superscript number 4) should pertain to EVIDENCE. These descriptors are fatally synonymous and they often make descriptions unnecessarily ambiguous or confusing in some cases. Let us illustrate some examples. First of all, ‘conjecture’ and ‘guess’ are used interchangeably, but their actual differences in meaning are not explained (see superscript numbers 1 and 2). When we re-examine Figures 4 and 5 in which -rashii and -sooda are used, respectively, the ways the speaker makes inferences in these cases are quite similar; the speaker comes to a conclusion by making utmost use of the evidence and his associated knowledge. Another issue is that it is not convincing to differentiate between ‘first-hand’ and ‘second-hand’ information in order to pin down -rashii and -yooda/-mitaida (see superscript numbers 3 and 4). Consider Figures 2–4 once again. It is not possible to demarcate these three figures on the basis of first-hand and second-hand information, for the speaker’s experience is anyway firsthand or learned directly in all cases. In addition, it is not clear at all what ‘information’ points to in this context; does it refer to EVIDENCE or KNOWLEDGE? Lastly, it is problematic when -rashii and -yooda/-mitaida are made distinct based on ‘indirect’ and ‘direct’ evidence because these descriptors can be interpreted in a number of ways, and, more decisively, this distinction may not help the learner to grasp why specific inferences are made differently in Figures 2, 3 ad 4.
5. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study examined the concepts expressed by some of the understudied Japanese grammatical markers, the evidentials -yooda, -mitaida, -rashii and -sooda, as markers that are essential for expressing speakers’ views and responsiveness for presented information. Based on the analysis of manga strips, the study highlighted the importance of recognizing the nature of speakers’ prior perceptual/conceptual experience, as well as evidence present at a speech situation in arriving at a particular judgment. In more technical terms, the usage of evidential markers does not merely involve evidence per se, but rather it is combined with epistemic information, namely speakers’ experiential or encyclopedic knowledge. Accordingly, we proposed a way of schematizing the two types of information into two parallel components, which then lead to the final stage, judgment. This proposal is in line with the thoughts stipulated in cognitive linguistics. While recognizing that some elements involved in the proposed idea, in particular, those contained in what we call the ‘evidence’ component, are incorporated in traditional instruction (e.g. presenting an image of a piece of cake, to induce the utterance oishi-soo-desu-ne ‘Looks delicious’), learners may not realize what knowledge triggers the expressed idea in the sentence.

As for the pedagogical implications of the present study, we suggest that the awareness of the existence of different conceptual types is beneficial as proposed above for teaching context-sensitive grammatical elements like evidentials. That is, recognizing multiple ‘venues’ in the thought processes involved in the usage of evidentials helps to identify possible reasons why learners (under-)use the markers the way they do and which conceptual components require attention in instruction. For example, using Figure 5, learners may not come up with tsubure-soo,’ if there is no prior experience of riding on a similar animal (and may end up using a different marker instead of -soo or not even express the idea at all). To this end, learners’ prior experiential knowledge can be brought to our attention in instruction, in this case, by negotiating our prior assumptions with learners about certain types of animals, (e.g. size, breed, appearance, etc.), once the evidence as a situational context is established. Likewise, in the case of -rashii as in hyooki ni nat-ta rashii ‘(Non-chan) became ill, looks like’ (See Figure 1 above) is the judgment drawn from the combination of evidence that ‘Non-chan (my friend) is not around’ and prior knowledge that ‘people don’t go out when they are ill.’ Note that there is a great degree of variation of mental representations that people may have about typical reasons for which friends are not around. Furthermore, as the two examples imply, different evidential markers involve not only different types of evidence (e.g. hearing vs. seeing), but also different degrees or relative strengths between evidence and knowledge. For example, the so-called ‘speculation’ marker -sooda relying more on speakers’ knowledge induced from their perceptual or bodily experience (e.g. riding animals, etc.), while -rashii gravitates toward ‘objective’ evidence (e.g. what is seen, heard, etc.) and requires less of such ‘subjective’ knowledge. Thus when we teach these markers, it is important to be aware of which type of information, i.e. evidence or knowledge, needs to be emphasized in contextualizing situations in which the markers are used.

As a methodological implication, the present paper suggests that stories with a visual context, such as manga, would be effective types of materials for introducing evidential expressions as rich sources of discourse contexts and situational/physical

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contexts. As a future direction, data from learners must be incorporated to test the model proposed here, and examining a broader variety of materials, for example, detective stories, which often contains evidentials and other modality markers, may be beneficial to further elucidate the nature of the relationship among evidence, knowledge and judgment.

PRIMARY SOURCES

REFERENCES