Sentence-final expressions
— rasii and yoo

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Abstract

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In the Japanese language there is a group of sentence-final expressions, which indicate the speaker’s attitude toward the proposition they are maintaining. Included in this group are expressions such as kamosirenaï, tigainai, hazu, yoo, mitai, rasii, soo (hearsay) and (si) soo. This thesis is an examination of the functions of the two expressions yoo and rasii. In many cases rasii and yoo are interchangeable in the respect that they work as evidential markers that the speaker makes a judgment based on evidence. However there is a subtle difference between them. The distinction between them is made by the degree of the speaker’s perception. Even though the same types of evidence may be used, rasii indicates that a lesser degree of the speaker’s perception is involved, whereas yoo indicates that a higher degree of the speaker’s perception is involved. A closer investigation of the uses of rasii and yoo, based on Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory, is carried out and it is concluded that both rasii and yoo work as politeness strategies. That is, the speaker utilises the function of either rasii or yoo to satisfy the other’s feeling and to establish a good rapport between the speaker and the addressee in human interactions, as well as to maintain the speaker’s own desire.
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Table of Contents

Abstract .............................................................................................................................. i
Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................ ii
Table of Contents .......................................................................................................... iii
Abbreviation ................................................................................................................ v
Notes on Romanisation ................................................................................................. vii
Sources of Japanese Examples ...................................................................................... viii

Chapter One: Introduction ................................................................................................. 1

1.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................... 1
1.2 Literature review .......................................................................................................... 2
1.3 Syntactic analysis of rasii and yoo ............................................................................. 5
1.4 Evidentiality .................................................................................................................. 8
1.5 Comparison of rasii and yoo .................................................................................... 17
   1.5.1 The types of evidence ......................................................................................... 18
   1.5.2 The degree of the speaker’s attitude ................................................................. 19
   1.5.3 The fundamental characteristics of rasii and yoo ........................................... 22
   1.5.4 Nobayashi’s framework for analysing rasii and yoo ....................................... 23

Chapter Two: Semantic analysis of rasii and yoo .............................................................. 26

2.1 The semantic difference between rasii and yoo ....................................................... 26
2.2 The types of evidence ................................................................................................. 28
2.3 The circumstances in which only yoo can occur ..................................................... 30
2.4 The circumstance in which both rasii and yoo can occur ........................................... 34
2.4.1 The relation to hearsay soo ....................................................................................... 37
2.4.2 The examination of compatibility ............................................................................... 40
  2.4.2.1 Compatibility with omooni .................................................................................. 40
  2.4.2.2 Compatibility with matigainaku .......................................................................... 42
  2.4.2.3 Compatibility with tasikani .................................................................................. 45
  2.4.2.4 Compatibility with denial expression ..................................................................... 49
  2.4.2.5 The distinction between rasii and yoo ............................................................... 51
2.4.3 The syntactic distinction between appearance yoo and inferential yoo .................... 52
2.5 The circumstance in which only rasii can occur .......................................................... 56
2.6 Psychological attitude toward evidence .......................................................................... 58
2.7 Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 62

Chapter Three: Paragmatic analysis of rasii and yoo ....................................................... 64

3.1 Linguistic politeness ..................................................................................................... 65
3.2 The universality of Brown and Levinson’s framework ............................................... 73
3.3 The uses of rasii and yoo as politeness strategies ......................................................... 77
  3.3.1 Maintaining the addressee’s negative face ............................................................. 77
  3.3.2 Maintaining the speaker’s positive face ................................................................. 84
3.4 Euphemistic usage of rasii and yoo ............................................................................. 86
3.5 Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 87

Chapter Four: Conclusion .................................................................................................. 89

Bibliography ....................................................................................................................... 92
Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used when giving translations of the examples provided in the thesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>ACCusative case marker (o)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAUS</td>
<td>CAUSative affix (~sase)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMP</td>
<td>sentence COMplementizer (no, koto, to, tokoro)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>COPula (da, desu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>DATive case marker (ni)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>GENitive case marker (no)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HON</td>
<td>HONorific form (~rare, o-V ni naru)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOC</td>
<td>LOCative case marker (ni, de, e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEG</td>
<td>NEGative morpheme (~nai)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>NOMinative case marker (ga)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASS</td>
<td>PASSive affix (~rare)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POL</td>
<td>POLite affix (~masu, ~desu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Question particle (ka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOP</td>
<td>TOPic marker (wa)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
* ungrammatical / unacceptable

? awkward

In translating the examples, the markers RASII, YOO and SOO are used respectively to indicate rasii, yoo and soo. Johnson (1994) interprets these terms as “AUX (AUXiliary verbs)”. Other researchers, such as Teramura (1984) also interpret these terms as auxiliary verbs. In this thesis however we do not specify these terms as auxiliary verbs. The aim of this paper is not to investigate whether or not these expressions represent auxiliary verbs, but to investigate their functions from the viewpoint of semantics and pragmatics.
Notes on Romanisation

The Kunrei romanisation is adopted for Japanese examples with the long vowels shown by the double **o** system.

e.g. syoogakkoo ‘primary school’, tyuugakkoo ‘junior high school’,

Tookyoo ‘Tokyo’

The Hepburn system is used in translations of the examples and bibliographical information, where the long vowels are not indicated following the widely practised translation.

e.g. Taishukan, Shogakukan, Chikuma

When a different system is adopted in citations, it is changed to the above system for unification.
Sources of Japanese Examples

Many of the Japanese examples are taken from the following:


Some examples are taken from "CD-COM Shincho sha bunko no 100 satsu" (1995).
Examples are used from the following works contained on the CD-ROM.

Akagawa, Jiro. *Onna shacho ni kanpai!*
Inoue, Yasushi. *Asunaro monogatari.*
Miura, Ayako. *Shiokari toge.*