Analysis of Japanese Adverbs in Japanese Drama

Suizokukan Gaaru

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the adverbs that are often used by Japanese people in daily conversation. The data used in this study is a Japanese drama called “Suizokukan Gaaru” aired in NHK in 2016. This drama was used considering a lot of scenes that depict conversations in family and work environment. The study used a qualitative descriptive method. The note-taking technique is used in this study to collect utterance that appears in the drama and the adverbs with the most occurrences are prioritized to be analyzed it meaning and usages. This study found that 464 of all utterances in the drama contain 2274 adverbs. Among the 464 adverb utterances, there are 44 adverbs with the highest frequency of occurrence (23-34 times) namely mou (already), chotto (a moment, a little), dou (how), “nanka” (somewhat). The adverbs mou and chotto has been taught basic level, while dou and nanka are taught in the advanced level as form of aizuchi in conversation. In the future dou and nanka are also need to be taught in the basic level so the learners could speak more fluently. Based on the category, the situation adverb, degree adverb, and modal adverb have higher frequencies than denotation adverb. In the future, it is necessary to rethink how the order of placement of the adverb categories is from the basic level, so that students can become proficient in daily Japanese conversation.

Keywords: Adverb, adverb meaning and usage, degree adverb, Japanese drama, situation adverb

1. INTRODUCTION

In a sentence, we often find a word that functions to describe or explain other words in that sentence. The word that describes the other words is called an adverb. Kridalaksana (1993) said that adverbs are words that are used to add information into verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs.

In Japanese, the adverb is known as fukushi. Similar to the definition above, Matsuoka in Sudjianto and Dahidi (2017) explains that fukushi are words that describe verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. It cannot be conjugated and function to express the state or degree of activity, atmosphere, or feeling of the speaker. Besides explaining verbs, i-adjectives, na-adjectives, and other adverbs, fukushi can also explain nouns. In addition, there are some adverbs that are used to create special expressions (Kamiya, 2012).

The improvement of learners’ Japanese skills can be seen by how many adverbs they acquired, as in to Japanese Language Proficiency (JLPT), the higher the levels, the frequency adverbs appearance will be more often (Yeon-Jung, 2017). In his research, Yeon-Jung (2017) described that adverb-related questions are found in JLPT’s vocabulary and grammar questions. In particular, synonym replacement questions are not only the central meaning of words but also peripheral meanings and various usages.

Based on ACTFL-OPI evaluation standard created by Makino et al. (2001), advance-level Japanese is shown in the learner’s ability to explain something in detail and clearly, and also can respond to unprecedented situations. The usage of adverbs is one of the indicators that a learner is on advance-level in learning Japanese. With the usage of adverbs, learners could tell more detailed information when using Japanese.

Adverbs are important for learners. Especially for their communication competency. However, many Japanese language learners found it difficult to understand the meaning and use of adverbs. In her research, Giyatmi (2013) found that students often make mistakes when using adverbs that have similar meaning and function. The factor was most students are only aware of adverbs in general and pays less attention to the context of the sentence (Giyatmi, 2013).
Similar result is also indicated in Nursanti and Supriatnaningsih (2019), which study found that the error factors of use of adverbs by the student are caused by: 1) The lack of understanding of the meaning and usage of the adverbs, 2) the similarity of meaning between adverbs, 3) Student did not understand the context of the sentences because they did not pay attention to the pattern of sentences that followed.

Mizutani et al. (1991) categorized Japanese adverbs into 4 categories. First are situation adverbs, the adverbs that describe the situation of a verb. Second is degree adverbs, the adverbs that describe a degree or quantity. The third is modal adverbs, the adverbs that contain the modality of the speaker. The last one is denotation adverbs. This category could help Japanese language learners to learn more about adverbs. Specially to understand its meaning and usages.

Thus, the aim of this study is to find out what adverbs are often used by natives and analyze its meaning and use so that it can be used for Japanese language learners to study deeper understanding of adverbs.

2. METHOD

The method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive method. According to Creswell (2014), the qualitative descriptive method is a research approach that involves identification of attributes of a particular phenomenon based on an observational basis. Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences.

This research uses a Japanese drama called “Suizokukan Garu” episodes 1-5 with total 210 minutes was aired in NHK in 2016 as its sample. This drama is used as a sample because the story of this drama talks about the daily life of aquarium workers. Therefore, the dialogue that used in this drama is relevant to represent Japanese that used by native in daily conversation. To gather the utterances from the dialogues, researchers use the note-taking technique. The note-taking technique is a method in which the researchers tap language behaviors in a speech event without being involved in the speech event Mahsun (2005).

The steps that are conducted after the data from the drama is collected are: 1. Sorting adverbs from the drama referring to the dictionary, 2. Categorizing adverbs based on Mizutani’s category, 3. Counting the frequency of occurrences in conversations, 4. Determining the variety of adverbs that appear based on level frequency, 5. Analyzing the usage of the adverbs on high and medium levels based on their use in conversations, 6. Concluding the results of the data analysis.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Adverbs based on the frequency of appearance

After analyzing 5 episodes of the drama, from a total of 2247 utterances, there were found 424 utterances that contain adverbs. From the data, there are 120 types of adverbs found. Researcher dividing the adverbs into 3 levels based on their frequency of appearance. The adverbs with a frequency of less than 3 were not considered as data because of the lack of comparison sentences to see the difference in meaning and usage.

From Table 1 and Table 2, it can be seen that there are plenty of adverbs that appear in this drama. The 4 most used adverbs by the characters in the drama are mou (already), chotto (a little), dou (how), and nanika/nanka (somewhat).

3.2. The use and meaning of the adverbs with most occurrences.

After categorizing the adverbs based on the frequency of appearance, the researcher analyzes the meaning and use of the adverbs.

Table 1. Adverbs with high frequency appearances (23-34 times) and medium frequency appearances (12-22 times)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Adverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mou (already), chotto (a little), dou (how), nanika/nanka (somewhat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mada (still, yet), yappari (as expected), mata (again), honjou(ni) (truly, really), zetta(ni) (definitely)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Adverbs with low frequency of appearances (<11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Adverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sou (that), tashikani (surely), motto (more), zenzen (at all), chanto (properly), sugu(ni) (immediately), Iishoni (together), nande (why), tonikaku (for now), zabun (very/extremely), zutto (always), hajimete (for the first time), trotro (various), kyuuni (suddenly), nanaka (considerably), sonnani (like that), imamade (until now), itsumo (always), shikkari (tightly/properly), ichiban (best/most), ippai (full of), sasuga(ni) (indeed), sukoshi (a little), taihen (very), doushite (why), jitsuha (honestly), itsunademero (forevermore), madeni (until), shibarako (for a moment), sekkaiku (specially), totsuzen (suddenly), minna (all), douse (anyhow), kekkyouku (after all/in the end), moshi (if)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The adverbs that will be analyzed are adverbs in the medium to high level frequency of appearance. The use and meaning of the adverbs will be analyzed using theory from Kamiya (2012), Hida and Asada (2018), and others past research on related adverbs.

1. Mou (Already)

According to Kamiya (2012), *mou* has different meanings depending on the sentence in which *mou* is used. In positive expression *mou* indicates that an action or event has occurred or that a state has been achieved. This is shown in sentence (1).

(1) "*Mou kekkon shitatte wakai to tachi ga uwasa wo shieta*"

“The young staff’s talk that she is already married”

(Episode 5)

As in sentence (1), *mou* is placed before a verb *kkekon suru* which means marry, therefore *mou* is used to tell that an event or activities is already done or happened.

Whereas in negative expression, it indicates that an action or event has stopped occurring or that someone or something no longer exists in the state he or she has been in.

(2) "*Koitsu wa mou omae no shitteru koitsu jyanaize.*"

“She is not a person that you know anymore”

(Episode 3)

Sentence (2) is an example of *mou* that is used in a negative sentence. *Mou* was used by the speaker to explain the state of *koitsu* that has changed from what the interlocutor previously knew.

Besides the use above, Weli (2018) argues that there is another usage of *mou* which emphasizes an unquestionable state. The sentence below is one of the examples.

(3) “*Mou koko no ichin naikara ne*”

“Because you are already one of us”. (Episode 1)

In sentence (3) The speaker emphasizes to the interlocutor that, even though she is a new member, her status as a member of the team is not in doubt. This emphasis is used for reassuring the interlocutor.  

2. Chotto (A Little)

Kamiya (2012) argues that the adverb *chotto* functions to indicate a small or little level or amount. As shown in sentence (4)

(4) “*Kaji, chotto Shima-san wo karite mo iindesuka?*”

“Kaji, can I borrow Shima for a minute?”

(Episode 3)

In sentence (4) *chotto* was used by the speaker to explain to Kaji that he needs Shima to talk or something to do with her for a short time, which is in line with the theory of Kamiya (2012) about *chotto*.

Besides the use above, there is another meaning and usage that is explained by Hida and Asada (2018). *Chotto* can be used to show and emphasize something that has a great or high degree as in example (5).

(5) “*Kaji, chotto kanojo ni kibishisugi jyanaika?*”

“aren’t Kaji a bit too strict to her?”. (Episode 2)

The sentence above is one of the examples of *chotto* which emphasizes the degree of adjective *kibishi* which means “strict”. This means in this sentence the speaker feels that Kaji is strict but, this time he is a little bit too strict than usual even to the new employee.

There is also the use of *chotto* from a pragmatic point of view. Mizuki (1999) argues that *chotto* is often used by the speaker when they have a request or asking for help. Karimah (2018) also states a similar theory that the function of “*chotto*” is to softens the sentence and make the other party less burdened.

(6) “*chotto tsukiatte kureru?*”

“Could you go with me for a while?”. (Episode 5)

The sentence above is an example of the use of *chotto* as a softener when requesting something or asking for help. With the usage of *chotto*, it shows the speaker's politeness and also makes the person who is asked for help more willing to accept the request because it seems ‘a little’.

3. Dou (How)

The following is a sentence that uses “*dou*” as an adverb, according to the data:

(7) “*Shima-chan ga shikai shinaide gooruden wiiku dou yatte norikirunda?*”

“How do we get through the golden week without Shima being the MC?”

(Episode 2)

(8) “*Shima-san ni torenaa ni naru kanren wo shinagara, iruka raibu no shikai wo yattemoraute no wa dou desuka*”

“How about Shima being the MC of the dolphin’s shows while training to become a trainer?”

(Episode 2)

(9) “*Demo Yuka wa dou nano? Same otoko no koto*”

“But, how about you Yuka? What do you think about that shark-man?”

(Episode 5)
Kamiya (2012) argues there are 3 usages of dou. The first one is to ask how something is done, as shown in sentence (7). The second is to ask someone’s opinion or offer something, sentence (8) is one of the examples. And the last is to ask about the condition of someone or something, the usage samples are shown in sentence (9).

Seeing the 3 uses above, it can be concluded that dou is a denotation word that is used for questioning something. This dou denotation has a different meaning depending on its placement in the sentences.

As in sentence (7) dou is followed by a verb (yaru) therefore dou in this sentence functions as a question word for how an activity or event is happening. In sentence (8) dou is placed after the speaker states his opinion. Therefore, dou in sentence (8) functions as a question word to offer something to the interlocutor. Lastly in sentence (9) the speaker used dou for asking a question of a topic to the interlocutor.

4. Nanika/nanka (Somewhat)

Nanka is the colloquial form of nanika. According to Hida and Asada (2018) there are 5 meanings and usages of nanka. (a) to represent indefinite things, (b) to represent a vague feeling, (c) to represent the state of listening back to the other party's true intentions, (d) represents an uncertain kind, and (e) to show how strongly they expressed their feelings.

(10) “nanika atashini hanashtai koto atta?”

“Is there anything you want to talk to me about?”

(Episode 5)

Sentence (10) is an example of the use of nanka which is to represent indefinite things. In this sentence, nanka stands as a pronoun for asking something that is still unknown by the speaker.

(11) “Are wo natsuyasumi atsui hi ni nanka yattara, ukeruto omoudesune”

“I think it would be great if we do it on hot summer days.”

(Episode 3)

Sentence (12) is also an example of the use of nanka which represents an uncertain kind. Whereas in this sentence nanka is used for mentioning an example of when the event will be held but not at an exact time. The use of nanka after a noun implies that nanka is a pronoun to represent an example or type. This is in line with Ijima (2008) findings that one of the functions of nanka is as an exemplification.

5. Mada (Still)

Kamiya (2012) argues that there are 2 usages and meanings of mada. Mada in negative sentences shows actions or events that have not occurred or conditions that have not been achieved. The sentence (12) below is one of its examples.

(12) “Demo C1 ni mada esa tabetemoraetennai desu”

“But I cannot feed C1 yet”

(Episode 1)

Whereas in a positive sentence mada shows the continuity of the action or situation. The example can be seen in sentence (13).

(13) “Mada saikaihatsu de koko wo nokoseruka mou bimyou desukaranee”

“We still don't know if this place can survive the redevelopment”

(Episode 4)

Seeing from the definition above, it can be concluded that mada is an antonym of mou. This shows the different meaning if mada is placed in a negative sentence or in a positive sentence. This argument can be backed up by the theory of Ikeda (1999) which explains that mou is used when the speech is spoken after a change in condition, while mada can be spoken before a change in condition.

6. Yappari (As expected)

Kamiya (2012) argues that yappari is used to show when something happened as expected. Yappari is a colloquial form of yahari.

(14) “Yappari imada ni gyaurui chifu ne ga omoida”

“As I thought, the responsibility as a fisheries chief is too much for Imada”

(Episode 2)

In sentence (14) yahari is used by the speaker to express that he already thought that Imada will have a hard time holding the position as chief of the department.

(15) “Tashikani soumuka no omoshirosa mou wakattekimashita. Demo, yappari iruka chiimu ni modoritai desu”

“I know, I already understand the joy in the GA Division. But, in the end, I want to go back to the dolphin team”.

(Episode 5)

In sentence (15), the speaker uses yappari to express her feeling about going back to the dolphin team, she always thinks about it when she gets moved to GA division. So even though she found joy in GA division, she still wants to go back to the dolphin division. Yahari was used to emphasize the feeling.

If we see from the two examples above, yappari is placed in front of the sentence to emphasize that the speaker has predicted or thought about something that happened. In addition, yappari is used for expressing the thought or feeling of the speaker only. This is in line with Chen (2019), who states that yappari does not refer to the knowledge, beliefs, or inclinations of others. Therefore, yappari is used when we want to express a conclusion from something that we have thought or predicted before.
7. Mata (Again)

The adverb *mata* is used to indicate the recurrence of an action or event. This is in line with the theory of Kamiya (2012).

(16) “*Mata* Morishita-kachou wa yokei na koto hirameichatte. Maitayō”

“I’m so done. Mr. Morishita ran into some weird ideas again.” (Episode 4)

In sentence (16), *mata* indicates a recurrence of an event where Chief Morishita tells some weird ideas to the aquarium staff. Previously, Chief Morishita always ran into strange ideas according to the aquarium staff.

8. Hontou(ni) (Truly, really)

The following is a sentence that uses *hontou(ni)* as an adverb.

(17) “*Hontou*, yasashii yo ne, Morishita-kachou wa”

“Mr. Morishita is really kind, isn’t it?” (Episode 1)

According to Hida and Asada (2018) one of the usages of *hontou(ni)* is to emphasize a very high degree of a fact or thought. In sentence (17) *honto* is used to emphasize the adjective *yasashii*. *Honto* is a colloquial form of *hontou*.

(18) “Natsuko-san kyō wa *hontou ni* arigatou gozaimasu”

“Thank you so much for today, Natsuko” (Episode 5)

In sentence (18) *hontou(ni)* is used to emphasize the feeling of gratitude of the speaker towards Natsuko. This also in line with the theory of Hida and Asada (2018) which defined that *hontou(ni)* is often used along with sentences that express feelings that the speaker feels.

The usage of adverb *hontou(ni)* is similar to *makotoni*. According to Wouthuyzen (2021), *makotoni* is used to express the state with emphasis on extraordinary degree. But, in the sentence above the speaker is using *hontouni* because the close relationship between them as *makotoni* tends to be a more formal expression.

9. Zettai(ni) (Definitely)

According to Hida and Asada (2018), there are 2 usages of *zettai(ni)*. The first one is to represent something that is certain or perfect. The second is to shows emphasis of a judgment, determination, or desire of the speaker and has a neutral tone.

However, in this drama, researchers only found the second use of *zettai(ni)* that is shown in 2 examples below.

(19) “Shinrai no okenai ningen no esa nanka *zettai ni* tabemasen”

“They never eat the food that came from a person they did not trust” (Episode 1)

If *zettai(ni)* is met with a negative verb it means ‘never’ in this sentence *zettai(ni)* is paired with *tabemasen* which is a negative form of *tabemasu*. In sentence (19) *zettai(ni)* is used to emphasize the speaker’s judgment about the dolphins that he trained would never eat a feed from a person that they did not know.

(20) “Atashi C1 Jampu zettai(ni) seikou sasemasu.”

“I will definitely perform the C1 Jump!” (Episode 3)

In sentence (20) *zettai(ni)* is used to emphasize determination or desire. The speaker uses *zettai(ni)* to emphasize her determination to be able to perform the C1 Jump attraction for the upcoming show.

Widyaningrum (2019) also has the same argument about the meaning of the adverb *zettai(ni)*. The adverb *zettai(ni)* has a meaning to show a will or desire of the speaker. This meaning can be seen in the sentence (20).

**Table 3.** Categorized *fukushi* based on Mizutani’s theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Situation Adverbs</td>
<td>Mada (still/yet), mata (again), sugu(ni) (immediately), chanto (properly), isseni (together), tonikaku (for now), hajimete (for the first time), iroiro (various), kyuuni (suddenly), imamade (until now), itsumo (always), shikkarui (tightly/properly), itsumademosu (forevermore), madeni (until), shibaraku (for a moment), sekkaku (specially), totsusei (suddenly).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Degree Adverbs</td>
<td>Mou (already), chotto (a little/a moment), hontou(ni) (truly/really), motto (more), zenzen (at all), zuiban (very/extremely), zutto (always), nakanaka (considerably), sonnani (like that), ichiban (best/most), ippai (full of), susuqa(ni) (indeed), sukoshi (a little), taihen (very), minna (all).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Modal Adverbs</td>
<td>Nanika/nanka (somewhat), yappuri (as expected), zettai(ni) (definitely), tashihani (surely), nande (why), doushite (why), jitsuwa (honestly), douse (anyhow), kekkouyou (after all/in the end), moshi (if).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Denotation Adverbs</td>
<td>Dou (how), sou (that)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
She also states that *zettai*(ni) has the meaning of a strong opinion of the speaker’s belief. This meaning can be seen in the sentence (19).

3.3. Fukushi Category Based on Mizutani (1991)

From Table 2, it can be concluded that the adverbs found in the drama can be categorized into Mizutani’s category. From 44 adverbs with the most appearance, 17 of them are Situation Adverbs.

3.2.1 Situation Adverbs

According to Mizutani et al. (1991), a situation adverb is an adverb that is usually attached to a verb that functions to describe a state or situation or how something is done. Some of the adverbs in situation adverbs are *na*-adjectives that are added with *to* and *ni* markers. One of the examples of this kind of adverb in this drama is *totsuzen*.

1. “Koukou detara, kondo wa totsuzen kaigai ni itte kaiyou kameraman narutte iitashite sa”
   “After graduated high school, suddenly he told me that he will go abroad and be a marine photographer”.
   (Episode 5)

In this sentence, *totsuzen* did not stand as a *na*-adjective, but as an adverb that describes the verb *iitashita* which translated as ‘told’.

On the other hand, adverbs that describe time are also part of the situation adverb. The examples of adverbs that describe time are *itsumo*, *shibaraku*, *imamade*, *madeni*, *itsumademo*.

2. “Oi! Kao awase ga sundara, shibaraku mizugiwa ni tatsuna!”
   “Hey! If you finish seeing the dolphins, don’t stay near the water for a while!”
   (Episode 1)

In sentence (22) *shibaraku* is used to describe the verb *tatsu*. *Shibaraku* is related to time because it means ‘for a moment’ or ‘for a while’.

3.2.2 Degree Adverbs

Degree adverb is an adverb that is used to express degree or quantity. Degree adverbs are more flexible than situation adverbs. Unlike situation adverbs which only explain verbs, degree adverbs can also be used to explain adjectives, nouns, and another adverb (Mizutani et al., 1991).

3.2.2.1 Degree Adverbs

Sentence (23) is an example usage of a degree adverb that is attached to an adjective. The meaning of *zuibun* in this sentence indicates a degree that is more than average. For example, in above sentences, the speaker had predicted something but it happened faster than usual. In this sentence, *zuibun* is attached to adjectives like *hayai* to explain the degree from that adjective.

4. “Yuka oneesan no tokoro made ato mou sukoshi”.
   “Just a little bit more until Yuka’s place”
   (Episode 1)

Sentence (24) is one of the examples of a degree adverb that is attached to another adverb. In this sentence, *mou* is attached to *sukoshi* to show the work that is being done. As a note, not all types of adverbs can be used together with degree adverbs. Below is another example of a degree adverb that is attached to nouns.

5. “Honsha kara jinin sakugen yousei wa zutto maekara no koto desune”
   “The request for personnel reduction from the head office has been around for a long time.”
   (Episode 3)

In sentence (25), *zutto* describes the noun *maekara no koto*. In this sentence, *zutto* is used to show time which explains that it has been around for a long time.

3.2.3 Modal Adverbs

Modal adverbs are adverbs that help to emphasize the meaning of statements in the predicate. The emphasis of meaning in modal adverbs are divided into 7 groups: negation, assertion-guess, negation guess, desire, assumption, question, comparison (Mizutani et al., 1991).

One example found in this drama is “*doushite*” as a predicate for a question.

6. “Doushite Kaji-san ni kimochi wo tsutaenaindesaka?”
   “Why don’t you convey your feelings to Kaji?”
   (Episode 4)

In sentence (26) *doushite* is used to ask the reason for the action of the interlocutor.

3.2.4 Denotation Adverbs

Denotation adverb is an adverb that is used in a sentence as a pointer to something. There are 4 words that are a part of this adverb: *aa*, *kou*, *sou*, *dou* (Mizutani et al., 1991). The following sentence is one example of the usage of denotation adverbs in the drama.
(7) “Shima-chan ga shikai shinai de gooruden wiiku dou yatte norikirunda?”

“How do we get through the golden week without Shima being the MC?” (Episode 2)

Dou in this sentence refers to the verb yaru and is used to ask how something is done.

4. CONCLUSION

From a total 2247 utterances gathered from this drama, 21 % (464 utterances) of them contain adverbs. The adverbs found from the data can be classified into 3 levels based on their occurrences: high, medium, and low. As an example of the analysis result, the adverb mou has the highest appearance in this drama. The adverb mou has 2 meanings. In a positive sentence, mou means an activity or some event that has been completed. Whereas in the negative sentence it shows an activity or an event that stops happening or changes in condition that are different from before. Mou is also an antonym of mada. The 44 adverbs with most occurrences in this drama can be categorized into Mizutani’s category, with 17 situation adverbs, 15 examples of degree adverbs, 10 modal adverbs, and 2 denotation adverbs. As a recommendation, considering the frequent uses, adverbs in the high level need to be taught their whole meaning and usage from the very beginning of Japanese language learning.

REFERENCES


