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Modality, *Modariti* and Predication – the Story of Modality in Japan

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1.1   Introduction

Since the 1990s, publications on Japanese modality, especially those written in Japanese and published in Japan, abound. There are more than a dozen book publications alone with 'modality' (*modariti*) in their title, in addition to countless papers and articles. Although it is difficult to provide exact numbers for comparison, it can hardly be doubted that this has been *the* most popular research topic in Japanese linguistics for the past 15 years. However, this surge of research interest seems to come out of nowhere. Until the mid-1980s, very little had been written on 'modality'. The two most influential reference volumes on Japanese linguistics of the time, the *Research Dictionary of National Language Studies* (Satō 1977) and the *Great Dictionary of National Language Studies* (Kokugo Gakkai, 1980) do not even have an entry for either 'modality' or 'mood'.

Based on these facts, one might suspect that around 1990 in Japan the concept of modality was newly discovered or newly imported from general linguistics. However, a close investigation reveals that nothing could be further from the truth. It is merely the case that modality studies in Western linguistics in the 1970s and 1980s, which themselves surged around that time, helped to contribute to the increased interest in the topic in Japan. In fact, all the important elements of modality theory as known in current Japanese linguistics were already in place in the 1950s. However, research on them was simply known under a different labelling. That is, it was not the concept that was newly discovered and adopted around 1990, but the labelling. Conversely, the dominant concept of *modariti* in Japan is not the same as the mainstream concepts

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of modality in Western linguistics. It is only the labelling which suggests identity (or close similarity).

The goal of this chapter is to inform, within the limitations of its format, about the development of *modariti* concepts in Japan from their beginnings to the present, and to unravel the mystery of how they relate to *modality* in Western linguistics. I will try to take into account not only the linguistic ideas as such, but also their social and political–historical background. I will start by introducing the dominant concept of modality in current Japanese linguistics, which is represented mainly by two scholars, namely Takashi Masuoka and Yoshio Nitta (section 1.2). I will then go back into the history of Japanese linguistics and show how these concepts developed and where their sources can be found (sections 1.3 and 1.4). These sections are followed by a short evaluation (section 1.5) and an exposure of contemporary alternative concepts of modality in Japanese linguistics (section 1.6), before a conclusion follows in section 1.7.[1]

1.2   Establishing the concept in Japan – Takashi Masuoka and Yoshio Nitta

At present, a large number of linguistic researchers in Japan are concentrating their activities on the field of modality. Some of them have been more influential and prolific than others. It is fair to say, however, that the modern study of modality in Japan is first and foremost identified with the work of two scholars, namely Takashi Masuoka and Yoshio Nitta. Not that they were the first to use the label 'modality' for Japanese. In fact, it is generally believed that the first use of the term goes much further back, namely to a dissertation by Uyeno (1971). However, they were the first to come up with the term in major publications in Japanese (Nitta and Masuoka 1989; Masuoka 1991; Nitta 1991), and the concept of modality that they moulded at that time has become the model for most of the subsequent research that has been carried out within the domestic field of Japanese language studies (*nihongogaku*). An understanding of their concepts of modality is essential to an understanding of contemporary writing on modality in Japan. Masuoka's and Nitta's concepts are close but not identical and shall be introduced here concisely.

Masuoka has the following basic view of modality: 'Proposition and modality are the two big elements that make up a sentence. I define them as the element that expresses objective facts, and *the element that expresses subjective judgements and attitudes*, respectively'[2] (Masuoka 1991: 6, 1999: 46; emphasis added). This definition crucially refers to

two factors. One is a bipartition of the sentence into proposition and modality, that is, essentially a syntactic factor. The other is the identification of one part of the bipartition with the expression of the speaker's judgements and attitudes. This is a semantic–pragmatic factor. Research that builds on Masuoka thus has to assume that:

1. Every sentence can be divided into proposition and modality, and there is a criterion (or criteria) for such division. Masuoka originally named a whole set of criteria (interrogation, nominalization, past tense) as the dividing line (Masuoka 1991: 34–6).
2. The dividing line between proposition and modality that was set in (1) coincides with a semantic division between objective and subjective sentence elements.

If this definition is taken seriously, the dividing line between proposition and modality becomes a crucial issue, and Masuoka has indeed repeatedly spent time on this issue and revised his position (e.g. Masuoka 1987: 9, 1991: 34–6, 1999). Given the obvious fact that many linguistic expressions are neither clearly objective nor subjective, Masuoka introduced the terms of 'primary modality' (*ichijiteki modariti*) for always subjective expressions and 'secondary modality' (*nijiteki modariti*) for expressions that can be both subjective and objective (Masuoka 1991: 36). For most researchers, however, Masuoka's definition has only served as a starting point to investigate (and describe) a number of linguistic categories in Japanese that are saliently associated with some measure of subjectivity. Masuoka himself distinguished nine types of modality (Masuoka 1991: 47–59):

1. Modality of speech attitude (incl. sentence-final particles etc.)
2. Modality of politeness (incl. politeness markers)
3. Expression pattern modality (refers to sentence mood)
4. Modality of truth judgement (refers to epistemic modality)
5. Modality of value judgement (refers to deontic modality)
6. Modality of explanation (incl. the sentence nominalizer *no(-da)* and *wake*)
7. Modality of tense (refers to tense)
8. Modality of polarity (refers to negation)
9. Modality of topic and focus (incl. topic- and focus-marking like *wa*, etc.)

This is an extraordinarily wide array of linguistic categories. Many of them, such as tense or topic and focus, in fact, would not be recognized

as part of modality in most linguistic theories, but are recognized as grammatical categories in their own right. In contrast, dynamic modality (ability, circumstantial possibility, volition and so on), which is often viewed as part of modality in English and Western linguistics is, in keeping with the Japanese linguistic tradition, not viewed as modal. Masuoka later slightly revised his position and narrowed down somewhat the scope of modality. Specifically, in 1999, he shifted to complementation with *koto* as the dividing line between modality and proposition (Masuoka 1999: 47). This leads to the exclusion of at least tense and polarity from the list above. Overall, however, it is fair to say that researchers (primarily descriptive linguists) who are indebted to, or sympathize with, Masuoka's notion of modality have not been much concerned with the problematic aspects or the faithful application of this concept. They have rather focused on the aspect of subjectivity and concentrated on the description of categories that are at the core of other Japanese modality concepts as well.

Nitta's concept of modality has from the beginning been narrower, more traditional and more focused. He defines modality as follows: 'Real typical modality is the *linguistic expression of the speaker's psychological attitude* towards the verbalized state of affairs or towards the utterance and the communication itself at the time of speech' (Nitta 1989: 34; cf. also Nitta 1989: 2, Nitta 2000: 81; emphasis added). In this definition we can find the same two elements of both modality vs something and subjectivity, but the idea of a bipartition of the sentence is assigned less prominence, since in Nitta's view modality does not necessarily modify the proposition but can also modify an utterance, or even something else. Therefore, the element of subjectivity takes the spotlight.

However, modality as a semanto-syntactic component still plays a significant role for Nitta. He has recourse to the most popular model of syntax in traditional Japanese linguistics, the layering model (for example Minami 1964, 1974), and locates modality in this model by dividing the sentence in Japanese into a layer of 'expressed situation' (*genpyō jitai*) and a layer of 'expressed attitude' (*genpyō taido*) (Nitta 1989, 1991). The sentence model is represented graphically in Figure 1.1. The 'expressed situation' layer comprises the situation core, as well as aspect, voice and tense. The 'attitude' layer consists of modality and politeness (Nitta 1991: 18). These layers roughly correspond to proposition and modality in models such as Masuoka's. Furthermore, according to Nitta, a sentence is only formed when the proposition (expressed situation) is enwrapped by modality (Nitta 2000: 81). That is, modality is seen as an indispensable semantic element of sentence formation.
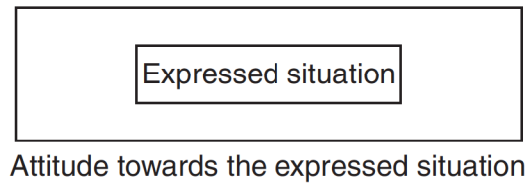
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│        ┌──────────────────┐          │
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Attitude towards the expressed situation

Figure 1.1   Modality in Japanese sentence structure, according to Nitta (1989: 1)

Since Nitta's concept of modality is narrower than Masuoka's, it is not surprising that he distinguishes fewer subcategories. Specifically, Nitta proposes two bipartitions of modality, which do not totally overlap with each other (Nitta 1989: 2, 34–40). First, he distinguishes 'contents-directed modality' (*genpyō jitai meate no modariti*) and 'utterance/communication modality' (*hatsuwa, dentatsu no modariti*). The former includes expressions of volition and desire on the one hand and epistemic modality on the other (Nitta 1989: 41). The latter refers mainly to sentence moods, such as declarative, imperative, etc. (Nitta 1989: 41). Second, he distinguishes 'true modality' (*shinsei modariti*), which can take neither past tense nor negation, and must always be associated with the first person (speaker), from 'pseudo-modality' (*giji modariti*). This distinction, which corresponds to Masuoka's 'primary' vs 'secondary' modality, is a consequence of the identification of modality with subjectivity. Presumably, past tense, negation and non-first person signal a distancing from the speaker, and thus non-subjectivity. 'True modality' includes linguistic forms that are not subject to past, etc. marking; for example, imperative inflectional endings or the inferential *daroo*. 'Pseudo-modality' markers include most deontic and boulemic (volitional) modal expressions (Nitta 1989: 34–8).

1.3   Roots of the concept I: Western linguistics

As the emergence of 'modality' as a major research topic in Japan is so recent, it would only be reasonable to assume that its roots lie in Western linguistics. Indeed, it is not difficult to find direct equivalents to Masuoka's 'subjective judgements and attitudes' and Nitta's 'speaker's psychological attitude' in Western linguistic writing. Lyons (1968: 308) defined 'modalities' as the grammatical marking of the 'attitude of the speaker', and later described sentence adverbs, including epistemic adverbs, as expressing '[the speaker's] opinion or attitude towards the proposition that the sentence expresses or the situation that the proposition describes' (Lyons 1977: 452).

Lyons' idea itself is much older. In modern linguistics, it can be traced back at least to the German Indo-Europeanists Hanns Oertel and Karl Brugmann (cf. Noreen 1923). Oertel spoke of 'the attitude of the speaker toward the utterance' (Oertel 1901: 287), and identified verbal moods ('modes') as a salient form of its expression, while Brugmann defined moods as 'a statement about a mental mood of the speaker, a sub-jective state with respect to which the [verbalized] event constitutes the determining objective side element to which the state is related' (Brugmann 1970 [1904]: 578). This concept was further popularized by Karl Jespersen, who wrote that moods 'express certain attitudes of the mind of the speaker towards the contents of the sentence' (Jespersen 1992 [1924]: 313). However, Oertel, Brugmann and Jespersen appar-ently did not attempt to define modality but simply to characterize Indo-European verbal moods.

For the bipartition of the clause into proposition and modality, a dif-ferent possible model can be identified. Charles Fillmore saw modality as a complementary constituent to the proposition in sentence struc-ture. He defined the proposition as the 'tenseless set of relationships involving verbs and nouns' (Fillmore 1968: 23). All other elements of the sentence, that is negation, tense, mood and aspect, would accord-ingly belong to modality. He thus offers the following formula to define the constituency of a sentence:

(1) Sentence → Modality + Proposition (Fillmore 1968: 24)

This is almost exactly the kind of bipartition of the sentence that we find with Masuoka (1991), and Masuoka does acknowledge Fillmore's influence (Masuoka 1991: 45). On the other hand, it should be taken into account that Fillmore was not researching modality: his goal was to clarify the concept of proposition on the way towards introducing his theory of case grammar, and not the concept of modality itself. As Fillmore himself admitted, 'the exact nature of modality may be ignored for our purposes' (Fillmore 1968: 24).

1.4   Roots of the concept II: *Chinjutsu-ron* 'Predication theory'

1.4.1   The development of the concept – Yamada Yoshio

We saw in the preceding section that the modality concept in Japanese linguistics could indeed be thought of as an offspring of its Western counterpart, or, to be more precise, a very particular choice among the

many concepts of modality available in Western linguistics. However, under closer scrutiny it turns out that this is a rash conclusion. In fact, all the elements of the Japanese linguistics *modariti* concept as espoused by Masuoka and Nitta were already in place much earlier. Beyond that, although the term *modariti* was virtually unknown until recently, a lot of research was done in the same area, but under a different label, namely *chinjutsu-ron* 'predication theory'.

The term *chinjutsu* ('predication') was coined by one of the great founding figures of modern Japanese linguistics, Yamada Yoshio (1873–1958). He was strongly influenced by state-of-the-art English and German grammars of his time, in particular J. C. A. Heyse's *Deutsche Grammatik*, which appeared in numerous editions from 1814, and Sweet's *New English Grammar* appearing in 1891. These scholars were concerned with the nature of the sentence (or clause) as a unit of thought, and grammatically as the linking of two major obligatory elements, the subject and the predicate. Heyse identified the verb as the centre of the sentence/clause (the German term *Satz* has both meanings). The most important function of a sentence/clause is predication (*Aussage*), and the element of the sentence/clause that bears the predication is the verb (Heyse 1868: 248f.). This understanding of *Aussage* 'predication' is the basis for Yamada's term *chinjutsu*. Sweet defined the sentence as 'the expression of a complete thought or meaning' (Sweet 1900 [1891]: 155), and Heyse likewise viewed a sentence/clause as 'a complete, coherent and independently understandable predication or utterance of a thought' (Heyse 1868: 248). Yamada, in principle, agrees when he writes: 'A clause is a thought that presents itself by borrowing the outer shape of language' (Yamada 1908: 1187; cf. also ibid.: 1165–6 discussing Sweet and Heyse).

Yamada, however, could not be satisfied with the idea of a sentence/clause that strictly presupposes a subject and a predicate, since in Japanese subjects are simply too frequently omitted, and there are many sentences consisting of only one word. He thus felt the need to add a different, psychological dimension to the definition of sentence and he sought it in the theory of Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920), the first psycholinguist. There Yamada found a psychological concept applied to grammar, namely that of 'apperception' (cf. Eschbach-Szabó 1989). For Wundt, sentences/clauses are 'the linguistic expression of the willful structuring of a total conception into units which stand in logical relationships to each other' (Wundt 1900: 240). Apperception (which, from a subjective perspective, is equal to 'attention' (*Aufmerk-samkeit*)) is the psychological process responsible for the integration

and structuring of various elements that make up conceptions (Wundt 1900: 244f.). This 'apperception' can then operate in all kinds of sentences, even if superficially incomplete, as long as they form a complete thought. Following this idea, for Yamada, *chinjutsu* ('predication') is the apperceptive role of predicates (verbs and adjectives) in predicative (declarative, interrogative, imperative) clauses (cf. Yamada 1908: 1238f.). Sweet, on the other hand, saw moods as forms expressing relations between subject and predicate in sentence formation. He defined 'moods' as 'forms expressing different relations between subject and predicate' (Sweet 1900 [1891]: 105). Here we might construe a connection between apperception, predication and modality (moods), but Yamada himself did not make this connection. For Yamada, the fundamental question related to 'predication' (*chinjutsu*) was how clauses are formed.

Yamada's concept was eagerly taken up by other linguists and shifted in diverse directions. Miyake (1934) distinguishes himself from many other scholars that have explored *chinjutsu* through his relatively scientific approach to the description of the Japanese language, which is based on phonological analysis. Like Yamada, he also sees *chinjutsu* in predicative clause types, but unlike Yamada, Miyake essentially sees it as an element at sentence level and not at clause level (adnominal clauses, for him, have no *chinjutsu*; cf. Miyake 1934: 18). Thus, for Miyake, *chinjutsu* is what makes a sentence a sentence. Also, in an innovative step that is more advanced than even many of his successors in *chinjutsu* theory, he sees the locus of *chinjutsu* ('predication') not in the (lexical) verb itself, like Yamada, but in the inflectional endings of the verbs, in sentence-final particles and in sentence intonation (Miyake 1934: 23f.). Mio (1939) raised awareness of the fact that Yamada's *chinjutsu* concept may be too broad and unspecific. He suggested dividing it into 'clause integrating function' (*tōitsu sayō*) and 'judgement function' (*dantei sayō*), which operates on top of the 'clause integrating function', thus creating two layers. It is the latter which is the true *chinjutsu* ('predication') (Mio 1939: 77f.). With this division between 'clause integration' and 'judgement', Mio already indicates what would be the main point in Watanabe's *chinjutsu* theory (see below).

1.4.2   The Tokiedan turn towards subjectivity

The *chinjutsu* concept of Yamada and his pre-war successors was concerned with what makes a clause a clause, and later, a sentence a sentence. It is thus related to sentence moods, but hardly to a specific

grammatical category. It was Motoki Tokieda and his successors who gave the concept an entirely new twist and who, still under the name of *chinjutsu* ('predication'), moulded the concept of *modariti* in current Japanese linguistics which is fundamentally based on the idea of subjectivity.[3]

Tokieda (1900–67), who is often viewed as one of a triad of the most influential scholars in the history of National Language Studies together with Yamada and Hashimoto Shinkichi, came forward with a new subjectivized view of language as a process which, in principle, can only be investigated through introspection. He strongly opposed objectivist Western linguistics, and revealed a fervent nationalism in his writings. Although it may be possible to interpret his theories purely from a linguistic viewpoint, they can arguably only be fully understood against the political and social milieu of his time. As the Japanologist Günther Wenck once put it,

> The Japanese nationalism of the later 1930s, which was not a political movement only, could not be content without some substantial connection between the Japanese language and the Japanese mind. The objective of Japanese language studies had to shift from linguistic structure [with Hashimoto] to the psychological and cultural character of the language, and it seems to have been on this tide that arose Tokieda's theory of language as a process. (Wenck 1989: 10)

Tokieda saw language primarily as the activity of the speaking subject (Tokieda 1950: section 1.3). He divided all morphemes (*go*) into 'objective' *shi* (contents words) and 'subjective' *ji* (function words). The subjective *ji* express the speaker's judgement, while the *shi* express objective conceptual contents of things and states of affairs (Tokieda 1950: ch. 2). In the structure of clauses, a *shi* is always followed by a *ji*, thus forming 'nested boxes' structures. If no overt *ji* is given, a zero-*ji* has to be posited (Tokieda 1950: ch. 3). For him, it is the subjective *ji* that have the predicative (*chinjutsu*) function, and not the predicates, which represent objective material (Tokieda 1941: 334). That is, *chinjutsu* can, in principle, be identified with subjectivity.

Note that for Tokieda, unlike Yamada, *chinjutsu* is not important to explain what makes a clause a clause, or a sentence a sentence (he has a different term for that element, namely *kanketsusei* ('completion'). The concept is about the speaker's expression in the sentence. While the idea of predication itself goes back to Yamada, the idea to identify predication with a specific set of dependent morphemes, and at the same

time to identify those morphemes with subjectivity is clearly not something intended by Yamada. However, this idea has become the most fundamental idea behind the concept of *modariti* in modern Japanese linguistics. In this sense, the representative concepts of modality in modern Japanese linguistics, as espoused by Masuoka and Nitta, can be labelled appropriately as Tokiedan.

From a purely linguistic point of view, the attraction of Tokieda's model of language structure rests both in the elegance of its simplicity and in its theoretical consequence. The price that is paid for these merits is counterintuitive analyses and the apparent mismatch with actual language data. Tokieda's language model is therefore often compared to generative grammar in its earlier stages. Representative examples for problematic analyses are the so-called zero-*ji*, which the theory requires when no overt *ji* appears in the actual clause structure. Also, the idea that the subjective expression of the speaker is tied up with specific morpheme classes was controversial from the outset (cf. e.g. Mikami 1972 [1959]: 115f.).[4]

1.4.3   *Chinjutsu-ron* at its height

Despite obvious shortcomings, the 'predication theory' of the Tokiedan brand continued its advance. Watanabe Minoru set an influential milestone in 1953 when he differentiated *chinjutsu* as a subjective and communicative (hearer-oriented) function expressed mainly by sentence-final particles and concluding a sentence, from *jojutsu* (also 'predication') as clause integration expressed mainly by the predicate. Grammatically speaking, it is *jojutsu* which is closer to Yamada's original *chinjutsu*, since Yamada's *chinjutsu* is identified with the predicate in the (potentially subordinate) clause. Watanabe thus liberates *chinjutsu* from its predicative function for purer subjective expression in the Tokiedan sense. Watanabe, while Tokiedan in principle, also brings about a synthesis between Yamada and Tokieda, since he articulates the syntactic role of *chinjutsu* in sentence formation in the sense of the former and simultaneously emphasizes its subjective nature in the sense of the latter.

While the mainstream of Japanese linguistics and most scholars working on 'predication theory' at this time had strong nationalistic leanings, and seemingly developed their ideas independent of Western linguistics, other scholars framed the same or a similar idea in terms of concepts developed by the Swiss linguist Charles Bally. Bally, a scholar of French language, advocated the bipartition of sentence elements into *dictum*

and *modus*. The former is the sentence contents, the latter the expression of the speaking subject. It should be noted, however, that this concept of *modus* does not bear much similarity to modality in the modern sense and is also not exactly identical to the Japanese *chinjutsu* concept. Bally primarily identifies the locus of the *modus* in a sentence with verbs of emotion and judgement and their overt and covert subjects (Bally 1965 [1932]: 36f.). Bally's linguistic thought was introduced to Japan through translations and articles from the late 1920s on by Hideo Kobayashi, and is widely cited by some of the authors associated with *chinjutsu-ron* ('predication theory'). However, his ideas were not read and adopted in any detail, and those who cite Bally make it clear that they have learned about his ideas not from his original writings but through the filtering of these by Kobayashi. One of the major scholars who cited Bally in the *chinjutsu* debate in fact made the embarrassing mistake of identifying *modus* with the objective component and *dictum* with the subjective component (Kindaichi 1953: 34). It appears that the reference to Bally mainly fulfilled two functions. First, it served as an inspiration, as Bally seemed to confirm that the Japanese intuitions about objective vs subjective contents in the language have a broader foundation in linguistics. Second, it allowed those scholars who did not identify with the nationalistic linguistic tradition of Tokieda and Watanabe (such as Mikami and Kindaichi; see below) to use different terminology for the same or similar concepts, thus indicating a more open- or internationally minded approach.[5]

Important scholars referring to Bally in their concept of *chinjutsu* include Yasushi Haga and Akira Mikami. Mikami adopted the *dictum* vs *modus* bipartition (1972 [1953]: 20; 1972 [1959]: 116) and related the *modus* part to 'moods' (a term rarely used in Japanese linguistics until then). The moods, such as finite mood or imperative mood, are identified with specific inflectional verb forms and particles (Mikami 1972 [1959]: 123–7). Mikami also pointed forward to Masuoka's *modariti* concept by including topics in the *modus* part of the sentence. Haga (1954, 1982) also adopted the *dictum* vs *modus* bipartition, but most importantly he distinguished two types of 'predication', judgemental predication (*jutteiteki chinjutsu*) and communicative predication (*dentatsuteki chinjutsu*) (Haga 1954: 58; he later also used the terms 'modus' of judgement and 'modus' of communication, Haga 1982: 44–6). Both *modi* (or types of predication) are associated with specific sentence types. Haruhiko Kindaichi (1953) proposed a different classification of objective vs subjective linguistic expressions from Tokieda when he acknowledged subjectivity only for non-inflecting suffixes. He

identified his new classification with Bally's *dictum* vs *modus*, as filtered by Kobayashi.

Crucially, at this point in time, and specifically with Haga (1954), all the fundamental elements of modality in modern Japanese linguistics as represented by Masuoka and Nitta are already in place. There is the bipartition of the clause, in which one part is identified with the expression of the speaker's attitude. Furthermore, there is the distinction between contents-oriented elements and hearer-oriented elements within the elements expressing the speaker's attitude, corresponding to Nitta's *contents-directed modality* and *utterance/communication modality*. The only element that is still missing now is the very label *modality* to replace the older labels *chinjutsu* and *modus*.

1.4.4   The turn towards *modariti*

The last links to modern *modariti* can be found in the linguistics of the 1960s and 1970s. First, models of a layered structure of a clause, as the one used by Nitta, were espoused by the likes of Shirō Hayashi (1960) and Fujio Minami (1964, 1974). Thus it was made explicit that *chinjutsu* or *modus*-type of sentence elements form an outer layer to the contents-oriented elements (in principle, this was already implied by Tokieda and Watanabe). Uyeno (1971), as mentioned above, was probably the first to use the term *modality* for Japanese (Yamaoka 2000: 73). She did so in an English piece of writing, but the understanding behind it is in the Japanese tradition, since she uses the term very broadly for particles, sentence types, modal suffixes and so on, without providing a definition. Suzuki (1972: 44) is the first to use the term in Japanese. He defines it as 'the attitude of the speaker towards reality and the hearer'. Okuda (1985: 240) similarly uses *modus* as the speaker's expression of the relationship between sentence contents and reality; according to him, *modus* is obligatory for every sentence. The idea of the relationship of sentence contents to reality as a central part of modality is neither original nor home-grown in Japan. It goes back to Vinogradov's writings from the 1940s and 1950s, and was expounded in detail in the Russian academy grammar of 1980 (cf. Kristophson 1994). Okuda and Suzuki were central members of the Linguistic Study Group (*Gengogaku Kenkyūkai*). This group, being originally Marxist and oriented towards Soviet linguistics, only had outsider status within the social dynamics of the field of National Language Studies, which has always had a diametrically opposed political orientation. Their studies of the Japanese

language were groundbreaking but can hardly be called representative of the field, because they were shunned and until recently did not earn full recognition.

In contrast, Hideo Teramura is a scholar who, although coming from English linguistics, in hindsight formed part of the mainstream of Japanese linguistics. He is also the one scholar who had the most direct influence on Masuoka and Nitta. Teramura, in keeping with Japanese tradition, espoused a bipartition of the clause into objective and subjective elements, labelled as *koto* 'things' and *mūdo* 'mood' respectively (Teramura 1982: 51). He further divided *mūdo* into contents-oriented and hearer-oriented (ibid.: 60). Probably the first person to use the very term *modariti* in the current sense as related to a bipartition of the clause was Nakau (1979). In the 1980s, a build-up towards the explosion of publications from 1989 on is visible, including papers by Masuoka and Nitta. At this stage, the terms *mūdo* 'mood' (Teramura) and *modariti* 'modality' (Nakau) still vary with each other.

Conversely, the concept *chinjutsu* recedes into the background. In 1990, traditionally minded Keisuke Onoe bemoans: '*Chinjutsu-ron*, which was a hot commodity until just 12 or 13 years ago is lying unsold on the shelves now for no apparent reason. Even if it is still sometimes touched upon, its original spirit is forgotten, and it is reduced to the discussion of modality, or to a practical means to arrange sentence-final word forms' (Onoe 1990: 16).

Having all elements so clearly already in place from the early 1950s, one may justifiably ask: 'What was new, after all, with the *nihongo-gaku* approach and *modariti* in the late 1980s? How could it cause such an explosion in research activities?'

As argued above, contents-wise the concept of modality brought to the fore in the 1980s by Masuoka, Nitta and others could hardly be called revolutionary. The reason for its success instead can only be sought in social and psychological factors. The act of establishing a new English category labelling indicated a shift towards an international attitude towards research and the opening-up of an academic field that until then had been exclusive and narrow in many respects. This alone may have been enough to set free new energies. Also, the recognition of grammatical categories as such was not common in Japanese linguistics, which tended to focus on the study of individual morphemes and, with the notable exception of the Linguistic Study Group centring on Okuda and Suzuki, mentioned above, even to deny the existence of categories such as tense, aspect and mood for Japanese (note that *chinjutsu*

is not a grammatical category). The notion of grammatical categories only started to become mainstream in the 1980s with papers such as Nitta (1985).

The most decisive factor, however, appears to be the overall social situation surrounding Japanese language studies. Until the 1970s this was a mostly self-contained field preoccupied with theoretical issues and with strong conservative, if not nationalist, leanings. The field itself was called *kokugo-gaku* or 'National Language Studies', and many scholars of the field strictly distinguished themselves from 'linguists'. Yamada was a key figure in the nationalistic education policies of the 1930s and 1940s, while Tokieda repeatedly repudiated Western linguistics and provided the ideological basis for the linguistic colonialization of Korea (the imposition of the Japanese language on the Korean people) in wartime (cf. Yasuda 1997). Even after the war, this did little harm to their reputation in the field, showing that their ultranationalistic leanings were potentially shared by a large majority of scholars devoting themselves to the same field of study.

However, new challenges arose in the 1980s with the increasing influx of foreign students into Japan who were in need of Japanese language education. 'Internationalization' (*kokusaika*) was one of the most significant keywords in Japanese politics and society of the 1980s and 1990s. The 'National Language Studies' tradition, with its indifference towards language description and its low regard for modern language as opposed to classical language, was simply unable to respond to the practical needs arising then. The new generation of *nihongo-gaku* 'Japanese Language Studies',[6] as represented by Masuoka and Nitta, not only used new, internationally oriented category labels, but were also committed to a decidedly descriptive orientation and to modern language. The area of modality, in turn, as conceptualized by Masuoka and Nitta, and in keeping with Japanese tradition, is so large that it comprises a wide area of grammar that is highly important for language description, and also highly relevant to language teaching, especially a language teaching which has to deal not only with rules of grammar but also with actual language use.

1.4.5   Conclusion of the historical overview

As conclusion of the preceding two sections, it should have become clear that the concept of *modariti* in Japanese language studies is in fact the product of an original development. The biggest influences from outside are not Lyons and Fillmore, as it might seem superficially, but

rather Sweet, Heyse, Wundt and Bally. Their concepts were, however, not simply imported, but transformed in a way that would help Japanese scholars to formulate intuitions that they shared about their own language.

Furthermore, although not explicitly discussed so far, it should have become clear that *modariti* in Japanese language studies cannot be equated with *modality* in modern general linguistics. A different spelling appears to be not only justified but also appropriate. *Modariti* to a large extent is the continuation of the 'predication' (*chinjutsu*) concept (Tokieda's, not Yamada's) formed within Japan. *Chinjutsu* is probably the most important concept in the history of Japanese grammar studies. As Onoe (2001: 265) writes, 'One can say that grammar theory in National Language Studies was developed around the concept of and from the perspective of [*chinjutsu*].'

The current *modariti* concept is therefore a mixture of the concept of a grammatical category, namely one which supposedly serves the expression of the speaker's attitude, and the answer to the question of what makes a sentence a sentence. This view is motivated by facts pertaining to Japanese language structure, where particles expressing the speaker's attitude and her or his orientation towards the hearer feature prominently. It is quite different indeed from most concepts of modality in general linguistics. Prevalent concepts of modality in general and English linguistics, where notions such as necessity and possibility, or factuality, or *realis/irrealis* are often central, have played little role in *modariti* studies. Arguably, in English linguistics, consciously or unconsciously, the modals have served as the model, or the prototype, for the linguistic expression of modality. Japanese also has linguistic expressions that correspond to the modals, and at least some of them are also viewed as being part of *modariti*. However, it is the illocutionary force-modulating sentence-final particles which appear to be grammatically more salient and to which definitions of Japanese modality apply best. Thus, there is a clear discrepancy between the focal points of the *modariti* concept in Japanese and modality in general linguistics.

1.5   Merits and problems of the dominant model

The preceding sections discussed the dominant concept of *modariti* in modern Japanese linguistics and its roots in Japanese and Western linguistic traditions. The merit of this concept, which is represented by Masuoka and Nitta, is already documented by its huge success. This success is mainly due to the fact that despite its English name, it seamlessly

continues the linguistic traditions of Japan and it matches intuitions that many native-speaker scholars share about their language. Also, while in Western linguistics emphasis is usually placed on a certain rigour of definition and analysis, the *modariti* concepts are decisively vague, leaving room for various interpretations. Thus, while Masuoka and Nitta both understand modality in terms of speaker's attitude, the actual linguistic categories that they believe to be part of the expression of the speaker's attitude differ to an extreme degree. Arguably, then, the success of the model can be ascribed exactly to the fact that this vague concept of modality places few constraints on scholars with respect to the subject or the methods of research. It is, so to speak, a big house in which everybody can live.

Arguably, this vagueness and vastness of the dominant *modariti* concept is at the same time its biggest shortcoming as well. It is highly questionable whether a linguistic category or a set of specific linguistic forms can be defined through subjectivity or speaker's attitudes (cf. Harada 1999, Onoe 2001, Narrog 2002). Research in many languages, including Japanese, shows that the speaker's attitude is expressed throughout the sentence, and not confined to specific form classes or grammatical categories (cf. Narrog 2005b). Furthermore, *modariti* conflates various categories that are treated separately in general linguistics (modality, illocutionary force modulation, politeness, tense, information structure and so on). The broader the category is defined, encompassing a large number of different subcategories that have little in common with each other, the more meaningless it becomes as a category label. Finally, it is at least dubious whether there is a specific layer in the sentence that can be identified with a specific category 'modality'. Modal markers occupy at least two or three positions in sentence structure, interspersed by other categories, such as tense and negation (Narrog 2009).

These and some other problematic aspects of the dominant model have been noted by many scholars inside and outside Japan. The following section is devoted to research that takes a different approach to modality in Japanese.

1.6   Alternative approaches

So far in this chapter, the dominant approach to modality in Japanese linguistics, which is based on the concept of subjectivism, as developed in the *chinjutsu* theory up to the 1950s, has been identified with only the work of two scholars, Masuoka and Nitta. Of course, this is a gross simplification. Other scholars who have shared essentially the

same view, although from different perspectives, and who have contributed substantially to *modariti* research from early on, include Takurō Moriyama, Hisashi Noda or Kazuhito Miyazaki. In a closer study of contemporary modality research, their contributions would merit broader exposition than can be given here. The following sections instead briefly introduce the contemporary work of a number of scholars inside and outside Japan who take a critical stance towards the dominant Tokiedan subjectivity-based *modariti* concept and espouse alternative theories. They can be divided into those who work within the framework of traditional Japanese linguistics (section 1.6.1), and those with a general linguistic orientation (section 1.6.2).

1.6.1   Alternative approaches informed by the Japanese tradition

Ever since the new descriptively and practically oriented movement that can be identified with the label of *nihongo-gaku* ('Japanese language studies') started to conquer the field in the 1980s, the traditional National Language Studies have receded into the background. However, individual scholars with a more explicitly tradition-conscious stance have still remained influential. In their view, the descriptive approach that has nowadays virtually monopolized the field of modality is theoretically dissatisfying, if not simply superficial. Keisuke Onoe is a scholar who prominently not only has given a voice to such dissatisfaction, but who has also come up with an alternative model, namely that of *johōron* ('modal theory') (Onoe 2001). He is followed by some other scholars, such as Kawamura (2002).

Onoe, in criticizing *modariti* theory, points out that the equation of modality with subjectivity is highly problematic. First, this use of the term of modality is not compatible with 'modality' in general linguistics, and second it is impossible to divide linguistic forms into objective and subjective ones (Onoe 2001: 432, 445, 485). Also, *modariti-ron* is unable to explain in a systematic way the polysemous behaviour of modal markers that may have meanings stretching across different semanto-syntactic layers (ibid.: 437f., 483f.; Onoe 2004: 51f.).

Onoe himself defines modality as 'the meanings expressed by predicative forms (*juttei keishiki*) that describe an irrealis state of affairs' (Onoe 2001: 454). Onoe's definition thus contains two major elements. The first is *irrealis* meaning. The idea that *irrealis* is central to modality is not uncommon in general linguistics, in contrast to Japanese linguistics. Onoe in particular identifies himself with the cognitive grammar

approach of Langacker, and Langacker indeed also shares the view that modality is defined by *irrealis* meaning.[7] The second element central to Onoe's definition, the 'predicative forms', are peculiar to his own theory. They refer to so-called auxiliaries (*jodōshi*) in Japanese school grammar and complex endings (*fukugobi*) in Yamada's grammar. According to Onoe, these predicative forms correspond to certain basic types of predication (*nobekata*) and express various meanings in correlation to the syntactic position in which they are used. They can be identified with 'mood' in the Western sense (cf. Onoe 2001: 439). Crucially, while the mainstream approach sees modality as an element outside the proposition, wrapped around the proposition like layers of an onion, Onoe, in a shift back to Yamada's idea of predication, sees the locus of modality within the predicate, the auxiliaries (or complex endings) being part of the predicate.

Onoe's critique of the mainstream approach is fully appropriate. His idea of locating modality again in the predicate is intriguing, and the observation that modal forms take different meanings in correlation to syntactic functions is important. As a theory of modality however, Onoe's *johōron* is not yet fully developed. One major issue that still has to be dealt with is the relationship between the supposed mood forms and modality as a whole, since modality can also be expressed outside the predicate, for example in adverbs. The second problem is how Onoe's predicative forms can be identified morphosyntactically. Onoe seems to identify them with the *jodōshi* in traditional grammar, but the morpheme analysis on which terms such as *mizenkei* or *jodōshi* are based has long been shown to be linguistically unfounded (cf. Suzuki 1978, Narrog 1998, and others). It is also not clear how periphrastic forms such as *ka-mo shirenai* (epistemic possibility) are to be integrated into the predicative forms, if at all.

The names of two scholars should be mentioned who, in principle, share the same critical stance towards the mainstream from a tradition-conscious perspective, but who in their argumentation remain independent of Onoe. Nomura (2003) critically focuses on the concept of subjectivity. He rejects the equation subjectivity = modality on the grounds that subjectivity is an epistemological category and not a grammatical one. He thus maintains that subjectivity and modality are mutually independent categories. For him, there are both objective and subjective types of modality, which is defined as the expression of the relationship between sentence contents and reality (cf. also Nomura 2004). Ōshika (1999, 2004) views modality from the perspective of sentence formation. For him, epistemic modality lies at the core of

the category, and he sees the possibility of interrogation as the most fundamental criterion for the classification of moods.

The scholars mentioned above all have one thing in common, namely that they see themselves in the tradition of Yamada and his predication theory, as opposed to the dominant Tokiedan approach. However, one can also take the opposite direction, and take the Tokiedan tradition of equating modality with subjectivity to its full consequence. This is what Senko Maynard did when she coined the term 'discourse modality' and defined it as 'the speaker's subjective, emotional, mental or psychological attitude toward the message content, the speech act itself or toward his or her interlocutor in discourse' (Maynard 1993: 38). Final particles and discourse markers constitute the core of discourse modality. Maynard thus manages to solve the contradiction that mars the mainstream approach, which includes in its notion of modality both discourse markers and equivalents of modal verbs, mixing up a wide range of categories of various and unclear degrees of subjectivity.

1.6.2   Alternative approaches informed by general linguistics

Besides the mainstream in Japanese linguistics, and a smaller group of scholars who firmly identify themselves with the Japanese tradition but are critical of the mainstream, some scholars inside and outside Japan take a third stance by orienting themselves towards general linguistics. One group of such scholars has already been mentioned, namely the Linguistic Study Group (*Gengogaku Kenkyūkai*) centred around Okuda, who oriented themselves towards Soviet linguistics. With respect to modality, their tradition has been continued mainly by Hiroshi Kudō, who identifies himself less specifically with Soviet linguistics than with traditional European grammar in general (e.g. Kudō 1989, 2005) as well as Mayumi Kudō (e.g. Kudō 2004, 2006), who presents herself as a direct successor of the linguistics of Okuda, but also takes into account recent research in English-language linguistics. The stance towards modality of Hiroshi Kudō and Mayumi Kudō is very similar. Both see modality as part of a broader concept of 'predicativity' (*chinjutsu-sei*), which also includes other categories such as temporality. They follow Vinogradov's concept of modality as 'the grammatical expression of the relationship between the sentence contents, reality, and the relationship [of the speaker] to the hearer from the speaker's point of view', as also adopted by Okuda (cf. Kudō 1989: 14, Kudō 2004: 3, 15). The central concern in this view of modality is the interface between grammatical form,

semantic contents and communication that is found most saliently in different sentence types. Therefore, the notion of *chinjutsu*, in Yamada's sense of what makes a sentence a sentence, or what integrates a sentence, is also highly relevant for this approach (cf. Kudō 1989: 16f.). Unlike the dominant approach to *chinjutsu* and *modariti* in the Tokiedan tradition, a broad range of lexical, syntactical and morphological devices are identified with the expression of modality, including 'objective' modality (for example, alethic and deontic modality), emotive expressions and evidentials. Thus, in a sense different from the mainstream approach, the Kudōs also espouse a broad view of modality that is characterized primarily by its deliberate lack of distinction between grammar and pragmatics.

Harada (1999) and Johnson (2003) define Japanese modality in terms of traditional logically oriented English linguistics, that is with the axes of necessity and possibility on the one hand, and epistemicity and deonticity on the other. Johnson also integrates a specific notion of 'degree of modality' into the dimension of epistemic modality. For her, the lower the degree of the speaker's conviction (weak possibility), the higher the degree of modality. That is, epistemic necessity is lower in modality than epistemic possibility (Johnson 2003: 105, 116f.). Within Japanese linguistics in Japan, however, approaches like this, based on the approach to modality in English linguistics, have struggled to take hold.

Another possible way to investigate Japanese modality is from a cross-linguistic or typological perspective. This assumes that it is more profitable to investigate Japanese with a model that is valid for as many languages as possible, also allowing for comparison across languages, than to adhere to a peculiar concept developed specifically for Japanese, or to apply a concept that is particularly suitable for English. Definitions of verbal categories in typological research can only be based on semantics, and not on syntax. Subjectivity, which is a pragmatic rather than semantic concept, is certainly not an appropriate candidate to define a category cross-linguistically, since it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to identify subjectivity with a particular set of linguistic expressions even in a single language (cf. above). Much better candidates are the concepts of factuality or validity, or actuality of the proposition (Chung and Timberlake 1985, Kiefer 1987, 1997, Narrog 2005b). This concept allows modality to be confined to a specific area of grammar, distinguishing it from illocutionary force (cf. Dik 1997, Van Valin and LaPolla 1997), tense, politeness and so on, which are viewed as categories in their own right. Narrog (2005a) proposed a cross-linguistic model for modality for the formulation of which Japanese data play an

important role. He set up two dimensions along which modality differs. One dimension is volitivity (cf. Jespersen 1992 [1924], Heine 1995). Modal categories are categorized by the presence (e.g. deontic modality) or absence (e.g. epistemic modality) of it. The other dimension is event orientation vs speaker orientation (comparable to (inter)subjectivity in the sense of Traugott (1989) and Traugott and Dasher (2002)), a dimension that is crucial for diachronic change, which always goes in the direction of speaker orientation. Note that (inter)subjectivity is taken as a descriptive dimension of modality but not as its defining element. This model has been applied to both the synchrony (Narrog 2009), and diachronic change of modal markers in Japanese (Narrog 2007).

1.7   Conclusion

In this chapter, an overview was given about the historical development of modality studies in Japan and the current state of affairs. It was pointed out that the concept of *modariti* in Japanese linguistics cannot be equated with modality as a grammatical category in general linguistics. The currently dominant concept is the result of a unique development within Japan which reflects both the tradition of linguistic discussion within Japan and the intuitions of many Japanese scholars about what is salient in their language. At the same time, the problematic equation of modality as a grammatical category with subjectivity, which forms the basis of the *modariti* concept, has repeatedly led to criticism and to the development of alternative approaches, both from within the Japanese tradition and from more general linguistic points of view.

As was already mentioned above, the issue of *chinjutsu* 'predication' and its successor *modariti* in the conscience of many scholars is *the* defining issue in the history of Japanese grammar studies. An important point that has emerged here, although it could not be fully developed, is that the history of these concepts (and possibly of important ideas in linguistics in general) cannot be completely understood without reference to their social contexts, both inside and outside academia. The concept of *chinjutsu* 'predication' and its successor *modariti* would be excellent material for a case study in linguistic politics, especially in the light of its importance for the Japanese linguistic community. The same philosophically laden concept that was at some point associated with an anti-rationalistic and intensely nationalistic language ideology (note that Tokieda used his own 'language as process' language

theory in his ideological writings to justify the linguistic colonialization of Korea (cf. Yasuda 1997: ch. 5)), was reformulated and relabelled[8] as *modariti* at times when the needs of society and academic life demanded 'internationalization' and down-to-earth language description and teaching. It is certainly tempting, and entirely possible, to describe these developments purely as a history of linguistic ideas, but on a deeper level such an approach cannot explain why these ideas and the way they are formulated emerged and succeeded (or failed). From a purely scientific point of view, it is hard to see why Tokieda's concept of *chinjutsu* should be superior to Miyake's, or why the current mainstream approach to *modariti* should be superior to that of Okuda/Kudō. On the contrary, in describing sentence-final predication Miyake is more scientific than Tokieda, and as a notion of 'modality' as a grammatical category Okuda/Kudō's concept is more appropriate than Masuoka/Nitta's. Arguably, the most successful linguistic concept at each time in history is not necessarily the one that is scientifically most outstanding, but rather the one that suits best the social and academic climate in the communities where it evolves and thus finds the strongest resonance.

Nowadays, the field of modality studies is vast in Japan and, as was shown in this chapter, scholars of different persuasions and with different backgrounds participate in it and influence it from outside the mainstream. More and more scholars are both willing and able to seriously confront domestically grown ideas with general linguistic ideas. Masuoka, who is one of the pioneers of the opening-up process from the 1980s and who has been portrayed in this chapter as a representative of the current dominant approach, has recently taken his concept of modality in a direction that is more compatible with general linguistic concepts (Masuoka 1999, 2002, this volume). Thus, borderlines crumble, and it is easy to foresee that in ten years from now it will be much more difficult to identify distinct schools of thought and track down their roots. The publication and conference project of which this chapter is a part, by presenting research on Japanese modality in an international context, both documents and promotes this development.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. The romanization system used in this chapter is Hepburn.
2. All quotes from Japanese, German and French are translated into English by the author.
3. It should be noted that the term 'subjectivity' here comprises both 'subjectivity' and 'intersubjectivity' in the modern sense of Traugott and Dasher (2002). In Japanese linguistics, sometimes 'subjectivity' and 'intersubjectivity' are clearly distinguished (Yasushi Haga was presumably the first to do so; see below), and sometimes they are treated under the same label of 'subjectivity' or 'speaker's attitude'.
4. Larm (2008) offers a detailed analysis of the *chinjutsu* concept with Yamada, Mio, Miyake and Tokieda.
5. There are at least two good indications for this assumption. First, Mikami and Kindaichi used the terms *dictum* and *modus* at points in their argumentation where they criticize the concepts of Tokieda and/or Watanabe. Second, Mikami and Kindaichi were at least temporarily associated with the Marxist Linguistic Study Group, indicating a completely different (and possibly internationalist) academic orientation from the more famous proponents of *chinjutsu-ron*.
6. The concept of 'Japanese Language Studies' as opposed to 'National Language Studies' is not a novelty. It goes back to the 1930s (cf. Yasuda 2006: ch. 3). However, from the 1980s *Kokugo-gaku* has started to be absorbed into *nihongo-gaku*.
7. 'A modal indicates that the profiled process is not accepted as part of reality' (Langacker 2003: 12). The connection of modality with *irrealis*, instead of subjectivity, is also emphasized in Japanese linguists' interpretation of Langacker (cf. Tsuboi 2004: 247–8).
8. It was not claimed in this chapter, however, that *chinjutsu* and *modariti* are identical. It is only a specific concept of *chinjutsu* which was transformed into the concept of *modariti* in the 1980s. Some scholars still use both terms simultaneously.

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