

Discourse Modality: Subjectivity, Emotion, and Voice in the Japanese Language by Senko Maynard. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1993. x + 315 pp.

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While it has been the mainstream approach in Western linguistics to provide a logical and rational analysis of propositions of language, as represented by Chomskyan linguists, some researchers have examined other aspects of language extending beyond propositional meanings, such as social interaction (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), language socialization (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Clancy, 1986), subjectivity (Benveniste, 1971; Kuroda, 1973), and speech acts (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). Following this latter type of linguistic study, Maynard (1993) proposes the framework of her non-propositional-based "Discourse Modality" (hereafter DM) as a device for analyzing language. In this framework, Maynard views language as a means of communicating the speaker's psychological position towards the proposition in discourse and interaction; this is characterized as "Discourse Modality." In *Discourse Modality*, this new framework is introduced in Chapters 1 and 2, and the next five chapters are dedicated to the examination of five types of linguistic devices in Japanese which are considered by Maynard to function mainly as reflections of the speaker's various personal voices. Throughout the book, Maynard claims that her framework, based on an interactive and discourse contextual analysis, can shed new light on previously puzzling language phenomena.

Chapter 1 discusses the three "modal" characteristics of language: interactionality (i.e., language as an activity, namely socialization, between the speaker and the interlocutor), subjectivity (i.e., language as an expression of the speaker's inner self), and textuality (i.e., language as a cohesive unit of discourse). Among these three characteristics, subjectivity is treated by Maynard as only existing in relation to interactionality. However, in my opinion, a few subjective expressions, such as interjections, do not seem to necessarily require any interaction with an interlocutor. Adopting the view of language as "interaction-based, subjectivity-conscious and textuality-bound," Maynard claims to uncover "non-propositional information which includes the expressions of subjectivity, emotion and voice of the speaking self" (p. 21). However, she does not provide a clear definition of the latter three elements, which also appear in the book's sub-title.

Chapter 2 provides a brief overview of several historical studies on modality and introduces the framework of DM. Recognizing the previous studies on

modality both in the West (Benveniste, 1971; Lyons, 1981) and in Japan (Suzuki, 1979, 1824; Tokieda, 1941) and additionally integrating speech acts and other interactive aspects of language, Maynard defines DM 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” (p. 38). In this framework, DM is conveyed by DM indicators which take specific linguistic forms at various levels from local (i.e., lexical items) to broad (i.e., discourse style), but which primarily express the speaker’s various attitudes. According to Maynard, DM indicators achieve a maximum of four aspects (i.e., information qualification, speech action declaration and qualification, participatory control, and interactional appeal) and create a “modal” context in the scene, summarized as Modal Contextualization effects.

The four aspects of DM discussed above are well categorized and contain specific sub-categories which cover a wide range of speech phenomena (e.g., perspective and epistemology under *information qualification*, speaker turns under *participatory control*, and sociolinguistic style under *interactional appeal*). However, one question arises: How would aspects such as the speaker’s evaluation, volition, control, negativity, and expectation, which are not in any of the four categories, be handled? Is it possible to interpret the four categories so loosely that any factor that is not found in the existing taxonomy could fit into it? Secondly, while “personal emotion” is treated under interactional appeal, subjective expressions are not necessarily interactive, as mentioned earlier; therefore, this sub-categorization seems unable to capture the overlapping nature of these characteristics.

Chapter 3 provides an analysis of two connectives, *dakara* ‘so, therefore’ and *datte* ‘but, because.’ According to Maynard, while the direction of the information flow is forward in *dakara* and backward in *datte*, these two connectives are related in propositional meaning; they have a causal relationship with or provide additional information about the previous sentences or discourse. However, their “modal” functions are quite different. *Dakara* generally provides explanatory information in a rather neutral manner and is occasionally used to signal the end of the speaker’s turn or may include a reluctant tone with a repeated request for the information. *Datte*, on the other hand, is used mainly for self-justification, and occurs in an oppositional or challenging situation and, therefore, results in showing the speaker’s negative attitudes. Although Maynard treats *dakara* and *datte* in the very same fashion, both as DM indicators, it seems inappropriate to claim that the primary function of *dakara* is to express the speaker’s personal voice (i.e., attitudes) because of its strong neutral propositional meaning.

Chapter 4 illustrates two adverbs *yahari/yappari* ‘as expected, at any rate’ and *doose* ‘anyway, after all,’ both of which have been traditionally treated differently from manner adverbs. *Yahari/yappari* expresses the speaker’s realized expectations, regardless of their clear mention in prior text or having been built from social knowledge or personal belief. Thus, *yahari/yappari* not only

conveys a high degree of the speaker's confidence in the realized assumptions, but also reveals a logical cohesiveness in the process of transferring an assumption into a realization. However, the assumption that *yahari/yappari* "functions as a conversation filler and planner...and as a dispreference marker" and "ultimately encourages personal rapport based on the shared knowledge" (p. 139) seems dubious because *yahari/yappari* itself implies little interactional quality. According to Maynard's analysis, *doose* functions similarly to *yahari/yappari* in reflecting the speaker's epistemological positioning (i.e., confidence in the occurrence of an event), but *doose* also implies the speaker's fatalistic speculation. The three personal attitudes that Maynard claims that *doose* conveys are surrendering unto fate, confirming fate, and facing fate bravely, the last of which does not seem compatible, due to the strongly resigned implication of a predetermined event entailed by *doose*.

The following chapter discusses the manipulation of two verb-ending forms, *da* or the "abrupt" form in Maynard's terms (often called "informal") and the *desu/masu*, or "formal" form. Focusing on data which contain style mixture, Maynard successfully contrasts each function and provides an in-depth explanation of the motivation for the manipulation of the two styles. According to Maynard, by adopting the *da* style, the speaker marks his/her internal perspective and involvement in a narrative, and, therefore, the *da* ending expresses an informal, casual tone, resulting in the expression of feelings of closeness with the interlocutor as well as belongingness in a group. In contrast, the *desu/masu* form is explained as being used in high awareness situations, such as being conscious of the interlocutor. Thus, although the following is not mentioned in the book, it is assumed that the application of the *desu/masu* style suggests a distance between the speaker and the interlocutor, and, as a natural result, politeness is produced. This chapter contains an excellent analysis of the two dominant forms in verb morphology because the pragmatic and contextual based analysis succeeds in providing a motivation for the traditional dichotomy of "informal" *da* versus "formal" *desu/masu*.

Chapter 6 is another enlightening chapter. Two interactional particles from a group that many scholars have attempted to explain, namely *ne* and *yo*, are discussed in this chapter. Maynard basically claims that *ne* is interaction-focused, while *yo* is information-focused. In her analysis, *ne* primarily functions to encourage the interlocutor's response as well as to solicit confirmation and emotional support, while defocusing the information. Conversely, *yo* fundamentally focuses on information which is requested, while, in so doing, the speaker also interacts with the interlocutor. Maynard claims that the so-called "interactional" particles contain different degrees of interactionality, that is, depending on the degree of interactionality that each particle contains, the main function of a particle may be something other than interactionality, such as information focus in the case of *yo*. Because Maynard's framework allows us to examine a wide range of aspects of non-propositional linguistic phenomena, instead of focusing on one particular aspect, Maynard successfully contrasts the

fundamental functions of different linguistic devices (i.e., *ne* and *yo*) traditionally included in the same category (i.e., interactional particles).

Chapter 7 examines the last DM indicator, *to yuu* '...called X, ...that says X,' a connector of clauses and nouns in complex nominal phrases. While many linguists have discussed when *to yuu* must or cannot occur, Maynard only deals with the cases in which the use of *to yuu* is optional. She claims that, when the speaker intentionally inserts *to yuu* in a nominal clause, the proposition made in the clause resembles directly quoted discourse, thereby demonstrating the vivid effect of "saying" in addition to "describing" the proposition. Furthermore, due to the vividly reflected personal voice, *to yuu* tends to focus on and foreground the proposition. Maynard's findings which are based on a pragmatic and contextual analysis, namely, the choice of *to yuu* as indicating the speaker's manipulation of a narrative voice, seem to overcome many controversial explanations provided by previous studies on *to yuu* (e.g., Terakura, 1980; Teramura, 1981) which were limited to characterizing and/or categorizing the types of clauses and nouns of a nominal phrase.

In Chapter 8, the concluding chapter, Maynard (1993) once again confirms her position of adopting "an emotion- and interaction-based view of language" (p. 276). Defining "voice" as "expressing personal attitude and feeling" and "narrative voice" (p. 260), she concludes that "language, at least some part of its property, serves the primary purpose of expressing subjectivity and emotion" (p. 257), although the connection among the three crucial elements, subjectivity, emotion, and voice, remains unclear. Maynard further investigates cognitive, psychological and social factors (e.g., the notion of *amae* 'psychological and emotional dependence' and the dichotomy of *uchi* 'insider, in-group' and *soto* 'outsider, out-group') which are reflected as sources of emotionality and interactionality in language use. Moreover, suggesting a continuum of "personalization of discourse" with the varying degree of DM that each utterance expresses (i.e., the more DM is expressed, the more personalized the utterance becomes), Maynard claims that "the Japanese language, equipped with a variety of DM indicators, ranks high among personalization-oriented languages" (p. 266). Finally, pointing out the difficulty of cross-culturally transmitting the DM characteristics of a language, she emphasizes the necessity of examining a language from a "modality"-centered view for a better cross-cultural communication.

The biggest contribution of *Discourse Modality* lies in Maynard's approach to language, namely integrating various aspects of language (e.g., the speaker's subjectivity, interaction between the speaker and the interlocutor, and speech acts) into one framework, Discourse Modality. An advantage of this approach, best exemplified in Chapters 5 and 6, is that it can not only categorize or contrast different linguistic devices of a similar or identical category, but can also correctly capture the fundamental function of each device. That is, instead of explaining different devices from only one aspect of language and claiming that a device contains higher degree of a certain element than another, DM can fully

characterize each phenomenon with various aspects of language use due to the multi-dimensional characteristics of the framework. It should be noted that when contrasting more than one linguistic phenomenon in this framework, the phenomena should contain a similar degree of DM. For example, if one device expresses a strong propositional meaning, while the primary function of the other is non-propositional, as seen in Chapter 3, the framework cannot provide a fair contrast or characterization. Another advantage of the DM framework is that this approach encourages a linguist to re-examine linguistic phenomena by adopting a wider perspective and to be aware of the connection among different aspects of DM expressed by the device, as is successfully done in Chapter 7.

While I generally recognize Maynard's study as suggesting an enlightening approach to language, I would like to address an issue regarding her claim about Japanese being a highly personalized language. This claim needs to be treated with skepticism because the grammatical potential to convey DM does not necessarily mean that the language itself is highly personalized; as Maynard recognizes, some other linguistic and extra-linguistic devices, such as tones and intonation or even word order, can also instill a personalized quality into speech. It is possible to say that Japanese is highly personalized in terms of *grammatical encoding*, but without considering various other factors expressing DM, it seems inappropriate to claim that Japanese is a highly personalized language. In fact, different languages use different devices to personalize speech, and thus, it seems almost impossible to claim by comparing only grammatical devices that one language is higher in "personalization of discourse" than another.

Although there are still some areas that need further investigation and clarification, this new approach to language, *Discourse Modality*, offers an in-depth analysis of the linguistic devices which are dealt with in the book and has the potential to uncover many other controversial and often overlooked phenomena in language use.

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