

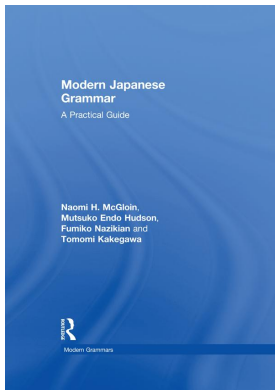
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## **Modern Japanese Grammar A Practical Guide**

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### **Evidential markers**

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# 28

## Evidential markers

Evidential markers indicate the source of information. For example, stem+**soo** ‘look like, seem,’ nonpast/past+**soo** ‘I hear,’ **yoo** ‘seem,’ **rashii** ‘seem, I hear’ and **mitai** ‘seem,’ indicate that what the speaker is saying is an impression, hearsay, inference, or conjecture.

### 28.1 Adj.(stem) or V(stem) + **soo** ‘look like, seem’

The evidential marker **soo** with stem forms of adjectives and verbs expresses the impression one gets based on what one sees, hears, smells, etc.

Looking at a book with an interesting title, one can say the following sentence. The speaker is simply giving his/her impression.

この本はおもしろそうですね。

**Kono hon wa omoshiro soo desu ne.**

This book looks interesting, doesn't it?

The first sentence below may be uttered when one looks at a dark sky, and the second sentence, when seeing a lonely-looking person.

今日は雨が降りそうです。

**Kyoo wa ame ga furi soo desu.**

It looks like it will rain today.

山下さんはいつも寂しそうです。

**Yamashita-san wa itsumo sabishi soo desu.**

Mr/Ms Yamashita always looks lonely.

**Soo** being a **na** adjective, **soo desu** is used at the end of a sentence, and **soo na** to modify a noun.

おいしそうなケーキをもらいました。

**Oishi soo na keeki o moraimashita.**

I received a delicious-looking cake.

大変そうですね。

**Taihen soo desu ne.**

That sounds tough.

楽しそうですね。

**Tanoshi soo desu ne.**

That sounds like fun.

**Soo** cannot be used to express the speaker's conjectures concerning a past event or state. See **yoo** and **rashii** for expressing such conjectures.

## 28.2

## CLAUSE (plain) + yoo 'seem, I gather'

The evidential marker **yoo** expresses conjectures based on evidence gathered through the speaker's observation or first-hand knowledge.

## ▶ 18.4

経済のクラスは難しいようです。

**Keezai no kurasu wa muzukashii yoo desu.**

It seems that the economics class is/might be difficult.

この本は学生には高すぎるようです。

**Kono hon wa gakusee ni wa taka sugiru yoo desu.**

It appears that this book might be too expensive for students.

佐藤さんは会社員のようです。

**Satoo-san wa kaishain no yoo desu.**

It seems that Mr/Ms Sato might be an office worker.

**Yoo** can be used to express conjectures concerning a past event or state as well as a present or future event or state.

田中さんはもう帰ったようです。

**Tanaka-san wa moo kaetta yoo desu.**

It appears to me that Mr/Ms Tanaka may have gone home.

この課題は簡単だったようです。

**Kono kadai wa kantan datta yoo desu.**

It appears that this assignment might have been easy.

Although both (stem+) **soo** and **yoo** can be used to express a conjecture, when talking about a visual impression, **soo** is used.

このケーキはおいしそうです。

**Kono keeki wa oishi soo desu.**

This cake looks delicious.

If **yoo** is used, what is expressed is the conjecture reached after considering various pieces of evidence, short of actually eating the cake. The evidence could be that many people were buying it or that the speaker saw many people enjoy eating it.

あそこの店のケーキはおいしいようです。

**Asoko no mise no keeki wa oishii yoo desu.**

It seems that cake from that shop/restaurant is good.

In informal conversation, **mitai** is often used in place of **yoo**.

この靴はきつすぎるみたいです。

**Kono kutsu wa kitsu sugiru mitai desu.**

It seems that these shoes are too tight.

**Mitai** follows the plain form of the predicate, but when the predicate is a noun or a **na**-adjective in the nonpast affirmative form, **mitai** directly attaches to the stem of the **na**-adjective.

退院したばかりなのに、田中さんはもう元気みたいだよ。

**Taiin shita bakari na noni, Tanaka-san wa moo genki mitai da yo.**

Even though he was just discharged from the hospital, Mr/Ms Tanaka appears well already.

## 28.3

CLAUSE (plain) + *rashii* 'seem, I hear'

The evidential marker **rashii** is similar to **yoo** in that it also expresses a conjecture or an inference. With **rashii**, however, the conjecture is most likely based on what one has read or heard rather than what one has observed. **Rashii** can be used to express conjectures concerning a past event or state as well as a present or future event or state.

When the predicate is a verb or an **i**-adjective, it takes the plain form before **rashii**.

田中さんは高校の時、留学したらしい。

**Tanaka-san wa kookoo no toki, ryuugaku shita rashii.**

It seems that Mr/Ms Tanaka studied abroad when he/she was in high school.

噂によると、あの二人はつきあっているらしいです。

**Uwasa ni yoru to, ano futari wa tsukiatte iru rashii desu.**

According to rumor, it seems that those two are dating.

この大学に入るのはかなり難しいらしいよ。

**Kono daigaku ni hairu no wa kanari muzukashii rashii yo.**

It seems that getting admitted into this university is very difficult.

The nonpast affirmative form of the copula (i.e. **da**) is deleted preceding **rashii**. (The copula is normally required when nouns and **na** adjectives are used as predicates.)

この病院は有名らしいです。

**Kono byooin wa yuumee rashii desu.**

It seems that this hospital is well known.

鈴木さんの実家は沖縄らしいです。

**Suzuki-san no jikka wa Okinawa rashii desu.**

It seems that Mr/Ms Suzuki's parents' home is in Okinawa.

Other forms of the copula **da** (i.e. negative nonpast, affirmative past, and negative past) do appear preceding **rashii**.

田中さんのお母さんは小学校の先生だったらしいです。

**Tanaka-san no okaasan wa shoogakkoo no sensee datta rashii desu.**

It seems that Mr/Ms Tanaka's mother used to be an elementary school teacher.

健さんはカラオケが好きじゃないらしい。

**Ken-san wa karaoke ga suki ja nai rashii.**

It seems that Ken does not like karaoke.

## 28.4

## CLAUSE (plain) + soo 'I hear' (hearsay)

When **soo** follows the plain forms of the predicate, it indicates 'hearsay.'

田中さんは高校の時留学したそうです。

**Tanaka-san wa kookoo no toki ryuugaku shita soo desu.**

I hear that Mr/Ms Tanaka studied abroad when he/she was in high school.

あのレストランのケーキはおいしいそうです。

**Ano resutoran no keeki wa oishii soo desu.**

I hear that the cake from that shop/restaurant is delicious.

## 28.5

## Summary

In Japanese it is important to distinguish information that one has direct access to from information obtained by hearsay or that one cannot directly experience. When someone asks you how your friend (Nobuko) is doing, for example, you would probably answer using one of the evidential expressions, **rashii**, **yoo**, or hearsay **soo**, unless you have actually seen her. Similarly, what you have heard on the news is usually conveyed as hearsay.

As mentioned in 13.5, expressing one's own internal state and that of others are also clearly distinguished in Japanese. One can only truly know one's own internal state and not that of others. Therefore, a direct declarative statement can be made only about one's own internal state. One can only *infer* another person's internal state. Therefore, when one talks about another person's internal state (e.g. desire, fear, joy, or sorrow), evidential markers are usually used. The choice will depend on what kind of evidence the speaker is using. As explained in the previous sections, (stem) **soo** expresses the speaker's impression based on visual or other senses. **Yoo** indicates a conjecture that is based on the speaker's various observations, and **rashii** is used when the conjecture is based on circumstantial evidence or information gathered from external sources by reading or hearing.

- (a) 田中さんは結婚して幸せそうだ。  
**Tanaka-san wa kekkon shite shiawase soo da.**  
 Mr/Ms Tanaka looks happy to be married.
- (b) 田中さんは結婚して幸せなようだ。  
**Tanaka-san wa kekkon shite shiawasena yoo da.**  
 I gather that Mr/Ms Tanaka is happy to be married.
- (c) 田中さんは結婚して幸せらしい。  
**Tanaka-san wa kekkon shite shiawase rashii.**  
 I infer (or I hear) that Mr/Ms Tanaka is happy to be married.

Example (a) may be uttered when the speaker actually sees Mr/Ms Tanaka looking happy in his/her marriage. Example (b) may be used when the speaker sees or hears Mr/Ms Tanaka do things that indicate his/her happiness in marriage. Example (c) may be used when the speaker reads or hears about Mr/Ms Tanaka's happy marriage from external sources such as mutual friends and letters.

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