

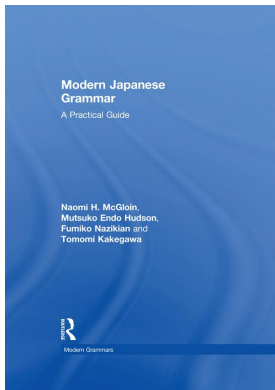
This article was downloaded by: 10.2.97.136

On: 21 Sep 2023

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



Modern Japanese Grammar A Practical Guide

Naomi H. McGloin, Mutsuko Endo Hudson, Fumiko Nazikian, Tomomi Kakegawa, Sarah Butler

Words

Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203856628.ch4>

Naomi H. McGloin, Mutsuko Endo Hudson, Fumiko Nazikian, Tomomi Kakegawa

Published online on: 04 Oct 2013

How to cite :- Naomi H. McGloin, Mutsuko Endo Hudson, Fumiko Nazikian, Tomomi Kakegawa.

04 Oct 2013, *Words from: Modern Japanese Grammar, A Practical Guide* Routledge

Accessed on: 21 Sep 2023

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203856628.ch4>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR DOCUMENT

Full terms and conditions of use: <https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/legal-notices/terms>

This Document PDF may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproductions, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The publisher shall not be liable for an loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

4

Words

4.1 Types of words according to their origin

Japanese words can be classified into three types according to their origin: those of native origin (**wago**), Chinese origin (**kango**), and Western and other origin (**gairaigo**).

Wago:	ie ‘house,’ te ‘hand,’ kumo ‘cloud,’ kami ‘god’
Kango:	gakkoo ‘school,’ kikai ‘machine,’ kee-ee ‘management,’ chuushoo ‘abstract’
Gairaigo:	booru ‘ball’ (English), noruma ‘norma’ (Russian), kimuchi ‘kimchi’ (Korean), janbo ‘big’ (Swahili meaning ‘hello’)

Wago (Japanese native words) largely consist of basic words relating to nature, body parts, daily routines, and traditional foods, art crafts, events, and ways of thinking. Most of them have simple sounds composed of consonant+vowel (or just vowel) sequences. As in other languages, words that are important to the speakers often have fine distinctions; e.g. **ine** ‘rice (plant),’ **kome** ‘rice (grain),’ **meshi** ‘(cooked) rice, meal.’

Kango (Sino-Japanese words) are words from Chinese, especially those imported before the fourteenth century. They occupy more than half the modern Japanese vocabulary. Many express abstract, scholarly and complicated concepts (e.g. **genshiryoku** ‘nuclear power,’ **hukuzatsu** ‘complicated’), as well as those relating to one’s daily life (e.g. **uma** ‘horse,’ **isu** ‘chair’) Many words come in *wago* and *kango* pairs; e.g. **owaru** vs. **shuuryoo suru** ‘to end,’ **muzukashii** vs. **konnana** ‘difficult.’ In such cases, the *kango* represents concepts and matters of more formal nature.

Gairaigo (loan words) have come from various sources and at different times. In the sixteenth century Portuguese words (e.g. **pan** ‘bread’) were borrowed, and later Dutch words (e.g. **garasu** ‘glass’). Since the nineteenth century, there has been an influx of words from German (e.g. **karute** ‘patient’s medical record’), French (e.g. **dessan** ‘sketch’), Italian (**sonata** ‘sonata’) and, especially, English (**konpyuuta(a)** ‘computer’). As new inventions and concepts are imported, so are the words along with them; e.g. **robotto** ‘robot,’ **konbini** ‘convenience store.’ Some words have triplets of *wago*, *kango* and *gairaigo*; e.g. **meshi** ‘rice (sounds rough),’ **gohan** ‘rice (polite),’ **raisu** (served with a Western meal),’ and **kokoro** ‘heart, spirit,’ **shinzoo** ‘heart (organ),’ **haato** ‘heart (shape).’ Words borrowed from certain languages are not considered *gairaigo*; e.g. **tonakai** ‘reindeer’ from Ainu.

4.2 Mimetic words

The Japanese language makes an extensive use of mimetic words, which can be classified into **giongo**, which mimics sounds (*onomatopoeia*, or *phonomimes*) and **gitaigo**, which expresses phenomena (*phenomimes*) and psychological states (*psychomimes*). These words are not only used in comic books and small talk, but in literature and intellectual conversations.

Giongo (sounds):	gaan ‘pow,’ chirin ‘ting,’ tonton ‘light knock,’ dondon ‘loud knock,’ gatagata ‘loud rattle,’ buubuu ‘oink oink,’ zaazaa ‘pouring rain’
-------------------------	--

Gitaigo (phenomena and psychological states):

sarasara ‘smooth,’ **nyokinyoki** ‘(grow) quickly,’ **karakara** ‘dry,’
futo ‘suddenly,’ **gunto** ‘remarkably,’ **jitto** ‘(sit) still,’ **gyotto** ‘startled’

雷がゴロゴロ鳴っています。

Kaminari ga gorogoro natte imasu.

Thunder is rumbling.

課長の靴はいつもピカピカです。

Kachoo no kutsu wa itsumo pikapika desu.

The section chief’s shoes are always shiny.

ふと見上げると、星がきれいだった。

Futo miageru to, hoshi ga kiree datta.

I looked up at the sky without thinking, and saw beautiful stars.

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish **giongo** from **gitaigo**; e.g. **perapera** ‘fluent,’ **shikushiku** ‘sobbing.’ Mimetic words with repeated elements express a repeated action or a prolonged state; e.g. **dokidoki** ‘pounding heart,’ **nebaneba** ‘sticky.’ Though of native origin, mimetics form a class of their own phonetically. For example, voiced consonants (e.g. b, d, z), /r/, and /p/ rarely occur in initial position of **wago** (native words), but are common in mimetics (and in **gairaigo**); e.g. **riinriin** ‘ring-ring,’ **pekopeko** ‘hungry.’

▶ 70.2

4.3

Interrogatives

Interrogatives (also called *question words*) are words that are used to ask for information; e.g. ‘who,’ ‘what,’ ‘when,’ ‘where,’ ‘why,’ and ‘how.’ Most Japanese interrogatives start with **do-**, **iku-** or **nan(i)-**. **Do-**words are part of the demonstrative series **ko-so-a-do**; e.g. **koko** ‘this place, here,’ **soko** ‘that place, there,’ **asoko** ‘that place far away, (way) over there,’ and **doko** ‘which place, where’ (See 9). **Iku-**words are few in number in modern Japanese, but **ikutsu** ‘how many (objects), how old (age)’ and **ikura** ‘how much (price)’ are used frequently. With another noun or a suffix attached to it, **nani** means ‘what . . .’; e.g. **nani-go** ‘what language.’ **Nan** can be attached to any *counters* (*classifiers*) (see 16) of Chinese origin, and mean ‘how many . . .’; e.g. **nan-ko** ‘how many (objects).’

do-	どれ どちら どこ どう どうして どの どのぐらい どんな	do-	どれ dochira doko doo doo shite dono (+ noun) dono gurai donna (+ noun)	which thing (out of three or more) which thing (out of two) which place, where how why (Lit. how + doing) which . . . how much (amount), how long (time) what type of . . .
iku-	いくつ いくら	ikutsu ikura		how many, how old how much (price)
nan(i)	何 (なに or なん)	nan(i)		what
nani-	何人 (なにじん) 何色	nani-jin nani-iro		what nationality what color
nan-	何人 (なんにん) 何匹 何歳 何度	nan-nin nan-biki nan-sai nan-do		how many (people) how many (small animals) how old how many times, what degree (temperature)
Other	何時間 誰 いつ	nan-jikan dare itsu		how many hours who when

Nani ‘what’ is often shortened to **nan** when preceding /t/, /d/, /n/, (and /r/).

何がありますか。	Nani ga arimasu ka.	What is there?
何を買いますか。	Nani o kaimasu ka.	What are you going to buy?
何で行きましたか。	Nan(i) de ikimashita ka.	By what means did you go?
それは何ですか。	Sore wa nan desu ka.	What is that?
今何と言いましたか。	Ima nan to iimashita ka.	What did s/he just say?
何の本ですか。	Nan no hon desu ka.	What is the book about?

The above Japanese words can only be used in questions, unlike ‘what,’ ‘which,’ etc. in English, which can appear in declarative sentences; e.g. ‘What I want to say is this: the book which I read yesterday was interesting.’

4.4 Indefinites

Indefinite words refer to a person, thing, place, etc. in a vague way; e.g. ‘something,’ ‘someone,’ ‘somewhere.’ Japanese indefinites are formed by attaching the particle **ka** to an interrogative word; e.g. **nani** ‘what,’ **nani ka** ‘something’; **dare** ‘who,’ **dare ka** ‘someone.’ In negative sentences the particle **mo** is attached to interrogatives; e.g. **nani mo** ‘(not) anything, nothing’; **dare mo** ‘(not) anyone, no one.’ With indefinites, the particles **ga** (for subject) and **o** (for direct object) are usually omitted.

何か (が) ありますか。

Nani ka (ga) arimasu ka.

Is there something/anything?

何もありません。

Nani mo arimasen.

There isn’t anything / There’s nothing.

何か (を) 見ましたか。

Nani ka (o) mimashita ka.

Did you see something/anything?

何も見ませんでした。

Nani mo mimasen deshita.

I didn’t see anything; I saw nothing.

誰か (が) 来ますか。

Dare ka (ga) kimasu ka.

Is someone/anyone coming?

誰も来ません。

Dare mo kimasen.

No one is coming.

When other particles are attached to interrogatives (e.g. **doko ka ni** ‘to/in some place,’ **dare ka to** ‘with someone’), **mo** appears after those particles in negative sentences.

Q: ねこはどこかにいましたか。

Neko wa doko ka ni imashita ka.

Did you find your cat somewhere/anywhere?

A: どこにもいませんでした。

Doko ni mo imasen deshita.

She was nowhere; I didn’t find her anywhere.

Q: 誰かと話しましたか。

Dare ka to hanashimashita ka.

Did you talk with someone/anyone?

A: 誰とも話しませんでした。
Dare to mo hanashimasen deshita.
 I didn't talk with anyone.

English and Japanese indefinites are quite different. In English, for example, the speaker can use words like *someone* and *something* even when he/she actually knows the person's identity (e.g. *I was busy because someone came to see me*), but this is not possible in Japanese. Also, Japanese indefinites cannot be modified as can English counterparts; e.g. *something nice*. A noun is required, in addition to the modifier such as adjectives and relative clauses.

[なにか冷たい物] を飲みたいんですが。
[Nani ka tsumetai mono] o nomitai n desu ga.
 I'd like to drink something cold.

[どこか静かな所] に行きましょう。
[Doko ka shizuka na tokoro] ni ikimashoo.
 Let's go somewhere quiet.

[だれか答えを知っている人] はいませんか。
[Dare ka kotae o shitte iru hito] wa imasen ka.
 Is there anyone who knows the answer?

To express the meaning 'anything,' 'anyone,' etc. in the sense of 'whatever, no matter what,' and 'whoever, no matter who,' the particle combination **demo** is attached to interrogatives; e.g. **nan** 'what,' **nan demo** 'anything'; **dare** 'who,' **dare demo** 'anyone.'

Q: 何がいいですか。
Nani ga ii desu ka.
 What would be good?

A: 何でもいいです。
Nan demo ii desu.
 Anything would be fine.

Q: いつ行きましょうか。
Itsu ikimashoo ka.
 When shall we go?

A: 私にはいつでも同じです。
Watashi ni wa itsu demo onaji desu.
 Anytime would be the same for me.

誰でもいいから、呼んで下さい。
Dare demo ii kara, yonde kudasai.
 It doesn't matter who, please call (someone).

Words like **nan demo** 'anything, whatever' and **dare demo** 'anyone, whoever' can also be used to mean 'everything' and 'everyone,' respectively.

こんな簡単な事、誰でもできます。
Konna kantan na koto, dare demo dekimasu.
 Anyone/Everyone can do such a simple thing.

うちの犬は何でも食べます。
Uchi no inu wa nan demo tabemasu.
 My dog eats anything/everything.

日本はどこでも込んでいます。
Nihon wa doko demo konde imasu.
 It's crowded anywhere/everywhere in Japan.

To express an indefinite amount, **nan-/iku-** + counter + **ka** ‘some, several’ and **nan-/iku-** + counter + **mo** ‘many’ can be used. The latter expression indicates an amount or number surprisingly large to the speaker, and/or an exaggeration ‘many, many . . .’

何時間か寝ました。

Nan-jikan ka nemashita.

He/she slept several hours.

何時間も寝ました。

Nan-jikan mo nemashita.

He/she slept many, many hours.

問題がいくつかあります。

Mondai ga ikutsu ka arimasu.

There are some problems.

問題がいくつもあります。

Mondai ga ikutsu mo arimasu.

There are many, many problems.