

# The Morphological Basis of Depictive Predication in Japanese

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Keywords: depictive predicate; adverbial modifier; copula; inflection; Japanese

Some adjuncts can be used as depictive predicates, which are taken to provide a description of a state pertaining to the subject or object of the primary predicate. A certain class of adverbial modifiers can also fulfill a similar semantic function, as seen by the fact that *John left his room angrily* carries a meaning similar to *John left his room angry*. A similar issue arises in Japanese.

(1) John-ga {kimono-sugata-de/insyooteki-ni} hanasi-ta.  
John-Nom {kimono-figure-Cop/impressive-Cop} talk-Pst  
'John talked {in kimono/impressively}'.

In Japanese, depictives are typically derived from nouns by combining with copula, as in *kimono-sugata-de*, but it is sometimes suggested that adverbials like *insyooteki* 'impressive' derived from nominal adjectives (which also occur with copula) can also provide a description of the transitory state of the subject (e.g. Nitta 2002, Matsuoka 2014). In this paper, I argue, contrary to the claims by previous works, that adjective-based adverbials cannot function as secondary predicates, and that adverbials can be taken to modify an argument via metonymy shift, rather than predication, i.e. the act of John's talking impressively is taken to characterize a transitory property of John via metonymy.

There are two types of evidence in support of this claim. A first piece of evidence comes from the inflectional pattern of the copula. *Kimono-sugata* cannot have the *ni*-form, which is an adverbial form, as in *\*kimono-sugata-ni hanasu* [kimono-figure-COP talk], but *insyooteki* can, as in (1). Secondly, the two expressions differ as to whether an adjunct can appear in a separate clause while retaining the basic meaning (cf. Himmelmann & Schultze-Berndt. 2005).

(2) {Kimono-sugata-de/#Insyooteki-de} at-ta-ga John-wa hanasi-ta.  
{kimono-figure-Cop/impressive-Cop} be-Pst-Conj John-Top talk-Pst  
'While John was {in Kimono/impressive}, he talked.'

In (2), *kimono-sugata* and *insyooteki* function as predicates appearing in the *de*-form when separated from the main clause with the verb *hanasu* 'speak'. Furthermore, (2) means essentially the same as (1) with *kimono-sugata*, but not with *insyooteki*, suggesting that *insyooteki* is not separable from the verb since it is used as a verbal modifier in (1).

Overall, the morphological and the interpretive facts show that *kimono-sugata* is identified as a depictive, but *insyooteki* can be only used as an adverbial modifier, although it is sometimes interpreted to provide a description on an argument by metonymy shift.

## References

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