

Book Review

Ken-Ichi Kadooka (ed.). 2021. *Japanese mood and modality in systemic functional linguistics*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, vi+179pp. ISBN: 978-90-272-6023-9 (ebk).

Reviewed by **Fang Geng**, School of Foreign Studies, Central University of Finance and Economics, Beijing, China, E-mail: fang.geng@cufe.edu.cn

<https://doi.org/10.1515/jwl-2024-0009>

Japanese mood and modality in systemic functional linguistics is a collection of four papers that center on the issues of Japanese mood and modality from the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). On the one hand, it offers elaboration of Japanese interpersonal metafunction, contributing to the research scope of SFL on particular languages. On the other hand, as language can mirror cultural complexity, its detailed description of the language reflects the specific characteristics of Japanese, which will further provide insights into the styles of communication and conveying interpersonal meanings within the Japanese cultural context. Therefore, with the collection of the research, this collection is able to enrich the general discussion of language, function, and the cultural connotation. The major objective of this collection is to offer a cross-linguistic and interdisciplinary exploration of modality. The cross-linguistic concern touches upon the function of modality by comparing the notion in different languages, which promotes the language particularity in SFL description. In doing so, the interpersonal metafunction in SFL contributes to the understanding of various cultural and social backgrounds. As for the interdisciplinary approach, this collection compares the perspectives on modality from both the traditional Japanese linguistic angle and the SFL, and highlights the similarities and differences, which provides a comprehensive understanding of Japanese mood and modality.

This collection contains five chapters. It starts with the introduction (Chapter 1) and then lays a foundation by presenting the system of Japanese modulation (Chapter 2). Following this, contrastive studies between Japanese and English interpersonal metaphors (Chapter 3) and modality systems (Chapter 4) are explored with detailed description. Lastly, an applicable topic of pragmatic impairment is addressed from the modality perspective to tackle the social issue (Chapter 5).

Chapter 1 is the introduction by Ken-Ichi Kadooka from Ryukoku University. In the introduction, after briefly defining the notion of modality, he outlines the structure of the book and provides an overview for each of the following chapters.

Chapter 2, entitled “The system of modulation in Japanese”, is authored by Ryuichi Iimura from Tamagawa University. It mainly explores the following aspects:

the definition of modulation through comparing lenses in traditional Japanese linguistics and SFL, and an elaboration on the Japanese framework of modulation, typical realizations, and the system delicacy. To begin with, Chapter 2 offers a synthesizing review of mood and modality by Palmer (1986, 2001), and the scholars within the traditional Japanese linguistic paradigm, such as Nitta (1991) and Yamaoka (2000, 2008). This is crucial for distinguishing the focuses between different approaches, with the traditional viewpoint tending to conduct morphosyntactic analysis of modality, and SFL, as exemplified by the works of Tatsuki (1998) and Teruya (2007, 2017), preferring to view it as a functional notion. Having clarified the scope and semantic domain of modality through the SFL lens, which incorporates modality type, orientation, value, and polarity within the system framework (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 691), this chapter introduces a descriptive framework of modulation in Japanese, which includes obligation and inclination. Obligation further contains four subtypes: necessity, obligatory, permission, and expectation; and inclination includes two subtypes, intention and willingness. Elaboration on typical realizations and systemic choices provides a detailed picture of Japanese modality.

Chapter 3, titled “Grammatical metaphor of Transitivity, Mood and Modality in Japanese: A functional perspective”, is written by Kazuo Fukuda from Niigata University. This chapter addresses the fundamental concepts of grammatical metaphor, introducing new notions and examining the various types of mood and modality metaphors in the contrastive view of English and Japanese. Fukuda initiates the exploration by addressing the notions of “typicality”, “naturalness” and “congruency” in his review of the fundamental concepts of grammatical metaphor: “congruency”, and its counterpart “metaphor”, are best understood through the relationship between the pattern of expression and the pattern of semantics in relation to the inner or outer world experiences. This positions the congruent or metaphorical relation as a potential language universal, which lays the foundation for the subsequent discussion on Japanese grammatical metaphor and the contrastive perspective. With the foundation established, Chapter 3 further introduces various types of Japanese mood metaphors, contrasting them with their English counterparts, and discusses the notions of softening and strengthening effects in them. The softening effect tends to lower the straightforwardness, thus fostering more implicit expression; on the contrary, the strengthening effect increases the explicitness. These effects are closely related to the meticulous picture of Japanese discourse markers, clause-final negotiators, and the honorific system. The Japanese modality metaphor is addressed through a contrastive study of Japanese modality and its English counterparts. Detailed similarities and differences of the two depict an interesting picture in the contrastive angle.

Chapter 4, entitled “A contrastive study of the English and Japanese modality systems”, is written by Ken-Ichi Kadooka. This chapter compares the modality systems of English and Japanese, focusing on the subcategories of modalization and modulation: they differ in system subcategories as well as syntactic expressions. This chapter begins by exploring the differences between English and Japanese in terms of syntactic negation and semantic negation. Syntactic negation, which is realized by syntactic elements, such as “not” in English and “*-nai*” in Japanese, typically has a straightforward relation to semantic relation. However, in certain cases in Japanese, asymmetry arises when the syntactic negative pattern is unmarked while the positive form is semantically eccentric. This discrepancy in certain cases highlights a polarity difference between English and Japanese. In the comparison of modality systems of the two languages, it is found that English subsystems of modality encompass modalization and modulation; modalization contains probability and usuality; and modulation is composed of obligation and inclination. However, the Japanese modality subsystems are depicted as more complex, containing evidentiality, ability, probability, and usuality for modalization, and necessity, obligation, permission, expectation, and inclination for modulation. This difference in delicacy is attributed to the syntactic complexity of Japanese modulation expressions.

Chapter 5, titled “The cognitive and linguistic reasoning process of the speaker’s choice of modal expressions: Modality from the perspective of pragmatic impairment”, is written by Sumi Kato from Aomori Chuo Gakuin University. This chapter bridges the theoretical concept of modality with the particularly concrete setting – pragmatic impairment in language. Building upon the SFL framework for Japanese modality, this chapter delves into modal usage which includes metaphorical realization and orientation. Through the investigation of data collected from 113 participants with Autism Spectrum Disorder in the author’s self-constructed corpus of Japanese individuals, the study reveals that pragmatic impairment is more closely linked to cognitive impairment than linguistic function. Primary factors considered include the theory of mind, executive function, and central coherence. In exploring the root leading to pragmatic impairment, the SFL theory sheds light on socio-linguistic activities within the specific context of culture in Japanese, the high-context culture (Hall 1976), in which the linguistic means is complicated and may induce stress. Additionally, the impairment may arise due to the failure to choose lexicogrammar within the system network when individuals find it difficult to appropriately interpret the cultural and situational contexts. As a result, the dysfunctions of three cognitive factors become intertwined.

On the whole, this collection brings about both an in-depth exploration of theoretical aspects and a dive into the applicable issue specific to the interpersonal realm, which provides a well-elaborated exploration of the interpersonal meta-function of the Japanese language. It delves into the topics with the following

distinguishing strengths: elaborating the definition by comparing with other linguistic approaches, discussing a less-explored area of interpersonal metaphor, offering typological insights by contrasting with English, and examining the modality from an applicable perspective.

Firstly, the collection introduces the definition of modality in traditional Japanese linguistics, which is less familiar to readers of other languages. Through the detailed elaboration, it presents the readers with the traditional morphosyntactic view of modality, focusing on realizations such as verbal endings, modal endings, particles, predicate-selecting adverbs, adverbial particles, emotive adjectives discussed by various Japanese scholars. The morphosyntactic view of modality, though distinctive from that of SFL, reveals the rich resources of the Japanese language in realizing modality, forming a basis for the discussion of language forms. Another noteworthy feature mentioned is the interchangeable use of the terms mood and modality by some Japanese scholars (such as Yamaoka 2000). This echoes with the discussion of the semantic hierarchical relationships of the two: while SFL designates mood as the premier network of the interpersonal metafunction and modality as part of the modal deixis (see Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 162), alternative perspectives may see it differently or view the two terms as interchangeable, which brings about room for deliberation and discussion. By comparing the Japanese modality from the SFL perspective, the collection can clarify the scopes and focuses of these two different approaches, laying the basis for deeper exploration into other facets of Japanese interpersonal metafunction.

Secondly, the collection commendably addresses a comparatively less-explored issue, the grammatical metaphor of mood and modality. While the counterpart of transitivity has received considerable attention over the years, mood and modality metaphor is curiously less discussed, even though it enjoys a large quantity of presence in daily language use. As thoroughly discussed in the collection, the metaphorical usage of mood and modality, and their congruent usage and “naturalized” usage have a complex relation, for the congruent one does not always equate to the naturalized – in certain cases, metaphorical usage may take precedence in terms of language naturalness. This subtlety leads us to a more nuanced understanding of realizing interpersonal metafunction, which involves the elements of politeness, face-saving, power relations, and other contextual indexes, stimulating the readers to extend this inquiry to other languages.

Thirdly, the collection distinguishes itself by contrasting Japanese with other languages (e.g. English), which gives us a valuable taste of the typological reference. While many Indo-European languages dominate SFL discussions, which, as a result, bring about frameworks that are more suitable for the features of these languages, Japanese receives relatively less attention. Through the contrast, readers are provided with a comprehensive understanding of the function and realizations of

modality in Japanese: readers now can notice that Japanese modality exhibits a more complex system, emphasizing highly semanticalized criteria for categorization compared to English. The contrastive analysis provides insights for further semanticalization of mood and modality, as called for by Fawcett (2009) for an equal semanticalization for mood network as it is for the transitivity.

Lastly, the collection exemplifies the multifunctionality of SFL, both discussing theoretical issues and providing insights into the applicable domain. This is in line with Halliday's (2008: 7) vision, where a comprehensive and theoretically powerful model of language would be capable of being applied to both research and practical problems. Besides highlighting the social responsibility that linguists should perform in their exploration into the language, addressing practice issues not only showcases the comprehensiveness that a model of language would have, but may also provide practical insight, contributing to the model's development.

In conclusion, the collection provides us with a thorough exploration into the topics of Japanese interpersonal metafunction, expanding the theoretical landscape. For further exploration, we look forward to more discussions on related issues and a more comprehensive description of Japanese, including the applicable domains such as discourse analysis, the discussion of other subsystems, systematically elaborated descriptions of realizations, and further discussion incorporating contextual features (Geng 2021).

Research funding: This work is supported by the Humanities and Social Science Project of the Ministry of Education of China (grant number 23YJC740015).

References

- Fawcett, Robin P. 2009. A semantic system network for MOOD in English. *Beijing Keji Daxue Xuebao (Shehui Kexue Ban)* [Journal of University of Science and Technology Beijing (Social Sciences Edition)] 25(4). 89–100.
- Geng, Fang. 2021. A contrastive study of the Chinese and Japanese MOOD TYPE systems. *Journal of World Languages* 8(1). 83–118.
- Hall, Edward. 1976. *Beyond culture*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Halliday, Michael A. K. 2008. Working with meaning: Towards an applicable linguistics. In Jonathan J. Webster (ed.), *Meaning in context: Implementing intelligent applications of language studies*, 7–23. London & New York: Continuum.
- Halliday, Michael A. K. & Christian M. I. M. Matthiessen. 2014. *Halliday's introduction to functional grammar*, 4th edn. London: Routledge.
- Nitta, Yoshio. 1991. *Nihongo modaritii to ninshoo* [Japanese modality and person]. Tokyo: Hitsuji-Shobo.
- Palmer, Frank R. 1986. *Modality and the English modals*. London: Longman.

- Palmer, Frank R. 2001. *Mood and modality*, 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tatsuki, Masaaki. 1998. Sentaku taikai kino gengogaku ni okeru Finiteness ni kanshite – nichieigo hikaku taisho no kanten kara [On the definition of “finiteness” from systemic functional perspective: A contrastive study of English and Japanese]. *Doshisha Daigaku Eigo Eibungaku Kenkyu* [Doshisha studies in English] 69(1). 113–132.
- Teruya, Kazuhiro. 2007. *A systemic functional grammar of Japanese*, two volumes. London: Continuum.
- Teruya, Kazuhiro. 2017. Mood in Japanese. In Tom Bartlett & Gerard O’Grady (eds.), *The Routledge handbook of systemic functional linguistics*, 213–230. London: Routledge.
- Yamaoka, Masaki. 2000. *Nihongo no jutsugo to bun kinoo* [Japanese predicate and sentence function]. Tokyo: Kuroshio.
- Yamaoka, Masaki. 2008. *Hatsuwa kinoo ron* [Speech act theory]. Tokyo: Kuroshio.