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Direct and Indirect Modification in Modern Standard Japanese

Abstract:

This talk offers a discussion on direct and indirect modification in Modern Standard Japanese. Embedding Japanese into the cartographic framework in the sense of Cinque (2010), it will be argued that depending on their syntactic source Japanese modifiers have access to both, indirect as well as direct modification, defying the predominant claim in the literature (Sproat / Shih 1991; Nishiyama 1999; Hoshi 2002; Baker 2003; Laenzlinger 2011) that Japanese does not have direct modification.

This analysis goes hand in hand with a reexamination of the Japanese word class system. As will be shown, cross-linguistically attested groups of exclusively direct modifiers are predominantly expressed via lexemes that carry the morpheme *-no* in attributive position (usually reserved for nominals) yet show adjectival behavior. I argue that such lexemes belong to the group of so-called *no-adjectives*, a third morphologically distinct adjectival subgroup (Muraki 2012) with a rather hybrid nature.

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