

**Japanese Native Speakers' Usage of
“Degree-Emphasizing Adverbs”:
Quantitative Research Using the “Corpus of Spontaneous Japanese”**

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Abstract

In this study, a survey of the use of the degree adverb “Totemo” and its synonyms, “Sugoku,” “Hijouni,” and “Taihen,” was conducted on the “Corpus of Spontaneous Japanese” using a classification tree analysis. Two surveys were conducted: the first was a survey of language usage by situation, and the second was a survey of usage by speaker age. The results of the first survey revealed statistically significant differences in the tendency to use each of these four words in different linguistic situations. “Hijouni” is used more frequently in situations where objective information is required, while “Sugoku” and “Totemo” are used more frequently in relatively informal situations. The second survey of the data from “simulated public speech” (short speeches by non-professional speakers) also confirmed that the tendency to use certain adverbs differs according to the age of the speaker. Younger age groups tend to choose adverbs according to interpersonal considerations, while older age groups tend to select words that pertain to the register of the language situation. This study’s findings show that in the situation of monologue, the frequency of word use differs according to the various conditions that comprise the situation. The findings also strongly suggest the need to re-organize the content of Japanese language teaching from the elementary level to make it adaptable to learners’ individual social situations and needs.

[Keywords] degree-emphasizing adverbs, adverbs of degree, corpus, synonym,
age of speaker