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Sentence-final expressions

— *rasii* and *yoo*

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
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Abstract

Sentence-final expressions — *rasii* and *yoo*

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In the Japanese language there is a group of sentence-final expressions, which indicate the speaker's attitude toward the proposition they are maintaining. Included in this group are expressions such as *kamosirenai, tigainai, hazu, yoo, mitai, rasii, soo* (hearsay) and *(si) soo*. This thesis is an examination of the functions of the two expressions *yoo* and *rasii*. In many cases *rasii* and *yoo* are interchangeable in the respect that they work as evidential markers that the speaker makes a judgment based on evidence. However there is a subtle difference between them. The distinction between them is made by the degree of the speaker's perception. Even though the same types of evidence may be used, *rasii* indicates that a lesser degree of the speaker's perception is involved, whereas *yoo* indicates that a higher degree of the speaker's perception is involved. A closer investigation of the uses of *rasii* and *yoo*, based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, is carried out and it is concluded that both *rasii* and *yoo* work as politeness strategies. That is, the speaker utilises the function of either *rasii* or *yoo* to satisfy the other's feeling and to establish a good rapport between the speaker and the addressee in human interactions, as well as to maintain the speaker's own desire.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used when giving translations of the examples provided in the thesis.

ACC ACCusative case marker (*o*)

CAUS CAUSative affix (*~sase*)

COMP sentence COMPlementizer (*no*, *koto*, *to*, *tokoro*)

COP COPula (*da*, *desu*)

DAT DATive case marker (*ni*)

GEN GENitive case marker (*no*)

HON HONorific form (*~rare*, *o*-V *ni naru*)

LOC LOCative case marker (*ni*, *de*, *e*)

NEG NEGative morpheme (*~nai*)

NOM NOMinative case marker (*ga*)

PASS PASSive affix (*~rare*)

POL POLite affix (*~masu*, *~desu*)

Q Question particle (*ka*)

TOP TOPic marker (*wa*)

*	ungrammatical / unacceptable
?	awkward

In translating the examples, the markers RASII, YOO and SOO are used respectively to indicate *rasii*, *yoo* and *soo*. Johnson (1994) interprets these terms as "AUX (AUXiliary verbs)". Other researchers, such as Teramura (1984) also interpret these terms as auxiliary verbs. In this thesis however we do not specify these terms as auxiliary verbs. The aim of this paper is not to investigate whether or not these expressions represent auxiliary verbs, but to investigate their functions from the viewpoint of semantics and pragmatics.

Notes on Romanisation

The Kunrei romanisation is adopted for Japanese examples with the long vowels shown by the double *o* system.

e.g. syoogakkoo 'primary school', tyuugakkoo 'junior high school',
Tookyoo 'Tokyo'

The Hepburn system is used in translations of the examples and bibliographical information, where the long vowels are not indicated following the widely practised translation.

e.g. Taishukan, Shogakukan, Chikuma

When a different system is adopted in citations, it is changed to the above system for unification.

Sources of Japanese Examples

Many of the Japanese examples are taken from the following:

Abe, Kobo. *Suna no onna*. Tokyo; Shincho sha, 1981.

Endo, Shusaku. *Seisho no naka no onna tachi*. Tokyo; Kodan sha, 1972.

Inoue, Hisashi. *Monkippotto shi no ato shimatsu*. Tokyo; Kodan sha, 1974.

Kaneko, Shiro. *Atorantisu tairiku no nazo.* Tokyo; Kodan sha, 1974.

Kaji, Motojiro. *Remon*. Tokyo; Shincho sha, 1967.

Kida, Gen. *Gendai no tetsugaku*. Tokyo; Kodan sha, 1991.

Kitamura, Kaoru. *Mizu ni nemuru*. Tokyo; Bungei bunshu, 1997.

Mayumira, Taku. *Nazo no tenkosei*. Tokyo; Kadokawa shoten, 1975.

Miyabe, Miyuki. *Henzi wa iranai*. Tokyo; Shincho sha, 1994.

Shibata, Takeshi. *Nihongo wa omoshiroi*. Tokyo; Shincho sha, 1973.

Suzuki, Takao. *Nihongo to gaikokugo*. Tokyo; Iwanami shoten, 1990.

Yamada, Masahiro. *Kazoku no risutorukusharingu*. Tokyo; Shincho sha, 1999.

Some examples are taken from "*CD-COM Shincho sha bunko no 100 satsu* " (1995). Examples are used from the following works contained on the CD-ROM.

Akagawa, Jiro. *Onna shacho ni kanpai!*

Inoue, Yasushi. *Asunaro monogatari.*

Miura, Ayako. *Shiokari toge.*