Epistemic Modality in Irabu Ryukyuan*

Michinori Shimoji
(Gunma Prefectural Women’s University)

1. Introduction
This paper examines epistemic modality in Irabu Ryukyuan (henceforth Irabu), a northern dialect of Miyako, Okinawa Prefecture, Japan. I focus on the verb form with the epistemic modal suffix -m, which will henceforth be called ‘M-form’, as illustrated in (1) below.

(1) A: kuri=a nau=mai s-sa-n-Ø=dara=i.
   3SG=TOP what=even know-SFN-NEG-NPST=PERS=eh
   ‘This (guy) does not know anything, right?’

B: nau! kuri=a nau=ju =mai s-si-u-Ø-m!
   what 3SG=TOP what=ACC=even know-SFN-PROG-NPST-M
   ‘No way! This (guy) knows everything!’

It has long been a matter of controversy in Ryukyuan linguistics exactly what function the M-form bears, the only agreement being that it must have some epistemic modal meaning (Nakama 1992, Izuyama 2002, Shimoji 2008). There are several reasons for the difficulty in examining M-forms. First, only certain dialects of Miyako Ryukyuan have this form (especially northern dialects, Karimata 1992), all of which are endangered with a limited number of speakers. Second, even in the dialects that are reported to have the M-form, it is not common to find M-forms in natural discourse. That is, they occur only when certain limited contexts are given in discourse. Third, in Ryukyuan linguistics, it has been tradition to rely on simple elicitations of context-less sentences, which is certainly not enough to examine, or even encounter, M-forms.

In this paper I take a different approach from that taken in traditional Ryukyuan linguistics, examining a wide range of natural discourse texts that I recorded and transcribed in three spells of fieldwork on Irabu Island (2005-2007). From the distributional patterns that M-forms bear in natural discourse, I will draw the following

* This paper is a revised version of The 6th workshop on Inferential Mechanisms and their Linguistic Manifestation held at Kyoto University (September, 2009). Deep thank goes to Professor Yukinori Takubo, who invited me as a speaker at the workshop, and to all the participants there who kindly gave me comments and advice.
conclusions regarding the function of the M-form:

(2) It encodes speaker’s perceived certainty.

(3) It encodes speaker’s judgement that the proposition has new information, or high information value to the hearer.

2. Irabu: a typological overview

As a Japonic language, Irabu is a verb-final language with the modifier-head constituent order, and with the nominative-accusative case system. However, Irabu is strikingly divergent from typical Japonic varieties in a number of respects.

First, Irabu prosody is characterised by foot-based rhythmic alternation of tone features (High-Low-High…), a characteristic that is quite uncommon crosslinguistically (Shimoji 2009a).

Second, Irabu has a word class assignment system whereby a property concept stem (such as \textit{taka-} ‘high’) is an input stem of as many as five output word forms: compound noun (e.g. \textit{taka-jama} ‘high mountain’), a (stative) verb (\textit{taka-ka-Ø-m} ‘high’), an adjective (\textit{takaa-taka} ‘high’), or an adverb (\textit{taka-f} ‘highly’), thus demonstrating the ‘switch-adjectival system’ in Wetzer’s typology (Shimoji 2009b).

Third, Irabu has two accusative case forms, the latter being restricted to occurring in dependent clauses encoding non-sequential events/states (Shimoji 2008).

3. Notes on verbal inflectional morphology

3.1. Basic structure

A verb inflects word-finally, with one or more inflectional affixes attached to a stem. Thus a schematic structure of Irabu verbs is [Stem-Inflection(s)]. Inflectional categories are dependency, tense, mood, and conjunctive relation.

All verbs inflect for dependency, or whether the verb serves as a main clause verb or a dependent clause verb. A verb is \textit{independent} when it only serves as a main clause verb, as shown in (4). A verb is \textit{dependent} when it only serves as a dependent clause verb or as component of a main clause verb phrase, as in (5). A verb is \textit{ambidependent} when it may be either a main clause verb, or a dependent clause verb that serves as the predicate of an adnominal clause, as in (6).

(4) \textit{mii-di}.

\texttt{look-INT}

‘will look’ [independent]
(5) *mii-ccjaaki,*
  look-CVB.SIM
  ‘while looking’ [dependent]

(6) *mii-r (pžtu).*
  look-NPST man
  ‘(the man who) look’ [ambidependent]

The M-form is independent, as it only serves as a main clause verb.

(7) *mii-r-m.*
  look-NPST-M
  ‘look’ [independent]

As shown above, the morphological exponent of dependency is the final affix of
the verbal word: -di in the case of (4), -ccjaaki in the case of (5), -r in the case of (6),
and -m in the case of (7). Note that the non-past suffix -r is not in itself the
morphological exponent of dependency, as it is a marker of the ambidependent status in
(6) whereas it does not show such status in (7). Thus dependency is not marked by a
particular morpheme, but is parasitic, i.e. always manifests itself in a suffix that marks
other inflectional categories such as mood (as in the case of -di in (4) and -m in (7)),
tense (as in the case of -r in (6)), and conjunctive relation (as in the case of -ccjaaki in
(7)).

Table 1. Inflectional categories in Irabu verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of verb</th>
<th>Dependency</th>
<th>Tense marking</th>
<th>Mood marking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finite irrealis</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finite M-form</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finite unmarked</td>
<td>Ambidependent</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-finite</td>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The finite unmarked form, or traditionally ‘rentai-shushi’ form (adnominal-conclusive form) may
be called ‘participle’, which is a more common name cross-linguistically. A major difference
between the finite unmarked verbs as found in Irabu and participles in well-known European
languages is that the latter is basically dependent, not ambidependent.
3.2. Stem-final segment
Where the stem ends in a consonant, a stem-final formative (glossed SFN) appears to further carry certain inflectional suffixes: tur- ‘take’ + -di (irrealis intentional) > tur-a-di ‘will take’ (take-SFN-INT; cf. (4)). This is analogous to ‘thematic’ segments in Indo-European languages and in other languages such as certain Oceanic languages (e.g. Manam, Lichtenberk 1983).

4. Data
This study is based on the following data set. As shown in Table 3, there were 2,541 verbs in the data, out of which M-forms account for 11.1% (N = 281). Note also that the most frequently observed verb form is the finite unmarked form.

Table 2. Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>2005-2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Irabu Island (Sawada-Nagahama area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants</td>
<td>Males M1 (69), M2 (77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females F 1(104), F2 (92), F3 (71), F4 (67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>8 texts from natural discourse (see §5.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>11,351 words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. M-forms in the data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Converbs</td>
<td>843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finite unmarked</td>
<td>1,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finite M-form</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finite irrealiss</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In total</td>
<td>2,541</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Distributional patterns of M-forms in the texts
In what follows I note five distributional features that M-forms exhibit in the texts. These should be interrelated, which will be discussed in more detail in §6.

(8) Distributional patterns of M-forms in the texts
a. Co-occurrence with post-predicate modifier clitics
b. Speech acts
c. Tense
d. Focus construction
e. Text genre

5.1. Co-occurrence with post-predicate modifier clitics
There are a number of post-predicate modifier clitics, which are enclitised to the predicate (either nominal or verbal) and function as modal or discourse markers: low certainty =paz ‘maybe’, self question =bjaam ‘I wonder’, emphasis =dooi, tag
question =i ‘eh?, right?, and so on. In my grammar of Irabu Ryukyuan (Shimoji 2008), twenty eight clitics have been identified that may attach to a predicate.

There is conspicuous tendency for M-forms to co-occur with modal clitics that are associated with high assertive force, or epistemic certainty, and not to co-occur with clitics that are associated with low assertive force, or epistemic uncertainty.

5.1.1. Clitics with high assertive force
M-forms tend to co-occur with those clitics that function to add assertive force, such as =dooi (emphasis), or to persuade the hearer to accept what the speaker says, such as =dara (persuasive) and =ju (caution). Out of the 281 tokens of M-forms, about fifty percent (N = 142) co-occurred with one of these clitics (88 tokens with =dooi, 46 tokens with =dara, and 8 tokens with =ju).

(9) nnama=a mii-n-Ø=suga, pav=mai juu u-ta-m=dooi, nkjaan=na.
  now=TOP see-NEG-NPST=but snake=too very exist-PST-M=EMP old.days=TOP
  ‘These days we don’t see (snakes), but (there) were a lot of snakes in old days.’

(10) kui=sii  nbja-i-Ø   t-ta-m=dara.
  this.way=INST survive-SFN-CVB.SEQ come-PST-M=PERS
  ‘In this way (we) have survived (until now), I tell you.’

(11) ui=gami=a mmja, s-si-u-Ø-m=ju.
  3SG=EMP=TOP well know-SFN-PROG-NPST-M=CAUT
  ‘(I) know that.’

The clitics =dara (persuasive) and =ju are like discourse clitics in that these clitics are almost restricted to occurring in dialogues (e.g. conversations) rather than monologues (e.g. narratives).

It is difficult at this stage of description to tell exactly what function the clitic =dara bears. However, when it occurs, it usually functions to draw the hearer’s attention, in such a way that the speaker persuades the hearer into accepting what he says. That is why I translate it as ‘I tell you’ in (10) above. It tends to co-occur with an M-form, as illustrated in (10), and it is very rare for it to co-occur with irrealis forms (i.e. intentional, imperative, and optative).

The clitic =ju (caution) expresses a speaker’s exasperation, such that s/he wants to correct the hearer’s wrong assumption or careless misunderstanding of what the
speaker has said. Thus, in (11) above, the hearer assumes that the speaker does not know something, and the speaker warns that s/he actually knows that thing.

5.1.2. Clitics with weak assertive force
The M-form does not co-occur with clitics that mark weak assertive force, such as =paz ‘maybe’ and =bjaam ‘I wonder’. There was only one example where =paz co-occurred with the M-form.

(12) *s-sa-n-Ø. až-ža-t-ta-m=paz.*
    know-SFN-NEG-NPST say-SFN-NEG-PST-M=maybe
    ‘I don’t know. (I) didn’t say so, perhaps.’

These clitics did occur in the texts rather frequently (92 tokens for =paz, 26 for =bjaam), but when they occurred, they almost always co-occurred with finite unmarkeds.

(13) *jaa=nkai pjar-tar=paz.*
    house=ALL leave-PST=maybe
    ‘(She) left for home, perhaps.’

(14) *stabutu=u muc-i-ur-Ø=bjaam=mi=tii, mmja, až-tar=ca.*
    bed.fellow=ACC have-SFN-PROG-NPST=I.wonder=eh=QT well say-PST=hs
    ‘ ‘I wonder if (my husband) has a bedfellow”, (she) said.’

The M-form never co-occurs with the hearsay clitic =ca, which is also a marker of speaker’s weak assertive force in that the speaker wants to secure that the message being told is second-hand information.

(15) *uri=a mmja, sinsii=nkai nar-kutu=ca.*
    3SG=TOP well teacher=ALL become-OBL=HS
    ‘This (guy) is going to become a teacher, they say.’

(16) *biki-vcca=a ma-i-par-tar=ca. tubi-i par-tar=ca.*
    male-quail=TOP fly-SFN-leave-PST=HS fly-CVB.SEQ leave-PST=HS
    ‘The male quail flied away; (he) flied to go away.’
It is noted that the hearsay clitic \(=ca\) is very frequently used in the texts. It is almost obligatory in folktale stories as illustrated in (16) above. When they occur in folktales, the usual host is a finite unmarked, as shown in (16).

5.2. Speech acts and M-forms

Three basic speech acts in Lyons’ (1977) terms, i.e. statement, question, and command, are encoded by declarative, interrogative, and imperative clauses in Irabu. These sentence types are distinguished by the form of focus marker and/or the verb inflection: \(=du\) for declaratives, \(=ru\) for Yes-No interrogatives, \(=ga\) for WH interrogatives, and the irrealis imperative inflection for imperatives. In interrogatives, a question marker may also appear, which is identical in form with the focus marker in the clause.

(17) \(uri=u=du\) \(fau-tar\).
\[
\begin{array}{c}
3SG=ACC=FOC \\
\text{eat-PST}
\end{array}
\]
‘(I) ate it.’ [declarative]

(18) \(uri=u=ru\) \(fau-tar(=ru)\)?
\[
\begin{array}{c}
3SG=ACC=FOC \\
\text{eat-PST(=Q)}
\end{array}
\]
‘(I) ate it.’ [Yes-No interrogative]

(19) \(nau=ju=ga\) \(fau-tar(=ga)\).
\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{what=ACC=FOC} \\
\text{eat-PST(=Q)}
\end{array}
\]
‘What did (you) eat?’ [WH interrogative]

(20) \(uri=u\) \(fa-i-Ø\).
\[
\begin{array}{c}
3SG=ACC \\
\text{eat-SFN-IMP}
\end{array}
\]
‘Eat it.’ [imperative]

The M-form tends to occur in declarative sentences (\(N = 258\) of the total 281 tokens). It never occurs in imperatives, as imperative clauses are coded by using a different verb inflection.

It is interesting to note that the M-form tends not to occur in interrogatives. The M-form occurred only in a limited number of Yes-No interrogatives (\(N = 23\) of the total 281 tokens). Except for one example listed in (21), these examples should be interpreted as one of rhetorical question rather than a normal question, even though the sentences are encoded with the interrogative syntax.
‘Didn’t anybody let you take a rest, Yoko?’

‘Did you have fields?’

‘Could there have been (the fields)?’ (i.e. There could not have been any fields, (as we were very poor peasants))

‘As for the school song, (you) all would do (i.e. sing) including first grades, right?’

‘No, could first grades sing?’ (i.e. they did not ever sing the school song.)

Rhetorical questions are unlike normal questions in that the former do not request the hearer to fill the information about the truth value of the proposition. Rather, the speaker is very certain that the proposition is false. In Givón’s (1994) terms, rhetorical questions entail ‘negative assertion’:

Givón’s (1994: 268) formulation of epistemic modality

a. **Presupposition**: The proposition is *assumed* to be true, either by definition, by prior agreement, by generic culturally-shared convention, by being obvious to all present at the speech situation, or by having been uttered by the speaker and left unchallenged by the hearer.

b. **Realis assertion**: The proposition is *strongly asserted* to be true; but challenge from the hearer is deemed appropriate, although the speaker has evidence or other grounds to defend their strong belief.

c. **Irrealis assertion**: The proposition is *weakly asserted* as either possible, likely, or uncertain, or necessary, desired or undesired. But the speaker is
not ready to back up the assertion with evidence or other strong grounds; and challenge from the hearer is readily entertained, expected, or even solicited.

d. **Negative assertion**: The proposition is **strongly asserted** to be false, most commonly in contradiction to the hearer’s explicit or assumed belief; challenge from the hearer is anticipated, and the speaker has evidence or other grounds to back up their strong belief.

The biased preference of M-forms for rhetorical questions rather than normal questions would be related to their biased preference for those clitics that add a high assertive force (§5.1.1): in both cases, the speaker is certain of the truth value of the proposition, whether the truth value be true (realis assertion in the sense of (24) above) or false (negative assertion).

### 5.3. Tense of the verb

Generally speaking, the M-form tends to occur in past tense, as shown in Table 4 (c) below. However, M-forms with a stative meaning tend to occur in non-past tense.

**Table 4. Tense and M-form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>non-past</th>
<th>past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) M-forms (dynamic)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) M-forms (stative)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) total</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is noted here that the time reference of non-past tense differs depending on whether the verb is dynamic (e.g. *ik- ‘go’, fau- ‘eat’*) or stative (e.g. *ur- ‘exist’, taka-kar- ‘be high’).* In dynamic verbs, time reference of non-past tense is usually a future time (but see below), whereas in stative verbs the time reference is the present time, as in (25).

(25) A:  

```
vva=a njaa-n-Ø=dara=i.
2SG=TOP not.exist-NEG-NPST=PER=eh
‘(At) you(r place) there is no (TV set), right?’
```

---

2 A stative verb stem may be derived from a property concept stem such as *taka- ‘high’* by affixing the verbaliser *-kar*. The derived stem inflects just like ordinary verbs (Shimoji 2009b).
Interestingly, when the M-form as a dynamic verb occurred in non-past tense, it almost always designated an imminent future, i.e. a situation that is about to take place.

(26) kaja, kaja! pav-Ø-m=mju=tii, mii-tigaa...
    there there move-NPST-M=EMP=QT look-CVB.CND
    “‘There, there! (The baby) is going to move!'”, said (the man), so (I) took a look…”

(27) hai, pjaa=sii tur-i-Ø. kjaari-i par-Ø-m=i=du
    now fast=INST take-SFN-IMP go.out-CVB.SEQ leave-NPST-M=QT=FOC
    as-i-ur-Ø.
do-SFN-PROG-NPST
    ‘Hey, take (the kettle) now. (The water) is about to diminish.’

Given all these, M-forms prefer to occur in expressions of what actually happened (past tense), what is perceived as a present situation (non-past tense with present time reference), and, less frequently, what is about to take place (non-past tense with imminent future time reference). In general, then, we can say that M-forms tend to be used when ‘actuality’ (Elliot 2000) of a situation is high. This is nicely represented by the following minimal pair that I elicited from a consultant. In (28), the interpretation may be either general truth or some unspecified future. By contrast, in (29) the interpretation must not be general truth or unspecified future: this sentence may be used only when, according to the consultant, ‘you are talking about an actual typhoon, which is in all probability coming to Irabu’. As indicated in the translations, the different interpretation caused by the verb inflection also forces referentiality of the subject NP. Since actuality is high in (29), the subject NP is felt (by the consultant) as referential.

(28) uku-kazi=nu  fii-Ø.
    big-wind=NOM come-NPST
    ‘Typhoons come.’ [general truth or some unspecified future]
(29) uku-kazi=nu fïï-Ø-m.
    big-wind=NOM come-NPST-M
    ‘The typhoon is about to come.’

5.4. Focus construction (Kakarimusubi)
In the database there was no example where the M-form occurred in the focus
construction, or Kakarimusubi (KM) construction. In KM, the sentential focus is
ovely marked by a focus clitic, and the presence of the focus marker restricts the
inflectional possibility of the predicate verb, thus there is a concord between the focus
marking and the predicate morphology (see Shinzato and Serafim 2003).

In a standard KM as found in Old Japanese and in certain Ryukyuan languages (e.g.
Okinawan), the inflection in the presence of a focus marker must be a specific form, i.e.
the finite unmarked (rentaikei) as opposed to the conclusive (shushikei) or other
non-finite forms such as infinitive, showing a ‘positive concordance’. By contrast, the
Irabu focus construction shows a ‘negative concordance’, whereby a specific inflection,
i.e. the M-form, is excluded when a focus marker appears. Thus in the examples below,
the predicate in each focus construction may be a finite unmarked (30a), an irrealis
form (30b), or even a convert (30c), but cannot be an M-form (30d).

(30)  a. ba=a nnama=kara=du if-Ø.
       1SG=TOP now=from=FOC go-NPST
       ‘I will go now’[finite unmarked]

b. ba=a nnama=kara=du ik-a-di.
   1SG=TOP now=from=FOC go-SFN-INT
   ‘I will go now’[irrealis]

c. ba=a nnama=kara=du ik-i-i, kari=u kurus-a-di.
   1SG=TOP now=from=FOC go-SFN-CVB.SEQ 3SG=ACC kill-SFN-INT
   ‘I will go now, and kill him’[converb]

d. * ba=a nnama=kara=du if-Ø-m.
   1SG=TOP now=from=FOC go-NPST-M
   ‘I will go now’[M-form]
Standard KM:  
NP_FOC → V[Adnominal]  
V[Conclusive]  
V[Infinitive], etc.

Irabu focus construction:  
NP_FOC → V[M-form]  
V[Finite unmarked]  
V[Irrrealis]  
V[Converb]

Figure 1. Positive concordance and negative concordance

The relevant question here is why the M-form is not used as the predicate form when a focus marker appears in a clause.

The key to this question seems to be the pragmatic function of the M-form. A detailed examination of the text data revealed that when the M-form is used, the speaker always indicates that, based on his/her established knowledge, his message is worth noting to the hearer, as the hearer does not know what is being told, or has a wrong assumption about it. That is, the message encoded by the M-form is new information to the hearer. Let us illustrate this with several examples.

In past tense, the overwhelming majority of M-forms were used in cases where the speaker tells his/her direct experience to the hearer who is ignorant of it, or may have a chance to doubt it. Examples (9) and (10), listed again below, are typical examples of this kind.

(31)  
nama=a mii-n-Ø=suga, pav=mai juu u-ta-m=dooi, nkjaan=na.  
now=TOP see-NEG-NPST=but snake=too very exist-PST=EMP old.days=TOP  
‘These days we don’t see (snakes), but (there) were a lot of snakes in old days.’

(32)  
kui=sii nbja-i-Ø t-ta-m=dara.  
this.way=INST survive-SFN-CVB.SEQ come-PST=EMP  
‘In this way (we) have survived (until now), I tell you.’

(31) was taken from the text where the speaker talked about Irabu Island fifty years ago to the author. The author and other younger generations have never seen snakes on Irabu Island, and it is a well-known fact that in Southern Ryukyuan areas snakes are absent. The speaker is aware that what she says is new to the hearer. In (32), the same speaker talks about the past life, where people lived a hard life that younger generation
would never dream of.

In non-past tense (where time reference may be present or imminent future, as noted in §5.3), M-forms usually entail warning or caution. This is understandable, as warning/caution is typically the act of making the hearer notice what is being taking place or is about to take place. Looking back at (1), which is listed again in (33) below, speaker A has the assumption that ‘this (guy)’ is ignorant, which B thinks is wrong, as he is certain that ‘this (guy)’ is a wise person. Thus B corrects A’s assumption by using an M-form.

(33) A:  
\[ \text{kuri=a nau=mai s-sa-n-Ø=dara=i.} \]
\[ 3SG=TOP \text{ what=even know-SFN-NEG-NPST} \]
‘This (guy) does not know anything, right?’

B:  
\[ \text{nau! kuri=a nau=ju=mai s-si-u-Ø-m!} \]
\[ \text{what 3SG=TOP what=ACC=even know-SFN-PROG-NPST-M} \]
‘No way! This (guy) knows everything!’

Compare (33B) with the following, where the predicate is a finite unmarked.

(34)  
\[ \text{kuri=a nau=ju=mai s-si-ur-Ø.} \]
\[ 3SG=TOP \text{ what=ACC=even know-SFN-PROG-NPST} \]
‘This (guy) knows everything.’

Without a context, this sentence is ambiguous. The speaker may be simply saying ‘This guy knows everything’ as a general truth. Or, this statement may be a surprise, uttered upon recognising that this guy knows everything contrary to the speaker’s expectation that this guy was dull.

In (35) below, speaker B warns speaker A not to buy things at supermarket x, as speaker B is quite certain that the goods sold at the supermarket are costly.

(35) A.  
\[ \text{mucii=mai njaa-n=niba. x=n ar-Ø?} \]
\[ \text{rice.cake=too not.exist-NPST=so x=DAT exist-NPST} \]
‘I have run out of rice cakes, so (the supermarket) x sells some?’

B.  
\[ \text{ugui! uma=a taka-ka-Ø-m=ju!} \]
\[ \text{hey that.place=TOP high-VLZ-NPST-M=CAUT} \]
‘Hey! they (sell) costly (things)!’
Similarly, the following examples are caution or warning to the hearer who is ignorant of the fact told by the speaker.

(36) *hai! uti-r-m=dooi!*

hey drop-NPST-M=EMP

‘Watch out! (The base behind you) is going to drop!’

(37) *kaja, kaja, fiř-Ø-m!*

there there come-NPST-M

‘(Hey don’t you see) there, there, (the ship is) coming!’

If my analysis that the M-form expresses new information to the hearer is correct, it is well expected for an M-form not to occur as the predicate in a focus construction, since in a focus construction, the predicate should be presupposed (Shinzato 1998: 204). Thus, it is the pragmatic feature of the realis form that leads to the exclusion of this form as the predicate form in the focus construction.

5.5. Text genre and M-form

Generally speaking, the M-form occurs more frequently in conversations than in narratives. It is noted that in folktales and procedural texts almost no example of M-form is found.

<p>| Table 5. Text genres and distribution of M-forms (N: Narrative, C: conversation) |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>N1</th>
<th>N2</th>
<th>N3</th>
<th>N4</th>
<th>N5</th>
<th>N6</th>
<th>C1</th>
<th>C2</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>folktale</td>
<td>folktale</td>
<td>folktale</td>
<td>procedure</td>
<td>past</td>
<td>past</td>
<td>spontaneous</td>
<td>meeting</td>
<td>Words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>2,098</td>
<td>2,022</td>
<td>2,203</td>
<td>3,090</td>
<td>11,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Verbs</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>2,541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. M-forms</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b/a</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That M-forms do not occur in folktales and in procedurals is expected from the semantic-pragmatic characteristics of M-forms that were noted so far. First, these genres are narrated with no interaction with the hearer, given that actuality of the events narrated or certainty about the actuality of the events narrated is not relevant both to the speaker and to the hearer. This is in sharp contrast to other narrative genres such as personal history (N5 and N6), where the speaker interacts with the hearer by checking whether the hearer actually knows things being narrated and drawing...
This kind of interaction should be most active in conversations where the speaker and the hearer both give information and update their knowledge as the conversation goes. In Givón’s (1994) sense, ‘challenge from the hearer’ (see ‘realis assertion’ and ‘negative assertion’ in (24)) is frequently induced in conversations.

6. Concluding remarks
This paper has shown that the M-form exhibits the following four major distributional patterns in the text.

(38) Distributional patterns of M-forms in the texts
a. **Co-occurrence with post-predicate modifier clitics:** the M-form tends to co-occur with modal clitics that add a high assertive force.
b. **Speech acts:** the M-form tends to occur in declarative clauses. When it occurs in an interrogative clause, the clause mostly functions as a rhetorical question, a type of speech act that expresses speaker’s certainty of the falsehood of proposition.
c. **Tense:** the M-form tends to occur in past tense or in non-past tense with present or imminent future time reference.
d. **Focus construction:** the M-form is excluded as the predicate form in the presence of a focus marker in the clause.
e. **Text genre:** the M-form occurs more frequently in conversations than in narratives. It is noted that in folktales and procedurals, which do not normally involve speaker-hearer interaction, almost no example of M-form is found.

Given these distributional features, what semantic or functional account can be made about the M-form?
I am not prepared to give an exact conclusion. However, it may be possible to state that the M-form is epistemic in nature as the previous works speculated, and that the epistemic modality is analogous to validationality, i.e. speaker’s perceived certainty (Weber 1986, Payne 1997). This is manifested in (38a, b, c). Since the M-form expresses speaker’s certainty, it tends to occur with forms with a high assertive force, such as emphatic =dooi and persuasive =dara. Also, speaker’s certainty is usually associated with statement rather than question, so that it is expected that the M-form do not normally occur in interrogatives. When it does occur in interrogatives, the normal function of interrogatives (i.e. question) is cancelled, and the negative assertion is
entailed. Finally, with respect to tense, the speaker is more likely to be certain when a situation has actually happened, is actually taking place, or is about to occur than when a situation will occur in an unspecified future. So, the M-form, as a form expressing speaker’s certainty, prefers past tense or non-past tense with present/imminent future time reference.

With respect to (38d), the hearer-oriented and pragmatic nature of the M-form is interesting typologically, since epistemic modality has mostly been discussed in terms of speaker’s perceived certainty, as in Akatsuka (1985) among others, or of objective actuality around the speaker, as in Elliot (2000). In other words, the perspective of the hearer was generally overlooked. Givón (1994) states that this speaker oriented characterisation of epistemic modality is not enough to capture the inherently communicative system of human language, suggesting his new way of formulation of epistemic modality, as listed in (24), where the hearer plays a significant role.
References


伊良部島方言における蓋然性のモダリティ

下地理則
(群馬県立女子大学)

要旨
本発表の目的は、伊良部島方言の文末終止の動詞形式の1つであるm語尾終止形（内間1985）の意味を記述することである。本発表では、発表者が収集した談話資料の分析から、m語尾終止形が以下の2つを同時に表す形式であると結論付ける。

(1) 【話者の確信】話者が命題の真偽について確信を持っている場合にのみ使われる。
(2) 【聞き手にとっての新情報】聞き手が命題の真偽について情報を持たない、あるいは間違った情報を持っている（と話者が判断する）場合にのみ使われる。

類型論的に見ると、m語尾終止形は【話者の確信】という点でvalidationality（e.g. Weber1986）を標示する形式であると指摘できるが、m語尾終止形のもうひとつの特徴である【聞き手にとっての新情報】は、話者と聞き手の両方を考慮する必要がある。この点で、伝統的な「話者中心の」認識モダリティ論に対して興味深い例を提示していると言える。