



The Diachronic Evolution of the Adverbialization of Te-verb Form in Japanese from Recent to Modern Period

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Abstract: In the process of language evolution, some te-verb forms in Japanese have been converted into adverbial modifiers or complete adverbs for modifying predicates. The conversion from the verb to the adverbial modifier or to the adverb is a gradual process. On the basis of the previous researches, this paper takes「敢えて」、「極めて」、「初めて」、「改めて」、「好んで」and「目立って」as the research objects, and through the investigation of corpus to explore the evolution of te-verb forms to adverbial modifiers or adverbs in diachronic process from recent period to modern one. With the observation of the frequency and semantic changes, the degrees of adverbialization of the research objects have been improved or reduced, and the conversion of word classes is a process of dynamic change.

Keywords: te-verb form, adverbial modifiers, adverbs, diachronic evolution

1. Introduction

Modern Japanese adverbs include inherent adverbs and adverbs derived from other parts of speech. Inherent adverbs include 「はつきり」、「だいたい」、etc. The adverbs that derived from other parts of speech include 「思い切って」、「重ねて」、etc. Based on previous studies, this paper takes adverbialization of te-verb form as the research object, and discusses the gradual transformation of adverbialization of te-verb form.

In the previous research, through the in-depth investigation of the te-verb form and the characteristics of the adverb itself, "whether it is endowed with functions of modifiers", "whether it is capable to dominate the case" and "whether the word order is relatively free" it is set as the criteria for judging the use of te-verb form as an adverb. According to this standard, the author of this paper investigates, analyzes the examples retrieved from the corpus, and confirms that 73 te-verb forms can be used as the adverbial modifier. But this is not enough to prove that the te-verb forms have been converted to adverbs, which requires an actuarial degree of adverbs. The degree of adverbs refers to the level of adverbs. Some te-verb forms have been transformed into adverbs, and some have just started to be transformed into adverbs. Their degree of adverbs varies. The degree of adverbs is calculated from two aspects: the frequency of use and a change in semantics.

The above transformation of te-verb forms into the adverbial modifier or adverb is an investigation of modern Japanese. Based on this, this paper is intended to conduct a diachronic study and extend the investigation to recent period. In this paper, typical 「敢えて」、「極めて」、「初めて」、「改めて」、「好んで」and「目立って」are selected as the research objects to investigate their application in recent period corpus so as to explore and examine the degree of adverbs. As a result, it also makes a comparative analysis of the adverbialization of the te-verb form in modern Japanese.

2. The characteristics of the use of the te-verb form as the adverbial modifier in modern corpus

This paper selects typical adverbial modifiers 「敢えて」、「極めて」、「初めて」、「改めて」、「好んで」and「目立って」to discuss their usage in recent period.

2.1 The usage of 「敢えて」 in corpus of recent period

Through the search and analysis of the corpus, 「敢えて」 is used as the adverbial modifier in the corpus. For example:

(1) もちろん本記者も決してその一人でない、敢えて断言する。それほどこの事件は常識を超越しているのだ。(I ascertained that this reporter was not alone. This is beyond common sense.)

(2) そして信長のひとみを、敢えて正視した。なんのための戦いか。それを思えばこそ、憂えればこそ、表を冒して、自分たちは、諫めに出たものである。(Dare to look the eyes of Nobunaga. What the fighting is for? It is thinking and concerns that encourage us to provide suggestions)

(3) みんなそういう意見らしいね。まことに結構である。が、それは一体いつの日に達成されるのである

か。敢えて諸君に反問したい。(That is the opinion of everyone. It sounds good. But I dare to ask you when it will be finished.)

Through etymological research, 「敢えて」 is the conjunctive form of the verb 「敢ふ」. In recent period corpus, 「敢えて」 is not used as a verb, but is used as the adverbs in the above sentences, the meaning of which is equivalent to "dare, insist...". In the examples, 「断言する」, 「正視する」 and 「反問する」 are modified respectively.

According to the survey conducted by Zhang (2016), 「敢えて」 is mostly used to modify action verbs such as 「言う」, 「聞く」, 「紹介する」, 「答える」, 「確認する」, 「願う」, 「発言する」, 「犯す」, 「使う」 and so on. Therefore, it is supposed that 「敢えて」 modifies action verbs on most occasions from recent period to modern times.

2.2 The usage of 「極めて」 in corpus of recent period

Through the investigation and analysis of the corpus, 「極めて」 can be used as the adverbial modifier in corpus most of time. For example:

(4) お松の手から極めて無愛想に、提灯を受取った彼は、さっさと相生町の河岸を駆け抜けて、本所元町まで来てしまった。(With utter indifference, He takes the lantern from Komatsu's hand and quickly crosses the bank of Aioimachi to Honjo-Motomachi.)

(5) もう人通りも極めて少く、電車もなく、春の冷々とした夜気が肌に快かった。(There are very few pedestrians, there are no trams, and the spring night with coldness gives the skin a pleasant feeling.)

理解力と感受性が豊かで、どんな物事に対しても妥当な判断を誤まらず、何に対しても極めて穏健な意見をはいた。(Endowed with rich understanding and sensibility, one can have a correct judgment of things, and mature thought will be developed toward anything that occurs)

「極めて」 is the conjunctive form of the verb 「極める」. According to the survey of corpus, the using frequency of 「極めて」 as an adverbial modifier in recent period corpus is much higher than that of verbs, which is about 3 times as much as that of verbs. In addition, when used as an adverbial modifier, the latter is usually used as an adjective. Such as 「無愛想」, 「少ない」 and 「穏健」 in the examples.

This is different from the modern languages. According to the survey of Zhang (2016), in modern languages, 「極めて」 is mostly used to modify verbs such as 「類似する」, 「限られる」, 「近似する」, 「誤る」, 「(多岐に)わたる」 and so on.

2.3 The usage of 「初めて」 in corpus of recent period

Through the investigation and analysis of the corpus, 「初めて」 can be used as the adverbial modifier in corpus most of time. For example:

(7) 父が初めてこの寺へきたときは、この寺が小さな辻堂にすぎなかったことや、夜、獺がうしろの川で鮭をとりそこなったりして夜中に水音を立てたということなどを聞いた。(When my father first came to this temple, it was just a small Buddha hall. Hearing the splash at night when otters fail to catch salmon in the creek behind them.)

(8) 翻訳というものは、遊び半分にやるのならともかく、真面目にやるとなると容易なものでないことが、初めて分ってきた。(I realized for the first time that translation is hard to be accomplished so we just want to have fun with it)

(9) 先刻自動車から降りて、貴女と顔を見合せた時、俺は結婚して以来初めて幸福を感じた。(The moment I got off the car looking at her eyes, I felt the happiness of marriage for the first time.)

The adverb 「はじめて」 derives from the verb 「始める」. 「はじめて」 can be used as an adverb as well as the te-verb form in recent period corpus, and the using frequency as an adverb is about 4 times that of the verb, so it can be said that 「はじめて」 on most occasions is used as an adverb. When it is used as an adverb, the following item is usually used as a verb. The verbs in the examples are 「来る」, 「わかる」 and 「感じる」, which is the same in modern languages. 「はじめて」 modifies action verbs such as 「飲む」, 「食べる」, and motional verbs such as 「行く」, 「来る」 and emotive verbs such as 「気づく」, 「実感する」 and so on.

2.4 The usage of 「改めて」 in corpus of recent period

Through the investigation and analysis of the corpus, 「改めて」 can be used as the adverbial modifier in corpus most of time. For example:

(10) これはきわめて明瞭なことで改めて例を挙げる必要もない。(The matter has been made clear enough that there is no need to give a new example.)

(11) その窓框に両手をかけて音もなくひらりと中に跳り込んで、改めて室の中を見渡した。(Placing his hands on the window, he jumps silently and nimbly into it and looks around the room once more.)

(12) こういう風なところをあちこち歩いてホテルへかえると、小規模なパッサージの清潔さと設備の簡素な合理性とが改めて新鮮に感じられた。(Strolling back to the hotel in such a place, I felt once again the cleanliness of the paths and the rationality of simplicity of the facilities.)

「改めて」 comes from the verb 「改める」, which means "once again...". 「改めて」 can be used as a verb or as an auxiliary modifier in recent period corpus, and the using frequency as the adverbial modifier is 3 times as much as that as verbs. 「改めて」 is used as an auxiliary modifier to modify the verbs 「挙げる」, 「見渡す」 and 「感じる」 in the above examples.

This is basically the same as the results of the survey of modern language corpus. In modern languages, 「改めて」 can modify action verbs such as 「頼む」, 「指摘する」, and emotional verbs such as 「痛感する」, 「驚く」 and so on.

2.5 The usage of 「好んで」 in corpus of recent period

Through the investigation and analysis of corpus, 「好んで」 can be used as the adverbial modifier in corpus most of time. For example:

(13) 我々は此等の虚構の言葉を文藝的なりとして寧ろ好んで使ふ傾向がある。(We have a tendency to prefer to use these fictional words in literature.)

(14) 私は好んで各地を旅行するが、これとは思うような土地特有の名物に接することは至って少なく、たいがいは都会におけるありふれたものの模造であり、失望することが常である。(I love to travel, but I rarely get to learn local features, and what I see everywhere is mostly imitation, which is often disappointing.)

(15) このゆえに人物よりも山水花鳥を画題として好んで用いるようになった。(I prefer landscapes, flowers and birds as the theme of my painting to people)

「好んで」 derives from the verb 「好む」, which can be used as the auxiliary modifier and also as a verb in recent period corpus. Adverbs are used four times more often than verbs, according to the survey. In the above example, 「好んで」 is used as an adverbial modifier to modify the verbs 「使う」, 「旅行する」 and 「用いる」 respectively. Through the preliminary investigation, 「好んで」 is used to modify action verbs in modern languages such as 「訪れる」, 「買う」 and 「書く」 and so on.

2.6 The usage of 「目立って」 in corpus of recent period

Through the investigation and analysis of corpus, 「目立って」 can be used as the adverbial modifier in corpus most of time. For example:

(16) 灯りが暗いので全体に物凄い影がさして、紫色の耳から頸へかけての肉の色が、一番目立ってはつきりと見えた。(In the dim light, the shadows were drawn long, especially from the purple ears to the skin of the neck.)

(17) つやつやしい毛色が妙に薄ぎたなくよごれて、顔もいつとなく目立ってやせて、目つきが険しくなってきた。(The color of the coat was a little dirty, the face had grown noticeably thinner at some point, and the eyes were terrible.)

(18) 街頭の花店には色とりどりの花の種類が目立って増えている。(In the street florist shop, there are obviously more flowers of all kinds.)

「目立って」 as an adverbial modifiers comes from the verb 「目立つ」. It can be used as both adverbial modifier and verb in recent period corpus. Adverbs are used about twice as often as verbs, according to the survey. In the above example, 「目立って」 as an adverbial modifier modifies the verbs 「見える」, 「痩せる」 and 「増える」 respectively. Through the preliminary survey, in the modern languages, 「好んで」 can modify the verbs such as 「緩和する」, 「欠ける」 etc., but, on most occasions, it is used to modify the adjectives such as 「美しい」, 「多い」 etc.

3. Comparison of the usage frequency and adverb degree of the te-verb form in recent and modern period

This section takes 「敢えて」, 「極めて」, 「初めて」, 「改めて」, 「好んで」 and 「目立って」 as the research objects to explore the degree of adverbs in recent period corpus. The degree of adverbialization refers to the degree of adverbs, which can be calculated by using the frequency of adverbs and of the meaning changes.

3.1 The calculation of the usage frequency of modern Japanese te-verb form and the comparison of usage frequency

According to the investigation in modern corpus, all 「敢えて」 in examples are used as adverbs, and 「敢えて」 is derived from the adjective of the verb. In recent period, all the sentences have been used as adverbs. The same result is found in modern language corpus. All 「敢えて」 in examples are used as adverbs. The survey results in recent period

corpus show that 「極めて」, 「初めて」, 「改めて」, 「好んで」 and 「目立って」 are used as adverbial modifiers on most occasions, accounting for 74.8%, 82.3%, 77.4%, 80.3% and 67.8%, respectively. The details are shown in the following Table.

Table 1. Calculation of the using frequency of te-verb form in recent period

Words	Using frequency as adverbs	Using frequency as verbs	Using proportion of adverbs	Using proportion of verbs
敢えて	1453	0	100%	0
極めて	7093	2395	74.8%	25.2%
初めて	19002	4074	82.3%	17.7%
改めて	2683	784	77.4%	22.6%
好んで	1271	312	80.3%	19.7%
目立って	297	141	67.8%	32.2%

In addition, based on the survey of Zhang (2016), the percentages of the use frequency of 「敢えて」, 「極めて」, 「初めて」, 「改めて」, 「好んで」 and 「目立って」 as adverbs account for 100.0%, 96.0%, 94.8%, 84.3%, 78.3% and 23.0% in modern language corpus. From this view, the using frequency of 「極めて」, 「初めて」 and 「改めて」 as adverbs have increased. In contrast, the using frequency of 「好んで」 and 「目立って」 as adverbs declined from recent period to modern times. The using frequency of 「敢えて」 as an adverb remained the same, which was 100%.

3.2 The calculation of adverb degree of te-verb form and the comparison of adverb degree in recent and modern period

Adverb degree refers to the degree of adverbialization. Some te-verb forms have been transformed into adverbs, and some have just started to be transformed into adverbs, so their adverb degree is not the same. This paper follows the calculation method of adverb degree in modern corpus proposed by Zhang (2016). The degree of adverbs is calculated from two aspects: the using frequency and the change of semantics. Through mathematical calculation, the degree of adverbs in the form of te-verb is obtained. The te-verb form with the degree of adverb above 50% can be identified as adverbs. Although the te-verb form with the degree of adverb below 50% has the function of adverbs, the usage as adverb is not fixed and temporary.

As for the semantic change of the te-verb form, this paper adopts the judgment method of Hayashi (2008). Hayashi (2008) believes that if the sentence ends with the original verb, it can be judged that the te-verb form has changed semantically if the sentence is false. If the sentence is structurally feasible, it can be determined that the te-verb form has not changed semantically. Such as:

(19) 物質的な「ゆとり」が増すにつれて、精神的な「ゆとり」はかえって減る。(✓)

(20) 物質的な「ゆとり」が増すにつれて、精神的な「ゆとり」はかえる。(×)

(If we are richer in materials, we are poorer in spirit.)

(21) 彼は首を曲げ、黙ってしばらく僕の顔を見ていた。(✓)

(22) 彼は首を曲げ、黙っていた。(✓)

(He tilted his head and looked at me in silence.)

In example (19), 「かえって」 is -te form of the verb 「かえる」, which is used as an adverbial modifier to modify the verb 「減る」. In example (20), the sentence ends with 「かえる」 is false. Thus, when 「かえって」 is used as an adverbial modifier, the semantics change. In example (21), 「黙って」 as an adjunctive modifier modifies the verb 「見る」, indicating the state of action. In example (22), the sentence ends with 「黙る」 proves to be reasonable. So it can be determined that for 「黙って」, there are no changes in semantics when it is used as adverbial modifier.

The same method is adopted in this paper to determine whether the semantic changes occur when the te-verb form is used as the adverbial modifier. Through the investigation of recent period corpus, it can be found that the the semantics is changed when 「敢えて」, 「極めて」, 「初めて」, 「改めて」, 「好んで」 and 「目立って」 serve as the adverbial modifiers. This paper calculates the mean value of the proportion of adverbs and the proportion of semantic changes to get the degree of adverbs, namely, the degree of adverbialization. As shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The adverbialization of te-verb form in recent period

Words	Proportion of adverbs	The proportion of semantic change	Mean value
敢えて	100%	100.0%	100.0%
極めて	74.8%	100.0%	87.4%
初めて	82.3%	100.0%	91.2%
改めて	77.4%	100.0%	88.7%
好んで	80.3%	100.0%	90.2%
目立って	67.8%	100.0%	83.9%

In addition, according to Zhang (2016) 's survey of modern languages, the adverb degrees of 「敢えて」, 「極めて」, 「初めて」, 「改めて」, 「好んで」 and 「目立って」 are respectively 100.0%, 98.0%, 97.4%, 92.2%, 89.2% and 61.5% in modern languages. Therefore, the adverbialization of 「極めて」, 「初めて」 and 「改めて」 has been enhanced, while the adverbialization of 「好んで」 and 「目立って」 has been reduced from recent period to modern times. The adverbialization of 「敢えて」 remains unchanged, which is still 100%.

4. Conclusion

Taking the te-verb form as the research object, this paper investigates the using frequencies and the adverbialization of 「敢えて」, 「極めて」, 「初めて」, 「改めて」, 「好んで」 and 「目立って」 when they are used as adverbial modifiers from recent period to modern times. It is concluded that from the using frequency, from recent period to modern times, the using frequency of 「極めて」, 「初めて」 and 「改めて」 as the adverb increases, the using frequency of 「好んで」 and 「目立って」 as the adverb decreases. The using frequency of 「敢えて」 as an adverb remains unchanged, which is still 100%. From the perspective of adverbialization, from recent period to modern times, the adverbialization of 「極めて」, 「初めて」 and 「改めて」 is enhanced, while the adverbialization of 「好んで」 and 「目立って」 is reduced. The adverbialization of 「敢えて」 remains unchanged, which is still 100%.

Due to the limited scope, this paper only chooses relatively typical -te form of 6 typical verbs for comparison and all the verb-te forms as adverbial modifiers will be investigated, which is not subject to recent period. Rather, it will be extended to the ancient times so as to make a comprehensive analysis and show the evolutionary process of te-verb form as adverbial modifiers from ancient time to modern times, which shall be the research topic in the future.

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