

## Emergence of modal meanings in adjective/adverb categories: A contrastive analysis from English and Japanese

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The notion of modality has long been researched by focusing mostly on verbal forms, especially on modal auxiliaries. In the framework of grammaticalization, analyses from the English adjective category (Vandewinkel and Davidse 2008, Van linden 2010) have shed new light on the developmental mechanisms of modal meanings. To explore the emergence of modality as a cross-linguistically cognitive mechanism, this presentation concentrates on adjectival/adverbial data from two etymologically distant languages, English and Japanese.

The English adjective *clear*, which originated in describing objects (e.g., *clear water*) and diachronically developed from concrete to abstract (Shindo 2009), frequently functions as an intensifier (e.g., *clear failure*) expressing epistemic modality in Present-Day English. This semantic-pragmatic change shows a leftward and constructional shift in pre-nominal strings with other adjectives, schematized as [Adj1 Adj2 Adj3 Noun] > [Adj1 [Adj2 Adj3 Noun]]. An analysis of about 5000 data for *clear/clearly* in the OED quotation database shows that this syntactic shift relates to the semantic-pragmatic development (from manner to sentential) of the derivative adverb, *clearly* (Shindo 2012).

The Japanese nominal adjective *akiraka*, corresponding to *clear*, can function both as an adjective and as an adverb; it changes its conjugational affix according to its connecting or modifying word. In Old Japanese *akiraka* etymologically described concrete situations of “bright,” “understandable,” or “open with no obstruction”, but in Present-Day Japanese *akiraka* predominantly means “obvious(ly),” expressing epistemic modality showing the speaker or writer’s commitment to the truth of a proposition. An analysis of diachronic corpus data for *akiraka* (Shindo 2012) shows the developmental processes of epistemic meanings as an adjective/adverb continuum occurring in the same word: adjective in *koto nari (it-that)* construction → sentential adverb → intensifying adjective.

In the cases of both *clear/clearly* and *akiraka*, the adverbial function connects the processes of pragmatic development to the intensifiers with epistemic meanings. In Japanese, *meihaku* and *hakkiri*, which etymologically describe “vividly recognizable or noticeable situations against their comparable items or backgrounds,” now also mean “perceivable” or “understandable.” They function only as an objectively evaluative adjective/adverb (Example (1)) but do not work as an epistemic sentential adverb (Example (2)).

- (1) Taro da-tta koto wa *akiraka*-de aru. / *meihaku*-de aru. / *hakkiri* shi-teiru.  
Taro be-PST that TOP clear-GER COP. / clear-GER COP. / clear be-PROG.  
“It is clear that (the person is) Taro.”
- (2) {*Akiraka-ni* / \**Meihaku-ni* / \**Hakkiri-to*} beikoku taishi wa osorete iru.  
{Clearly/clearly/clearly} American ambassador TOP afraid be  
“Clearly, the American ambassador is afraid.”

What causes this difference in the emergence of epistemic meanings? It depends on whether a word comes to include the speaker or writer’s subjective attitude toward a proposition. *Akiraka* conveys the speaker or writer’s evaluation of the reliability of a proposition, while *meihaku* and *hakkiri* describe the perceptual recognizability of a proposition. This diachronic and contrastive approach from typologically distant languages reveals that the developmental path of subjectification (Traugott and Dasher 2002) connects processes to epistemic adverbial usages, and then to adjectival intensifiers.

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