

## ■ Adverbs and Aspect

Adverbs that are involved with aspect have two types. One type modifies the aspect of movement, and the other modifies state, such as adverbs of duration. Basically, the former does not collocate with stative verbs, and can be called aspectual adverbs in the narrow sense. They can be generally classified into manner-of-occurrence adverbs, which modify the temporal aspect of the occurrence of a situation; manner-of-progression adverbs, which modify the progressive aspect of the situation; manner-of-result and termination adverbs, which modify the result and the terminal aspect of a situation; determination-of-quantity adverbs, which defines the quantity of the situation. Adverbs of tense, which describe what happened previously, also take part in semantic interpretation.

Manner-of-occurrence adverbs, such as *suguni* ‘right away,’ *totsuzen* ‘suddenly,’ *yōyaku* ‘finally,’ *yagate* ‘eventually,’ define the starting point of a situation, describe circumstances of the occurrence of the situation, and existence of the change since the occurrence of the situation. Many of these adverbs collocate with the *suru* form of verbs. Even when they occur with the verb form *shite iru*, they do not signify progression (i.e., they refer to the past history that the occurrence took place).

Manner-of-progression adverbs, such as *yukkuri* ‘slowly,’ *hitotsu zutsu* ‘one at a time,’ *dondon* ‘steadily,’ *shidaini* ‘gradually,’ express the manner in which the situation progresses. (*Dondon* and *shidaini*, in particular, express the progression of the degree of change). The adverbs of repetition that describe multiple occurrences of repeated situations are at a different level in that they describe a collection of situations. However, they are included here because they modify the progressive aspect. They all express the manner of progression, so the *shite iru* form here is interpreted to describe progression. The *shite iru* form of subject-change verbs expresses result, as in *mado ga aite iru* ‘the window is open’ (result). However, when a manner-of-progression adverb collocates with it, it is dominantly interpreted to express progression, as in *mado ga yukkuri aite iru* ‘the window is opening slowly’ (in progress). Similarly, when *tsugitsugito* ‘one after another’ collocates with *geinin ga shindeiru* ‘entertainers are dying,’ the sentence can describe progression of multiple occurrences of a situation as a repetition, rather than result.

Manner-of-result and termination adverbs, such as *konagonani* ‘into smithereens,’ *gararito* ‘drastically,’ describe the resulting change of a situation. The *shite iru* form of verbs, which describes the subject’s movement and change in the object, is interpreted mostly as describing progression. When an adverb that expresses the resulted manner collocates with it, the resultative aspect becomes dominant, as in *Madogarasu o watteiru* ‘They are breaking the window panes. (progressive)→*Madogarasu o konagona ni watteiru* ‘They have broken the window panes into smithereens (result).’ In the same vein, when adverbs that define the total amount of the phenomenon modify the terminal aspect of the phenomenon, they no longer single out the aspect of ongoing process for the predicate; they modify the terminal aspect instead, as in *shi o kaite iru* ‘am writing a poem’ (progressive) →*shi o kyūhon kaite iru* ‘have written 9 poems so far’ (past history).

Adverbs that are also involved with tense include *izen* ‘previously,’ *sudeni* ‘already,’ and *kinō* ‘yesterday’ (the latter two are associated with the point of speech). They only construct past

history even when they collocate with the *shiteiru* form, as in *Sudeni kare wa hon o kaite iru* ‘He’s already written books.’

When these adverbs collocate with the *shite iru* form, the interpretation of the meaning of the *shiteiru* form depends on the higher level adverb, as in *Kare wa gyūdon o tabete iru* ‘he’s eating a beef bowl,’ *Kare wa gyūdon o yonhai mo tabete iru* ‘he’s eaten as many as four beef bowls,’ *Kare wa mainichi gyūdon o yonhai mo tabete iru* ‘Everyday he eats as many as four beef bowls,’ *Kare wa gakusei jidai mainichi gyūdon o yonhai mo tabete iru* ‘In his student days he ate as many as four beef bowls every day.’

→アスペクト Aspect (2-G), 様態副詞 Adverbs of Manner (2-B)

● References

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