

■ Volitional Expressions

A volitional expression is used to describe the speaker's intention to perform an action which the speaker hasn't yet realized at that point, as in *mō kaerō* 'let's go home/I am going home,' and it involves the volitionality of the verb. In its basic use, a volitional verb expresses the decision to execute an act. With a verb whose volitionality is weak, as in *Mō wasureyō* 'Let's forget about it/I am going to forget about it,' it expresses an intention to make an effort toward the realization of the act. Verbs with no volitionality do not form volitional expressions (e.g., **Eigo ga hanaseyō*').

Shiyō and *suru* are important volitional expressions. *Mai* expresses negative volitional meaning, as in *nido to aumai* 'I intend never to see him again.' *Tsumori da*, which is derived from a volitional formal noun, is also one of the volitional expressions.

The volitional form, *shiyō*, basically expresses the speaker's decision to execute an action. This is used monologically, as in *Tsukareta naa. Mō kaerō.* 'I'm tired. I'll go home,' and in internal speech act, as in *Kyō wa ichinichi hon o yonde sugosō to omotta* 'I thought I'd spend all day reading today.' **Yōji ga aru node, shitsurei shimashō* is ungrammatical in that the speaker cannot tell her/his decision to act on her/his will in a dialog with another person. *Shiyō ka* is a volitional form turned into a question form, and expresses the speaker's indecision, as in *Kaerō ka. Soretomo nokorō ka* 'Should I go home, or should I stay?'

The speaker does not intend to tell the listener of the speaker's intention with the *shiyō* form, but the speaker may use the form in dialog when the act affects the listener. *Nimotsu, o-mochi shimashō* 'I'll carry your bag,' is appropriate, where the speaker offers to do an act that benefits the listener. When the speaker wants to confirm whether the listener accepts the offer or not, *shiyō ka* is used, as in *Nimotsu, o-mochi shimashō ka?* 'May I carry your bag?'

Suru is used when the speaker wants to notify the listener of the speaker's intention to perform an act. *Watashi, mō kaeru* 'I'll go home now' is appropriate in a dialog, but is not natural in a monolog. **Watashi wa mō kaeru to omou* does not work. When the speaker who has the authority to make the decision uses *suru*, as in *kono an o saitaku suru* 'we will pass this resolution,' use of the *suru* form adds the nuance that the decision is final.

Suru is not generally used in monologs, but the speaker may use it in monologs to affirm her/himself in her/his determination, as in *Kondo attara hakkiri sasete yaru* 'I'll settle it once and for all next time we meet' and *Kondo koso katsu zo* 'I'll definitely win next time.'

Tsumori da, which is derived from a formal noun of intention, expresses the plan that the speaker has already made prior to the utterance. *Watashi wa rainen ryūgaku suru tsumori da* 'I am intending to study abroad next year' notifies the listener of the speaker's plan, but the speaker cannot use this form to say s/he made up her mind to carry out the act at the time of speech.

→Modality (2-H), Invitation (2-H)

● References

Moriyama, Takuro (1990) "Ishi no modaritii ni tsuite" (On the Modality of Volition) in *Handai Nihongo Kenkyū* 2.

Nitta, Yoshio (1991) *Nihongo modaritii to ninshō* (Japanese Modarity and Person.) Hituzi Syobo.

(Adachi Taro)