

■ Evidence-Based Judgment

There are some sentence final forms of predication sentences that express that the said utterance is based on some sort of evidence (the speaker's observation and the ground for conjecture), as in *Kono hon wa kekkō omoshiroi {yō da/mitai da/rashii}* 'This book seems quite interesting' and *Kono hon wa kekkō omoshirosō da* 'This book looks quite interesting.' Of these, *yō da* and *mitai da* are almost the same semantically and functionally (but not stylistically), and *yō da* and *rashii* are similar in their usage in postulation.

● *Yōda* and *Rashii*

The main characteristic of *yō da* is that the speaker recognizes the establishment of the proposition content through her/his observation. This characteristic is evident in examples such as *Mita tokoro, kare wa nakanaka ii kuruma ni notte iru yō da* 'From what I see, he seems to drive a rather good car,' *Kyō wa kinō yori sukoshi atatakai yō da* 'It seems a bit warmer today than yesterday,' *Anata no kangae wa watashi to wa kanari chigatte iru yō desu ne* 'It seems that your thinking is quite different from mine.' If one replaces *yō da* with *rashii* in these examples, it either sounds unnatural or it loses the nuance that it is what the speaker is saying based on her/his observation.

It is natural that the usage of so-called analogy derives from the basic usage of *yō da*, which describes what the speaker observes, as in *Ano hito no hanashikata wa marude okotte iru yōda* 'The way that person talks is as if s/he is angry.'

Yō da becomes close to *rashii* when the speaker's observation and the content of the proposition are not necessarily equivalent, and when some speculation is suspected, as in (looking at a puddle) *Dōyara ame ga futta {yō da/rashii}* 'Seems it's rained.' The use of *yō da* expands into the use of postulation, but even then its characteristic to construct the content of the proposition based on observation remains.

Rashii, on the other hand, basically expresses the postulation based on evidence. When the information comes from the outside, there is no restriction on the type of evidence. *Rashii* may use what someone else says as evidence, as in *Uwasa dewa, kare wa mamonaku tenshoku suru rashii* 'I surmise from the rumor that he will change jobs soon.' This is the so called usage of hearsay.

● *Sō da*

Sō da differs from *yō da* and *rashii* morphologically in that it is affixed to the stem of verbs and adjectives (*furi*- 'fall', *tanoshi*- 'happy') and possesses the negative forms, *furisō {ni/mo} nai*, *tanoshisō dewa nai*, and the interrogative forms *furisō ka?*, *tanoshisō ka?*

The meaning of *sōda* differs greatly when it is affixed to a verb or when it is affixed to an adjective. First, when affixed to verbs, there are two usages. One is to describe the observation of indications themselves that foretell an event, as in *Imanimo ame ga furidashisō da* 'It looks like it's going to rain any minute,' and *Kono isu wa kowaresō da* 'This chair looks like it is going to break.' The other usage anticipates that some event will occur later, based on the observation of the current situation, as in *Kono shigoto wa ato 30pun gurai de katazukisō desu* 'It looks like this job will take

another 30 minutes to finish,’ and *Kono mama dewa, ano kaisha wa baishū sareru koto ni narisō da* ‘If things stay as they are, it looks like that company will end up being purchased.’

When *sō da* is affixed to adjectives, the basic function is to describe the characteristics and internal condition of the subject as evident on the outside, as in *Kono keeki, oishisō da na* ‘This cake looks delicious,’ and *Kare wa saikin sabishisōda* ‘He looks forlorn these days.’ Even when this form is affixed to verbs, the temporal development does not matter if it is used in the semantic structure where the characteristics of the subject are discussed; the meaning is similar to when it is affixed to adjectives, as in *Kono naifu, kiresō da na* ‘This knife looks like it cuts well,’ and *Ano hito wa supootsuman dakara yoku tabesō da* ‘Since he’s a sport player, he is likely to eat a lot.’

→助動詞 Auxiliary Verbs (2-B), モダリティ Modality (2-H)

● References

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