

■ *Demo* and *Nanka*: Focus of Exemplification

The particle of focus *demo* focuses on a certain situation as an example, and it may also indicate that there are other options to choose from.

(1) *Doraibu demo shimasu ka* ‘How about a drive or something?’

In (1), going for a drive is the focus, but the implication is that anything will be fine as long as it is in the same category of activity as going for a drive.

*Demo* expresses exemplification only when the speech act and modality contain conative function to the listener, and when the end of the sentence is not definitive.

(2) *Uta demo utatte kudasai* ‘How about singing a song for us, or something?’

(3) *Kissaten no mae de demo machiawase o shiyō* ‘Let’s meet in front of a coffee shop, or something.’

(4) *Kono basho ni izakaya demo hiraku nodarō ka* ‘I wonder if they are opening a pub or something here.’

The meaning of exemplification does not hold up if the sentence is definitive, such as describing the past.

(5) \**Doraibu demo shimashita.*

*Nanka* is also a focus particle which focuses on a certain event or object to imply that there is more.

(6) *Uchi no kagi nanka ni suzu o tsukeru to benri da* ‘It’ll be useful if we put a bell on our house key, for instance.’

*Nanka* may change to *nado* in formal style. In (6), keys other than that of the house, such as that of a bicycle, and a car key, are implied. *Nanka*, which implies things that the listener can guess, functions almost like a particle of parallel construction.

*Demo* and *nanka* also have a usage where something else other than focus is suspected but not identifiable.

(7) *Kagyō o tsuide, isha ni demo naru ka* ‘I might as well take over the family business and become a doctor, or something.’

(8) *Tanaka san nanka gakusei jidai kara tosshutsu shite yūshū datta ne* ‘Mr. Tanaka, for one, has always stood out from the rest since he was a student, as I recall.’

(9) *Kochira no burausu nanka ikaga deshō* ‘How would you like this blouse, for example?’

These sentences utilize exemplification as a means of euphemism, avoiding being restrictive.

*Nanka* may be replaced with *demo* only when the utterance and modality are conative toward the listener, and when there is an implicit component.

(10) *Murakami Haruki no hon {demo/nanka} yondemitara dō darō ka* ‘Why not try reading a book by Murakami Haruki, or something?’

→デモとモー意外性のとりたて Demo and Mo: Focus of Unexpectedness (2-I)

● References

Moriyama, Takuro (1998) ‘Reiji no fukujoshi *demo* to bunmatsu seiyaku’ (The Adverbial Particle of Exemplification, *Demo*, and Sentence Final Constraint) in *Nihongo Kagaku*, 3.

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