

- Quantifier + *Wa* & *Mo*

In an affirmative sentence, the form, quantifier + *wa*, implies that the minimum quota has been established, but the established quantity is not explicit.

(1) *10nin wa kita* ‘At least 10 people came.’

In a negative sentence, the interpretation is different depending on whether the form, quantifier + *wa*, is outside or inside of the negated scope.

(2) *10nin wa konakatta*.

[Interpretation 1] Within the scope of negation; the number of people didn’t reach 10.

[Interpretation 2] Outside the scope of negation; at least 10 people didn’t show up. That is, when the form is outside the scope of negation, the interpretation is the same as with an affirmative sentence.

The form, quantifier + *mo*, differs from the form, quantifier + *wa*, in that the former describes explicitly the established quantity when the sentence is affirmative. *Mo* adds the meaning that the established quantity is unexpectedly larger than the speaker’s expectation and prediction.

(3) *10nin mo kita* ‘As many as 10 people showed up.’

In a negative sentence, the interpretation differs whether the form, quantifier + *mo*, occurs outside or inside the scope of negation, same with the form, quantifier + *wa*.

(4) *10nin mo konakatta*.

[Interpretation 1] The form is inside the scope of negation. The quantity was smaller than what the speaker had expected or predicted. The speaker had expected that at least 10 people would show up but the actual number was less than 10.

[Interpretation 2] The form is outside the scope of negation. The speaker expresses that unexpectedly the number of people who didn’t show up was larger than expected or predicted. S/he hadn’t expected that as many as 10 people wouldn’t show up. The sentence says that the actual number of those who didn’t show up reached 10. The sentence expresses unexpectedness that the number exceeded speculation, same as in the affirmative sentence.

The relationship between the forms quantifier + *wa/mo* and negation is important.

→数量詞 Quantifiers (2-B)

- References

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