A Constructional Approach to the Historical Development of Conditional Imperatives in Japanese

Chiharu U. Kikuta
Doshisha University
0. Introduction

Goal:

(1) Empirical: To demonstrate with diachronic data how the Japanese *Temiru* conditional imperative (TCI, for short) has developed into its present form.

(2) Theoretical: To show that the construction grammar provides an effective framework to explain the diachronic change.
TCI has two types, and each one developed through very different types of language change.

- The first type emerged in early 18C through usage-based reanalysis, and constituted a new construction.
- The second type emerged in early 19C through construction-based analogy.
- Bottom-up and top-down.
Road map

1. A Brief description of conditional imperatives
2. The Japanese TCI and the issues in its development

3. Proposal:
   - Proposed construction network
   - Proposed scenarios of development

4. Conclusion
1: Conditional imperatives:

- Form: imperative / Meaning: conditional
  
  (1) Eat this, and you’ll be in trouble!
  
  - If you eat this, you’ll be in trouble.
  
  - Don’t eat this! (Otherwise, you’ll be in trouble.)

  undesirable consequence → warning/prohibition

- And-Conditional Imperatives
  

- Construction grammar analysis: double inheritance
2. Japanese *Temiru*-conditional imperatives (TCI)

(2) Sore-o yonde-miro, omae –towa zekko-da.
that acc read-try(imp), you with break off
‘Read that, (and) I’m done with you!’ (Shinzato 2002)

Common with the English conditional imperative

- The discrepancy of form and meaning
  warning, prohibition

Peculiar to the TCI

- The use of –*temiru* ‘try’ (< miru ‘see’) complex predicate.
- No conjunction; bare juxtaposition or parataxis
- A conditional marker (e.g., *mosi* ‘if’) can occur in the imperative sentence.
The occurrence of conditional marker *mosi*

(2) Sore-o yonde-miro, omae –towa zekko-da.

that acc read-try (imp), you with

‘Read that, (and) I’m done with you!’

(Shinzato 2002)

(3) **Mosi** sore-o yonde-miro, omae –towa zekko-da.

if that acc read-try(imp), you with

‘Read that, (and) I’m done with you!’

(Shinzato 2002)
(4) Try hard! You’ll make it.
   → If you try hard, you will make it.

    hard try-imp-try make-it
    ‘Try hard. You will make it.’

    if hard try-imp-try make-it
    ‘Try hard. You will make it.’
Two types of TCI

- (i) warning type
- (ii) supposition type

(7) Zisin –demo okotte-miro, doo suru-nda!
earthquake like happen-try(imp), what do Q
‘(Lit.) (Let) the earthquake happen. What will you do?’
‘=If the earthquake ever happens, what will you do?’

(8) Mosi zisin –demo okotte-miro, doo suru-nda!
If earthquake like happen-try(imp), what do Q
‘(Lit.) (Let) the earthquake happen. What will you do?’
Supposition type TCI (vs. warning type)

- (Implicit) subject can be non-2\textsuperscript{nd} person; inanimate thing.
- The predicate can denote a non-volitional process or state.
- *Te-miru* has lost its lexical meaning ‘to try.’

- Unavailable as an independent imperative sentence (i.e., unless it is meant as a condition with some consequence implied.)

(9) *Zisin -demo okotte-miro.
    earthquake like happen-try(imp)
    ‘(Lit.) (Let) the earthquake happen.’
No meaning of prohibition; the supposed event and the consequence can be desirable. (cf. (10))

(10) (Mosi) Kono takarakuzi –ga atatte-miro, if this lottery nom win-try, sugoi gotei -o tatete-miseru. huge mansion acc build-show ‘(Lit.) (Let) this be a winning ticket. I’ll build a grand mansion!’ (Nagano1996: modified)
Issues of the Japanese conditional imperative construction

1. Why can the conditional marker appear in the imperative clause?

2. How is the supposition type possible at all? (Why can it take the imperative form, while it fails to meet the fundamental conditions of the imperative?)

3. What is the relationship between the warning type and the supposition type?
Previous studies

Shinzato (2002)
- Neo-Gricean analysis:
  - Imperatives which cannot be interpreted as direction → conditional (warning) interpretation
  - “Started probably after 17C”
    (but provided data only from 19C (=supposition type))

Mori (2006)
- Follows Shinzato’s (2002) historical data.
- For TCI, the imperative can have a conditional meaning because it is a construction. (?)
3. Proposal

The answer to the questions lies in the construction network, and how the construction emerged and developed.
Proposed construction network

- macro-cons: conditional
- imperative

- meso-cons: Temiru-cond. Temiru-imperative Basic imp. Rhetorical Literal


Temiru conditional imperative (TCI)
The occurrence of the conditional marker *mosi*:

- TCI is an independent construction which is a subtype of both imperative and conditional constructions.

- The double inheritance ensures the occurrence of *mosi*, (not simply the availability of the conditional interpretation.)
Proposed scenario

- 1st Step: constructionalization
  temiru imperative $\rightarrow$ temiru conditional imperative (warning type)

- 2nd Step: construction expansion
  conditional imperative (warning type) $\rightarrow$
  conditional imperative (warning + supposition)
Proposed scenario

- **1st Step:** constructionalization
  
  *temiru imperative* → *temiru conditional imperative*

  **Syntagmatic relation provided the crucial context; A formulaic expression triggered rechunking (reanalysis)**

- **2nd Step:** construction expansion
  
  *conditional imperative (warning type)* →
  
  *conditional imperative (warning + supposition)*

  **Construction network=knowledge of language as a system induced the expansion:**
Step 1: constructionalization

Emergence of the TCI.

- Rhetorical (negative) imperatives were reanalyzed as a protasis of a conditional sentence.

[The conditional interpretation (generally available as inference, when a clause of prediction follows) was pragmatically strengthened to such an extent that it became the meaning of the construction.]

How?

When? (Empirical evidence?)
Idiomatic expressions (Early 18C and after)

(11) Ma-itido yubi-o saite-miyo. Ude-hone kitte, kiri-sagen.

once more finger-acc point-try-imp arm-bone chop chop

‘Point your finger once again, I’ll chop your arm and crash the bone.’

(Yomei Tenno Syokunin Kagami (1704))


one word say-try-imp. head acc slap-crash-do

‘Say that again, I’ll crash your head!’

(Ukiyo Oyazi Katagi (1720))
An imperative sentence and a subsequent prediction sentence (which were linked by a pragmatic inference of conditional relation) were rechunked (reanalyzed) as ONE conditional sentence, with the imperative functioning as the protasis.

Crucial points:

(1) Rhetorical imperatives: no literal interpretation available.

(2) Typically two sentences occur together, and the semantic structure of the parataxis coincides with that of a conditional sentence.

First attested data of the warning type TCI.
Step 2: construction expansion
First attested data of the supposition type

Early 19C; *Ukiyoburo* (1809-1813):

(13) Ottsuke  Edo –no mizu –ga simite-mina,
    eventually Edo gen  water nom penerate-try-imp,
    tanon-demo utai-wa simee.
    ask-if will not sing.

    ‘(Lit.) (Let) the water (life) in Edo eventually come to fit her.
    She will not sing if she is asked to.’

(14) Ottsuke kokodomo –demo dekite-mina,  aa-wa ikanee.
    Eventually child be born-try-imp that not go

    ‘(Lit.) (Let) a baby be born. Things will not go that way.’
Problems in the construction expansion

- Statives in conditional imperatives

(15) Know the answer and you will get an A. (Lakoff, 1966)

- Japanese TCI: warning type vs. supposition type

[1] polarity reversal
  - Warning type: Don’t do X.
  - Supposition type: Imagine X.

[2] supposition type allows the third person inanimate subject.

[3] te-miru ‘to try’ compatible with volitional action only

- No diachronic data suggesting the gradual change.
What happened in the late 18C??

- A new usage of *te-miru* conditional (Kikuta 2011)

- Non-volitional *te-miru* conditional:
  \[ Te-miru = \text{‘to try’} \rightarrow \text{volitionality constraint.} \]

- In this usage
  The lexical meaning of ‘trying’ is almost unavailable.
  The volitionality constraint is lifted;
  a non-volitional process/state can appear.
Non-volitional *te-miru* conditional

(16) Hutto omohituihi te-mireba, sekkyo -hodo imaimasihi

think of-try-cond. preaching as annoying

mono -wa naiga

thing top not-exist

‘If I come to think of it, nothing is as annoying as preaching.’  (*Shikatahanasi* 1772)

(17) Koo natte-mireba hubin-dayo.

this way become-try-cond. Sorry.

‘If things become this way, I feel sorry.’  

(*Tsugen sougamagki* 1787)
Non-volitional *temiru*-conditional as the source of the supposition-type TCI

- Only in these two usages of *temiru*-complex predicate
  - *Temiru* has lost the original sense of ‘trying
  - The volitionality constraint is not operative.

- The supposition type TCI was born by inheriting the new usage in the *temiru*-conditional, one of its parents.
Proposed construction network

macro-cons  conditional  imperative

meso-cons  Temiru-cond.  Temiru-imperative  Basic imp.  Rhetorical  Literal

micro-cons  Rhetorical  temiru-imperative.  Literal  temiru-imp.

Temiru conditional imperative
Conclusion

- Warning type emerged in early 18C.
- Supposition type emerged in early 19C.

Two different types of language change are involved.

- Constructionalization or the emergence of the warning type was motivated by the situated language use and syntagmatic rechunking: bottom-up.
- The emergence of the supposition type directly reflected an independent change in the parent (meso-) construction; thus the construction expansion was supported by the configuration of the construction network: top-down.
References


References


