Intention as an intersection between imperative and conjecture

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1 Introduction

This study aims at shedding a new light on the notion of intention, by examining the Japanese auxiliary -(y)oo. We observe that this auxiliary has common points with imperatives as well as with the conjecture auxiliary daroo. On the one hand, while imperative and exhortative are expressed in a similar way in many European languages (e.g. French), -(y)oo marks both intention and exhortative: (1) is interpreted as expressing either the speaker’s intention or her solicitation towards the addressee. Zanuttini et al. (2012) effectively classify imperative, exhortative and intention (promissive in their term) in the same category, jussive\(^1\).

(1) kaimono-ni ik-oo
shopping-LOC\(^2\) go-YOO
‘I will go shopping. / Let’s go shopping.’

Next, just as an imperative sentence in (2A), (3aA) involving -(y)oo is performative and does not have a truth value. But when embedded under an attitude predicate, like kangaeru ‘think’, a clause marked by -(y)oo may not be performative and is refutable, as in (3b), which is also the case with Japanese imperative (cf. Kaufmann 2012: 200). In view of this embeddability, the combination of -(y)oo and an attitude predicate is similar to the English intend.

(2) A: Close the window! – B: #That’s (not) true. (Kaufmann 2021: 1159)

(3a) A: kaimono-ni ik-oo – B: #sore-wa uso-da.
shopping-LOC go-YOO that-TOP lie-BE
‘A: I will go shopping. – B: #That is a lie.’

(3b) A: kaimono-ni ik-oo to kangaeru-teiru – B: sore-wa uso-da.
shopping-LOC go-YOO COMP think-PROG that-TOP lie-BE
‘A: I intend to go shopping. – B: That is a lie.’

On the other hand, the auxiliary -(y)oo is related to the conjecture auxiliary daroo. First, daroo is etymologically decomposed into a copular dearu and -(y)oo. Second, both auxiliaries are followed neither by the past -ta nor by the negative nai (cf. Nitta 1991) but have the same negative form mai. Third, the agent of intention or conjecture is in principle limited to the speaker, as shown in (4a) and (5a). This person restriction is however circumvented when the clauses marked by -(y)oo or daroo are embedded under an attitude predicate, as in (4b) and (5b). In the embedded cases, the agent of conjecture or intention is co-indexed with the matrix subject.

(4a) {watasi/*kimi/*kare}-wa kaimono-ni ik-oo.
1SG. / 2SG. / 3SG.-TOP shopping-LOC go-YOO
‘(I / You / He) will go shopping.’

\(^1\) Similarly, Gendai Nihongo Bunpoo 4 [Modern Japanese Grammar 4] classifies the canonical imperative form and -(y)oo among the markers of the same category, “effective modality [jikko-no modariti]”.

\(^2\) The glosses follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules. The abbreviations used are as follows: 1 = first person; 2 = second person; 3 = third person; BEN = benefactive; COMP = complementizer; GEN = genitive; IMP = imperative; INS = instrumental; LOC = locative; NEG = negative; NOM = nominative; PROG = progressive; Q = question marker; SG = singular; TOP = topic
Forth, when followed by the question particle -ka and a falling intonation, both expressions basically convey a monological question, but may invite a joint speculation where the attitude holder is expanded from the speaker alone to the inclusive *we* (cf. Miyazaki 2005: 72). Such joint intention and joint conjecture are respectively illustrated by (6a) and (6b).

(6a) odori-mas-yoo-ka↓

↑

dance-POLITE-YOO-Q

(6b) ame-ga furu daroo-ka↓

rain-NOM fall DAROO-Q

‘Shall we dance?’

‘I wonder if it will rain. What do you think?’

But importantly, while the sequence –(y)oo-ka may be pronounced with a rising intonation and form a canonical information-seeking question, as in (7a), this is not the case with daroo-ka, as in (7b), as already pointed out by Hara (2019) and Uegaki & Roelofsen (2018).

(7a) kaimono-ni ik-oo-ka↑

↑

shopping-LOC go-YOO-Q

‘Will I go shopping?’

(7b) *ame-ga furu daroo-ka↑

rain-NOM fall DAROO-Q

‘(intended) According to you, will it rain?’

(8a) kaimono-ni iki-tai.

↑

shopping-LOC go-want

‘{I/*you/*he} want(s) to go shopping.’

(8b) kaimono-ni iki-tai-ka↑

shopping-LOC go-want-Q

‘{I/*you/*he} want(s) to go shopping.’

It is known that like –(y)oo in (4a), the subject of Japanese internal state predicates is restricted to the speaker in declaratives, as in (8a); in interrogatives, the subject is flipped to the addressee, as in (8b), which McCready (2007) analyzes in terms of context shifting. What is special about –(y)oo is that the subject remains the speaker in interrogatives, as in (7a). This auxiliary thus does not seem to induce an interrogative flip. Nonetheless, it is compatible with canonical questions. Moreover, the agent of intention cannot be interpreted as the inclusive *we*, but as the speaker alone. Thus, (7a) cannot mean “Will we (you and me) go shopping?”.

This study tries to account for these similarities and differences between -(y)oo and imperatives and between -(y)oo and the conjecture marker daroo. In what follows, Section 2 first reviews previous analyses of imperative and conjecture. Section 3 then advances my own proposals. Section 4 recapitulates the results of this study.

## 2 Previous analyses

This section first reviews previous analyses of imperative and its relationship with intention and next those of conjecture and its relationship with intention.

### 2.1 Imperative and intention

There exist two concurrent approaches to the semantics of imperatives. On the one hand, Portner (2007) claims that imperatives denote not a proposition but a property and make a requiring speech act, which boils down to adding a property to the addressee’s To-Do List
(abbreviated by TDL), as in (9a). Zanuttini et al. (2012) extend this approach to *exhortative* and *promissive*, which may be redefined as performative intention.

(9a) [[Sit down!]] = \{x. x sits down\} \in TDL(Ad) (based on Portner 2007: 358)
(9b) [[Sit down!]] = \forall w' \in W^p [sit-down(Ad)(w')] (based on Kaufmann 2012: 162)

On the other hand, Kaufmann (2012) analyzes imperatives as denoting a modalized proposition expressing a necessity: the semantics of “Sit down” is roughly represented in (9b), where speaker and addressee are abbreviated by Sp and Ad and W^p signals a conversational background consisting of a set of worlds ordered according to the speaker’s preference.

Stegovec (2017, 2019) applies this approach to cases where imperatives and imperative-like constructions (called “directives”) are embedded or questioned in Slovenian: the modal base is ordered according to the matrix subject’s preference in embedded cases or to the addressee’s preference rather than the speaker’s one in questions. To account for such perspective shift, this author proposes that syntactically, as in (10), in the Spec of necessity modal phrase (whose head is occupied by the directive operator) is generated a perspectival PRO, with respect to which the conversational background is centered.

(10) \( [\text{CP} C \ [\text{MoodP PRO} \ [\text{Mood'} OP\text{Directive} \ [\text{TP pro}_i/k \ [\text{vP e}_k \ldots]]]]] \) (based on Stegovec 2019: 87)

The perspectival PRO is i) bound by COMMIT operator and co-indexed with the speaker in matrix imperatives, ii) bound by ASK operator and co-indexed with the addressee in interrogatives, or iii) bound by the matrix predicate and co-indexed with its subject in embedded cases. It should be noted that COMMIT is here not only related to the assertion speech act, as usual, but also the requiring speech act. Furthermore, to account for the observation that in many languages, the speaker cannot be at the same time the director and the actor of matrix imperatives, Stegovec claims that the subject of the predicates of directives is a pro, which is in the same binding domain with the perspectival PRO and cannot be co-indexed with the latter, as in (10)\(^3\). But Zanuttini et al. (2012) observe that in Korean *promissives*, which are classified together with imperatives in the same category *jussives*, the speaker is at the same time the actor and the director.

(11) \( [\text{CP} C \ [\text{MoodP PRO} \ [\text{Mood'} OP\text{Directives} \ [\text{TP T* [vP e}_2 \ldots]]]]] \) (ibid.) [for Korean *promissives*]

To account for this phenomenon, Stegovec (2017: 169) suggests that the T head is defective in this case and cannot license a pro subject and that a PRO (bound by COMMIT operator and co-indexed with the speaker in matrix *promissives*) is generated in vP and moves to Spec-MoodP, as shown in (11), where T^* signals a defective tense head.

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\(^3\) Kaufmann (2019) claims that this person restriction (*obviation* in her terms) of directives is not due to a violation of binding condition, as claimed by Stegovec, but is pragmatically motivated. According to Kaufmann, directives should satisfy two conditions: *Authority Condition* according to which the speaker is in an epistemically privileged position with respect to the truth of the denoted proposition (if the speaker expresses this proposition, the addressee will accept it as true); *Epistemic Uncertainty Condition* according to which the speaker believes that the described situation may not be realized. Now, when the speaker is the actor of imperatives, a contradiction arises: the speaker would be at the same time certain of its realization due to *Authority Condition* and uncertain because of *Epistemic Uncertainty Condition*. In the same vein, Ginnakidou & Mari (2021) argue that the performative *promise* (corresponding to \(-(y)o\) in matrix clauses), which takes an indicative complement in Greek, does not imply the speaker’s uncertainty while non-performative *promise* as well as *intention*, both of which take a subjunctive complement in Greek, do. Martin & Schäfer (2014) however show that cross-linguistically, agentive and intentional actions tend to be non-culminated. From the latter perspective, it is not sure that *Epistemic Uncertainty Condition* is necessarily unsatisfied when the speaker is at the same time the director and the actor of directives. Further research is needed to settle this question.
2.2 Conjecture and intention

According to Uegaki & Roelofsen (2018) and Hara (2019), daroo is a necessity modal operator, paraphrased by English believe. Hara et al. (2019) semantically analyze daroo as parallel to English must. The analysis of conjectural meaning in terms of necessity modal is effectively advanced by many authors (Giannakidou & Mari 2018, Eckardt 2020, among others). It is Jackendoff (1985) that parallelly analyses believe and intend, by observing that persuade roughly means “cause to intend” when combined with a non-finite control complement, and “cause to believe” when taking a finite complement. By developing this idea, Grano (2018) and Giannakidou & Mari (2021) analyze not only believe but also intend in terms of necessity modal, although their conversational backgrounds are different (doxastic vs. preferential).

3 Proposal

Syntactically, following Stegovec’s (2017) analysis of Korean promissives, I propose that: –(y)oo instantiates the head of MoodP; because of the defective T head, PRO is generated in Spec-vP and moves to Spec-MoodP; it is bound, in matrix clauses, by an implicit COMMIT operator (I here follow Stegovec’s expended use of COMMIT) and co-indexed with the speaker (or the speaker + the addressee if PRO is interpreted as partial), as in (12a). The notation “Sp/Sp+Ad” here means “the speaker or the speaker + the addressee”. Semantically, by adopting Stegovec’s modification of Kaufmann’s modal approach, I analyze -(y)oo as a necessity operator4 scoping over centered conversational background, as in (12b).

\[
\begin{align*}
(12a) & \quad [\text{CP } \text{COMMIT } [\text{MoodP } \text{PRO}^{Sp/Sp+Ad} ]_{TP} \text{[vP eSp/Sp+Ad go-shopping] T*}]-(y)oo(=\text{OPdirective})] \\
(12b) & \quad [(1) \quad (=\text{kaimono-ni ik-oo})] = \forall w' \in W^{Sp/Sp+Ad} \text{[go-shopping (Sp/Sp+Ad)(w')]} \\
\end{align*}
\]

This analysis of –(y)oo as a necessity modal allows us to analyze it as parallel to daroo, which equally is analyzed as a necessity modal (see Section 2.2). The hypothesis of the syntactic deficiency of T head is supported by the fact that –(y)oo is attached to the verbal radical which is not specified for the tense. In embedded cases, as in (4b), PRO is bound by an explicit attitude operator, like kangaeru ‘think’, and co-indexed with the matrix subject. Now when a –(y)oo-marked clause is composed with the question marker -ka with a rising intonation (i.e. ka↑), as in (7a), I propose that: first –(y)oo instantiates an implicit COMMIT operator by which PRO, which is generated in Spec-vP and moves to Spec-MoodP, is bound; PRO thus is co-indexed with the speaker; next, when ka↑ is composed, an ASK operator is instantiated and binds the second perspectival PRO which is co-indexed with the addressee (in view of the existence of interrogative directives and directives in scope marking questions in Slovenian (cf. Stegovec 2017, 155 and Stegovec 2019, 72), I assume that a question speech act and a requiring speech act may coexist); in the case of a preference modality, the speaker can adjust her perspective (i.e. her preference) with the addressee’s one; the first perspectival PRO may be co-indexed at the same time with the speaker and the addressee, as in (13).

\[
(13)[\text{CP2 ASK PRO}_2^{Ad} [\text{CP1 COMMIT } [\text{MoodP}_1 \text{PRO}^{Sp=Ad}]_{TP} \text{[vP eSp go-shopping] T*}]_{\text{Mood1}}(y)oo(=\text{OPdirective})]_{C1} -ka↑ \\
\]

According to the proposed analysis, (7a) semantically amounts to meaning that “according to your preference with which I adjust my preference, is it necessary for me to go shopping?” This analysis is supported by positive and negative answers to (7a), as in (14).

\[
(14)A: \text{kaimono-ni ik-oo-ka↑} - B: \text{un it-tekure. / iya hituyoo-nai shopping-LOC go-YOO-Q yes go-BEN.IMP no necessary-NEG} \\
\]

‘A: Will I go shopping? – B: Yes, please go. / No, it’s not necessary.’

\[(15)\] \begin{equation}
\forall w' \in W^{B=A}.\text{Go-shopping}(A)(w'), \neg \forall w' \in W^{B=A}.\text{Go-shopping}(A)(w')
\end{equation}

According to a widely accepted view, the semantics of a question boils down to a set of its possible answers, as represented in (15). Now, the negative alternative in (15) consisting of the negation of necessity modal makes sense of B’s negative reply “It’s not necessary.” Furthermore, the positive alternative in (15), which means “According to B, it’s necessary for A to go shopping”, makes sense well of B’s positive reply “Please go”.

Now there remain two questions. First, why is the agent of intention in (7a) not interpreted as the inclusive we but as the speaker alone? This is because if the addressee is one of attitude holders of intention, the speaker can strongly expect a positive reply, while in canonical questions marked by a raising ka↑, “the speaker’s epistemic state is neutral relative to the possible resolutions of the issue she raises” (Farkas 2022: 297). In effect, when the inclusive we is the agent of intention, a question is marked by –(y)oou with rising intonation but without ka, as in (16), and serves as a request for confirmation or an strong invitation.

\[(16)\] kaimono-ni ik-oo-?↑ – B: un ik-oo. / iya yame-teok-oo

‘A: We will go shopping, won’t we? – B: Yes, let’s go. / No, let’s not go.’

\[(17)\] [CP2 ASK PRO2↑, [CP1 [COMMIT[PRO1Sp=Ad↑, [TP [vP it-rain]]T]Mood1daroo]c1]c2↑, for (7b)]

Second, why is daroo not accepted, unlike –(y)oou, in canonical questions marked by ka↑, as in (7b)? I propose that this is because, with doxastic modality conveyed by daroo, unlike with preferential modality marked by –(y)oou, the speaker cannot adjust her perspective (i.e. her belief) with the addressee’s one, and therefore PRO1 cannot be co-indexed at the same time with the addressee and the speaker, as in (17): PRO1, the attitude holder of conjecture, remains the speaker. If PRO2 was coindexed with the speaker to avoid a conflict due to different perspectives, (7b) would amount to “putting the addressee in a position to assert an alternative from the speaker’s epistemic base [,which] is a pragmatically odd move” (Bhadra 2020: 402).

As regards conjectural questions like (6b) with daroo-ka↓, Uegaki & Roelofsen (2018) and Hara (2019) claim that although the question particle ka apparently follows daroo, the latter semantically scopes over the former. Giannakidou & Mari (2023) propose a similar analysis for conjectural questions with Italian future. If we follow these analyses, the questions involving Japanese daroo-ka↓ or Italian conjectural future induce neither an ASK operator nor a PRO bound by it. Any conflict due to different perspectives therefore does not occur.

4 Concluding remarks

Grano (2018) analyzes intend as an intersection between believe (as a rational attitude) and desire (as a preference-based attitude). The present study argued that the intention expressed by –(y)oou in Japanese rather is an intersection between the conjecture expressed by daroo and imperatives. To makes sense of this nature, by referring to previous analyses which argue that both daroo and imperatives instantiate a necessity modal, I claimed that –(y)oou equally marks a necessity modal. This analysis advocating similarities between intention and imperatives was supported by positive and negative answers to questions including –(y)oou. Extending Stegovec’s idea of perspectival PRO, I further proposed that intention/conjecture and canonical questions respectively induce a perspectival PRO coindexed with the speaker (in the former) or the addressee (in the latter) in the same sentence. The difference between intention and conjecture as for the compatibility with canonical questions was reduced to an (un)availability of the speaker’s adjustment of her perspective to avoid a perspective conflict.
References


