

# Comparative Analysis of Adverbs *Tabun* and *Moshikashitara* in Japanese

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**Abstract.** This research aims to analyze the differences between Japanese adverbs *tabun* and *moshikashitara*. Both adverbs have similar lexical meanings as 'probably', but contextually they were different. The data were collected from multiple Japanese news articles posted on *asahi.com* by observation method and note-taking techniques. Then analyzed using distribution method with expansion techniques. To analyze the meanings of both adverbs, this research used contextual meaning theory by Pateda (2001). The results show that the usage of adverbs *tabun* and *moshikashitara* serves to add meaning 'probably' in Japanese sentences. The data shows *tabun* usually ends with the expression *deshou* or *darou*. *Moshikashitara* usually ends with the expression *kamoshiremasen* or *kamoshirenai*. Contextually, there are differences in meanings between *tabun* and *kamoshirenai*. *Tabun* can be used to indicate a conclusion subjectively by a person. The conclusion is drawn from the speaker's knowledge about the subject. *Tabun* also can be used to indicate formality by using the expression *deshou* at the end of a sentence. *Moshikashitara* can be used to indicate expectations about something to happen. *Moshikashitara* also can be used to indicate the speaker's fear and anxiety.

## INTRODUCTION

Synonym is a semantic relationship that states the similarity of meaning between speech units and other speech units. When comparing the similarity within two or more words, there are bound to have differences between words that make really interesting topics to dive into. Synonyms are found in almost all the languages spoken by people around the world, for example in Japanese. In Japanese, words with the same meaning are called *ruigigo*. One of the Japanese word classes that have many synonyms is the adverbs word class.

Adverbs are a class of words that provide information to verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, numerals, and the sentence as a whole (Keraf, 1984). In Japanese, adverbs are called *fukushi* is a word that in functions adds meanings to predicate (Masuoka etc, 1989:38). Japanese has a lot of adverbs that have a similar meaning to each other, for example: *kanarazu*, *touzen* and *zettai ni* which indicates something absolutely should happen or do, then *sugu ni* and *sassoku* which means an event immediately occurs, *hotondo* and *daitei* which means a situation that is close to perfect or almost, and so on (Emiko, etc, 2002). Out of many Japanese adverbs, this study compares two similar adverbs which are *tabun* and *moshikashitara*. Both adverbs are used to add the meaning of 'probably' to a sentence. The following are examples of the usage of both adverbs in a sentence.

1. 彼はたぶんイギリス人じゃないでしょう。  
*Kare wa tabun igirisu-jin janai deshou.*  
'He's **probably** not British.'
2. もしかしたら彼女は先に行っているのかもしれない。  
*Moshikashitara kanojo wa saki ni itte iru no kamoshirenai.*  
'**Probably** she's gone first.'

When looking at the examples above, the adverbs *tabun* and *moshikashitara* have the same literal meaning. However, both adverbs have differences in contexts. So there is a tendency to use one of the two adverbs in some sentences. In addition, explanations in Japanese textbooks are usually not detailed enough. This can lead to confusion, especially when studying Japanese. Therefore, this study analyzes the comparison of Japanese adverbs between *tabun* and *moshikashitara*.

This study compares *tabun* and *moshikashitara* in two aspects, namely usage and meaning. The theory used to analyze usage is a theory according to Takamizawa (1997), which stated that Japanese adverbs is a word that is independent, cannot be conjugated, and has a function to add meanings to other words classes such as verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. One of the functions of adverbs is to help emphasize the meaning of statements in the predicate (Mizutani, 1991). Adverbs *tabun* and *moshikashitara* are included in the *chinjutsu fukushi*. *Chinjutsu fukushi* is an adverb that is used in pairs with the statement in the modality expression at the end of the sentence.

In this case, *tabun* and *moshikashitara* or group of adverbs that explain something related to decisions and are paired with an expression of truth at the end of the sentence (Masuoka, etc, 1989).

To understand the meaning of these similar words, learners should know the whole context of the sentences. The meaning that corresponds to the context of the term that appears as an additional meaning in addition to the true meaning of the impression generated by a certain scenario is known as contextual meaning (Nawaristika, 2012). Through context, the meaning of language can be investigated using probability methods and focuses on the formal distribution of forms of language and speech, and the relationship between speech or discourse and the physical and social environment (Kridalaksana, 2009:135). The theory used to analyze the context of *tabun* and *moshikashitara* is the contextual meaning theory by Pateda (2001). Pateda stated that contextual meaning is the meaning that arises as a result of the relationship between speech and context.

Various studies on adverbs have been carried out. One of them is Putri (2018) who researched Japanese adverbs *zenzen* and *mattaku*. The researcher's purpose is to describe its pragmatic function changes when used as a negative connotation. The data was collected from Corpus Spontaneous Japanese, a voice corpus made by National Institute for the Japanese Language Based on the results, the majority of *zenzen* and *mattaku* in usage is express negation. *Zenzen* is mostly used on a negative connotation and something relative. On the other hand, *mattaku* is mostly used by its new function as a positive connotation and something absolute.

Fauzi (2021) analysis the usage of Japanese adverbs in Japanese drama titled *Suizokukan Gaaru*. The theory used in this research is from Kamiya (2012) and Hilda (2018). This study found 44 adverbs with the highest frequency of occurrence, which are *mou*, *chotto*, *dou*, and *nanka*. He analyze the meanings of each frequently used adverbs and classified the adverbs based on category by Mizutani (1991)

Both this research, Putri's, and Fauzi's research analyze Japanese adverbs. There are several differences between previous research with this research. Putri compares both adverbs by looking pragmatically. Fauzi analyzes the frequency of adverbs. This research compares adverbs based on their usage and contextual meanings in sentences.

## METHODOLOGY

The method used to collect the data is the observation method with note-taking techniques (Sudaryanto, 2015). The source of data comes from sentences used in published articles that were uploaded on the *asahi.com* news website page. Which is one of the largest Japanese national newspaper website that is still published today. By using this method, sentences using adverbs *tabun* and *moshikashitara* are observed and then recorded for further analysis.

Data that has been collected is then analyzed using the distribution method, which is a method that refers to the language in question (Sudaryanto, 2015: 18). This method is with expansion techniques, namely expanding the lingual unit using certain elements. In this case, the sentences were expanded by using adverbs *tabun* and *moshikashitara*.

After the data is analyzed, next is presenting the results. The results of the analysis are presented in the form of reports by applying informal methods. By using the informal method, this article provides the results of the analysis in ordinary words (Sudaryanto, 2015).

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results, there are a total of 23 data found within the source. Which are 12 data showing the usage of adverb *tabun* and 11 data that use adverb *moshikashitara*. The results are divided into two categories, which are the usage of adverbs *tabun* and *moshikashitara* in sentences, followed by a discussion of the contextual meanings of both adverbs. The following are the results of the analysis of the usage and meaning of the adverbs *tabun* and *moshikashitara*:

### The Usage of Tabun and Moshikashitara

In terms of usage, *tabun* functions to add an explanation to other word classes such as verbs, adjectives, and nouns. *Tabun* tends to appear at the beginning or middle of a sentence. *Tabun* is often paired with the expression of truth, although it can be used normally in sentences without any addition. It is often found in a sentence with *deshou* or *darou* expressions at the end. This end is used to express the speaker's belief in something. The difference between *deshou* and *darou* is contextually the former more formal than the latter.

1. 中国は清和会や宏池会で占められ、党内野党になった二階派との綱引きが多分にあった。

*Chūgoku wa Seiwa-kai ya Kōchi-kai de shimerare, tōnai yatō ni natta ni-kai-ha to no tsunahiki ga tabun ni atta.*

‘China was occupied by the Seiwakai and the Kochikai, and there was **probably** a tug of war with the second-class faction that became the party's internal opposition party.’

2. 今、おっしゃったように今後もこういうことは**多分**続くでしょう。

*Ima, osshatta yō ni kongo mo kō iu koto wa tabun tsudzuku deshō.*

‘As you said, this will **probably** continue in the future.’

3. 飼い主がいても、その人は「ご主人」ではなく、**たぶん**「仲間」くらいに思っているだろう。

*Kainushi ga ite mo, sono hito wa 'goshujin' dewa naku, tabun 'nakama' kurai ni omotte iru darō.*

‘Even if it has an owner, instead of thinking that person is a “master”, **probably** it thinks as a “friend”.’

Similar to *tabun*, the adverb *moshikashitara* has the same function to add an explanation to other words. Although there are several differences. *Moshikashitara* tends to be used at the beginning of a sentence. Just like *tabun*, *moshikashitara* is can be used individually or paired with an expression at the end. However, this expression is different, which is *kamoshiremasen* or *kamoshirenai*. This end expresses the speaker's conjecture. *Kamoshiremasen* is slightly more formal than *kamoshirenai*. There is also a clipping form of *kamo* used on some sentences.

4. 上が決めたことに従う国民性が**もしかしたら**一つの原因ではないかと思えます。

*Ue ga kimeta koto ni shitagau kokumin-sei ga moshikashitara hitotsu no gen'in dewa nai ka to omoimasu.*

I think that the nationality traits that follows the decisions made above **may be** one of the causes.

5. **もしかしたら**、見た人はそれを感じ取っていただいたの**かもしれません**。

*Moshikashitara, mita hito wa sore o kanjitotte itadaita no kamoshiremasen.*

‘**Perhaps** the person who saw it felt it.’

6. **もしかしたら**、選手村や豊洲市場を周遊し、レインボーブリッジをくぐって競技会場周辺をクルーズしていたの**かもしれない**。

*Moshikashitara, senshumura ya Toyosu ichiba o shūyū shi, reinbōburiji o kugutte kyōgikaijōshūhen o kurūzu shite ita no kamoshirenai.*

‘**Perhaps** he was touring the athlete’s village and Toyosu Market, passing through the Rainbow Bridge, and cruising around the competition venue.’

As an adverb, both are used to add an explanation to other word classes such as verbs, adjectives, and nouns. In terms of differences, this study found that *tabun* usually appears at the beginning or middle of sentences. *Moshikashitara* will always appear in the beginning. There are often expressions paired with certain adverbs. *Tabun* is usually paired with the expressions *deshō* or *darō*. *Moshikashitara* is usually paired with *kamoshiremasen* or *kamoshirenai*.

## The Meanings of *Tabun*

Based on its contexts, this study found two meanings of *tabun*. The first is expresses a subjective conclusion. *Tabun* can be used when the speaker intends to give his or her conclusion about something. This conclusion has a bit of truth because it is based on facts that speakers know. Second, it can be used to express an action that the speaker has the intention to do in the future. Here are the examples of meanings expressed by adverbs *tabun*:

7. 技術の特訓ばかりで大学に入ったら「コンセプト考えろ」って言われて心が折れちゃう子もいるんですね。私は**多分**、日本の美大は全部落ちていると思う。

*Gijutsu no tokkun bakari de daigaku ni haittara 'konseptu kangaero' tte iwarete kokoro ga orechau ko mo iru ndesu yo ne. Watashi wa tabun, Nihon no bidai wa zenbu ochite iru to omou.*

‘There are some children that are heartbroken after being told to “think about the concept” when they enter the university because of special technical training. I think **perhaps** all the art schools in Japan have fallen.’

8. 「私の娘にもさせられない仕事なのに、よくやるわね」 **たぶん**、褒めるつもりで言ったのだと思う。

'*Watashi no musume ni mo saserarenai shigoto na noni, yoku yaru wa ne' tabun, homeru tsumori de itta no da to omou.*

'"It's a job that I can't let my daughter do, but you did well." I think maybe I said it intending to compliment it.'

On data (7), the speaker intended to express the conclusions of something subjectively. In context, the speaker believes that art schools in Japan will fall. This is because the speaker has supporting reasons. In data (8), the speaker stated that he would do something in the future. In context, the speaker convinced himself to praise his daughter later. Based on the results above, the meaning of *tabun* is influenced by the context of the situation and the goals of the speakers.

## Meanings of *Moshikashitara*

*Moshikashitara* has two meanings. First to express the speaker's conjecture. Perhaps it is similar to *tabun*, but it has a low level of certainty. Second, there is the tendency of the sentence using *moshikashitara* that express the speaker's fear and anxiety about something. When the speaker is uncertain about something to do or happen, usually they use this adverb.

9. *もしかしたら『SAO』が好きという人の中には、私のペンネームを知らない人がいるかもしれません。*

*Moshikashitara "SAO" ga suki to iu hito no naka niwa, watashi no pennēmu o shiranai hito ga iru kamoshiremasen.*

'Perhaps some of the people who like "SAO" don't know my pen name.'

10. *だが、スタジアムの近くまで来たものの、もしかしたら生涯で最も大きな試合が（映像でも）見られなくなってしまった。*

*Daga, sutajiamu no chikaku made kita mono no, moshikashitara shōgai de mottomo ōkina shiai ga (eizō demo) mi rarenaku natte shimatta.*

'However, even though I came close to the stadium, I probably couldn't see the biggest match of my life (even in the video).'

In data (9), *moshikashitara* is used to express the speaker's conjecture. As the author of a novel entitled SAO, he thought that some people do not know his pen names. This is said without providing any evidence and it seems that the speaker is not too sure of his conjecture. In data (10), *moshikashitara* expresses the meaning of the speaker's anxiety if he can not watch the football match he wants. Contextually, *moshikashitara* is influenced by the context of goals and moods of the speakers.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there are several differences between Japanese adverbs *tabun* and *moshikashitara*. Both adverbs are used to add meanings to other words class likes verb, adjective, and noun. The difference is when using specific sentences. *Tabun* tends to appear at the beginning or middle of a sentence. *Moshikashitara* tends to be used at the beginning of a sentence. For sentences ending with the expression *darou* or *deshou*, only *tabun* can be used. The same goes for *moshikashitara*, which only can be used in sentences that end with *kamoshiremasen*, *kamoshirenai*, or *kamo*.

The meanings of both adverbs can be translated into 'perhaps' or 'probably'. But contextually, there are some differences. The adverbs *tabun* lean-to express the speaker's conclusion about something subjectively. The other meaning is stating the action that the speaker intends to do in the future. The adverbs *moshikashitara* expresses the speaker's conjecture about something, but the probability is not quite high enough. The other meaning of *moshikashitara* is to express the speaker's fear and anxiety when doing something.

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