

## Use of the verb YARI-MORAI

(Linguistic Typology)

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### Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah *pertama*, mendeskripsikan pola kalimat dasar Bahasa Jepang, *kedua*, menjelaskan pemakaian verba YARI-MORAI, yakni *agemasu* ‘memberi’, *moraimasu* ‘menerima’, dan *kuremasu* ‘memberi’ secara Tipologi Linguistik. Metode penelitian yang dipakai deskriptif yang bersifat kualitatif, eksplanatoris dan sinkronis yang mengarah pada penjelasan sebuah bahasa individu atau penjelasan berbagai bahasa yang mengarah pada keuniversalan bahasa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemakaian verba YARI-MORAI mudah dipahami oleh mahasiswa pada waktu presentasi dengan hasil nilai maksimal. Dari satu kelas jumlah mahasiswa 30 (tiga puluh) orang, rata-rata 25 (dua puluh lima) orang bisa mempresentasikan pemakaian verba YARI-MORAI yang sering digunakan orang Jepang berkomunikasi, terlebih dalam Bahasa Jepang Pariwisata.

Kata Kunci : Verba Yari-Morai, Tipologi Linguistik, Bahasa Jepang Pariwisata.

### Abstract

The purpose of this study is, first, to describe the basic sentence patterns of the Japanese language, and second, to explain the use of the verbs YARI-MORAI, namely *agemasu* “to give”, *moraimasu* “to receive”, and *kuremasu* “to give me”, from a linguistic typology perspective. The research method used is descriptive, qualitative, explanatory, and synchronous, aiming to explain an individual language or various languages leading to the universality of language. The results of the study indicate that the use of the YARI-MORAI verbs is easily understood by students during presentations, with maximum scores achieved. Out of a class of 30 students, an average of 25 students were able to present the use of the YARI-MORAI verbs frequently used by Japanese people in communication, especially in Japanese for Tourism.

Keywords: Yari-Morai Verbs, Linguistic Typology, Japanese for Tourism

## 1. Introduction

Understanding the Yari-Morai verbs, namely *ageru* “to give”, *kureru* “to give me” and *morau* “to receive”, is an important aspect in learning Japanese as a foreign language. These verbs have complex functions and nuances of meaning because they are closely related to social relationships, hierarchy, and the subject's perspective in speech acts (Sutedi 2023). The appropriate use of these verbs involves not only grammatical aspects but also an understanding of the pragmatic and cultural contexts behind them. The verbs *ageru* “to give”, *kureru* “to give me” and *morau* “to receive” are used to express the actions of giving and receiving, but each has a different subject, object, and point of view (Sutedi:2020, Tjandra:2013). The choice of the appropriate verb depends on who is giving, who is receiving, and who is the centre of the sentence (the speaker's point of view).

This paper focuses specifically on the initial discussion of the overall research plan that has been designed, with a primary focus on analysing the use of Yari-Morai verbs in Japanese. The discussion covers three main verbs, namely *ageru*, *morau*, and *kureru*, which are the main representations of the system of giving and receiving in Japanese grammar. The reason for choosing this topic is closely related to its implementation in the classroom context, as these three verbs are included in the compulsory material taught in basic Japanese language learning. Furthermore, these three verbs are not only important in terms of grammatical theory, but also often cause difficulties in their practical use among learners. This difficulty is particularly evident in the distinction between the meanings and contexts of use of *ageru* and *kureru*, which in Indonesian translation both mean ‘to give’, but in Japanese have different nuances and directions of giving, often confusing students or beginner learners.

In addition to discussing the use of the verbs *ageru*, *morau*, and *kureru*, this study also includes a discussion of sentence structures that use these three verbs as part of linguistic analysis. This is because the target audience for this material is vocational students focusing on the tourism field. Therefore, when presenting this material, a simpler and easier-to-understand teaching approach is required. The explanation of the three verbs must be tailored to the needs and level of understanding of vocational students, so that they not only understand the basic concepts of each verb but are also able to apply them appropriately in various communication situations, both in the classroom and in the workplace in the tourism field.

Based on the background described earlier, there are two main issues that are the focus of this research analysis. The first issue relates to how sentence structure in Japanese is formed or constructed when using the verbs *ageru*, *morau*, and *kureru*, which are important verbs for expressing the actions of giving and receiving. To analyse the first issue, Typological Linguistic Theory is used. The second issue concerns how the use of these three verbs can be effectively adapted in the context of Japanese language learning for vocational students in the tourism field. This analysis employs a discourse analysis approach. This includes the extent to which these three verbs can be understood and applied by vocational learners who have practical language needs for the workplace, as well as how teaching strategies can be designed to be more communicative, simple, and tailored to their needs.

## 2. Method

This study uses a descriptive method that is qualitative, explanatory, and synchronous, leading to an explanation of an individual language or an explanation of various languages that leads to the universality of language combined with a discourse analysis approach as the basis for understanding the data (Artawa, Jufri: 20218, Sudaryanto 2015). The theory used to discuss the basic sentence structure of the Japanese language is Typological Linguistic Theory (Artawa,

Jufrizal: 20218). This method was chosen because it is considered the most appropriate for revealing and examining in depth the use of the verbs *ageru*, *morau*, and *kureru* in Japanese, which are functionally used to express the actions of giving and receiving in various communication contexts. Although these three verbs are generally related to transfer activities (giving and receiving), each has fundamental differences in terms of sentence structure, namely who is the subject (giver), who is the object (receiver), and the speaker's point of view, which greatly determines the appropriate verb choice. Therefore, a discourse analysis approach allows researchers to understand contextually how these three verbs are used in language practice by learners. In this study, the participants consisted of 30 people per class and there were 7 classes for beginner-level Japanese language learners, specifically second-semester students from diverse cultural backgrounds. However, all participants had at least one year of experience learning Japanese, so they were considered to have sufficient basic knowledge to be used as a source of data on the use of Yari-Morai verbs in more structured and meaningful communication situations.

### 3. Use of the verb YARI-MORAI

As mentioned in the background section, this paper analyses two topics, namely 1) Basic sentence structures with the verbs YARI-MORAI, namely *agemasu* “to give”, *moraimasu* “to receive”, and *kureru* “to give me”. 2) The usage of the YARI-MORAI verbs *ageru* “to give”, *morau* “to receive”, and *kureru* “to give me”.

#### A. Basic sentence structure with YARI-MORAI verbs, namely *agemasu* “to give”, *moraimasu* “to receive”, and *kuremasu* “to give me”

In Japanese grammar, verbs or action words play a very important and fundamental role in sentence formation. Verbs not only function as markers of action or state, but also form the centre of the sentence structure itself (Sanada,1999). The presence of verbs determines how other elements in the sentence are arranged, while also influencing the overall meaning and grammatical acceptability of the sentence. This differs from sentence structure in Indonesian and English, where the subject is often the main and mandatory element in a sentence. In Japanese, the presence of a subject is not always necessary to form a complete sentence. In fact, a sentence consisting of only one verb is considered complete and its meaning can be understood contextually.

For example, a simple sentence like *taberu*, which literally means ‘to eat,’ can be considered a complete sentence even without an explicit subject. In this context, the subject can be understood as ‘I.’ This demonstrates that in Japanese, the primary emphasis is on the verb as the core, not the subject, so the sentence structure remains effective even if the performer of the action is not explicitly stated.

Here are some sentences formed using the verbs *ageru*, *morau*, and *kureru*.

In Japanese sentence structure, verbs play a central or core role in sentences, as they determine the structure, meaning, and grammatical acceptability of a sentence. In Japanese, a sentence can be considered complete with only a verb, even without a subject (Tjandra: 2013).

- 1) *Agemasu* ‘to give’

*agemasu.*  
*to give*

hana o agemasu.  
*to give flowers*

Dewi san ni kaban o agemasu.  
*to give flowers to Dewi*  
Ali san wa Dewi san ni kaban o agemasu.  
*Ali gives flowers to Dewi*

The basic structure of the Japanese sentence above is as follows: first, the verb *agemasu* appears first, followed by the object that completes the verb *agemasu*, namely *hana*, which is marked with the particle *o*. This is followed by the target/purpose, namely *Dewi san*, marked with the particle *ni* “to”. Finally, the agent *Ali san* is marked with the particle *wa*

2) *Moraimasu* ‘to receive’

moraimasu  
*to receive*  
hana o moraimasu  
*to receive flowers*  
Ali san kara hana o moraimasu  
*to receive flowers from Ali*  
Dewi san wa Ali san kara hana o moraimasu  
*Dewi receives flowers from Ali*

The basic structure of the Japanese sentence above is as follows: first, the verb *moraimasu* appears first, followed by the object that completes the verb *moraimasu*, namely *hana*, which is marked with the particle *o*. This is followed by the source, *Ali san*, marked with the particle *kara* “from”. Finally, the agent *Dewi san* is marked with the particle *wa*.

3) *Kuremasu* ‘to give me’

kuremasu.  
*to give me*  
boorupen o kuremasu.  
*to give me pen*  
watashi ni boorupen o kuremasu  
*to give pen to me*  
Dewi san wa watashi ni boorupen o kuremasu  
*Dewi gives pen to me*

The basic structure of the Japanese sentence above is as follows: first, the verb *kuremasu* appears first, followed by the object that completes the verb *kuremasu*, namely *boorupen*, which is marked with the particle *o*. This is followed by the target/purpose, namely *Watashi*, marked with the particle *ni* “to”. Finally, the agent *Dewi san* is marked with the particle *wa*.

**B. Use of the verbs YARI-MORAI, namely *agemasu* “to give”, *moraimasu* “to receive”, and *kuremasu* ‘to give me’**

Japanese is a language whose communication system is greatly influenced by social context and relationships between speakers (Sutedi:2023). One linguistic aspect that reflects this sensitivity to social structure is the use of verbs that express the actions of giving (*agemasu*,

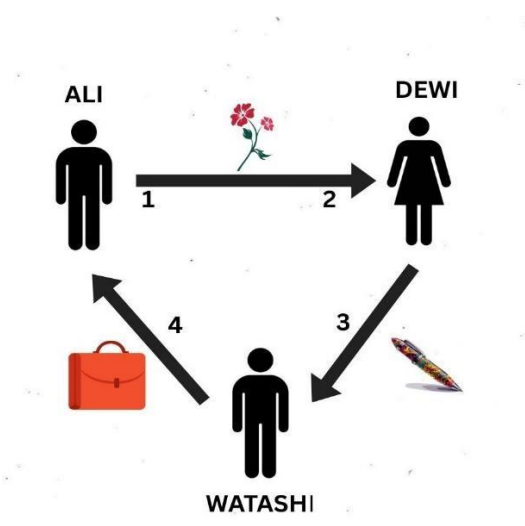
kuremasu) and receiving (moraimasu). These three verbs not only express the basic semantic meanings of ‘giving’ and ‘receiving,’ but also serve to indicate the direction of the action and the speaker's point of view, as well as the relative positions of the giver and receiver in a conversation.

The verb *agemasu* is used when the subject gives something to another person, who in the context of communication is usually someone of equal or higher social status, or someone outside the speaker's circle (out-group). Meanwhile, *kuremasu* is used when someone outside the speaker's circle gives something to the speaker or someone in the speaker's group (in-group). On the other hand, *moraimasu* is used by the speaker to express that they or their group is receiving something from someone else.

Pragmatically, the use of these verbs cannot be separated from the concept of *keigo* (敬語) or polite language, which is one of the main characteristics of the Japanese communication system. The use of these verbs reflects a strong hierarchy and value of politeness, so their use must be adjusted to the social relationship between the parties involved in the conversation. Therefore, choosing the right verb between *agemasu*, *kuremasu*, and *moraimasu* is very important to maintain smooth communication, politeness, and to avoid misunderstandings in interactions.

In the context of learning Japanese as a foreign language, especially for Indonesian speakers, understanding this system of giving and receiving verbs is a challenge in itself. This is because there is no equivalent in Indonesian, either in terms of grammatical structure or socio-cultural background. Therefore, in-depth learning and analysis of the use of *agemasu*, *kuremasu*, and *moraimasu* is important in order to improve the pragmatic competence of Japanese language learners. This study aims to examine in more detail how these three verbs are used in social and linguistic contexts, as well as their implications for the process of learning Japanese among foreign speakers.

The following images illustrate the usage of *agemasu* “to give”, *moraimasu* “to receive”, and *kuremasu* “to give me” for easier understanding.



1. Ali san wa Dewi san ni hana o *agemasu*.  
*Ali gives flowers to Dewi*
2. Dewi san wa Ali san kara hana o *moraimasu*.  
*Dewi receives flowers from Ali.*

3. Dewi gives me a pen.  
*Dewi gives me a pen.*
4. Watashi wa Ali ni kaban o agemasu.  
*I give Ali a bag.*

By using illustrations such as those shown in the image above, learners of Japanese can more easily understand and apply the use of verbs of giving and receiving known as yari-morai, namely the verbs *agemasu* “to give”, *moraimasu* “to receive”, and *kuremasu* “to give to me”. The image provides visual guidance through the use of arrows that indicate the direction of the action from one character to another, thus clarifying who the subject is, what the object is, and to whom the action is directed. For example, in the first arrow (1), when Ali gives flowers to Dewi, the verb used is *agemasu*, because Ali is the giver and Dewi is the receiver. Conversely, in the second arrow (2), Dewi can state that she receives flowers from Ali by using the verb *moraimasu*. Then in the third arrow (3), when Dewi gives a pen to me (*watashi*), the verb used is *kuremasu*, because the action of giving is directed at me as the recipient. Finally, in the fourth arrow (4), when I give a bag to Ali, the verb used is again *agemasu*, because I am acting as the giver. By following the direction of these arrows, the understanding of the use of each verb can be more structured and systematic.

#### 4. Discussion

In Japanese syntactic structure, verbs are the core elements in sentence formation. Verbs have the main function of conveying the action or state performed by the subject, and their presence greatly determines the meaning and grammatical acceptability of a sentence. This is in line with Sanada's (1999) opinion that in Japanese, verbs not only function as predicates but also determine the relationship between actors in a communication act.

Three verbs commonly used to express the actions of giving and receiving in Japanese are *agemasu*, *moraimasu*, and *kuremasu*. All three belong to the yari–morai verb group, whose usage depends on the speaker's perspective and the direction of the action between the actors.

Sentences containing these verbs are typically structured with the giver, the receiver, and the object being given listed first. In this case, the particle *ni* is used to indicate the receiver, the particle *kara* for the source of the giving, and *o* for the object.

#### 5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the previous discussion, it can be concluded that understanding the use of Yari–Morai verbs in Japanese can be achieved more effectively through two stages of approach, namely, first, through the formation of basic sentence structures involving giving and receiving verbs (*agemasu*, *moraimasu*, and *kuremasu*), and second, through the use of visual media in the form of images or diagrams of relationships between characters as learning aids. I have applied this method in teaching second-semester students in the Tourism Business Management Study Programme, Department of Tourism, Bali State Polytechnic. In practice, out of a total of 30 students who attended the lectures, around 25 were able to demonstrate a fairly good understanding by presenting sentences that correctly used the verbs Yari–Morai. There were 7 classes in the second semester.

As part of the practical assignment, students were asked to create their own visual illustrations based on the patterns they had learned, replacing the names of the characters and objects involved in the actions of giving and receiving. However, there was one specific rule: the word *watashi* (I) must not be changed because it serves as a reference point in the use of the verb *kuremasu*, which emphasises the position of the recipient as the speaker. This strategy

has proven to help students understand the differences in the context of each verb's usage in a concrete and practical way.

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