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Japanese modalized questions: their prosody and levels of meaning

Abstract:

This study examines the interaction of the Japanese modal auxiliary /daroo/ with different sentence types and intonation. A detailed investigation of /daroo/ reveals an interesting paradigm with respect to parameters such as clause type, boundary tone, tier of meaning and pragmatic context. I propose that /daroo/ is a root-level/expressive modal operator which expresses the epistemic knowledge of the speaker. The proposal is formally implemented in the framework of inquisitive epistemic logic. A rising intonation contour is analyzed as a prosodic morpheme that is paratactically associated to its host and functions as an expressive question operator that renders an at-issue declarative into an expressive interrogative.