

FLJ302 -- 2009.01.29 -- Noun modification:

Remember our definition of 'noun' = any word that can be followed by だ. ...almost...

There are eight or more types of N-N connections:

先生 の 本 [= a book of (by/about/belonging to/otherwise relating to) sensei]

A majority of nouns connect with ~の~. Note that the relation is not always possessive.

きれい な 家 [= a nice-looking house]

Note that 'na-words' like きれい can only be modified indirectly (~の様にきれいな~).

Also, if 'na-words' belong to a separate category, then each of the following should as well:

同じ の 人 [= the same person]

'Onaji' seems to be a one-of-a-kind word.

あの 学生 [= that student] A 'demonstrative' (代名詞).

It cannot be followed by だ. It must modify a noun. It cannot itself be modified. Go figure.

日本 の 料理 [= Japanese cuisine]

The elision of の turns the phrase into a single noun unit.

堂々 たる 歩き方 [= a majestic manner of walking]

Such '~taru' expressions are a vestigial category from classical grammar.

如何 (いか) なる 言語でも~ [= even for 'whatever type of language...]

Such '~naru' expressions are also a vestigial category: many have switched to standard na-nouns.

先生 な んだから~ [= it is because it is 'a matter of being' the teacher...]

This 'explanatory の' (also called extended predicate) requires な when preceded by a noun. Very odd!

Nouns can also be modified by Adjectives or Verbs:

赤い本 [= a red book]

読む本 [= a book that (people) read]

Nouns can be modified by entire sentences (N, A, or V):

(田中さんがきのう図書館で読んだ) 本 [= a book that Tanaka read at the library yesterday]

(お母さんが病気の) 学生 [= a student whose 'mother is ill']

(キャップが赤い) ペン [= a pen whose 'cap is red']

Note that in the last two examples, the final noun is modified by the entire preceding sentence, not just the immediate word that precedes it. This pattern can mislead non-native speakers:

お母さんが病気の学生だ ≠ His mother is a sick student.

When a modifying sentence (also called an embedded sentence) includes a subject, the modern subject-marker が<sup>s</sup> will often (especially in writing) be replaced by the archaic subject-marker の. Thus:

(田中さんのきのう図書館で読んだ) 本 [= a book that read yesterday at the library]

(お母さんの病気の) 学生 [= a student whose mother is ill]

(キャップの赤い) ペン [= a pen whose cap is red]

Note that these, too, can be misleading for a non-native speaker:

キャップの赤いペンだ ≠ the red pen that belongs to the cap

Some nouns regularly require modification, or have slightly different meanings from their un-modified versions. The following is a refresher, not a comprehensive treatment:

~前に: 日本に発つ前 (に/の)、電話をください。[Call me before you leave for Japan.]

note the preceding verb is in the imperfective (non-past) form (because the action has not been completed)

also: 前にもあったな。[This happened before, too.]

~後で: ご飯を食べた後 (で/の)、かたづける。[I'll clean it up after I have eaten.]

note the preceding verb is in the perfective (completed, past) form (because the action has been completed)

also: 後で電話してください。[Call me later.]

~うち: そのうち、高くなるよ。[Soon enough (= in the meantime / interval), it will become expensive.]

忘れないうち (に) 書いておかないと。[I'd better write it down before I forget.] = Requires non-past

~つもり: 日本語を勉強するつもりだ。[I intend to study Japanese.]

これが南口のつもりで入った。[I entered thinking that this was the south entrance.]

～はず：この辺に公衆電話があるはずだ。 [There should be a telephone around here...one would expect.]  
この辺に公衆電話があったはずだけど。 [There was supposed to be a telephone around here...]  
そんなはずはないよ。 [Things shouldn't be the way you're saying they are...]

～の：行くのは、だれだ。 [Who is it that's going?]

～のだ：もう帰るんですか。 [Is it (the fact) that you are going home (that would explain why you are putting your coat on)?]  
だまって歩くんだ。 [To a captured soldier: You're gonna shut up and walk (...and that's the way it is).]  
学生なんだ。 [It's a matter of me being a student (that explains why I have no money).]

～ので：高いので、買わなかった。 [Being that they are expensive, I did not buy any.]

～のじゃなかった：日本語を勉強するんじゃなかった。 [Man, I should never have studied Japanese.]

～のにする：買わないのにする >> 買わないことにする。 [I'll make a point of not buying any.]

～のに：何回も言ったのに、聞いていなかったの？  
[Despite the (given) fact that I told you so many times, weren't you listening?]  
一生懸命（いっしょうけんめい）勉強したのに、全然できない。  
[Despite the (given) fact that I studied as hard as I could, I can't do it at all.]  
cf: 一生懸命勉強しても、全然できない。  
[Even if I were to study as hard as I can, I wouldn't be able to do it at all.]

～こと：試験のこと、話した？ [Did you talk to him about the exam?]  
自分の事は自分でしなさい。 [Take care of your own matters on your own.]  
エレファントとは、像（ぞう）のことを言う。 [An 'e-l-e-p-h-a-n-t' refers to an elephant.]  
上手になりたかったら勉強することだね。 [If you want to get good at it, studying is the thing to do.]  
英語を話すことができる。 [He can speak English.]  
長いこと留守にしましたね。 [You were away for quite a long time.]

～ことにする：もう、テレビなんか見ないことにする。 [I'll make it my policy not to watch TV any more.]

～ことがある：中国に行ったことがある。 [I have been to China.]  
時々、夏でも見ることもある。 [Occasionally, one will see them in summer.]

～ものだ：仕方がないんですもの。 [Hyperfeminine snake: There's nothing that can be done about it!]  
教会なんか行かないんだもん。 [Hyperconfident: I ain't gonna go no place like church, so there!]  
nb: compared to こと or の, もの represents an idea of 'too bad, but that's how things are.'

～ものにする：英語をものにした。 [I want to master English: make it my own.]

～ものの：苦しいものの、楽しさもあるさ。 [Despite it being painful, there is also some pleasure to it.]

～ために：日本で勉強するために、日本語を勉強している。 [I'm studying Japanese so I can study in Japan.]  
何のために勉強してるか、分からなくなった。 [I don't even know any more why I'm studying.]  
事故があった為（に）遅くなりました。 [I'm late because there was an accident.]  
nb: ためになる本 [a book that will be of benefit to you]

～わけ：どういう訳（わけ）で拒否（きよひ）したんですか。 [For what reason did you turn it down?]  
日本に来たわけを聞く。 [Ask someone why they came to Japan.]  
なるほど、日本に行きたい訳でね。 [I see. That's a good reason to want to go to Japan.]  
なるほど、できないわけだね。 [I see. Well, it makes sense, then, that he can't do it.]  
nb: 訳が分からない話、やめとけよ。 [Just cut it out with your nonsensical stories, will you?]

～場合：雨が降った場合（ばあい／ばわい）は中止（ちゅうし）する。 [In case it rains, we'll cancel.]

～ふう：こういう風（ふう）に説明（せつめい）してあげてください。 [Please explain it to them like this...]  
中国風の料理 [Chinese-style cooking.]

～ほう：話した方がいい。 [You should tell her.]  
こっちの方が安い。 [This one (of a limited number of alternatives) is cheaper.]

- ～よう：カサを忘れないようにしてください。 [Make sure you don't forget your umbrella.]  
 カサを忘れないよう、気をつけてください。 [Be careful so as not to forget your umbrella.]  
 勉強する様（よう）にします。 [I shall make a point of studying.]  
 Note this example is similar to の and こと, but has a more superficial “make as if to” quality, having slightly more to do with the appearance than with the actual fact or ‘policy’ on the part of the speaker.
- ～まま：そのままにしてください。 [Please leave it as it is.]  
 昔（むかし）のままで、少しもかわらない。 [Just as it was long ago, it hasn't changed a bit.]  
 足の向く（むく）ままに歩き回った。 [He walked in circles as his feet directed him.]
- ～時：日本に行った時（に/ø）仕事を探す。 [I'll look for a job when I have gone to Japan (=when I'm there).]
- ～際（さい）：日本に行った際（に/ø）交渉する。 [We will negotiate on the occasion of being in Japan.]
- ～瞬間（しゅんかん）：見た瞬間に分かった。 [I figured it out the instant I saw it.]

In addition to these, there is an entire class of sentence endings that reflect the ‘quality of information’ -- including ～みたいだ、～そうだ、～ものだ、～ようだ、だろう、かもしれない、etc. Despite the overlap, these will be treated separately later.

Some linguists like to point out that there also exist nouns that can never be modified: namely, the な- nouns (形容動詞), which to some extent justifies their being put into a separate category. But since おなじ and some の- nouns also can't be modified, again there is one less reason to think of 形容動詞 as a separate category unto itself.