

## Explanations of the Polite Hortative form *-(i)mash-ō* in Current Resources and a Proposition of a Morphological Approach

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how the description of Japanese grammar is explained in current resources and to present another, more systemic, morphological approach. It will be achieved by examining explanations of the basic level grammatical unit *-(i)mash-ō* which can be roughly translated as ‘let’s’. At the beginning the crucial characteristics of present description are portrayed. After showing the basics of the traditional, syllabary description, examples of *-(i)mash-ō* explanations derived from textbooks are given. Then the author analyzes *-(i)mash-ō* in accordance with its morphological properties. This approach argues that it is in fact a compound built of smaller units each bearing a separate meaning. Afterwards they can be divided and located in different grammatical dimensions. The morphological segmentation of grammatical units can be used in many other occurrences. This would make paradigmatical descriptions of inflection related phenomena more possible.

**KEYWORDS:** Japanese linguistics, grammar, hortative mode, systemic approach, non-syllabary approach

### Introduction

The aim of this study is to demonstrate the way the polite hortative form *-(i)mash-ō*<sup>2</sup> is explained in current resources for Japanese learners with its flaws and then to introduce a more systemic perspective on this topic. The main reason why it should be modified can be found in the outbalancing benefits following the change. The currently popular approach, though

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<sup>2</sup> The element *-(y)ō* primarily marks a proposition but it is also used to denote hortative meaning (Jabłoński 2021a/2: 299–303). For this reason it is referred as PROP(osition) in glossing.

simple in its form, causes many misunderstandings and complications that eventually influence a noticeable part of studying Japanese as a foreign language and simultaneously shape the knowledge of new researchers.

Solutions already exist in publications of linguists studying Japanese grammar. For example, Chamberlain in one of his works (1886: 50–65) presents a systemic description of Japanese conjugation. Still, it lacks clear definitions of terms like *stem*, *ending*, *grammatical marker*, *grammatical dimensions*, *word*, and *grammatical form*, which makes it insufficient especially in the case of morphological analysis. Yet it is quite peculiar as he knew Latin and because of that must have known these terms. The approach he presented can be seen as Anglocentric in a way, which is not suitable for the Japanese language (Jabłoński 2021b: 49–50).

Another well-known publication, written by Bloch (1970: 97–100), seems to be more relevant regarding implemented terminology. However, the linguist appears to focus on word formations and creates inflectional categories based on the formations instead of trying to divide extracted grammatical markers into categories of homogeneous semantics (*ibid.*, 98–102). Moreover, Bloch treats grammatical endings *-na-* and *-ana-* marking negativity as derivational suffixes (*ibid.*, 106). This might be caused by an absence of notions of verbal and nominal elements as well as unambiguous definitions of inflection and derivation. In the light of the facts mentioned above, the publications cannot serve as the primary sources of information. There can be also found more recent resources created by Polish linguists but due to lack of popularity, facilities specializing in teaching the discussed language have not shown interest in adopting them. This itself shows the significance of covering the subject.

The textbooks used for the introduction of the current approach were considered suitable for this paper as they are used at Polish public universities teaching Japanese<sup>3</sup>. Since they are used as resources for teaching Japanese at academic institutions, their importance and influence on research on Japanese language is even more significant.

It is also crucial to understand that the content of textbooks for studying a foreign language is usually influenced by linguistic description of a given language. An example representing this problem are resources for learning Japanese.

Japanese is considered an agglutinative language (Huszczka et al. 2003: 115–116, Jabłoński 2021a/1: 409–410, Polański 1999: 274, Shibatani 1990: 91) which implies that majority of its word formations are going to be of a

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<sup>3</sup> The author of this paper himself completed his first year at Japanese studies using *Shokyū Nihongo* 1–2. Later, as a lecturer, he conducted classes relying on all the textbooks discussed below.

synthetic type (Bańko 2012: 211, Huszcza et al. 2003: 115, Jabłoński 2021a/3: 176–177). In the case of an agglutinative language, synthetic forms are built from morphs containing only one grammatical function (Bańko 2012: 48). On the other hand, Polish grammatical morphemes usually accumulate more than one meaning. For this reason, Polish is classified as a fusional language (*ibid.*).

In order to conduct research on any language's morphology it is necessary to adopt proper tools. Morphemes are the smallest meaning bearing units of a language realized by phonemes as morphs (Polański 1999: 376). Every phoneme should be easily differentiated from one another. If this condition is not fulfilled, then it is impossible to determine clear boundaries between morphemes. This problem exists in descriptions of Japanese grammar as many Japanese linguists did their research using a writing system with its smallest units being syllables (Jabłoński 2021b: 53–59).

### 1. The popular approach

Contemporary grammatical material on conjugation is introduced based on syllabic description *gojū'ongata* 五十音型 in various textbooks for learning Japanese. It refers to the layout of the Japanese syllabary *gojūon* 五十音 and primarily to the layout of the syllables in it (Huszcza et al. 2003: 129, Jabłoński 2021a/2: 92).

There are five inflectional forms of Modern Japanese verbs. As the traditional description was reliant on the Japanese writing system where syllables are the smallest units of analysis, it is rather difficult to find something corresponding with the term *stem*. The closest idea are verbal conjugational forms called *katsuyōkei* 活用形 (Huszcza et al. 2003: 129–130, Jabłoński 2021a/2: 92, Shibatani 1990: 221–222).

All the forms of a verb are arranged in five columns *dan* 段 in consistence with vowels *-a*, *-i*, *-u*, *-e*, *-o* appearing at the final position of a syllable. To portray that, in case of the verb *nomu* 飲む 'to drink' the element that will change is the syllable *-mu*. It will conjugate as follows: *-ma*, *-mi*, *-mu*, *-me*, *-mo*. Phonemes located in the initial position appear in the syllabary order, which implies that, for example, the syllable *-ku* of the verb *kaku* 書く 'to write' will precede *nomu* 飲む, as the syllables' onset is *k* which is located before those starting with *m*. These rows coming one after another starting with a different phoneme are called *gyō* 行 'row' (Jabłoński 2021a/2: 92–93).

Japanese verbs are classified into three groups in accordance with the number of conjugational forms they represent. The first one is *godan katsuyō*

五段活用 ‘five grade conjugation’. The verb *nomu* 飲む presented above falls into this category as it has five different forms. The second one is known under the term *ichidan katsuyō* 一段活用 ‘one grade conjugation’ being much simpler to grasp for second-language learners as it has only one form. Verbs associated with this group represent two types: *kami* ‘ichidan 上一段’ ‘upper one grade’, whose conjugational form ends with the phoneme *i* and *shimo* ‘ichidan 下一段’ ‘lower one grade’ with *e* as the final phoneme in their form. The last one called *henkaku katsuyō* 変格活用 ‘irregular conjugation’ consists only of two conjugation patterns called *sagyō henkaku katsuyō* サ行変格活用 ‘irregular conjugation of s-stem verbs’ and *kagyō henkaku katsuyō* カ行変格活用 ‘irregular conjugation of k-stem verbs’. The terms five grade conjugation 五段活用 and one grade conjugation 一段活用 have versions extended by *seikaku* 正格 ‘regular’ that can be used to display their regular pattern in contrary to the irregular conjugation (ibid.). As stated above there are five inflectional forms in the present-day descriptions of Japanese grammar. Although when this description was being developed primarily by scholars from the late eighteenth through the early nineteenth century it contained six distinct forms. It was reduced to five when a category called *rentaikei* 連体形 ‘attributive form’ merged with the terminal form (Shibatani 1990: 222). Due to irrelevancy to the topic of this paper the matter of archaic categories will not be covered here. The modern ones are: *mizenkei* 未然形 ‘irrealis’, *ren’yōkei* 連用形 ‘conjunctive’, *shūshikei* 終止形 ‘terminal’, *kateikei* 假定形 ‘hypothetical’, *meireikei* 命令形 ‘imperative’ (ibid.).

All the information mentioned above are summarized in the Table 1 below.

inflectional categories	one grade conjugation		five grade conjugation	irregular conjugation of s-stem verbs	irregular conjugation of k-stem verbs
	<i>taberu</i>	<i>miru</i>	<i>nomu</i>	<i>suru</i>	<i>kuru</i>
<b>irrealis</b>	<i>tabe,</i> <i>tabeyo</i>	<i>mi,</i> <i>miyo</i>	<i>noma,</i> <i>nomo</i>	<i>shi,</i> <i>shiyo</i>	<i>ko,</i> <i>koyo</i>
<b>conjunctive</b>	<i>tabe</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>nomi</i>	<i>shi</i>	<i>ki</i>
<b>terminal</b>	<i>taberu</i>	<i>miru</i>	<i>nomu</i>	<i>suru</i>	<i>kuru</i>
<b>hypothetical</b>	<i>tabere</i>	<i>mire</i>	<i>nome</i>	<i>sure</i>	<i>kure</i>
<b>imperative</b>	<i>tabero</i>	<i>miro</i>	<i>nome</i>	<i>shiro,</i> <i>seyo</i>	<i>koi</i>

Table 1. Representation of inflectional categories of Modern Japanese (based on Jabłoński 2021a/2: 93).

As previously stated, syllabary-based grammar explanations can be seen as a simplification for learning Japanese, but in the long run it proves to be delusive, due to the absence of detailed descriptions about morphological changes that appear within a verb. Whenever a student needs to comprehend the rules of building new grammatical structures, the instructions are purely mechanical and the smallest grammatical elements remain unaddressed. Textbooks solely focus on indicating which column of the hiragana syllabary is necessary to create a specific sentence pattern. This method leaves a student without any understanding of the inflection of Japanese words.

Table 2 and 3 below demonstrate how the current, syllabary approach is applied in textbooks. The examples used here are instructions of how to form the plain non-past negative form of verbs, which consists of a specific form of a verb ending with the phoneme *a* and the element *-na-i* ない depicting negation.

	<i>masu-kei</i>			<b>translation</b>	<i>nai-kei</i>			<b>translation</b>
I	<i>su</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>masu</i>	‘to smoke’	<i>su</i>	<i>wa</i>	<i>nai</i>	‘not to smoke’
	<i>i</i>	<i>ki</i>	<i>masu</i>	‘to go’	<i>i</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>nai</i>	‘not to go’
	<i>iso</i>	<i>gi</i>	<i>masu</i>	‘to hurry’	<i>iso</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>nai</i>	‘not to hurry’
	<i>hana</i>	<i>shi</i>	<i>masu</i>	‘to talk’	<i>hana</i>	<i>sa</i>	<i>nai</i>	‘not to talk’
	<i>ma</i>	<i>chi</i>	<i>masu</i>	‘to wait’	<i>ma</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>nai</i>	‘not to wait’

Table 2. A fragment of explanation of how to create the non-polite negation in *Minna-no Nihongo I*. Originally written fully in hiragana without English translations (Suriie Nettowaku 2012: 146).

			<b>translation</b>
<i>aimasu</i>	<i>au</i>	<i>awanai</i>	‘to meet’
<i>kakimasu</i>	<i>kaku</i>	<i>kakanai</i>	‘to write’
<i>hanashimasu</i>	<i>hanasu</i>	<i>hanasanai</i>	‘to speak’

Table 3. A fragment of explanation of creating non-polite negation in *Shokyū Nihongo I*. Originally written fully in hiragana without the column with translations (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japanese Language Center for International Students [JLCIS] 2011: 107).

In both cases at first each verb appears in so-called *masu-kei* ます形 ‘*masu* form’ which is presented to learners just when verbs are introduced in textbooks. Consequently, it is the base form for creating other verbal constructions. The first table is clearer as it shows that the ending *-(a)na-i*

appears in the place of *-(i)mas-u*. It also indicates, relying solely on syllables, that the conjugational form has to be changed so it ends with the vowel *a*.

Table 3 is even more vague as there are three different verb forms listed one after another. In contrary to Table 2, this one also contains verbs in their terminal forms in the middle column. It does not explicitly specify what elements should be removed and what should be changed, nor does it indicate lexical stem. A learner that is able to read the hiragana syllabary can only guess what is necessary to create the non-polite negation form.

The two examples confirm the statements presented prior in this section as all of them are based on the hiragana syllabary layout. Although it is possible to separate the stems and the inflectional endings, these textbooks seem to be avoiding this way of describing formations of synthetic verbal constructions.

## 2. Explanations of the polite hortative mode

Learners usually come across the polite hortative ending *-(i)mash-ō* very early. This might be the reason why resources for learning Japanese contain little grammatical information related to the ending and focus mainly on its pragmatical aspects. Therefore, a student will be given instructions on when to use it and how to connect it to a verb but will not know that *-(i)mash-ō* is essentially a morpheme sequence made of two separate elements, as this part is omitted, and that the same elements can be found in many other environments. The following part of this section provides examples of this phenomenon derived from textbooks for learning Japanese.

The first one is derived from *Minna-no Nihongo I*, the second one from *Shokyū Nihongo I* and the last one from *Donna Toki Dō Tsukau Nihongo Hyōgen Bunkei Jiten*.

When using *Minna-no Nihongo I*, a student has to be aware that the main textbook will not be sufficient for gathering all the necessary information about *-(i)mash-ō*, as it does not contain instructions on how to use it, but merely gives a few example sentences and explains the way this compound connects to different verbs based on the type of Tables 1–3 mentioned previously. In order to gain knowledge about in what situation this expression should be used, a student is forced to search for it in an additional book for grammar notes – *Minna-no Nihongo Shokyū I: 2nd edition, Translation & Grammar Notes — English*.

*Minna-no Nihongo I* gives the following three sentences where only the first one (2-1.) is completed. The morpheme sequence *-(i)mash-ō* implicitly appear in the other two examples (2-2. and 2-3.) after the given verbs:

- 2-1. *asoko-de* *yasum-imash<sup>4</sup>-ō.*  
 there-INST rest-POL-PROP  
 あそこで やすみ ましょう。

‘Let’s rest there.’

- 2-2. *shokudō-e* *ik-i[mash-ō.]*  
 canteen-ALL go[-POL-PROP]  
 食堂へ いき [ましょう。]

‘Let’s go to the canteen.’

- 2-3. *sanji-ni* *a-i[mash-ō.]*  
 three o’clock-LOC meet[-POL-PROP]  
 3時に あい [ましょう]。

‘Let’s meet at three o’clock.’

(Suriie Nettowāku 2012: 50, orig. without square brackets).

At this point a beginner learner would be able to conclude that *-(i)mash-ō* connects to the same form of a verb as the polite ending *-(i)mas-u*. Moreover, the examples in 2-2. and 2-3. in the part with glossing have brackets in the same place as they were put in the Japanese text. Doing so, it becomes clearer that the boundaries of the morphs cannot be set with the syllabary, as the vowel *-i-* cannot be treated as a part of a lexical stem.

For other crucial information, including descriptions of situations when the morpheme sequence should be used, it is necessary to proceed to the additional grammar book. In it, it is stated that the expressions with verbal ending *-(i)mash-ō* are used for giving invitations for someone to do something together in formal speech and as an agreement to a proposition someone was given. The textbook also points out that *-(i)mash-ō* is more direct than another expression of proposition *-(i)mas-en ka* (Suriie Nettowāku 2019: 47). This short explanation is followed by the examples below:

- 2-4. *chotto* *yasum-imash-ō.*  
 a.little rest-POL-HYP  
 ちょっと 休みましょう。

‘Let’s rest a little.’

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<sup>4</sup> For the convenience of the study the vowel *-i-* appearing between lexical stems and ending *-mas-* will be written together with the latter. The status of element *-i-* is worth of its own study. More on this topic: Jabłoński 2021a/3: 301–304.

2-5.	<i>issho-ni</i> together-LOC	<i>hirugohan-o</i> breakfast- ACC	<i>tabe-mas-en</i> eat-POL- NEG	<i>ka.</i> INT(SP)
	いっしょに	昼ご飯を	食べません	か。

‘Why don’t we eat breakfast together?’

2-6.	<i>ē,</i> yeah	<i>tabe-mash-ō.</i> eat-POL-PROP
	ええ	食べましょう。

‘Yeah, let’s do it.’ (ibid.)

There are a few exercises for students to get acquainted with the form but there is no additional information on pragmatical or grammatical aspects of it.

A description of *-(i)mash-ō* in *Shokyū Nihongo 1* is even more limited as it gives only example sentences. The reason is that the concept of the book is that it ought to be used in classes held in Japanese conducted under the teaching term *chokusetsuhō* 直接法 ‘direct mode’ (JLCIS 2011: i–iii). In this case it is assumed that the teacher will be able to give a general description of the grammatical form, especially focusing on its usage and connection to verbs, namely showing what forms of verbs are necessary when ending with *-(i)mash-ō*.

The structure is shown right above two example sentences in the following way: (*issho-ni*) *Vmashō*. *Issho-ni* translates as ‘together’ and the brackets insinuate that it is optional. V symbol stands for ‘verb’ but a student cannot conclude which inflectional form it is based on from just the letter V. As verbs and their polite form *Vmasu* were introduced in the previous lesson, it is probable that the authors believed students will understand that V in *Vmasu* and V in *Vmashō* are the same verbs taking the same form, which can already be considered as a fully correlation-based description. The example sentences are cited below (JLCIS 2011: 40).

2-7.	<i>issho-ni</i> together-LOC	<i>ano</i> that	<i>mise-e</i> shop-ALL	<i>ik-imash-ō.</i> go-POL-PROP
	いっしょに	あの	みせへ	いきましょう。

‘Let’s go together to that shop.’



2-8.	<i>issho-ni</i> together-LOC いっしょに	<i>ryō-e</i> dorm-ALL りょうへ	<i>kaer-imash-ō.</i> go back-POL-PROP かえりましょう。
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‘Let’s go back to the dorm together.’ (ibid.)

There is no additional information a student would be able to find in the textbook.

The most extensive explanations are in *Donna Toki Dō Tsukau Nihongo Hyōgen Bunkei Jiten*. This dictionary first gives basic translations of any grammatical entries in English, Chinese, Korean and an additional Japanese paraphrase in cases of more advanced Japanese expressions. It is then followed by a few examples that give a better understanding of the proper usage of a grammatical structure. At the end it says what form of a word is necessary and provides more pragmatic information (Tomomatsu et al. 2010: 364). This paper will focus only on the parts of the explanation written in Japanese and English.

The ending *-(i)mash-ō* is translated into English as ‘let’s’. Right under this information six example sentences and dialogs are provided although without translations to other languages. Here is one of them to illustrate what it looks like.

2-9. A	<i>ja</i> then じゃ	<i>komban</i> this.evening(NUL) 今晚	<i>shichi-ji-ni</i> seven-o’clock-LOC 7時に	<i>hoteru-no</i> hotel-GEN ホテルの
A:				
	<i>robii-de</i> lobby-INS ロビーで		<i>a-imash-ō</i> meet-POL-PROP 会い <u>ま</u> しょう。	

‘Let’s meet at 7 o’clock this evening then.’

2-10. B	<i>ē,</i> okay ええ	<i>ja,</i> then じゃ	<i>shichi-ji-ni</i> seven-o’clock-LOC 7時に。
B:			

‘Okay, at seven o’clock then.’ (ibid.)

The ending *-mash-ō* is underlined in every sentence it appears in, as it is shown in the given example. Before the part with the explanations on the

usage there is a short note indicating how *-mash-ō* should be connected to a verb: *Vmasu + mashō* (originally fully in hiragana) (ibid.), which should be interpreted as *-mashō* combining with a verb created by losing its ending *-masu*. The main part of the description reads as follows:

1) Actively solicits or urges other party to do something, rather than ask other party's intentions. Also used as answer to such solicitations as *V masen ka* or *V mashō ka*, as in sentence ③ and ④. 2) Action is performed together, as in *mashō ka* or *masen ka* (solicitation). 3) Pattern *V mashō* is polite form of *V yō*. *V yō* is used for close or hierarchical relationships, as in sentences ⑤ and ⑥. Distinguish from *V yō* expressing speaker's volition. (ibid.)

This one is by a large margin the most detailed explanation. In accordance with the fragment cited above *-(i)mash-ō* is used when a speaker wants to actively invite the other party to do something together, but also can be used as a way of accepting a given proposition. There is also information which is usually omitted in textbooks. Namely it is said in the dictionary that verbs combined with the ending *-(y)ō* are the informal equivalents of the form, which are used in remarkably close relationships.

All the explanations work in accordance with the hiragana syllabary or merely show what elements differ while equated with a form introduced earlier in a textbook. It is a purely mechanical approach that leaves learners with little understanding of Japanese grammar. None of the resources presented in this section gives any information about the ending *-(i)mash-ō* itself and components it consists of. These issues can be prevented if a different approach is proposed.

### 3. Proposition of a systemic approach

The main idea behind a systemic approach is to create a systemic description of phenomena found in Japanese by using the tools of general linguistics. It should contain grammatical elements with their fixed functions and information about their syntactic features<sup>5</sup>. As presented above, the currently popular explanations discuss neither of them.

The approach presented here, in contrary to the one given in the previous section, is called non-syllabic *higojū'ongata* 非五十音型. The aim of this description is to reduce the number of stems in the case of verbs by relying on the phonological features of Japanese. The ideal situation would be to derive one stem to which multiple endings attach (Jabłoński 2021 a/2: 94).

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<sup>5</sup> There can be found studies (although not particularly in-depth) aligned with the main thought of this paper (Hansen 2015). This shows the struggle and the need of students to understand rules of building word formations of any type.

This way, rather foreign to Japanese linguistics, was already proposed and characterized in some Polish publications. Based on their content Japanese verbs can be divided into two regular categories and one irregular containing only three verbs: *suru* する ‘to do’, *kuru* 来る ‘to come’ and the copula *da* だ ‘to be’ (Huszczka et al. 2003: 166–188, Jabłoński 2021a/2: 93–94).

Japanese regular verbs fall into two separate categories depending on number of stems they have. The term *bo'indōshi* 母音動詞 ‘vowel verbs’ depicts a group which has one conjugational stem always ending with a vowel either /i/ or /e/. The other group consists of verbs called *shi'indōshi* 子音動詞 ‘consonant verbs’ usually with two conjugational stems with a final position phoneme being a consonant. The environment a verb appears in, determines what type of a stem should be used.

Previously used examples *taberu* 食べる ‘to eat’ and *miru* 見る ‘to watch’ in this perspective are vowel verbs. Their fixed stems are followingly: *tabe-*, *mi-*. The element *-ru* expresses the non-past, affirmative meaning connecting always with this type of verbs (Huszczka et al. 2003: 193–194). Although it seems more proper to treat *-r-* as another grammatical ending as it appears in other positions regularly (Jabłoński 2021a/3: 301–302). The verb *nomu* 飲む ‘to drink’ splits into the stem *nom-* and the non-past, affirmative marker *-u*. The Table 4 below shows how non-past negation forms of the given verbs are created.

non-past affirmative form (stem-ending)	stem	non-past negation form (stem-endings)
<i>tabe-ru</i>	<i>tabe-</i>	<i>tabe-na-i</i>
<i>mi-ru</i>	<i>mi-</i>	<i>mi-na-i</i>
<i>nom-u</i>	<i>nom-</i>	<i>nom-ana-i</i>

Table 4. Examples showing the process of creating the non-past negation form in the non-syllabic approach (based on Huszczka et al. 2003: 195–197).

The first column contains verbs in their so-called dictionary form *jishokei* 辞書形 as they figure in this manner in dictionaries. It is identical to the terminal form *shūshikei* 終止形 in the syllabic description. The ending marking non-past and affirmative values (*-[r]u*) detaches from each verb. In its place comes non-past, negation marker *-(a)na-i*. The vowel *a* is in brackets as it connects only to consonant verbs.

In this approach, the introduction of the two verbal categories should appear at the beginning of any resource for studying Japanese. A learner is able to create any verbal form as long as they are provided with information on the

types of verbs. As endings with their specific meaning will be always given, it is only necessary to master deriving stems from verbs.

#### 4. The polite hortative mode in the non-syllabic description

The non-syllabic description operates on units smaller than syllables. This fact influences the determination of boundaries of verbal stems and grammatical markers as has been shown above. In the case of vowel verbs nothing changes. The stems and the polite hortative mode marker stay the same. However, consonant stems' final phonemes are consonants which means that a vowel is needed before connecting with *-mash-ō*. The necessary vowel is *i* and it can be put in brackets before the ending similarly to *(-a)nai*: *-(i)mash-ō*.

Having the marker *-(i)mash-ō* and knowing that the *i* attaches to consonant stems the only information a learner needs is to know what type of verbs they work with. Five verbs appeared in the examples above: *yasumu* 休む 'to rest', *iku* 行く 'to go', *au* 会う 'to meet', *kaeru* 帰る 'to go back', *taberu* 食べる 'to eat'. Four of them are consonant verbs (*yasumu*, *iku*, *au*, *kaeru*) and one is vowel verb (*taberu*).

	dictionary form	stem	polite hortative mode <i>-(i)mash-ō</i>
consonant verbs	<i>yasum-u</i>	<i>yasum-</i>	<i>yasum-imash-ō</i>
	<i>ik-u</i>	<i>ik-</i>	<i>ik-imash-ō</i>
	<i>a-u</i>	<i>a-</i>	<i>a-imash-ō</i>
	<i>kaer-u</i>	<i>kaer-</i>	<i>kaer-imash-ō</i>
vowel verb	<i>tabe-ru</i>	<i>tabe-</i>	<i>tabe-mash-ō</i>

Table 5. Non-syllabic approach in attaching the polite hortative mode *-(i)mash-ō* to verbs (based on Jabłoński 2021a/2: 299).

Table 5 summarizes all the information presented in this and the previous section. By removing the marker *-u* from any consonant verb, the stem is created. (However, there are alternatives in the case of verbs ending with *-tsu* and *-su*. When */i/* appears instead of */u/* in this kind of verbs, */ts/* changes into */ch/* and */s/* into */sh/*. In all other cases */ts/* changes into */t/*). As can be seen, in all four cases the vowel *i* precedes the ending *-mash-ō*. When it comes to the vowel verbs, the stem is made by detaching the marker *-ru*. Then the ending *-mash-ō* simply follows.

This method involves neither other grammatical constructions nor the hiragana syllabary. It implies that that learning process should start with verbs in their dictionary forms and as soon as they appear in textbooks the distinction of vowel and consonant verbs needs to be explained. This approach is universal in its nature, which means it can be applied to verbal constructions of any level.

Current resources treat *-(i)mash-ō* as an indivisible unit, although it is a morpheme sequence consisting of two elements: *-mas-* being a verbal polite marker and *-(y)ō* proposition marker. Traditionally the element *-mas-u* is treated as an auxiliary verb (Matsuda 2021: 56) that inflects just like five grade conjugation verbs. It results from the inability to describe *-u* as non-past affirmative marker in the syllabic approach. The polite marker has two variants: *-mas-/mash-* (Jabłoński 2021a/2: 169). When combining with the proposition marker the latter is used. In *-(y)ō* the phoneme *y* appears only in vowel conjugation. It is then clear that *-(i)mash-ō* is built of *-mash-* and *-ō*. This method of explanation cannot be included in current textbooks due to its purely non-syllabic character.

What is more, learners, by knowing that the function of *-mash-* is only to carry the value of politeness, can realize it is fully removable. By doing so they will be able to create the non-polite hortative mode form, which is treated by textbooks as a separate grammar phenomenon. Vowel verbs will need the phoneme *-y-*.

stem	politeness marker	hortative mode marker	translation
<i>tabe-</i>	<i>-mash-</i>	<i>-ō</i>	‘let’s eat’
<i>tabe-</i>		<i>-yō</i>	‘let’s eat’
<i>yasum-</i>	<i>-imash-</i>	<i>-ō</i>	‘let’s rest’
<i>yasum-</i>		<i>-ō</i>	‘let’s rest’

Table 6. Structure analysis of verbs in hortative mode forms (based on Jabłoński 2021a/2: 169, 299, 2021a/3: 301–302).

The simple examples in Table 6 show that the constant element is *-ō* in both formal and informal usage. When the politeness marker is removed in case of vowel verbs the phoneme *-y-* precedes the hortative mode marker. Consonant stems combine with it directly.

## Conclusion

The current syllabic approach, although simple in its mechanical method of explanation, is bound by the writing system. Verbs must appear in textbooks in the *masu*-form so that other verbal constructions can be presented.

Consequently, grammatical phenomena of units smaller than a syllable are either completely ignored like the information about *-(i)mash-ō* being a sequence of two elements performing different functions, or they are modified so they can be described by using the syllabary<sup>6</sup>.

In resources *-(i)mash-ō* and *-(y)ō* are treated as nonrelated endings. Sometimes publications like *Donna Toki Dō Tsukau Nihongo Hyōgen Bunkei Jiten* explain that these two forms share the same meaning, but the latter one is used in close relationships. This is not untrue, but it is possible to explain it by showing learners each element of the morpheme sequence with its function (Table 6)<sup>7</sup>. It will then be clear that *-(i)mash-ō* is in fact *-(i)mash-* (politeness) and *-(y)ō* (hortative).

Japanese grammar dictionaries incorporate hundreds of entries that can be divided into smaller segments. Then the isolated elements fall into specific categories (many of them to specific grammar dimensions) depending on their morphological features. As a result, the number of entries reduces. This way, robotic memorization and putting endings in an appropriate place in a sentence is transformed into a deeper awareness of Japanese grammar.

### Abbreviations

ACC	accusative
ALL	allative
GEN	genitive
INST	instrumental
INT	interrogative
LOC	locative
NEG	negation
NUL	morphological zero (including the drop of a recoverable case marker)
POL	polite

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<sup>6</sup> It is noticeable that the application of the hiragana syllabary in textbooks interferes with grammatical explanations. This fact was also stated by the anonymous peer-reviewers of this paper. It would probably be justifiable to examine if the current state should remain unchanged.

<sup>7</sup> There seems to be a clash between the Japanese presented in textbooks for foreigners and Japanese characterization in linguistic publications. The anonymous peer-reviewers indicated this fact as well. This division highly influences the structure of grammatical information incorporated in resources for learning Japanese. As briefly shown above in this paper, the lack of linguistic perspective results in non-systemic descriptions, which leads to making the study of Japanese purely a memorization process. On the other hand, it is not uncommon to find many textbooks, intended for teenagers at European schools, which contain terms specific for linguistics (Kopp et al. 2013, Piotrowska-Skrzypek et al. 2019, Samson 2006, Viúdez et al. 2006, Wiseman et al. 2018). This operation is made to simplify the learning process by showing regularities. Therefore, it seems appropriate to reconsider the content of current textbooks for learning Japanese.

PROP	proposition
SP	sentence particle

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