

japanese hiragana and katakana chart

Japanese Hiragana and Katakana Chart: A Guide to Mastering the Foundations of Japanese Writing

japanese hiragana and katakana chart form the cornerstone of learning to read and write in Japanese. Whether you're just starting your Japanese language journey or looking to solidify your basics, understanding these two syllabaries is essential. Unlike alphabets used in English or many other languages, Japanese employs a combination of characters that represent sounds (syllables) rather than individual letters. This makes the hiragana and katakana charts incredibly useful tools for learners aiming to build a strong foundation in Japanese.

The Basics of Japanese Writing Systems

Before diving deep into the charts themselves, it's helpful to grasp where hiragana and katakana fit into the broader Japanese writing system. Japanese uses three main scripts:

- **Hiragana (ひらがな)**: The primary phonetic script used for native Japanese words, grammatical particles, and verb endings.
- **Katakana (カタカナ)**: Another phonetic script, mainly used for foreign loanwords, onomatopoeia, and scientific terms.
- **Kanji (漢字)**: Logographic characters borrowed from Chinese, representing whole words or concepts.

Among these, hiragana and katakana are the most straightforward to learn initially because they each consist of a fixed set of characters that correspond to specific sounds.

Understanding the Japanese Hiragana and Katakana Chart

At its core, a **japanese hiragana and katakana chart** is a visual representation of the 46 basic characters in each syllabary. Both charts are organized by rows and columns that represent consonant and vowel combinations, making them easy to memorize systematically.

Structure of the Chart

The charts typically arrange characters in a grid format with five vowel sounds running horizontally:

- A (あ / ア)

- I (い / い)
- U (う / う)
- E (え / え)
- O (お / お)

Vertically, the columns represent consonant sounds combined with these vowels, like K (か / か), S (さ / さ), T (た / た), and so on. For example, the hiragana character か (ka) corresponds to the katakana character カ (ka).

Why Learn Both Hiragana and Katakana?

It's common for beginners to wonder why they need to learn two seemingly similar syllabaries. The answer lies in their distinct functions:

- **Hiragana** is used for native Japanese words that don't have kanji or when the kanji is too difficult. It also marks grammatical elements.
- **Katakana** is primarily for foreign words, names, loanwords (like コンピュータ for "computer"), and sometimes for emphasis, similar to italics in English.

By mastering both charts, you'll be able to read and write virtually any word in Japanese at a basic level.

Tips for Memorizing the Hiragana and Katakana Chart

Learning two sets of 46 characters each might seem overwhelming at first, but with the right approach, it becomes manageable and even enjoyable.

Use Mnemonics and Visual Aids

Many learners find it helpful to associate each character with a memorable image or story. For example, the hiragana character さ (sa) looks somewhat like a "saw," which can help you remember its sound.

Practice Writing by Hand

Writing characters repeatedly helps ingrain their shapes in your memory. Japanese calligraphy resources or stroke order diagrams can guide you to write efficiently and beautifully.

Leverage Flashcards and Apps

Digital tools like Anki or mobile apps dedicated to Japanese syllabaries offer spaced repetition systems that optimize your study time. Flashcards can help reinforce recognition, pronunciation, and recall.

Practice Reading Simple Texts

Start with children's books or beginner-level materials that use furigana (small hiragana above kanji) and katakana words. This contextual practice gives meaning to characters rather than rote memorization.

Variations and Extensions of the Basic Chart

Once you're comfortable with the basic hiragana and katakana charts, you'll encounter additional characters created by modifying the base syllables. These include:

- **Dakuten and Handakuten:** Small marks added to characters to change their sound. For example, か (ka) becomes が (ga) with dakuten.
- **Yōon (Contracted Sounds):** Combining certain characters to create sounds like きゃ (kya) or しゃ (sha).
- **Small Characters:** Small versions of や (ya), ゆ (yu), and よ (yo) are used in these combinations.

Understanding these modifications is crucial for reading and writing accurately because they represent essential sounds in spoken Japanese.

Where to Find a Japanese Hiragana and Katakana Chart

Numerous resources online provide accessible and printable charts for both hiragana and katakana. Some popular options include:

- Interactive websites that let you click on characters to hear their pronunciations.
- Printable PDF charts with stroke order guides.
- Mobile apps featuring quizzes and writing practice.

Finding a chart that suits your learning style—whether minimalistic or colorful with mnemonic hints—can make a big difference in motivation.

Incorporating the Charts into Your Study Routine

Don't just memorize the charts in isolation. Try weaving them into your everyday learning:

- Label objects around your home with their Japanese names written in hiragana or katakana.
- Write simple sentences or diary entries using the syllabaries.
- Pair your study of the charts with listening exercises to link sounds with characters.

This approach helps transition from recognizing characters to actively using them, a key step toward fluency.

Common Mistakes to Avoid When Learning the Charts

While learning the Japanese hiragana and katakana chart, beginners often stumble on a few pitfalls:

- **Mixing up similar-looking characters:** For example,  (nu) and  (me) in hiragana can look alike. Careful attention and writing practice help differentiate them.
- **Neglecting stroke order:** Although it might seem tedious, correct stroke order improves writing speed and legibility.
- **Focusing too much on katakana later:** Many learners prioritize hiragana and delay katakana, but practicing both consistently leads to better retention.
- **Ignoring pronunciation:** Knowing the character shape isn't enough; listening and speaking practice solidify your grasp of the sounds.

Being aware of these will help streamline your learning process.

Using Hiragana and Katakana Charts for Advanced Learning

Once you're comfortable with the charts, they open the door to more advanced aspects of Japanese, such as:

- Reading manga or subtitles that use furigana to assist with kanji.
- Understanding loanwords and foreign names through katakana.
- Improving your kanji knowledge, as many kanji readings are taught using hiragana.

Ultimately, these charts are not just beginner tools but lifelong companions in your Japanese language journey.

Mastering the Japanese hiragana and katakana chart paves the way to unlocking the richness of Japanese

culture, literature, and communication. With patience, practice, and the right resources, these characters become second nature, turning the challenge of learning Japanese into an exciting adventure.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between Hiragana and Katakana in Japanese?

Hiragana is primarily used for native Japanese words and grammatical functions, while Katakana is used for foreign loanwords, onomatopoeia, and emphasis.

How many characters are there in the Japanese Hiragana and Katakana charts?

Both Hiragana and Katakana charts consist of 46 basic characters each, representing the same set of sounds but with different scripts.

What is the best way to learn the Japanese Hiragana and Katakana charts?

The best way is to practice writing and reading the characters daily, use mnemonic devices, flashcards, and engage with reading materials that use simple Japanese.

Are there any apps that can help me memorize the Hiragana and Katakana charts?

Yes, apps like Duolingo, Lingodeer, and Kana Quiz are popular tools that provide interactive ways to learn and memorize Hiragana and Katakana.

How are the Hiragana and Katakana charts organized?

Both charts are organized by consonant-vowel combinations in a grid format, starting from vowels (a, i, u, e, o) and progressing through consonants like k, s, t, n, etc.

Can I learn Hiragana and Katakana simultaneously?

Yes, it is possible to learn both simultaneously, but many learners prefer to master Hiragana first before moving on to Katakana for easier retention.

What are the voiced and plosive marks in Hiragana and Katakana charts?

Voiced marks (dakuten) and plosive marks (handakuten) are diacritical marks added to characters to change their pronunciation, such as changing 'ka' to 'ga' or 'ha' to 'pa'.

Where can I find printable Japanese Hiragana and Katakana charts?

Printable charts are available on websites like Tofugu, JapanesePod101, and many educational sites offering free resources for Japanese learners.

Additional Resources

Japanese Hiragana and Katakana Chart: A Comprehensive Exploration

japanese hiragana and katakana chart serves as an essential tool for learners and linguists delving into the Japanese writing system. As two of the three fundamental scripts in Japanese—alongside kanji—hiragana and katakana charts offer a structured visual representation that aids in mastering pronunciation, writing, and reading. Understanding these charts is indispensable for anyone aiming to acquire proficiency in Japanese, whether for academic, professional, or personal enrichment.

The Role and Importance of the Japanese Hiragana and Katakana Chart

The Japanese language employs a complex writing system that integrates three scripts: kanji (logographic characters borrowed from Chinese), hiragana, and katakana (both syllabaries). The hiragana and katakana charts encapsulate these two syllabaries, each containing 46 basic characters representing distinct syllables or morae. These charts are not mere reference tables but foundational tools that facilitate literacy and language acquisition.

Hiragana is predominantly used for native Japanese words, grammatical elements like particles and verb endings, and for words without kanji representations. Conversely, katakana is typically reserved for foreign loanwords, onomatopoeia, scientific terms, and the transcription of foreign names. The duality of these syllabaries necessitates familiarity with both charts, as they complement each other in daily Japanese usage.

Structure and Layout of Hiragana and Katakana Charts

Both charts are organized systematically, usually in a grid pattern aligning consonant sounds with vowel sounds. The traditional ordering, known as the gojūon (五十音) table, arranges characters by the five vowel sounds (a, i, u, e, o) across columns, and consonant sounds down rows (k, s, t, n, h, m, y, r, w, and a few exceptions).

For example, the hiragana character "か" (ka) aligns in the 'k' row and 'a' column, matched by katakana "カ" in the corresponding position. This mirrored arrangement aids learners in drawing parallels between the

scripts.

The charts also include characters for syllables with diacritical marks (dakuten and handakuten), which modify sounds, such as from "か" (ka) to "が" (ga). Additionally, there are contracted sounds (yōon) involving small "ya," "yu," and "yo," modifying base syllables to create sounds like "きゃ" (kya).

Analyzing the Educational Utility of Hiragana and Katakana Charts

From an educational standpoint, the hiragana and katakana charts are indispensable. They facilitate memorization through visual association and systematic categorization. Language instructors often rely on these charts as foundational teaching aids, enabling students to grasp the phonetic components of Japanese before progressing to kanji.

Moreover, digital versions of these charts often incorporate audio elements to demonstrate pronunciation, enhancing auditory learning. This integration underscores the multifaceted nature of the charts as tools for visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners.

Comparative Features of Hiragana vs. Katakana Charts

While both charts contain the same phonetic inventory, their visual forms and applications differ significantly:

- **Visual Style:** Hiragana characters are generally cursive and rounded, reflecting their origin from cursive Chinese characters. Katakana characters are more angular and simplified, designed historically for shorthand and annotation.
- **Usage Context:** Hiragana is integral to native language constructs, while katakana's primary use is for foreign words and proper nouns.
- **Learning Curve:** Hiragana is often introduced first to beginners due to its prevalence, with katakana following thereafter.

These distinctions make the dual charts complementary yet individually significant for comprehensive Japanese literacy.

Modern Applications and Digital Adaptations

In the digital age, the traditional Japanese hiragana and katakana chart has evolved beyond static print formats. Interactive online charts now offer dynamic features such as stroke order animations, audio pronunciation by native speakers, and quizzes that enhance retention. These tools cater to various learning styles and have become standard in many language learning platforms.

Furthermore, apps utilizing spaced repetition systems (SRS) incorporate hiragana and katakana charts to optimize memorization efficiency. This technological integration underscores the ongoing relevance of these charts in contemporary language education.

Challenges in Mastering Hiragana and Katakana Charts

Despite their structured design, learners often face challenges with the Japanese hiragana and katakana chart, such as:

- **Character Similarity:** Some characters in both scripts appear visually similar, leading to confusion (e.g., し (shi) in hiragana vs. ツ (tsu) in katakana).
- **Pronunciation Nuances:** Certain syllables have subtle pronunciation differences that require attentive practice.
- **Retention:** Memorizing 46 base characters plus additional diacritics and contracted sounds demands consistent repetition.

Addressing these challenges typically involves methodical study supported by the charts and immersion techniques.

The Japanese Hiragana and Katakana Chart in Linguistic Research

Beyond language learning, the Japanese hiragana and katakana chart holds significance in linguistic research. Scholars analyze these syllabaries to understand phonological patterns, script evolution, and sociolinguistic functions within Japanese society. The charts act as frameworks for examining how syllabic scripts interface with logographic kanji and how script usage varies across contexts.

Additionally, the charts provide insight into the adaptation of the Japanese language to foreign influences, as evidenced by katakana's role in representing loanwords, an area of active linguistic interest given globalization.

Practical Tips for Utilizing Hiragana and Katakana Charts Effectively

To maximize the utility of these charts, learners and educators might consider the following strategies:

1. **Sequential Learning:** Begin with hiragana to build a foundation of native phonetics before introducing katakana.
2. **Contextual Practice:** Use the charts alongside real-world materials such as manga, signage, and menus to contextualize learning.
3. **Incorporate Writing:** Practice writing characters while referencing stroke order to reinforce muscle memory.
4. **Audio Reinforcement:** Pair charts with pronunciation audio for proper intonation and rhythm.

These approaches can accelerate mastery and deepen understanding beyond rote memorization.

The Japanese hiragana and katakana chart remains a cornerstone of Japanese language education and research. Its structured presentation of syllabic sounds, coupled with its adaptability in modern learning environments, ensures its continued relevance. As learners navigate the intricate landscape of Japanese scripts, these charts provide clarity and guidance, bridging the gap between abstract phonetics and written communication.

[Japanese Hiragana And Katakana Chart](#)

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Timothy G. Stout, 2013-11-21 A complete introduction to written Japanese -- start here with zero knowledge and finish feeling confident! This introduction to the Japanese writing system teaches you to read and write the fundamental 92 hiragana and katakana characters--and makes learning fun and easy with a memorable picture-based method! The method that's helped thousands learn Japanese successfully: Memorable pictures help you to learn the characters by associating their shapes and sounds with combinations of images and English words already familiar to you Clear examples and engaging exercises offer opportunities to read, write, use and practice all 92 primary hiragana katakana characters, plus the remaining kana that stand for more complex sounds Polish

your knowledge with word searches, crossword puzzles, fill-in-the-blanks, timed recognition quizzes, and other engaging activities The online media includes printable flashcards to help you review and practice, even while you are on the go All media content is accessible on tuttlepublishing.com/downloadable-content

japanese hiragana and katakana chart: *Japanese Writing Notebook* Himawari (Sunflower) Press, 2019-05-10 This notebook is perfect to practice your Japanese handwriting of hiragana, katakana, kana and kanji characters: It's a great tool to anyone learning cursive writing or looking to improve their handwriting. The book contains a mixture of alternate lined pages and specially designed printed with vertical columns of squares, and each square designed to accommodate a single Japanese character. There are two simple hiragana and katakana charts to familiarise yourself with the characters. Size: 21.6 x 27.9 cm 88 practice pages Gloss cover The modern Japanese writing system uses a combination of logographic kanji, which are adopted Chinese characters, and syllabic kana. Kana itself consists of a pair of syllabaries: hiragana, used primarily for native or naturalised Japanese words and grammatical elements, and katakana, used primarily for foreign words and names, loanwords, onomatopoeia, scientific names, and sometimes for emphasis. Almost all written Japanese sentences contain a mixture of kanji and kana. Because of this mixture of scripts, in addition to a large inventory of kanji characters, the Japanese writing system is often considered to be one of the most complicated in use anywhere in the world.

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japanese hiragana and katakana chart: Handbook of Japanese Phonetics and Phonology Haruo Kubozono, 2015-03-10 This volume is the first comprehensive handbook of Japanese phonetics and phonology describing the basic phonetic and phonological structures of modern Japanese with main focus on standard Tokyo Japanese. Its primary goal is to provide a comprehensive overview and descriptive generalizations of major phonetic and phonological phenomena in modern Japanese by reviewing important studies in the fields over the past century. It also presents a summary of interesting questions that remain unsolved in the literature. The volume consists of eighteen chapters in addition to an introduction to the whole volume. In addition to providing descriptive generalizations of empirical phonetic/phonological facts, this volume also aims to give an overview of major phonological theories including, but not restricted to, traditional generative phonology, lexical phonology, prosodic morphology, intonational phonology, and the more recent Optimality Theory. It also touches on theories of speech perception and production. This book serves as a comprehensive guide to Japanese phonetics and phonology for all interested in linguistics and speech sciences.

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2014-06-11 Basic Japanese: A Grammar and Workbook comprises an accessible reference grammar and related exercises in a single volume. This book presents 25 individual grammar points, covering the core material which students would expect to encounter in their first year of learning Japanese. Divided into two parts, the first part outlines fundamental components of Japanese including the writing system, pronunciation, word order, particles and conjugation patterns, while the second part builds on this foundation by introducing basic grammatical patterns organised by the task they achieve. Grammar points are followed by contextualised examples and exercises which allow students to reinforce and consolidate their learning. Key features include: clear, accessible format many useful language examples transliteration of all examples jargon-free explanations of grammar abundant exercises with full answer key subject index. Basic Japanese is suitable both for class use and independent study making it an ideal grammar reference and practice resource for both beginners and students with some knowledge of the language.

japanese hiragana and katakana chart: *Handbook of Japanese Syntax* Masayoshi Shibatani, Shigeru Miyagawa, Hisashi Noda, 2017-10-23 Studies of Japanese syntax have played a central role in the long history of Japanese linguistics spanning more than 250 years in Japan and abroad. More recently, Japanese has been among the languages most intensely studied within modern linguistic theories such as Generative Grammar and Cognitive/Functional Linguistics over the past fifty years. This volume presents a comprehensive survey of Japanese syntax from these three research strands, namely studies based on the traditional research methods developed in Japan, those from broader functional perspectives, and those couched in the generative linguistics framework. The twenty-four studies contained in this volume are characterized by a detailed analysis of a grammatical phenomenon with broader implications to general linguistics, making the volume attractive to both specialists of Japanese and those interested in learning about the impact of Japanese syntax to the general study of language. Each chapter is authored by a leading authority on the topic. Broad issues covered include sentence types (declarative, imperative, etc.) and their interactions with grammatical verbal categories (modality, polarity, politeness, etc.), grammatical relations (topic, subject, etc.), transitivity, nominalizations, grammaticalization, word order (subject, scrambling, numeral quantifier, configurationality), case marking (ga/no conversion, morphology and syntax), modification (adjectives, relative clause), and structure and interpretation (modality, negation, prosody, ellipsis). Chapter titles Introduction Chapter 1. Basic structures of sentences and grammatical categories, Yoshio Nitta, Kansai University of Foreign Studies Chapter 2: Transitivity, Wesley Jacobsen, Harvard University Chapter 3: Topic and subject, Takashi Masuoka, Kobe City University of Foreign Studies Chapter 4: Toritate: Focusing and defocusing of words, phrases, and clauses, Hisashi Noda, National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics Chapter 5: The layered structure of the sentence, Isao Iori, Hitotsubashi University Chapter 6. Functional syntax, Ken-Ichi Takami, Gakushuin University; and Susumu Kuno, Harvard University Chapter 7: Locative alternation, Seizi Iwata, Osaka City University Chapter 8: Nominalizations, Masayoshi Shibatani, Rice University Chapter 9: The morphosyntax of grammaticalization, Heiko Narrog, Tohoku University Chapter 10: Modality, Nobuko Hasegawa, Kanda University of International Studies Chapter 11: The passive voice, Tomoko Ishizuka, Tama University Chapter 12: Case marking, Hideki Kishimoto, Kobe University Chapter 13: Interfacing syntax with sounds and meanings, Yoshihisa Kitagawa, Indiana University Chapter 14: Subject, Masatoshi Koizumi, Tohoku University Chapter 15: Numeral quantifiers, Shigeru Miyagawa, MIT Chapter 16: Relative clauses, Yoichi Miyamoto, Osaka University Chapter 17: Expressions that contain negation, Nobuaki Nishioka, Kyushu University Chapter 18: Ga/No conversion, Masao Ochi, Osaka University Chapter 19: Ellipsis, Mamoru Saito, Nanzan University Chapter 20: Syntax and argument structure, Natsuko Tsujimura, Indiana University Chapter 21: Attributive modification, Akira Watanabe, University of Tokyo Chapter 22: Scrambling, Noriko Yoshimura, Shizuoka Prefectural University

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Japanese language than ever before, others are still wary of starting because they believe, it's too difficult. But Beginning Japanese Phrases Language Practice Pad will show absolute beginners that Japanese is in many ways much easier than other languages and it will help intermediate Japanese learners review and improve upon their past studies and practice Japanese everyday. Japanese is a fascinating language that uses Chinese characters (kanji) as well as two other alphabets (hiragana and katakana). After a few weeks of gradual progress your ability to read Japanese, write Japanese and speak Japanese will grow tremendously. This calendar like desk companion is divided into monthly topics and builds upon itself, one day at a time. Japanese phrases are kept short, simple and functional. Each of the 365 pages include these four components: The phrase or dialogue in Japanese characters. A transliteration using English letters (romanji), which gives English speakers a guide to pronunciation. The English translation. A related note about the phrase, Japan, or Japanese culture to add context.

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of contemporary research at the intersection of linguistics, anthropology, psychology, and sociology, to name a few. The Handbook of Japanese Applied Linguistics reflects crosscurrents in applied linguistics, an ever-developing branch/discipline of linguistics. The book is divided into seven sections, where each chapter discusses in depth the importance of particular topics, presenting not only new findings in Japanese, but also practical implications for other languages. Section 1 examines first language acquisition/development, whereas Section 2 covers issues related to second language acquisition/development and bilingualism/multilingualism. Section 3 presents problems associated with the teaching and learning of foreign languages. Section 4 undertakes questions in corpus/computational linguistics. Section 5 deals with clinical linguistics, and Section 6 takes up concerns in the area of translation/interpretation. Finally, Section 7 discusses Japanese sign language. Covering a wide range of current issues in an in-depth, comprehensive manner, the book will be useful for researchers as well as graduate students who are interested in Japanese linguistics in general, and applied linguistics in particular. Chapter titles Chapter 1. Cognitive Bases and Caregivers' Speech in Early Language Development (Tamiko Ogura, Tezukayama University) Chapter 2. Literacy Acquisition in Japanese Children (Etsuko Haryu, University of Tokyo) Chapter 3. Age Factors in Language Acquisition (Yuko Goto Butler, University of Pennsylvania) Chapter 4. Cross-lingual Transfer from L1 to L2 Among School-age Children (Kazuko Nakajima, University of Toronto) Chapter 5. Errors and Learning Strategies by Learners of Japanese as an L2 (Kumiko Sakoda, Hiroshima University/NINJAL) Chapter 6. Adult JFL Learners' Acquisition of Speech Style Shift (Haruko Minegishi Cook, University of Hawai'i at Manoa) Chapter 7. Japanese Language Proficiency Assessment (Noriko Kobayashi, Tsukuba University) Chapter 8. The Role of Instruction in Acquiring Japanese as a Second Language (Kaoru Koyanagi, Sophia University) Chapter 9. The Influence of Topic Choice on Narrative Proficiency by Learners of Japanese as a Foreign Language (Masahiko Minami, San Francisco State University) Chapter 10. CHILDES for Japanese: Corpora, Programs, and Perspectives (Susanne Miyata, Aichi Shukutoku University) Chapter 11. KY Corpus (Jae-Ho Lee, Tsukuba University) Chapter 12. Corpus-based Second Language Acquisition Research (Hiromi Ozeki, Reitaku University) Chapter 13. Assessment of Language Development in Children with Hearing Impairment and Language Disorders (Kiyoshi Otomo, Tokyo Gakugei University) Chapter 14. Speech and Language Acquisition in Japanese Children with Down Syndrome (Toru Watamaki, Nagasaki University) Chapter 15. Revisiting Autistic Language: Is literalness a Truth or Myth? Manabu Oi (Osaka University/Kanazawa University) Chapter 16. Towards a Robust, Genre-based Translation Model and its Application (Judy Noguchi, Mukogawa Women's University; Atsuko Misaki, Kwansei Gakuin University; Shoji Miyanaga, Ritsumeikan University; Masako Terui, Kinki University) Chapter 17. Japanese Sign Language: An Introduction (Daisuke Hara, Toyota Technological Institute) Chapter 18. Japanese Sign Language Phonology and Morphology (Daisuke Hara, Toyota Technological Institute) Chapter 19. Japanese Sign Language Syntax (Noriko Imazato, Kobe City College of Technology) Chapter 20. Sign Language Development and Language Input (Takashi Torigoe, Hyogo University of Teacher Education)

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to other languages, such as conditional forms, forms expressing varying types of speaker modality, and social deixis.

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