

Research Article

Grammatical Blocking of Universal Uptake in Japanese Advertising Texts: Wake-Framing, Case Restriction, and Event Packaging

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Abstract: This study examines Japanese advertising and product-information texts on Shiseido Japan's official website (www.brand.shiseido.co.jp) that grammatically prevent readers from construing statements as universal claims ("always" or "true for everyone"). It addresses two problems: how universal readings are blocked through grammatical construction in this register, and how the main blocking mechanisms differ in limiting generalisation and managing scope. The data consist of sentence-level usage, precautionary, and quality-related statements that plausibly invite broad general interpretations. Seven analytically representative tokens are used as illustrative evidence, covering wake-negation, *baai*-based case framing, and event/occasion packaging with *V-ru koto ga aru*, including rare-event calibration with *mare ni* and layered conditional framing. The study employs qualitative, theory-driven grammatical analysis focusing on clause structure, embedding, nominalisation, connective relations, and the compositional contribution of key markers. The results identify recurring templates with distinct structural signatures. *Wake*-negation blocks over-strong uptake by denying a candidate inference (...to iu *wake de wa arimasen*). Case framing with *baai* shifts categorical commitments into situation-restricted possibility (...*baai ga arimasu*), including complex variants that add causal linkage, avoidance marking, and directive closure. Event/occasion packaging with *koto* plus existential predication (...*koto ga arimasu*) presents anomalies as contingent occurrences, and it can be triggered by causal conditions (e.g., temperature change) or conditional frames (...to). Rare-event marking with *mare ni* further calibrates frequency and often co-occurs with contrastive reassurance about quality. Overall, universal-blocking emerges as a set of non-redundant grammatical routes that constrain inference, situational domain, and event profiling in a compact public informational genre.

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1. Introduction

Universal interpretations are a recurring risk in product-facing language. Readers often take short descriptions and read them as if they apply always or to everyone. In this paper, universal uptake means that strengthened reading at the point of interpretation. It can happen even when the text does not use explicit universal words. In Japanese, this is not only a reader habit. Grammar also guides it. Studies on quantifier and negation show that interpretation depends on structure and scope preferences [1], [2]. Small morphosyntactic differences can move a sentence away from a universal-like construal and toward a weaker, restricted reading.

Related work on polarity, negation, and expectation management also shows that Japanese has several grammatical tools for limiting how far a proposition extends beyond its immediate context. This makes product-facing Japanese a good place to study grammar that can prevent overgeneralisation in real texts [3], [4], [5].

From a grammar-first view, blocking universal readings means preventing interpretations that treat a statement as an unconditional general claim. The mechanism is not just lexical softening. Writers often rely on structure. These choices can shift what the clause targets and what kind of commitment it presents. Scope is therefore not only a logical notion. It is where syntax and compositional semantics shape what readers normally take a sentence to mean [6], [7]. This fits work on Japanese modality and functional structure, where operators such as possibility and conditionality are organised in layers. Those layers can create stable interpretive differences even when the propositional core stays the same. For that reason, this study treats universal-blocking as a matter of clause structure and operator placement [8], [9], [10].

There is also a practical reason to look at product texts. Much research on scope, negation, modality, and polarity uses theoretical tests or constructed examples. Product advertising and warning notes are different. They are short, formulaic, and often read quickly. They can also be mistaken for guarantees [11], [12], [13], [14]. This leads to a simple question. Which grammatical templates are actually used in this register to stop universal uptake before it becomes the default inference. The approach here is constructional. Universal-blocking is treated as a small set of recurring templates whose morphosyntax limits the readings that are available. On this view, meaning differences follow from compositional structure such as embedding, nominalisation, and higher operators. They are not explained only by pragmatic repair [15], [16].

The data come from Japanese product advertising and warning statements on Shiseido Japan's official website. In this setting, short notes must acknowledge exceptions without making unconditional promises. The dataset includes seven sentence-level tokens chosen for analytic clarity and because they show recurring solutions in this register. Two solution types are central. The first is wake-framing, realised by the template *...to iu wake de wa arimasen*. It blocks a strong construal by denying that a proposition should be taken as the intended take-away. The second is case and event framing through existential patterns. This includes situation framing with *...baai ga arimasu* and event framing with *V-ru koto ga arimasu*. In some tokens, the event template is further shaped by conditional triggers such as *...to* and by frequency marking such as *mare ni*. Descriptive work and reference grammars support treating these patterns as stable resources in informational writing [17], [18], [19]. They allow concise exception-packaging without inviting a shift from a general claim to an unrestricted guarantee.

Prior research explains universal-like interpretations which can feel natural and the way grammar can constrain them. However, it has not yet provided a clear register-focused mapping of these constructions as a typology for product-facing Japanese. Work on quantifier and negation scope shows why strong readings can arise and why overt constraints matter [6], [12], [20]. Research on information structure and universal quantifiers also shows that licensing conditions influence stable broad generalisations that are in discourse. Studies on compact packaging and omission in Japanese suggest that short formulaic strings can still carry precise interpretive instructions. This matters for warning notes that depend on economical phrasing. Work on modality supports analysing *baai* and related existential patterns as tools that shape the domain of interpretation within a layered clause model. They are not just stylistic alternatives [15], [16]. Research on polarity sensitivity and negation-related phenomena also points to the same pressure. Japanese grammar often manages restricted licensing and counter-expectation, which fits the needs of product warnings that must mention exceptions without encouraging universal conclusions [9], [21]. The remaining gap is therefore a clause-level account that shows wake-framing and existential case and event framing work that toward the same goal while using different structures to limit generalisation.

Against the background, the study offers a grammar-only account of Japanese advertising and warning statements that block universal uptake. It uses seven Shiseido tokens as illustrative evidence. It also explains the constructions that differ in the way they limit generalisation and manage scope [22]. The comparison focuses on wake-framing and case and event framing realised through existential patterns. These include *...baai ga arimasu* and *V-ru koto ga arimasu*, including tokens with *mare ni*. The contribution is threefold. First, it treats universal-blocking as a constructional typology based on overt markers rather than vague hedging. Second, it shows that non-universal commitment can be achieved through different grammatical routes that target different parts of clause structure, even when they serve the same practical

goal. Third, it argues that product-facing texts offer clear evidence because they rely on repeatable templates and stable ways to package exceptions [23], [24]. The study is limited to sentence-level analysis. It does not claim frequency patterns across the website and it does not use reader-perception methods. Within these limits, the paper addresses two research questions. The first asks how Japanese advertising and warning statements grammatically block universal readings in the seven tokens analysed. The second asks how the constructions differ in limiting generalisation and managing scope, comparing *wake*-framing with existential case and event framing patterns, including tokens with *mare ni* [4], [15].

2. Preliminaries or Related Work or Literature Review

Recent work helps clarify why product-facing Japanese often relies on grammar to avoid overgeneral claims. Short product notes can be read too strongly. They may sound like they apply to everyone or in every situation. The paper stays with grammar only. It looks at sentence structure and recurring templates that keep generalisation in check in advertising and warning statements.

One line of research shows that structure matters when quantification and negation occur in the same clause. Experimental studies on Japanese and Chinese quantifier and negation sentences show that strong and weak outcomes pattern with structural choices and ordering preferences. This supports a grammar-only view where writers manage risk through form and placement, not by adding extra words. Work on partial negation also suggests that not-all patterns track grammatical configuration. Research on contrastive topic licensing with universal quantifiers adds that information-structural settings can also constrain broad generalisations [25]. These studies motivate the first part of the paper. It shows the Shiseido tokens that are built, so that an always or for everyone construal does not come out as the default.

A second strand supports the idea that short strings can still carry clear grammatical instructions. Work on adverbial particle modification and argument ellipsis shows compression changes in what material remains in the clause. This matters for product notes because they are brief, but they still need stable constraints. Processing-oriented work also suggests that layered structure can guide readers toward predictable routes, even with short surface strings [1], [5], [8]. This supports analysing the Shiseido examples as template-driven clauses where form packages commitment in a controlled way.

A third strand is useful for warning-style grammar which contingency is often tied to guidance. Work on imperatives shows that different imperative formats distribute work across grammatical form and use conditions. Research on formulaic turn formats with deontic implications also shows that some endings work as conventional ways to present a problem while pushing toward compliant action [7]. This matters because directive structure can reduce the chance that conditional statements are read as blanket guarantees. Work on Japanese minimiser expressions also shows these items interact with counter-expectation effects, which can help control how strong a negative environment feels in public-facing prose. Typological work on polarity sensitivity and negative concord supports the broader point that languages have grammatical resources that limit over-strong generalisations in systematic ways [9], [24]. Work on exceptional wide scope behaviour and on expletive negation is also useful background for how non-standard scope patterns can arise, even when surface order looks straightforward. In this paper, these studies are used as grammatical motivation and context. They are not treated as targets for semantic modelling.

Book-length work provides the backbone for a grammar-only description of the templates studied here. Narrog's model of layered clause structure offers a clear way to talk about operator placement and the hierarchy of functional material in Japanese clauses [11]. Work on Japanese negation also shows that negation is not uniform and different types come with different grammatical constraints. This supports separating predicate-level negation from denial patterns that target a takeaway. That distinction matters for *to iu wake de wa arimasen*. The volume on Japanese modality also treats scope as something that shows up at the interface of morphosyntax and clause structure which helps when describing condition framing and frequency marking in product texts [3], [22]. Foundational work in generative grammar supports the view that embedding and operator placement limit what structures are available and the way they are used. A grammaticalization perspective adds that repeated templates in public registers can become stable form and function pairings over time. Finally, a reference grammar provides usage constraints and descriptive generalisations for constructions that are common in informational prose [1]. These works support the second part of this paper. It compares two grammatical routes for limiting generalisation. Wake-framing relies on a denial

template such as *to iu wake de wa arimasen*. Existential templates restrict generalisation by framing situations or events, as in *baai ga arimasu* and *V-ru koto ga arimasu*. Some tokens also include frequency marking such as *mare ni*.

Taken together, the literature supports the present study in two ways. It shows that overgeneral readings are a real risk in fast-read product texts. It also supports a grammar-only method that tracks recurring templates and clause structures reduce that risk. On this basis, the paper first describes the seven Shiseido tokens that are grammatically built to block universal-like uptake. It then compares the way wake-framing and existential case and event framing differ in which the restriction sits in the clause including the role of rarity marking such as *mare ni*.

3. Proposed Method

Data source and unit of analysis

The data come from Japanese product advertising and warning statements on Shiseido Japan's official website at www.brand.shiseido.co.jp. The unit of analysis is one sentence-level, product-facing statement. These statements appear in product descriptions, usage instructions, precaution notes, and quality or safety notices. The study focused on sentences that can be read too broadly. In other words, readers might treat them as if they apply in all cases. The analysis searches for grammatical patterns that reduce that risk by building the restriction into clause structure.

The dataset included seven sentence-level tokens. They were used as clear examples of the constructions discussed in this paper. They were not meant to represent how often the patterns appear across the whole website. The seven tokens fell into two construction families. The first blocked an inferred conclusion through wake-framing with *to iu wake de wa arimasen*. The second limited generalisation through existential framing. This included situation framing with *baai ga arimasu* and event framing with *V-ru koto ga arimasu*. Some tokens also included rarity marking with *mare ni* within the same event-existential pattern.

Data collection and documentation

The data were collected through a documentary procedure from publicly available pages on the official site. First, relevant product pages were located through the site catalogue and category menus. Pages were prioritised when they included caution sections, usage limitations, or quality and safety notes. Second, candidate sentences were copied and transcribed into a corpus file. The transcription kept the original orthography, punctuation, and clause boundaries. Third, each sentence was stored as a single entry with basic metadata. The metadata include product name, product category, page URL, and access date.

A retrieval log was kept for traceability. The log links each entry to its exact location on the webpage. When possible, the study also kept screenshots or saved page copies for later checking. If the same sentence appeared on more than one page, it was recorded for provenance but counted once in the analysis.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

A sentence was included if it met two conditions. First, it had to limit generalisation, reduce an implied guarantee, or state a condition that affects the outcome. Second, it had to contain at least one grammatical trigger that is relevant to universal-blocking. The triggers in the study are wake-framing with *to iu wake de wa arimasen*, case framing with *baai*, event packaging with *koto* combined with existential predication, and optional rarity marking with *mare ni*. Connectives that link a condition to reassurance or instruction were also noted, including *node* and *ga*. Promotional slogans without limitation or contingency were excluded.

Analytical procedure and coding

The study uses qualitative grammatical analysis focused on clause structure. The analysis has three steps. First, each token was annotated for its formal structure. The annotation covers clause type, embedding, nominalisation, and connective relations. It also records the presence and position of the target markers. Second, each token was analysed for its grammar blocks universal-like uptake. For each token, the analysis stated a plausible overgeneral reading that could arise under fast, product-facing reading. It then identified the grammatical configuration that blocks it. In the study, wake-framing was treated as inference blocking. The clause was framed as a possible conclusion, and the *wake* frame with negative copular form blocks that conclusion as the intended takeaway. Case and event framing were treated as

existential packaging. *Baai* packaged a situation and presented it as a case that can occur. *Koto* packaged an event and presented it as something that could occur on some occasions. *Mare ni* is treated as a rarity marker that further narrowed the event-existential pattern.

Third, the results were brought together into a constructional account. This account compares wake-framing and existential case and event framing that differ in what they target and in which way the restriction is encoded in the clause. Wake-framing targets inference status. Existential framing targets situation or event profiling. Coding decisions were guided by clear rules. They were also checked against the retrieval log so that each claim can be traced back to the source entry.

4. Results and Discussion

Grammatical blocking of universal readings in Japanese advertising texts

Public-facing Japanese product statements can be read too broadly. Short descriptions may be taken as if they apply in all cases or for all users. In the Shiseido sample analysed here, this risk is handled through a small set of recurring grammatical templates that restrict how the clause can be taken.

Two construction families recur in the seven tokens. The first is wake-framing with *to iu wake de wa arimasen*. This template blocks an over-strong takeaway by placing a candidate inference under an explicit denial frame. The second family uses existential framing. Situation framing with *baai ga arimasu* packages the claim as case-based. Event framing with *V-ru koto ga arimasu* packages it as occasion-based. Within the event-existential pattern, *mare ni* can be added as a rarity marker that further narrows the construction by signalling low frequency.

The dataset is organised as seven illustrative tokens chosen for clarity. It includes one wake-framing token, two *baai* tokens, and four *koto* tokens, including two rare-event variants marked with *mare ni*. Together, the tokens show that universal-blocking in this register is not a single general softening strategy. It is realised through a small inventory of stable templates. These templates differ in which the restriction is encoded. Wake-framing targets a potential takeaway. *Baai* targets the level of situations. *Koto* targets the level of events across occasions, with *mare ni* tightening the same event-based template.

(1) Wake-framing with *to iu wake de wa arimasen*

Arerugii tesuto-zumi (subete no hito ni arerugii ga okinai to iu wake de wa arimasen.)

Data glossing

arerugii	tesuto-zumi							
allergy	test-COMPL							
subete	no	hito	ni	arerugii	ga	okinai		
all	GEN	person	DAT	allergy	NOM	occur-NEG		
to	iu	wake		de	wa	arimasen		
QUOT	say	MEANING	COP TOP	COP-POL-NEG				

English translation

‘Allergy-tested (This **does not mean** that allergies will not occur in everyone.)’

For data (1), the anti-universal effect follows from the *wake*-based denial template, instead of relying on a separate frequency marker such as “sometimes”. The embedded clause contains the quantifier phrase *subete no hito* ‘all people’ and the negated predicate *okinai* ‘not occur’. This is the kind of quantifier plus negation setup that can invite a strong reading when scope is left to default preferences [1]. The important point in this token is that the sentence does not let that clause stand as the main clause. It is put inside a larger frame.

The core shape is [embedded clause] + *to iu* + *wake* + *dewa arimasen*. The quotative marker *to* turns the preceding clause into quotable content. The verb *iu* supports that packaging. Together they create a unit that can modify a noun. So the string [clause] *to iu* behaves like a clausal modifier in Japanese. Next, *wake* appears as the head noun. This turns the whole string into a noun phrase of the form [clause *to iu*] *wake*. At this point, the embedded clause is no longer in main clause position. It is inside an NP as descriptive material.

The sentence then ends with *dewa arimasen*. This is copular negation over that NP frame. The form *de* is the copula. *Wa* marks contrast or topic. *Arimasen* supplies polite negation in this copular environment. The main grammatical point is where this negation applies. The

negation in *deva arimasen* targets the NP headed by *wake*. It does not target the predicate inside the quoted clause.

This shows up clearly in the double negation layout. Negation is already inside the embedded clause in *okinai*. The sentence still adds another negative form outside the quoted clause. The two negatives are in different structural positions. The inner negation belongs to the embedded clause. The outer negation belongs to the copular frame that closes the NP. So the second negation is not a repeat negation of *okinai*. It is negation of the *wake* phrase itself.

With this setup, the sentence can mention a strong looking clause and still block a universal like construal. The clause with *subete no bito* is treated as quoted material. It is then turned into an NP by *wake*. Finally, that NP is negated by *deva arimasen*. This is a stable template in Japanese and it gives a clear structural reason why the ‘for everyone’ reading is pushed away in this token.

(2) Case framing with *baai ga arimasu*

Osenaku naru nakami ga denikuku naru baai ga arimasu.

Data glossing

ose-naku		naru	
press.can-NEG		become	
nakami	ga	de-niku-ku	naru
content	NOM	come.out-DIFFIC-ADV	become
baai	ga	arimasu	
case	NOM	EXIST-POL	

English translation

‘There are cases where it becomes impossible to press and the contents become difficult to dispense.’

The anti universal effect in data (2) comes from the fixed pattern *baai ga arimasu*. The sentence is not written as a simple statement about what the product does. It is written as an existential statement that says certain cases exist. That matters in product notes, because short declaratives can easily sound like general facts. With *baai* plus an existential predicate, the text avoids that general shape from the start.

In terms of form, the descriptive string comes before *baai* and works as a modifier of the noun *baai* ‘case’. The modifier contains two *naru* clauses. The first is *osenaku naru*. The second is *nakami ga denikuku naru*. Both end with *naru* ‘become’. This gives two parallel predicate blocks that can sit in the same pre nominal position. The sentence does not need extra embedding or a clause linker to join them. It simply stacks them before *baai* as a compact modifier chain.

Once *baai* appears, the whole string becomes one nominal unit. It is basically “cases where [this happens]”. After that, *ga arimasu* closes the sentence as an existential. Here *ga* marks *baai* as what exists, and *arimasu* supplies the existential predicate in polite form. So the sentence takes the shape “there are cases where ...”. With this setup, the malfunction description is not presented as something that holds generally. It is kept inside a case frame, and that frame blocks an “always” reading at the level of form.

This also differs from the denial pattern in (1). In (1), the text builds a quoted clause and then blocks a reading through *to iu wake deva arimasen*. In (2), there is no quoted clause and no denial frame. The sentence does not build a strong clause first and then reject it. It chooses *baai ga arimasu* from the outset, so the restriction is visible early. Once the reader reaches *baai*, it is clear that the preceding string is being treated as a case description. The closing *ga arimasu* then confirms the existential structure.

A typical product note feature also shows up in the compact listing of two outcomes, separated by the dot. The two *naru* clauses are placed side by side without an overt coordinator like *to* or *ya*. There is also no full connective between them. This kind of compression is common in label style writing. It lets the text list more than one point quickly. Even with that compression, the structure stays easy to parse because the ending is clear. The final *baai ga arimasu* works like a boundary. It signals that the material before it belongs to one modifier span, and it packages that span under a single head noun.

The internal shape of the two outcome clauses supports the same pattern. *Osenaku naru* is a compact potential negative form, and it stays short enough to sit in front of *baai* without

extra structure. The second clause adds an explicit nominative phrase *nakami ga* and then uses the difficulty form *denikuku* before *naru*. This makes it slightly heavier, but it still fits the same pre nominal slot. Both clauses are shaped so they can be stacked before *baai* in one line. That is one reason this template is useful in product warnings. It allows multiple outcomes to be listed, but the sentence still ends in a single, recognisable case existential closure.

Overall, (2) blocks a universal like reading through a stable grammatical form. The modifier plus *baai* builds a case unit, and *ga arimasu* turns it into an existential statement. At the level of grammar, that is enough to stop the sentence from sounding like an “always” claim. The text stays practical and clear, but the restriction is built into the structure rather than added through extra hedging words.

(3) Case framing chain with *node*, *you*, *gochuu kudasai*

Iroochi shitari itameru baai ga arimasu node, kagu komono neiru kawaseihin nado ni tsukanai you juubun go-chuu kudasai.

Data glossing

<i>iro-ochi</i>	<i>shi-tari</i>	<i>itame-ru</i>	<i>baai</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>arimasu</i>	<i>node</i>
color.transfer	do-LIST	damage-NPST	case	NOM	EXIST-POL	because
<i>kagu</i>	<i>komono</i>	<i>neiru</i>	<i>kawaseihin</i>	<i>nado ni</i>	<i>tsukanai</i>	<i>you</i>
furniture	small.item	nail	leather.product	etc	DAT	attach-NEG
<i>juubun</i>	<i>go-chuu</i>	<i>kudasai</i>				
sufficiently	HON-caution	HON.give-IMP				

English translation

‘Because there are cases where it may cause colour transfer or damage, **please be** sufficiently careful **so that** it does not get on furniture, small items, nails, leather products, etc.’

Token (3) has two main parts. The first part is the risk statement, and it ends with *baai ga arimasu*. The second part is the instruction chain, linked by *node* and shaped by *tsukanai you*, then closed by *go-chuu kudasai*. This layout is common in product notes because it keeps the risk and the guidance in clear blocks.

Before *baai*, the string functions as a pre-nominal modifier. The sequence *iroochi shitari, itameru* sits in the modifier slot that feeds into the noun *baai* ‘case’. That placement matters. The outcomes are not expressed as a main clause predicate. They are expressed as material that characterises a “case”. The listing format *-tari* in *shitari* also fits this register. It allows more than one outcome to be mentioned without building a heavy coordination structure. It also avoids a closed list feel. The verb *itameru* then follows in the same modifier zone, so both outcomes are kept inside one modifier that leads directly into *baai*.

The first clause is closed by *ga arimasu*. Here *ga* marks *baai* as the subject of existence, and *arimasu* supplies the polite existential predicate. This is the key grammatical choice for restricting broad readings. The clause is not shaped as a plain declarative like “it causes colour transfer” or “it damages”. Instead, it is shaped as an existential that says certain *baai* exist. The structure itself pushes the sentence away from a blanket, general statement.

After that, *node* connects the risk clause to the instruction clause. The instruction includes a long object sequence, ending with *nado*. This is another listing device that keeps the examples open-ended. The avoidance frame is built with *tsukanai you*. The negative form *tsukanai* sets what should not happen, and *you* packages it as a purposive frame. This is useful here because it keeps the long list under one clear grammatical umbrella.

The ending *juubun go-chuu kudasai* is a fixed caution formula. *Juubun* raises the strength of the warning. *Go-chuu* is a nominal caution expression with the honorific prefix *go-*. *Kudasai* provides the directive ending in polite style. The result is a recognisable product-note finish.

From a clause-structure perspective, the restriction is encoded in the *baai ga arimasu* frame. The subsequent string is connected by *node* and shaped by *you* as an avoidance instruction, closing with *go-chuu kudasai*. This structure is sufficient to show the token that does not take the form of an “always” statement while still functioning as a clear warning.

(4) Event framing with *koto ga arimasu* plus reassurance and instruction

Ondo henka ni yotte, hyoumen ga nurete mieru koto ga arimasu ga, hinsuitsu-jou mondai wa arimasen node, fukitotte o-tsukai kudasai.

Data glossing

ondo henka ni yotte
 temperature change DAT due.to
 hyoumen ga nure-te mie-ru koto ga arimasu ga
 surface NOM wet-TE seem-NPST NMLZ NOM EXIST-POL but
 hinshitsu-jou mondai wa arimasen node
 quality-aspect problem TOP EXIST-POL-NEG because
 fuki-tot-te o-tsukai kudasai
 wipe.off-TE HON-use HON.give-IMP

English translation:

‘Due to temperature changes, the surface **may** appear wet, but there is no quality-related problem, so please wipe it off and use it.’

This token follows a standard warning chain used in Japanese product notes. The line starts with a condition-like adjunct, then shifts into an event-existence template, adds a contrastive reassurance, and ends with a reason plus instruction. The main grammatical device that prevents a blanket reading is the *koto ga arimasu* template. The later links keep the sequence readable and give a clear action step.

The opening phrase *ondo henka ni yotte* works as an adverbial modifier. It sets up the setting in which the next clause is relevant. Formally, it is an adjunct that restricts the clause that follows. This kind of fronted modifier is common in short notes because it gives a bounded frame before the main predicate appears. After that comes the descriptive clause *hyoumen ga nurete mieru*. The subject is marked by *ga* on *hyoumen*. The predicate is built with *nurete* plus *mieru*. This *V-te mieru* shape is a regular grammatical format for “appearance” descriptions. In isolation, the clause can look like a plain descriptive statement.

The line then changes the shape by adding *koto* and closing with *ga arimasu*. This is the key structural move. *Koto* nominalises the preceding predicate string, and *arimasu* supplies existential predication with polite morphology. Together, [*predicate*] *koto ga arimasu* is a conventional event-existence template. The clause is no longer realised as a simple predication like “the surface looks wet”. Instead, it is realised as an existential statement built around a *koto* phrase. This form is widely documented in descriptive grammars and is consistent with analyses that treat Japanese clause structure as layered, where operator placement and packaging matter for how broad a statement can sound. For the present analysis, the important point is purely structural. The template shifts the predicate into a nominalised unit and then places it under existential predication, which makes a blanket reading harder to sustain in a short product note.

Immediately after *arimasu*, the connective *ga* links to a reassurance clause. The reassurance is *hinshitsu-jou mondai wa arimasen*. Here *mondai* is marked by *wa*, and *arimasen* is the polite negative existential. The phrase *hinshitsu-jou* narrows the reassurance at the level of form. It does not simply state “no problem” in the abstract. It states it with an explicit restriction built into the noun phrase. The sequence [*event-existence clause*] + *ga* + [*reassurance clause*] gives a clear contrastive chain, which is a familiar layout in public-facing notes.

Next, *node* links the reassurance clause to the instruction. This produces a straightforward reason-to-instruction connection without changing the basic clause type. The instruction itself is *fuki-totte o-tsukai kudasai*. The *-te* form *fuki-totte* sets up a first action, and *o-tsukai kudasai* provides a polite directive. The honorific *o-* matches the register of product information, and *kudasai* is the standard request ending in this style.

Taken as a chain, the grammar is clean and easy to audit. The restriction is encoded by *koto ga arimasu*. The connective *ga* introduces a contrastive reassurance built with *wa* and *arimasen*. Then *node* links that reassurance to an instruction shaped by *-te* chaining and *kudasai*. With this staged organisation, the note can mention a possible surface change and still avoid sounding like it holds in all cases, while also delivering a clear, conventional next-step instruction.

(5) Trigger to plus event framing koto ga arimasu

Sutikku o kuridashisugiru to, oretari modora naku naru koto ga arimasu node, go-chuui kudasai.

Data glossing

sutikku	o	kuridashi-sugi-ru		to				
stick	ACC	extend.out-exceed-NPST		COND				
ore-tari	modora-naku	naru	koto	ga	arimasu	node		
break-LIST	return-NEG-ADV	become	NMLZ	NOM	EXIST-POL	because		
go-chuui	kudasai							
HON-caution	HON.give-IMP							

English translation

‘If you extend the stick too far, it may break or become unable to return, so please be careful.’

Data (5) follows a familiar product-note chain. A trigger clause comes first, marked by *to*. The outcomes are then packaged with *koto ga arimasu*. The whole string is finally tied to a caution ending through *node*. The result is a compact warning that stays grammatical clear even in a short space.

The first clause ends in *to*, which closes the trigger part. The clause before it is *sutikku o kuridashi-sugiru*. The object marker *o* attaches to *sutikku*. The verb is built from *kuridasu* plus the excess marker *-sugi-*. The non past form *-ru* appears right before *to*, which is the expected shape for this trigger pattern. Structurally, this first clause is not a stand-alone statement. It is a dependent clause that sets up the conditions for what follows.

After *to*, the sentence moves straight into the outcome string. Two outcomes are placed before *koto*. The first is *ore-tari*. The *-tari* format is a listing device. It allows an outcome to be mentioned without turning the sequence into a fixed, closed coordination. In product notes, this is useful because it keeps the line short and still leaves room for more than one possible result. The second outcome is *modora-naku naru*. Here *modora-naku* is the adverbial negative form, and *naru* completes the predicate as a change expression. These two outcome blocks are simply lined up in the same pre nominal position, right before *koto*. That placement keeps the clause easy to scan.

The key form appears right after the outcomes. *Koto* nominalises the preceding predicate material, and *ga arimasu* closes the clause as an existential. Formally, the template gives a standard event statement. The string is not realised as a plain declarative like “it breaks” or “it will not return.” Instead, it is realised through *koto ga arimasu*, which is widely used in product information writing to package the preceding outcome as something that can occur. This is where the anti universal effect comes from in purely structural terms. The outcome is kept inside the *koto* phrase and then closed by *arimasu*, rather than being left as a direct assertion.

The last step is the bridge into the caution ending. *Node* links the outcome clause to the directive, and the sentence ends in *go-chuui kudasai*. This is a standard polite caution formula. The noun *chuui* takes the honorific prefix *go-*, and *kudasai* supplies the directive ending. In this token, *node* is doing clean connective work. It ties the risk statement to the warning formula without adding new clause packaging.

Structurally, the chain can be stated quite simply. *To* closes the trigger clause. The outcomes are listed with *-tari*, then nominalised by *koto*, and closed by *ga arimasu*. Finally, *node* links to the fixed caution ending *go-chuui kudasai*. This is enough, at the level of grammar, to show why the sentence avoids sounding like a blanket “always” statement while still delivering a clear warning in a standard product-note template.

(6) Rare-event marking mare ni inside koto ga arimasu

Tennen seibun o haigou shite iru tame, mare ni chinden butsu ga shoujiru koto ga arimasu ga, seihin no hinshitsu ya kouka ni wa mondai arimasen.

Data glossing

tennen	seibun	o	haigou	shi-te	iru	tame		
natural	ingredient	ACC	blend	do-TE	be-NPST	because		
mare ni	chindenbutsu	ga	shouji-ru	koto	ga	arimasu	ga	
RARELY	sediment	NOM	arise-NPST	NMLZ	NOM	EXIST-POL	but	
seihin	no	hinshitsu	ya	kouka	ni	wa	mondai	arimasen
product	GEN	quality	LIST	effect	DAT	TOP	problem	EXIST-POL-NEG

English translation

‘Because it contains natural ingredients, sediment **may rarely** occur, but there is no problem with the product’s quality or effectiveness.’

This sentence uses a common product note layout where a reason clause comes first, then a restricted event statement, then a short reassurance. The opening segment ends with *tame*. In *tennen seibun o haigou shite iru tame*, the clause is closed as a reason frame. The verb phrase *haigou shite iru* is in the progressive or resultative form, and *tame* marks it as the stated basis for what follows. This keeps the first part clearly separate from the next clause, and it avoids a flat one clause description.

The restriction is built in the next section through the sequence *mare ni* plus *koto ga arimasu*. The frequency marker *mare ni* is placed before the event clause and sets the clause up as low frequency from the start. The predicate string *chindenbutsu ga shoujiru* is then followed by *koto*, which nominalises the predicate, and the clause is closed by *ga arimasu*. As a result, the token does not use a plain declarative like “sediment occurs.” Formally, the template yields an event existence statement, [*predicate*] *koto ga arimasu*, and *mare ni* tightens that template without changing its basic shape. This is one of the reasons it works well in warning notes. The structure stays compact, but the restriction is visible in the markers.

The contrastive linker *ga* then shifts the sentence into the reassurance part. Here *ga* functions as the hinge between the event statement and the evaluation clause. The reassurance itself is built with a negative existential predicate, *mondai arimasen*. The topic marker *wa* appears inside that clause, and it helps organise the evaluation as a bounded statement rather than a general declaration. The phrase *seihin no hinshitsu ya kouka ni wa* is also doing important grammatical work. The list marker *ya* gives a light coordination of *hinshitsu* and *kouka*, and the sequence *ni wa* sets the evaluation frame. In other words, the “no problem” clause is grammatically tied to the specific dimensions named in that phrase, rather than being presented as an unqualified “no problem” claim [15].

Put together, the token shows a clean chain of forms that can be described without abstract “commitment” language. The first clause is closed as a reason clause by *tame*. The second clause is shaped as a rare event statement by *mare ni* plus the event existence template *koto ga arimasu*. The third clause is introduced by contrastive *ga* and ends in *mondai arimasen*, with ... *ni wa* making the evaluation frame explicit. Studies on minimiser expressions and counter expectation patterns help explain why contrastive packaging like this is stable in Japanese informational prose [9]. For the present grammar only analysis, the key point is that the restriction and the reassurance are both carried by overt clause level markers, not by extra hedging words.

(7) Conditional *baai* plus *mare ni* plus *koto ga arimasu* layered

Shibaraku o-tsukai ni naranakatta baai, mare ni disupensaa no kuchimoto ni nokotta nakami seibun ga katamaru koto ga arimasu ga, hinshitsu ni mondai arimasen.

Data glossing

shibaraku	o-tsukai	ni	nara-nakat-ta		baai		
for.a.while	HON-use	DAT	become-NEG-PST		case		
mare ni	disupensaa	no	kuchimoto	ni	noko-tta	nakami	
RARELY	dispenser	GEN	mouth.edge	LOC	remain-PST	content	
seibun	ga						
component	NOM						
katamaru	koto	ga	arimasu	ga			
harden	NMLZ	NOM	EXIST-POL	but			
hinshitsu	ni	mondai	arimasen				
quality	DAT	problem	EXIST-POL-NEG				

English translation

‘If it has not been used for a while, the remaining components at the dispenser opening **may rarely** harden, but there is no problem with quality.’

What stands out in (7) is the stacking of three restrictions inside one sentence. The form keeps the statement away from a blanket reading by building the risk clause in layers, then closing it with a separate reassurance clause.

Layer 1 is the condition phrase ending in *baai*. The string *shibaraku o-tsukai ni naranakatta baai* is placed at the front, and it works as the setting for what follows. The past negative form

naranakatta makes the condition explicit, and *baai* turns it into a “case” expression. Structurally, this opening prevents the next clause from being read as a simple general description, because the main clause is already tied to a specific “if-case” frame.

Layer 2 is the rarity marker *mare ni*. It comes right before the event clause, so the low-frequency cue is positioned early in the main clause. In product notes, this placement is practical because the reader sees the limitation before reaching the predicate. The key point here is surface form. *Mare ni* is not added at the end as an afterthought. It is integrated into the clause spine before the event packaging appears.

Layer 3 is the event-existence closure *koto ga arimasu*. The predicate material *katamaru* is followed by *koto*, and then the clause closes with *ga arimasu*. This is the same event template seen in other tokens, but here it comes after both a *baai* condition and *mare ni*. As a result, the hardening is not shaped as a plain declarative like “it hardens.” It is shaped as an event that can occur, and the clause is completed in a standard existential format.

Inside this main clause, the long noun phrase also does clear grammatical work. *Disupensaa no kuchimoto ni nokotta nakami seibun* is built with nested modification. The genitive *no* links *disupensaa* to *kuchimoto*. The locative *ni* anchors the location. The relative clause *nokotta* modifies *nakami seibun*. This makes the referent narrow and concrete. It points to a specific part and a specific residue location, rather than “the contents” in general. In informational writing, this kind of nominal modification often appears together with risk statements because it keeps the description tight and avoids overextension in what the statement seems to cover.

After the event clause, *ga* introduces the final reassurance clause. The reassurance is short and clean, *binshitsu ni mondai arimasen*. It uses the dative marker *ni* to set the evaluation area, and it closes with negative *arimasen*. The contrastive link *ga* keeps the two parts distinct. First comes the restricted event statement. Then comes the reassurance in a separate clause.

At the surface level, the template is clear and regular. A *baai* clause sets the condition. *Mare ni* follows as a frequency marker. The event is expressed through *koto ga arimasu*. The last step is the contrastive *ga* plus a reassurance ending in *mondai arimasen*. This is a compact grammatical way to mention a possible issue without presenting it as something that always happens.

Differences in grammatical strategies for limiting generalisation and managing scope

The dataset suggests that generalisation limits and scope control are not handled by one broad softening device. Instead, product-note style relies on a small set of recurring grammatical templates that are easy to spot. Three families are central. The first is inference framing with *to iu wake de wa arimasen*. The second is situation-based case framing with *baai ga arimasu*. The third is event or occasion framing with *V-ru koto ga arimasu*, which can be tightened further by low-frequency marking with *mare ni*. These patterns often co-occur with linkers such as *ga* and *node*, and with list formats such as *-tari* and *nado*. Together, they keep statements informative while reducing the chance of blanket readings.

One practical comparison point is where each construction places its closing material. In this dataset, scope control is visible in the surface form because each template ends with a different closure. In *wake* framing, the closure is the negative copular frame *de wa arimasen*, applied to a nominal unit headed by *wake*. In *baai* framing, the closure is existential *arimasu*, applied to the case noun *baai*. In *koto* framing, the closure is also existential *arimasu*, but the head is *koto*, which nominalises the predicate string. When *mare ni* is added, it appears before the predicate string, so the limiter arrives early inside the same clause chain. The contrast, then, is not only about meaning. It is also about where the restriction is inserted and what unit receives the closure [1], [5], [6].

Another useful comparison is how much structure is built above the descriptive clause. The *wake* template adds an extra layer by packaging a clause under *to iu* and then placing *wake* as the head noun. That larger nominal unit can then be negated by the copular negative. By contrast, *baai ga arimasu* does not require quotative packaging. The descriptive material stays in the pre-nominal modifier slot and *baai* serves as the head noun. The existential closes the clause as cases exist. The *koto ga arimasu* family is similar in shape, but the head is *koto*, which nominalises the predicate string, and the existential closes it as occasions exist. This difference in repackaging helps explain why the templates feel different in real product notes. *Wake* framing reads like a rejection of a possible reading. *Baai* and *koto* framing read like ordinary informational clauses, but the existential closure makes a blanket reading harder to sustain [14], [15].

These contrasts matter most when a universal-like reading is structurally easy to form. A common trigger is quantification plus negation inside one clause. In the dataset, the clearest case is the token with *subete no hito* and *okinai*. Configurations like this are widely discussed as environments where strong readings can surface if no explicit limiter is present. In such contexts, the dataset tends to favour templates that show the non-blanket stance through clause structure, rather than through a vague strength reduction [13].

Wake framing

The *wake* strategy makes the restriction explicit through a denial frame. The core form is [clause] + *to iu* + *wake* + *de wa arimasen*. The embedded clause is introduced as quotative content by *to*. The verb *iu* supports that packaging and allows the quotative material to function as a modifier. Then *wake* appears as the head noun, yielding a noun phrase of the form [clause *to iu*] *wake*. The sequence *de wa arimasen* applies copular negation to that noun phrase. Structurally, the negation sits outside the embedded clause and targets the nominal frame headed by *wake*, not the embedded predicate itself [26].

In the dataset token, the embedded clause contains *subete no hito* and *okinai*. Negation is already present inside the embedded clause in *okinai*, yet the sentence still adds *de wa arimasen* outside it. This placement is informative because it shows two negative elements in two different structural sites. The inner negation belongs to the embedded clause. The outer negation belongs to the copular frame that closes the *wake* noun phrase. The outer negation is not a repetition of the inner negation. It denies the *wake* frame, meaning the packaging of the embedded clause as a candidate reading [3], [27]. That structural design fits contexts where a universal-like inference is likely and needs to be actively blocked.

A further difference from the existential templates is that *wake* framing does not recast content as cases exist or events occur. It keeps the descriptive clause intact and then places it under a quotative nominal frame that can be negated. In product-note writing, this allows a strong-looking clause to be mentioned and neutralised in the same compact line. This is especially useful for testing claims, where a short label such as tested can invite a broad inference if left unqualified. The *wake* template makes the qualification easy to scan because the denial is carried by a fixed closing sequence.

Case framing with *baai*

Case framing with *baai ga arimasu* differs in both architecture and pacing. The descriptive material comes before *baai* in a pre-nominal modifier position. The noun *baai* serves as the head, and existential *arimasu* completes the clause. The closure therefore states that cases exist. This clause shape resists blanket readings without needing an explicit denial frame. The restriction is built into the choice of closure. Rather than asserting a general property, the clause asserts existence of cases [1], [4].

In the dataset, the malfunction example shows a typical use. The outcome string is placed before *baai* as a compact modifier chain and the clause closes with *baai ga arimasu*. This creates a clear structural boundary. Everything before *baai* remains inside the modifier zone. Everything after *baai* belongs to the existential closure. The outcomes are not expressed as a main predicate. They function as descriptive content that characterises the cases. This layout is one reason *baai* templates are common in product notes [12], [17]. They allow risk descriptions to appear without forcing a general declarative format.

A second *baai* token shows how the case frame can feed into an instruction chain. The first clause closes with *baai ga arimasu*, then *node* links it to an avoidance instruction. The instruction uses *tsuk-anai you* and a list ending in *nado*, and it closes with the caution formula *go-chuuji kudasai*. The key point here is that the instruction does not carry the restriction. The restriction is already set by the first-clause closure *baai ga arimasu*. After that, the rest of the chain can focus on procedure without turning the risk statement into a general claim.

List format inside the modifier zone helps keep these warnings short. In the dataset, *-tari* appears as a listing device. In product-note register, *-tari* supports compact sequences of outcomes without requiring strict coordination and without making the list look closed. At the level of form, it is enough to note that *-tari* allows multiple outcomes to sit inside the same modifier zone before *baai*.

Event framing with *koto ga arimasu*

Event or occasion framing with *V-ru koto ga arimasu* shares the existential closure with *baai* templates, but it differs in what is nominalised. Instead of using a case noun like *baai*, the predicate string itself is nominalised by *koto*. The clause is then closed by existential *arimasu*.

This yields an occasions exist style of closure. In surface terms, predicate plus *koto* creates a nominal unit, and *ga arimasu* provides existential closure. The clause therefore avoids the bare declarative shape that can invite blanket readings [1], [5].

The *ondo* change example shows a common staging. A cause phrase *ondo benka ni yotte* appears first. Then a descriptive clause *byoumen ga nurete mieru* is immediately followed by *koto* and closed by *ga arimasu*. After that, *ga* links to a reassurance clause *hinsbitsu-jou mondai wa arimasen*. The chain then uses *node* to link reassurance to the instruction *fukitotte o-tsukai kudasai*. For scope control, the key step is the event closure. The descriptive clause is not left in plain declarative form. It is nominalised by *koto* and closed by existential *arimasu*. The reassurance and directive support the message flow but do not change where the restriction sits [26].

The stick example shows the same logic with a different lead-in. The first clause ends with *to*, which marks a trigger clause. The outcome is then packaged with *koto ga arimasu*. The token also uses *-tari* as a list format inside the outcome string, and *node* links the event clause to *go-chuuu kudasai*. Here, *to* sets the action context, while the non-blanket force is carried by the existential closure *koto ga arimasu* applied to the nominalised outcome string. This differs from *wake* framing because the token does not present a strong-looking general clause and then negate it. It builds a trigger and closes the outcome as an event existential.

Rare-event marking with *mare ni*

The *mare ni* tokens show how rarity marking can layer onto the event template. In the dataset, *mare ni* appears before the event clause, so it signals low frequency early. It works alongside *koto ga arimasu* rather than replacing it. The event is still nominalised by *koto* and closed by *arimasu*. The difference is the added low-frequency marker placed before the event description. This is useful in product notes when the text needs to mention an anomaly without making it look typical [15], [18].

The natural-ingredient token shows the pattern clearly. The sentence begins with a reason clause closed by *tame*. The event is introduced with *mare ni* and described as *chinden butsu ga shoujiru*, then nominalised by *koto* and closed by *ga arimasu*. After that, *ga* links to a reassurance clause that ends in *mondai arimasen* and includes the bounded phrase *seihin no hinsbitsu ya kouka ni wa*. The sequence is easy to track in the form. *Tame* closes the reason clause. *Mare ni* marks rarity early. *Koto ga arimasu* closes the event as an existential. *Ga* introduces the contrastive move. The reassurance clause is bounded by *ni wa* and closed by negative *arimasen* [21], [25].

The condition plus rarity token shows stacking most clearly. The sentence begins with a condition phrase ending in *baai*. Inside that restricted setting, *mare ni* appears, then the event clause is closed with *koto ga arimasu*. A contrastive *ga* introduces a reassurance clause ending in *mondai arimasen*. The chain contains several restriction points in one surface string. The condition limits applicability. The rarity marker limits frequency. The event closure avoids a plain declarative shape. The reassurance clause blocks escalation into a defect reading. Each restriction occupies a different position in the chain, and each is visible in the grammar.

Comparison across targets and clause organisation

Across the dataset, the main contrast is where restriction is built and what unit receives the closing material. *Wake* framing builds a nominal frame above an embedded clause and places negation on that nominal frame. The closure is *dewa arimasen*, applied to [clause *to iu*] *wake*. This makes the denial explicit and easy to recognise. It fits tokens where a universal-like inference is likely to be drawn [9], [10].

Baai ga arimasu builds a case noun phrase and closes it with existential *arimasu*. The descriptive string stays in the modifier position before *baai*. This yields a natural cases exist clause shape and reduces the chance of a blanket reading without adding an explicit denial frame.

V-ru koto ga arimasu nominalises a predicate string with *koto* and closes it with existential *arimasu*. The closure applies to the event nominalised by *koto*, yielding an occasions exist clause shape that suits occasional effects and operational outcomes in product notes [7], [27].

Finally, *mare ni* adds explicit low-frequency marking to the event template. It appears before the event description and is often paired with contrastive reassurance and bounded evaluation that ends in *mondai arimasen*. These combinations are common in product notes because they allow a minor anomaly to be mentioned without turning it into a defect narrative. The grammar remains visible and the chain remains predictable.

5. Conclusions

This study shows that Japanese advertising and product-information texts can block universal readings through grammar. Put simply, the wording can steer readers away from taking a statement as always true or true for everyone. In this dataset, the effect is not created by vague ‘soft’ tone. It comes from a small set of clause templates that appear repeatedly in product-note style writing.

Across the items, the restriction is carried by how the clause is built and where it is closed. One pattern uses *to in wake de wa arimasen*. It keeps a strong-looking clause inside a quotative frame and then closes the larger *wake* phrase with negative copular *de wa arimasen*. A second pattern uses case framing with *baai ga arimasu*. Descriptive material stays in the pre-nominal modifier position, *baai* provides the head, and existential *arimasu* closes the clause. A third pattern uses event or occasion framing with *V-ru koto ga arimasu*. Here the predicate string is nominalised by *koto* and then closed by existential *arimasu*. These options are not interchangeable. They place the restriction at different points in the clause chain and they close different grammatical units, which is the main contrast discussed in Sections 4.1 and 4.2.

The additional case and event tokens make the existential route easy to see in real product-note chains. In *ondo henka ni yotte, hyoumen ga nure-te mie-ru koto ga arimasu*, the surface description is immediately turned into a *koto* unit and closed with *ga arimasu*. The clause then continues with contrastive *ga*, a short reassurance, and a *node* linked instruction. In *sutiteku o kuridashi-sugiru to, ore-tari modora-naku naru koto ga arimasu node, go-chuuu kudasai*, the trigger clause is closed by *to*, while the outcome is packaged by *koto* and closed by *ga arimasu*. The *-tari* form keeps the outcome string compact, and *node* connects it to the warning ending. In both examples, the non-blanket force comes from existential closure over a nominalised unit, not from adding separate hedging words.

The dataset also shows that universal-blocking is built through more than one grammatical route. *Wake* framing works through higher-level packaging and a fixed negative closing. *Baai* framing works through existential closure over cases, and it can be followed by standard instruction material without shifting where the restriction sits. *Koto* framing works through existential closure over events or occasions, and it combines smoothly with contrastive *ga* and procedural sequences. Rare-event marking with *mare ni* adds another visible limiter by placing low-frequency marking before the event description, and it can stack with an initial *baai* condition when both situation restriction and rarity are needed in the same sentence.

Taken together, these patterns support a grammar-based account of how Japanese product notes limit generalisation and manage scope. The analysis stays with clause structure and recurring templates, rather than treating the effect as pragmatic hedging. The dataset is still small and illustrative, but it offers a clear starting point for larger corpus work that can test how widely these templates occur and how they combine with other operators in the same register.

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