Hearsay evidentiality in Japanese: -sooda, -rashii, and matrix-clause hearsay

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Speakers have various ways of indicating the information source for a certain proposition, and this linguistic notion has been termed EVIDENTIALITY. Japanese has two morphosyntactic markers that speakers can use to indicate that they have acquired some information via hearsay: -sooda and -rashii (1).

(1) keiko-wa ninshinshi-tei-ru-sooda / rashii
keiko-TOP pregnant-PROG-NPST-RPT
‘Keiko is pregnant (I heard).’

In addition, the matrix-clause hearsay construction 'I heard that p' serves a similar function (2).

(2) keiko-wa ninshinshi-tei-ru-to-kiita
keiko-TOP pregnant- PROG-NPST-CMPL-heard
‘I heard that Keiko is pregnant.’

We ran an experiment that tested the felicity conditions for the above hearsay expressions: (a) whether the information source was accessible firsthand to the speaker, and (b) whether there was any conjecture required by the speaker. It was found that these two factors influenced -sooda, -rashii, and matrix-clause hearsay in different ways, although all three indicate hearsay. Possible explanations for this difference will be discussed.