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The Japanese Language of Food Enjoyment with the Five Senses 五感で楽しむ食の日本語

Edited by **Polly Szatrowski**. Tokyo: Kurosio Publishers, 2021. 308 pp. ¥4,500.

Reviewed by Tatsuya Fukushima

The Japanese Language of Food Enjoyment with the Five Senses (hereafter *JLFE*) is an outcome of a panel session at the 2018 Spring Conference of the Association of Japanese Language Education. Although language about food was a vibrant theme of everyday discussion on TV game shows, drama series, gourmet reports, and travel blogs, it was discussed only sporadically in the field of Japanese pedagogy. Szatrowski points out that not many scholarly works on food and language are found in Japan in the twenty-first Century, while there are numerous publications of research about food in European languages. (1) Additionally, although Japanese is known for its rich variety of onomatopoeias, which is a challenging element for nonnative speakers due to their language-specific nuances, researchers have not investigated onomatopoeias from the perspective of Japanese food until recently. (2) After the panel session, the scholars launched a joint book publication project in the Japanese language, which resulted in *JLFE*.

This book consists of four parts with eleven chapters, each of which is written by one or two researchers in Japanese linguistics and pedagogy. Both chapters of Part 1 “Innovating Food” focus on onomatopoeias. First, Shinko Suito’s “Recipe onomatopoeia: Expressions conveying cooking techniques” focuses on changing trends between 1969 and 2018 of adverbial onomatopoeias used in recipes found at the website of cookpad.com. Based on an observation that onomatopoeias occur frequently not just in recipes but in general procedural matters, Suito finds that the viewers of the cookpad.com recipes are encouraged to



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comprehend the meanings of the onomatopoeias properly by using the onomatopoeias in the Web recipes as good examples (60). Second, Nami Fukutome and Masayuki Ioki's "Onomatopoeia for textures: Deliciousness in recipes on cookpad" examines patterns of onomatopoeias for food textures on cookpad.com. They observe that onomatopoeias for food textures typically duplicate the consonant-vowel sequence yield the ABAB pattern such as *fuwa fuwa* "fluffy fluffy." (69) Recently, however, they find that ABCD, e.g., *fuwa toro* "fluffy drippy," is an increasingly common pattern of onomatopoeia that expands diversity of onomatopoeic expressions. (69) Given the growing development of the internet in Japan, abbreviations of this kind are easily predictable due to the inherent nature of shortening common expressions.

Three chapters in Part 2 employ Conversation Analysis to examine food evaluation taking place in small group conversations and a TV food show in Japanese. First, Mariko Karatsu's "'I love fresh cream': How food preferences are shared through storytelling" discusses ways in which three Japanese graduate students at a U.S. university share their experience of their favorite food in their conversations. Second, Chisato Koike's "Evaluating food and verbal behavior in conversation: Evaluation begins before meals" analyzes video recordings of casual conversations between two to four office co-workers about food and beverages. Notable in Koike's conversation analysis are a variety of facial expressions that participants in her study display and food items that participants try. Third, Polly Szatrowski's "Evaluation of food that viewers like to eat on TV cooking shows" uses ten video recordings of a Japanese TV food show in September 2008 and focuses on how the guests evaluate the food items after they are served. As anticipated due to the nature of the TV show, guests display uniformly positive responses to the food items.

In Part 3 "Teaching Food," Ayaka Muto's "Semantic analysis of *katakana* words describing delicious food items - Meanings of *sweet-na*, *healthy-na*, and *fresh-na*" employs a web-based corpus to compare the grammaticality of *katakana*-go adjectives (from English; typically *-na* adjectives) and their counterparts, i.e., Japanese adjectives. Yuki Hoshino's "Expanding onomatopoeia for trending sweets: How to convey the taste, aroma, and texture of chocolate" compiles recent editions of *Salon du chocolat* official magazine books and four special Japanese magazine articles about chocolate to describe the diversity of onomatopoeias for chocolate textures and flavors. Yoko Ishihara's "Interaction frame for meal assistance that foreign caregivers are

concerned about: From ‘gulp’ to ‘a swallow’” studies four Japanese nurses and two foreign nurses with certificates in JLPT Level N2 and N3 to discuss challenges related to language use in meal assistance faced by the nurses and patients at nursing homes in Japan.

In Part 4 “Discussing Food,” Mari Noda’s “From ‘Even the Indians are Surprised to Three Brothers of Japanese Rice Flour Dumplings’: The third strategy in oral performances during Japanese Language Speech Contests” focuses on two speeches on food items in the 1998 and 1999 Japanese Language Speech Contests for nonnative speakers. First, Noda introduces an award-winning Indian contestant who used a 1964 TV commercial slogan for a Japanese curry sauce mix, ‘Indo-jin mo Bikkuri! (Even the Indians are surprised!),’ that has helped establish curry as a regular menu item in Japan. Second, Noda presents a 1999 Russian contestant who used *Dango San-Kyōdai* (*Three Brothers of Japanese Rice Flour Dumplings*), a No.1 hit song that sold nearly three million copies in Japan. Noda points out that both contestants won their awards by establishing mutual understanding effectively between the contestants and the audiences through familiar food items, well-known slogans, and songs. Kumiko Ishii’s “Food words for *Shōjo no Tomo* in the Taishō Era” compiles all words for food and beverages in *Shōjo no Tomo* (*Girls’ Friends*) magazines issued in the Taishō era (1912-1926) and categorizes them into *wago* (i.e., words of Japanese origin), *kango* (i.e., words of Chinese origin), and *gairaigo* (i.e., foreign borrowings) and finds that *gairaigo* includes a lot of kitchen utensils such as *tēburu* “a table,” *koppu* “a cup,” and *naifu* “a knife.” (248) Finally, Midori Takasaki’s “How Natsume Sōseki and Mori Ōgai portrayed ‘eating’” discusses scenes of meals in Meiji Era (1868-1912) literary classics such as *I Am A Cat* by Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916) and *Vita Sexualis* by Mori Ōgai (1862-1922).

One interesting chapter in this book is Ayaka Muto’s grammaticality judgment of katakana-go (loan words from English). Muto employs the Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese (BCCWJ) as the basis for grammaticality judgment of a noun phrase consisting of an adjective and a noun. While one group of adjectives is katakana-go (e.g., *furesshu-na*, *suīto-na*, *herushī-na*, etc.), another group of adjectives comes from the ordinary vocabulary (e.g., *shinsen-na* “fresh,” *amai* “sweet,” *kenkōteki-na* “healthy,” etc.). Questions posed in this study are: (1) whether the ordinary adjectives are just as well-formed as their katakana-go counterparts, and (2) where semantic differences come from if katakana-go adjectives are either semantically odd (?) or ill-formed (*).

Muto finds that **suīto-na kangae* “thinking” is ill-formed, while its ordinary counterpart *amai kangae* is well-formed. Similarly, other phrases with *suīto-na* such as **suīto-na mitōshi* “prospects,” **suīto-na tama* “a pitch,” and **suīto-na shiteki* “an argument” are all ill-formed, while their ordinary adjective counterparts *amai mitōshi*, *amai tama*, and *amai shiteki* are all well-formed. (169) At the same time, Muto finds nouns such as *pinku* “pink” and *koe* “a voice” can be combined with *suīto-na* and *amai* to be well-formed. (171)

Muto explains these differences by stating that katakana-go *suīto-na* only conveys generally positive connotations, while *amai* conveys negative connotations in certain cases. In other words, *amai* — which conveys negative meanings in certain contexts such as *wishful*, *tentative*, and *naïve* — co-occurs with nouns that convey qualitative semantic meanings (e.g., *wishful thinking*, *a tentative pitch*, and *a naïve argument*, respectively). On the other hand, *suīto-na*, according to Muto, conveys positive meanings only and co-occurs with nouns describing visual and auditory features.

On the other hand, Muto’s study yields different results for *kenkōteki na* “healthy” and *herushī-na*, and for *shinsen-na* and its katakana-go counterpart *furesshu-na*. For example, *herushī-na mayonēzu* “mayonnaise” is well-formed, while *?kenkōteki na mayonēzu* is semantically odd. Conversely, *?herushī-na toshiyori* “a senior citizen” is semantically odd, while *kenkōteki na toshiyori* is well-formed. (175) Muto explains that *herushī-na* is semantically associated with conduciveness to health, while *kenkōteki na* is associated with physical fitness. (177) As for the other pair, *?furesshu-na sakana* “fish” is semantically odd, while *shinsen na sakana* is well-formed. On the other hand, Muto finds that *furesshu-na shin’nyū-shain* “a new employee” and *furesshu-na menbā* “a member” are well-formed, while *?shinsen na shin’nyū-shain* and *?shinsen na menbā* are semantically odd. (179) Muto explains that *furesshu-na* is semantically associated with sound mind, while *shinsen na* is semantically associated with youth and freedom from conventions. (180)

Muto’s study in grammaticality judgment of katakana-go adjectives offers its readers a novel perspective. Individuals with little or no JFL/JSJL expertise would be predisposed toward an idea that ordinary adjectives and their katakana-go counterparts convey essentially the same or sufficiently similar sets of meanings. Instead, employing a recognized corpus, Muto finds and identifies important differences in semantic attributes in an insightful manner. While it fails to distinguish semantically odd from ill-

formed phrases in concrete forms, a common shortcoming in studies using grammaticality judgment of this kind, Muto's study is intuitively appealing, and further investigation in a more objective method will be highly beneficial.

The key contributing factor to the successful publication of this book within a short period of time was editor Polly Szatrowski's expeditious editing process. For example, Szatrowski employed a common set of transcription conventions for the conversation analysis in the three chapters by Karatsu, Koike, and Szatrowski. These standardized conventions are extremely helpful to those who are new to or have little experience in discourse studies in Japanese. Additionally, amid unprecedented logistical limitations during the COVID-19 pandemic, the successful publication of this book is highly commendable.

This book was released in a culturally appropriate time for three reasons. First, Tokyo, Japan, has recently become the No.1 city in the world with the largest number of Michelin-rated restaurants. There is a heightened interest in Japanese food evidenced in foreign visitors' frequent references to dining experience as reported in the media. Second, there currently are more than ten regular TV food shows in Japan including *Kewpie Sanpun Kukkingu* (*Kewpie 3-Minute Cooking*), which has been aired continuously since December 1962. In the 1990s, a Japanese TV station aired a hugely popular cook-off series *Ryōri no Tetsujin* (*Iron Chef*, 1993-1999). The international editions of *Iron Chef* ensued in the U.S., Canada, Thailand, and Vietnam. Third, since the so-called gourmet boom flourished in the late 1980s and early 1990s amid the bubble economy, Japan has released cooking manga series such as *Oishinbo* and *Cooking Papa* (both of which were later released in TV anime), and *The Chef*. More recently, Japanese cooking manga series such as *Gohan Biyori*, which started in 2016, *Tasogare Shokudō*, in 2017, and *Outdoor Gohan*, in 2020, are attracting a new generation of readers despite the ongoing economic turmoil.

In 2019, the year after the panel discussion, the Act on Promotion of Japanese Language Education came into effect, and Japanese language instructors are called on to include many more aspects of life in Japan as integral parts of Japanese culture. Along with the recent publication of Japanese language textbooks focused on food such as *Meshiagare* (Hatasa, 2021) and *Diving into Japanese Culture and Society through Food* (Prefume et al., 2023), *JLFE* helps expand the subject of food in terms of how various linguistic data related to food are analyzed as well as how

Japanese speakers talk about food. Besides academic readers, this book will also appeal to general readers interested in Japanese food, linguistics, and communicative phenomena associated with food because it covers a variety of themes ranging from web recipes, TV shows, and literary works to speech contests.