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Review of the doctoral dissertation by Ms. Halina Zawiszova:  
„Verbal resources for affective stance display in Japanese conversational interactions”

Apart from being viewed as autonomous systems of rules and interdependencies, languages should also be described as tools used for social communication in diverse speech communities. As was demonstrated by many works up to date, this demanding goal may be achieved by taking into account the processes motivated by far more compound factors than relatively simple relation between *signum* and *designatum*. Recent trends in linguistics aim at, as Yngve put it at a time, *to achieve a scientific understanding of how people communicate*, contemporarily often grouped under the common umbrella of pragmatics.

The research of actual communicational events and communication tools utilized in the course of social events goes largely beyond the boundaries set by de Saussure in his original postulate that: *the true and original object of linguistics is language studied in and for itself*. Possible advantages of such approach, founded only partly on strictly systemic grounds, have to be balanced against potential risk of obscurity of basic terms and definitions utilized by different researchers, with diverse attitudes and varying perspectives of access to the actual individuals taking part in communication processes occurring in highly contextualized circumstances. The context, to some extent, includes also the unique properties of the individuals themselves and their (inherently intangible) attitudes as well as (not necessarily always precisely and unambiguously set) social goals. The doctoral dissertation of Ms. Zawiszova, the object of this review, is a good example of how such a research attitude may be implemented towards what is often referred to as the phenomenon of affective stance display in Japanese.

The dissertation (329 A-4 pages in its PDF version) consists of five chapters. The first chapter, technically constituting an introduction, presents initial overview of the issues related to the affective stance display and sets the objective of the study. The second chapter is devoted to prior scholarship in the field, while the third chapter provides essential information on terminology, data, transcription applied in the fourth chapter, containing the analysis of verbal resources related to the phenomena in question. The analysis differentiates, in subsequent subchapters, the resources related to the use of: lexical categories (including various parts of speech), demonstratives, particles, interjections, connective expressions, interactional practices related to syntactic forms of elements as well as utterance final elements. Chapter five includes final discussion and conclusion.

Ms. Zawiszova's dissertation is a successful attempt at a description of a frequently raised and variously defined (with significant ambiguities, mentioned by the author herself in the course of the text) issue of the area of pragmatics, often pointed out by prominent scholars and described in a variety of ways in contemporary sources on Japanese linguistics. The choice of references is representative and suited to the research goal. The description of basic concepts is supplemented with valuable language examples, selected from reliable sources and based on actual instances of

communication in Japanese. Also the glossing of the examples and the details of analysis are clear and may be considered friendly for the projected readers of the text, including also the teachers and students of Japanese as a foreign language. As such, the dissertation may serve as a valuable reference and as a point of entry for further investigation on the phenomena in question.

At this point, acting as an *advocatus diaboli*, I should perhaps mention that I am personally not much, not to state: not at all, convinced by quite numerous works on Japanese language, grammar and communication in the Japanese language speech community devoted to the phenomena described mostly (often: solely) on the basis of rather vague terms of emotion, affect or attitude of a speaker towards the object of context. Such works, abundant and widely quoted in the area of Japanese linguistics, include both fairly recent texts by Akio Kamio or Senko Maynard (quoted in the dissertation) and much earlier monographs by Motoki Tokieda (not quoted directly but alluded to in the dissertation). Their authors provide deep and valuable insight into Japanese language and grammar, proposing interesting descriptive solutions of particular phenomena, many of them being unknown or not being raised towards the language data of other languages and speech communities. There is absolutely no doubt that without such original and insightful concepts as *territory of information* (Kamio), *expressivity* (Maynard) or the structure of *nesting boxes* found in Japanese sentences (Tokieda) the significance of certain peculiar properties of the language and its grammar might have been overlooked or underestimated. At the same time, their explanation and actual usage is surprisingly often described in a manner overtly departing from the grammatical rules of Japanese – or even from the concepts known and commonly used in the works from the area of general linguistics.

To provide one example, the outcome of the widely quoted work by Li and Thompson (quoted also as a peripheral source in the dissertation), on certain universal aspects of syntactic typology, claiming the coexistence of both subject-prominence and topic-prominence in Japanese, seems to be surprisingly rarely practically utilized in the descriptions of actual phenomena of Japanese morphology and syntax as well as of their impact on communication pragmatics. In fact, it may be pointed out that in many grammatical descriptions of Japanese there is virtually no link between the native Japanese concept of *nesting boxes* and the notion of *topic-prominence* as described in general linguistics. The proliferation of new and creative approaches at the grammar of Japanese does not significantly alter this situation. This does not make it easier for the students and researchers of the language to obtain and verify the information necessary to describe its grammar rules and their actual implementation.

Moreover, various unanimously grammatical oppositions tend to be described as non-systemic and unique for Japanese – or at least not fully explicable in terms of general linguistics, often with overt neglect towards their paradigmatic features and interdependencies. It is interesting to find out that it is rarely maintained overtly that the phenomena in question are inexplicable. Still, their uniqueness is emphasized in a variety of ways. A good example may be a monumental collection of works on selected issues of Japanese language and grammar edited by Yoko Hasegawa (also quoted in the dissertation). In one of the articles, Hasegawa states (as quoted partly also in the dissertation): “[...] Japanese cannot express the giving event neutrally or objectively, disregarding the speaker’s empathetic view or subjective evaluation of the event in

question.” This, however, is only true when the benefactive elements of Japanese are actually used in an utterance. In other words, the values of the grammatical dimension of benefactivity (in fact, a subdimension of vertical, rank-differentiated honorificativity) are marked as binary in several (at least two in a narrow sense, three in a more advanced sense) respects (giving vs. receiving, in-group subject vs. out-group sentence subject and the same subject vs. different subject of main and auxiliary verb in compound constructions with benefactive verbs). Other honorific oppositions, including especially horizontal (plain vs. polite) and vertical (higher vs. lower rank) may overlap with benefactive marking, with further pragmatic consequences to be found in actual interpretation of the instances of their actual usage. As long as these oppositions are taken into account, it is not possible to go beyond marking the oppositions strictly set within a grammatical dimension. On the other hand, it is possible (and sometimes: necessary) both to *express the giving event neutrally or objectively* and to avoid overt marking of benefactive and honorific values in some circumstances, of which surprisingly many sources on Japanese fail to mention. Honorific and benefactive phenomena of Japanese are but selected examples of research topics that happen to be described in unsystemic and inexplicable terms, while there are systemic and simple rules as well as universally intelligible methods of description available for this purpose.

The above is mentioned not in order to question the outcome of the analysis presented by Ms. Zawiszova in her dissertation or to undermine its conclusions. The fact that the proposed analysis of language phenomena related to the affective stance display in Japanese is rooted in contemporary study of Japanese language and grammar reflects the dominating trends in Japanese linguistics may be viewed rather as an advantage than as a shortcoming of the dissertation. At the same time, the postulate to concentrate on systemic description of the phenomena allegedly valid only in Japanese remains valid. It may be supposed that the dissertation in its present version may constitute a good point of departure for the future research in this area.

As should be concluded, Ms. Zawiszova’s work meets the standards of an academic monograph and contributes in a significant manner to the description of verbal resources of affective stance display in Japanese. I sincerely recommend that it is passed to the subsequent levels of the relevant doctoral procedure.

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