

Partial Listing, etc.: The Case of the Japanese *X toka* Construction

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The Japanese language has a series of partial-listing/exemplification constructions, *X toka* 'for example, X, etc.' being one of them (Teramura 1991; Barotto 2021; Taki 2021). The construction is often identified as having additional uses such as defocusing functions (e.g., approximation, hedging, and hearsay) marking 'X or something like that' as well as less commonly examined focusing functions (e.g., highlighting and unexpectedness) marking 'such a thing as X' and topic-managing function marking 'Like X, ...' Using spontaneous conversational data consisting of approximately twenty hours of recording collected from various YouTube channels, this study qualitatively analyzes a family of constructions in which focusing and topic-managing *X toka* appears from a cognitive-pragmatic, functional perspective.

The analyses reveal that *X toka* marks new discourse topics in four ways:

- (i) In topic narrowing, a topic (T) is narrowed from T1 to T2 (Ex1);
- (ii) In topic shifting, a topic is shifted from T1 to T2 (Ex2). In some cases, it involves various types of contrastiveness which expresses addressee-oriented unexpectedness (i.e., T2 is different from, opposite of, or more noteworthy than T1, contrary to the addressee's expectation) (Ex3);
- (iii) In topic recapturing, part of T1 is recaptured as T2 (Ex4). It can mark both speaker-oriented unexpectedness (i.e., The speaker expresses his surprise on X) (Ex5) and speaker- and addressee-oriented unexpectedness (i.e., The speaker expresses his surprise on X, and the speaker warns the addressee that his comment on X will surprise the addressee) (Ex6); and
- (iv) Inthetic marking, a topic is introduced to the addressee out of the blue, which involves addressee-oriented unexpectedness (Ex7).

The study suggests that *toka* functions to put X at the forefront of the addressee's attention (Talmy 2010), making it a discourse topic so as to talk about it further. It is argued that this function stems from the first of the two functions of partial listing: (i) to denominate salient examples and (ii) to evoke others in a category (Moravcsik 2017). Moreover, it reveals an intricate network of the discourse-pragmatic functions of the *X toka* construction that concern the speaker's own mind and the speaker's projection of addressee's mind, suggesting multiple layers of (inter)subjectification involved (Traugott 2003).

The current study contributes not only to our understanding of the *X toka* construction, but also of other partial-listing and related constructions, such as general extenders (Overstreet & Yule 2021) and the similative plural constructions (Daniel 2005) across languages. It also furthers the understanding of how various constructions such as partial listing, exemplification, topic, focus, contrastiveness, theticity, and unexpectedness, are related with one another and how (inter)subjectification plays a role in their relations.

Examples

(1) Speaker (S) is talking about how comedienne have their life together. S narrows down the topic to a comedienne, Bābī and comments on her.

bābī toka mo meccha umai-shi ne. ryōri.

'Bābī toka, she is also super good at cooking.'

(2) A group of friends is talking about the dialect of Tsuken Island and how it has many interesting expressions. Their friend, who is from Nago City on Okinawa Island, enters the room. S shifts the topic from the dialect of Tsuken Island to the dialect of Nago City and asks his friend about it.

nago toka kekkō ōi n ja nai desu ka?

'In Nago toka, there are quite a lot of expressions, aren't there?'

(3) S and his friend are catching fish. S's friend finds the larva of a dragonfly and is surprised at how big it is. S responds by mentioning oniyanna no yago 'larvae of oniyanna dragonflies.'

oniyanna no yago toka motto dekai yo.

'(You may not know it, but) the larvae of oniyanna dragonflies toka, they are much bigger.'

(4) S is talking about how his daughter used to do yonaki 'crying overnight.' S asks her if she remembers it.

tabun yonaki toka oboete-nai de-sho?

'Crying overnight toka (such an old incident), maybe you don't remember it, do you?'

(5) S and his family are eating takeout sushi. S's young daughter says she is going to eat uni 'sea urchin.' S is surprised.

uni toka iku n ya.

'Sea urchin toka (such an adult-tasting food), you are going to try it!? (I did not expect that).'

(6) S is doing a DIY project, and his friend is filming him. S is surprised that his friend is filming his ossan no kewashī kao 'old man's rough face' and expresses his opinion about this (I don't think anyone wants to see it'), which will be surprising to his friend.

daremo ossan no kewashī kao toka mi-tak-unai to omou ze.

'An old man's rough face toka (such a dirty thing), I don't think anyone wants to see it.'

(7) S, a comedian, learns that a food stand outside a supermarket is run by one of his fans, whom he calls ata-oka 'crazy people.' The stand has a special discount called ata-oka waribiki 'crazy-people discount' for the comedian's fans. To support the food stand, S tells a supermarket customer about the discount.

ata-oka waribiki toka arun n da kedo...

'There is a crazy-person discount toka (such an interesting thing), but...'

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