

Patterns of Semantic Network in Japanese-Originated “Destruction” Verbs:

Comparison of Native Japanese Speakers and Chinese JFL (Japanese as a Foreign Language) Learners with High and Low Lexical Abilities

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Abstract

Five Japanese-originated transitive verbs of *oru*, *waru*, *kudaku*, *yaburu* and *tsubusu* related to the meaning of “destruction” were selected from *the Usage Handbook for Japanese Basic Verbs* (Prashant et al, 2012; hereafter, the handbook). Frequencies of producing an object co-occurring with these five verbs by native Japanese speakers and Chinese JFL (Japanese as a foreign language) learners with lower and higher lexical abilities were recorded as production frequencies. The basic meanings of five verbs were identified based on behavioral description. Object production frequencies showed that the most frequently produced meanings were not the basic behavioral meanings defined in the handbook. This result suggests that a semantic network of a verb is not always spread from its basic meaning. Additionally, as Chinese JFL learners improve their Japanese lexical abilities, they become more proficient in producing verb objects with a wide variety of meanings. Chinese JFL learners with low lexical ability seem to be strongly influenced by the usage of Chinese morphological (*kanji*) meanings in their native language.

[Keywords] polysemy, Japanese-originated verbs, semantic expansion, lexical knowledge, Chinese JFL (Japanese as a foreign language) learners