

Think 53: Food Talks

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The Magic of Food Names and the Ideophone

Tuesday, April 18, 2017

Pocky

mochi

ポキン

/pokin/

ポキッ

/poki? /



Taste

“Our experience of foods is mediated through all our senses: these include all the familiar senses (pain, touch, sight, hearing, taste, and smell) as well as the perhaps less familiar such as chemesthesis. [...] our senses of sight and touch can set up expectations of the overall flavor of food which can be very hard to ignore. Try eating the same food using either high-quality china plates and steel or silver cutlery or paper plates and plastic cutlery; the food seems to taste better with the perceived quality of the utensils. Equally, the color of food can affect our perception of the flavor; try eating a steak dyed blue!

However, among all the senses, the most significant for our appreciation of food remain the **chemical senses** which encompass taste, smell, and chemesthesis.”

Barham, P., Skibsted, L. H., Bredie, W. L., Bom Frøst, M., Møller, P., Risbo, J., ... & Mortensen, L. M. (2010). Molecular gastronomy: a new emerging scientific discipline. *Chemical reviews*, 110(4), 2313-2365.

Taste

- “Taste is both a *sensory perception* and an *aesthetic preference*.”

(Strauss 2005: 1430)

- Taste is “an incorporated principle of classification which governs all forms of incorporation, choosing and modifying everything that the body ingests and digests and assimilates, **physiologically and psychologically.**” (Bourdieu 1984: 190)

Taste

- Inherently “**cultural**,” in that what is considered edible, is socio-culturally determined (Remember the story of rabbits?)
- Necessarily involves some element of **evaluation**, usually pleasant or unpleasant
- Subject to a wide range of **individual variation**

Backhouse, A.E., 1994. *The Lexical Field of Taste: A Semantic Study of Japanese Taste Terms*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

TV Advertisements of Food

Strauss (2005)

- How **taste descriptors** are used in food commercials in Japan, Korea and the U.S.
- How the domains of **taste and tactility** are combined to aestheticize the food products in each country in order to render them sensuously appealing.

Data set

Strauss (2005)

- Language and food related commercials from the first 100 aired during the early evening of a 1996 weeknight on the national channels from Yokohama, Seoul and LA (300 commercials in total).
- Japanese corpus had highest number of food-ads: Japan (42%), Korea (30%), U.S. (23%).

A Note on Research Methodologies

- Quantitative
- Qualitative

- Experimental
- Observational

'Delicious' and 'good tasting'

- *Oishii* おいしい 'delicious' appears 33 times in 15 of the 42 commercials in Japanese.
- *Masissta* 맛있따 'delicious, (lit.) 'has flavor', appears in 6 Korean commercials.
- "Delicious" and "good" appear in 4 U.S. commercials.

Taste-texture in Japan

- **Softness** in Japanese ads associated with **babies** (even though the products are not baby food).
- Softness associated with “**airiness** and **wispiness.**” (p. 1442)
- “Emphasis on the visual aspect of the food items, i.e., on how they appear aesthetically, rather than on how the products actually feel inside the mouth as they are being consumed.” (p. 1440)

Taste-texture in the U.S.

- Emphasis on the ‘**softness**’ of food items (p. 1442).
- Descriptors include: ***creamy, rich, soft, tender, ooey, gooey***

** “No adjective such as English ‘creamy’ representing texture exists in Japanese or Korean.” (p. 1444)

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torotoro-shita, torokeru, maroyakana, kuri:mi:na

Taste-texture in the U.S.

- Softness in the U.S. is that of a **fullness of texture** rather than the airiness and wispiness of the Japanese ads.
- **Spreadability** – “thick yet pliant as they are manipulated with utensils or fingers.” (p. 1443)
- Lexical synesthesia combining taste and touch: ‘It tastes richer, much creamier.’ (p. 1443)

Taste-texture in the U.S.

- The evocation of ‘softness,’ both visually and linguistically tends toward associations with **adult sensuality**.
- In the U.S., “adjectives ‘indulgent,’ ‘irresistible,’ and even ‘completely decadent’ connote an aspect of **negatively moral evaluation** associated with the product, but **used in a quasi-seductive way.**” (p. 1446)
- **Sensual hedonism** in the U.S. vs purity and innocence in Japan. (p. 1446)



Skippy reduced fat peanut butter 1995 commercial

@

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CExINHPCgjk>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oG_9oxSo-Ks

Taste-texture in Korea

- Allusions to other sensations such as temperature, moisture and pain.
- Use ideophones:
 - *pasak pasak hata* 바삭바삭하다 ‘crunchy’,
 - *sayng sayng hata* 싱싱하다 ‘fresh’
- **Ideophones** are “**descriptive expressions**, usually involving some level of reduplication, in which **sounds, texture, and impressions are phonologically recreated** in the actual pronunciation of the words.”

Taste-texture in Korea

uses of ideophones

- Korean commercials do not underscore softness, but emphasize what is **hard and stimulating**
 - *pasak pasak hata* ‘crunchy’
 - *wulthung pwulthung hata* ‘solid and bumpy’
울퉁불퉁하다
 - *ccalis hata* 짜릿하다 ‘stinging, stimulating’
- No expressions to capture the notion of ‘creaminess’ and ‘richness’ used

Taste-texture in Korea

uses of ideophones

- Temperature
 - *siwenhata* 시원하다 ‘cool, refreshing’
 - *Ssaahata* 싸하다 ‘cool, refreshing’
- Moisture
 - *chokchok hata* 촉촉하다 ‘moist, damp, dewy’
- Scintillating sensation of the tongue
 - *thok ssota* 톡쏘다 ‘stinging’
 - *elelhata* 얼얼하다 ‘spicy to the extent that one’s nerves are numbed’


Taste and Texture Descriptions on Packages - Japanese

- Expressions of sensations felt inside the mouth including ideophones are frequently used in snack packages




Share happiness! **POCKY**
分かち合うって、いいね!

ぽってりとかわいいポッキー“ミディ”



- まろやかなココの紫いもショコラ
 ロ当たりがやわらかい紫いもショコラで、内側のホイップショコラをやさしく包みました。
- ホイップした紫いもショコラ
 空気を抱き込ませてしっかりと練り上げ、なめらかなくちどけに仕上げました。
- さっくりとしたビスケット
 卵と練乳を使って風味豊かに焼き上げました。

1本あたりのチョコレートの比率は75%
 ボリュームがありながらも、あと口すっきりの新しいおいしさです。



Round and **rich** sweet potato chocolate

We've gently covered the inside-layer of whipped chocolate with sweet potato chocolate that **softly touches your mouth**.

Whipped sweet potato chocolate

We had it embrace the air, carefully worked it in and perfected it into chocolate that **smoothly melts in your mouth**.

Gently crispy cookie

We have baked a cookie **rich in flavor**, using eggs and condensed milk. Although it contains 75% chocolate per stick, **the taste lingering in your mouth** is a **refreshing**, new type of delicious.

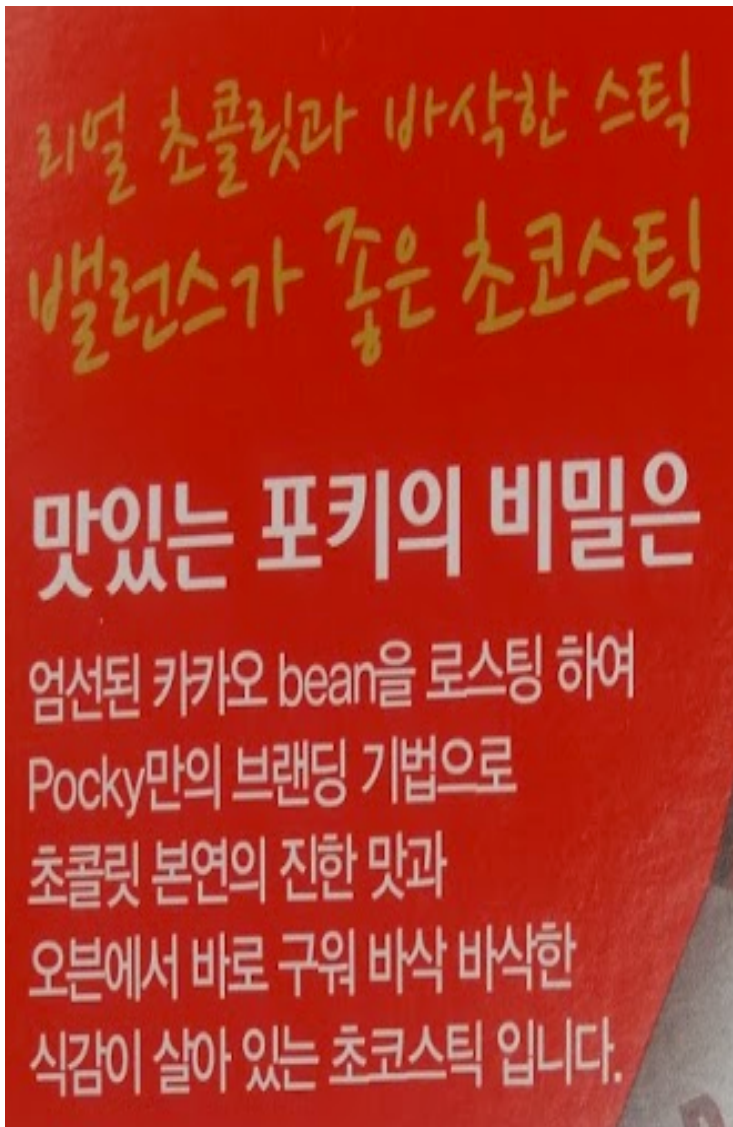
Pocky in Korea

- Real chocolate and a crunchy stick
- A chocolate stick that's well balanced

• The secret of delicious Pocky

- We roast carefully selected cacao beans
- By means of a technique that only Pocky has
- The natural [as in innate] strong [as in deep or dark] flavor of chocolate and
- The crispy crispy mouthfeel/ texture* [from the next line] of baking perfectly in the oven
- This is the living choco stick

[Photo and translation - Courtesy of Judy Kroo]



Preferred Taste-texture descriptions in Japan, Korea and the U.S.

- **Japan** soft, delicious
- **Korea** hard, stimulating
- **U.S.** soft, creamy

While you read Strauss:

Identify your favorite food or favored food in your culture, and describe the sensation you feel when you eat it.

Is your description similar to those used in the American TV advertisements given by Strauss?

***Oinoglossia* or “Wine Talk” and indexical order**

Silverstein, M. (2003) Indexical order and the dialectics of sociolinguistic life. *Language & Communication* 23: 193 – 229

“‘Indexical order’ is the concept necessary to showing us how to relate the micro-social to the macro-social frames of analysis of any sociolinguistic phenomenon.”

Oinoglossia or “Wine Talk” and indexical order

“Notwithstanding the existence of standard English as an entrenched institutional fact of sociolinguistic hegemony, **such registers as “wine talk,”** which I have dubbed *oinoglossia*, **show the mechanisms of life-style emblemization (convention-dependent indexical iconicity) at work via the processes of higher-order indexicality.**

Within the complex pattern of class and other kinds of stratification, wine, a perduringly constant prestige comestible, has been aggressively marketed to what is sometimes called “yuppiedom” or “the yuppoisie” (viewed through age, income, profession, etc.) and has seized the imagination of a wide sectorial swatch of people concerned with or anxious about mobility. As a comestible, this aesthetic object, wine, is, of course, consumed in the aesthetic experience; but **its consumption is the culminating moment of cooperative performance art, to be sure, in which “educated connoisseurship” can be manifested while doing away with the artifact of perceptual encounter.**”

Second-order indexicality

William Hamilton, *The New Yorker*, May 4, 1992.



“Sure, they drank it—but did they get it?”

Oinoglossia or “Wine Talk” and indexical order

Ch. Haut-Brion Blanc

*Roughly 50 per cent Semillon, 50 per cent Sauvignon-Blanc. Very pronounced yellow; honeyed Semillon uppermost, beautifully complex bouquet; dry, good body and flavour, assertive, backbone of firm acidity. At a tasting with Alexis Bepaloff at the Windows of the World restaurant, New York, October 1979 ** (***) Drink 1982-1995.*

Chateau Haut-Brion Blanc 1976:

[I:] Very pronounced yellow;

[IIa

+b:] beautifully complex

[IIIa

+b

+c:] assertive backbone

honeyed Semillon uppermost,

bouquet;

dry, good body

and flavour,

of firm acidity.

Professional wine-tasting notes (M. Broadbent), lexically analyzed.
(From Fig. 15 of Silverstein 2003)

Oinoglossia or “Wine Talk” and indexical order

“When we look at how the oenoglossic lexical register is employed in professional discourse, we find that the tasting note does, indeed, have a textual form, in which the phraseological occurrences of all descriptors presuppose the orderliness of the tasting encounter. **The tasting note is a discourse genre**, in other words, relative to the organization of which, among those who control the register, paradigmatic sets of possible terms can appear in a report following the phased tasting encounter of Fig. 14. **What we have**, in other words, **is [Putnamian (1975) sociolinguistic] words and expressions paired with their special cultural concepts (Putnam’s ‘stereotypes’) about wine as a complex aesthetic comestible**. This is a technical vocabulary of connoisseurship manifested in use only as the words and expressions form part of denotational (and even interactional) text properly cohesive and thence coherent.”

Oinoglossia or “Wine Talk” and indexical order

“Of course, **popular, sociolinguistically uninformed belief focuses merely on the lexical, as though this were not a matter of the senses of these words and expressions emerging from pragmatic baptism in a genre-specific register.** [...] But further, the **descriptions of the wine along evaluative dimensions of figurative distinction** index Speaker’s Bourdivine (1984) ‘**distinction**’. So the basis for using these figurations authoritatively is the fact that, in essence, **“it takes one to know one,”** that there is, in other words, a consubstantiality of inhabited/ figured essence between the intentionality doing the evaluation and the object of the evaluation. ”



\$4 Toast

Melia Robinson
Business Insider
June 14, 2015

Leave it to San Francisco to disrupt the foundation of a well-balanced breakfast. Toast is beginning to go the way of chocolate, cheese, and coffee — **"artisanal."**

The Mill's inch-and-a-half-thick slabs of doughy goodness are toasted on high and served with locally sourced butters and jams.

Order up! The melted butter and strawberry jam ran over the sides, and it was beautiful.

At first, I was surprised by how difficult it was to cut the crust with a butter knife. Baker wasn't kidding when he said he likes the ends burnt. But the crispness added a contrasting texture to the spongy, still warm center, making for a perfect combination.

Overnight Oats



Ideophones

Ideophones

- ***Ideophone*** *A vivid representation of an idea in sound. A word, often onomatopoeic, which describes a predicate, qualificative or adverb in respect to manner, colour, sound, smell, action, state or intensity.*

[C. M. Doke, Bantu Linguistic Terminology, 1935, p. 118]

Ideophones

(sound-symbolic/synesthetic expressions)

- Phonomimes
 - “voice mimicking words” (擬声語 *giseigo*) e.g. *wan-wan*
 - “sound mimicking words” (擬音語 *giongo*) e.g. *gata-gata*
- Phenomimes (擬態語 *giseigo*)
 - words that depict states, conditions, or manners of the external world (non-auditory senses), e.g. *kossori* ‘stealthily’.
- Psychomimes (擬情語 *gijōgo*)
 - words that symbolize mental conditions or sensations, e.g. *ira-ira nervously*

[Shibatani 1990, Iwasaki 2006]

THE SOUND OF EATING IN FIVE LANGUAGES



..... ?
* LIKE THIS GUY *

Uri Friedman
Nov 27, 2015
The Atlantic.
Illustration by
James Chapman

How to Snore and Clap in Six Languages



Uri Friedman. Nov 27, 2015. *The Atlantic*.
Illustration by James Chapman

Guessing the Meaning

- *nuru nuru* – dry or slimy?
- *pika pika* – bright or dark?
- *waku waku* – excited or bored?
- *ira ira* – happy or angry?
- *guzu guzu* – moving quickly or moving slowly?
- *kuru kuru* – spinning around or moving up and down?
- *koso koso* – walking quietly or walking loudly?
- *gocha gocha* – tidy or messy?
- *gara gara* – crowded or empty?
- *tsuru tsuru* – smooth or rough?

[By Gwilym Lockwood]

Answers

- *nuru nuru* – slimy
- *pika pika* – bright
- *waku waku* – excited
- *ira ira* – angry
- *guzu guzu* – moving slowly
- *kuru kuru* – spinning around
- *koso koso* – walking quietly
- *gocha gocha* – messy
- *gara gara* – empty
- *tsuru tsuru* – smooth

[By Gwilym Lockwood]

The Magic of Food Names



Japanese New Year's Food and Homonyms

- *kuromame* (黒豆) 'black beans'
mameni-hataraku 'work diligently'.



- *kazunoko* (数の子) 'herring roe' '(lit.)many children'



Japanese New Year's Food and Homonyms

- *kuri kinton* (栗きんとん),
‘chestnut **treasure(s)**’ [stewed chestnuts with sugar are also bright yellow gold, connoting wealth.]



Japanese New Year's Food and Homonyms

- ***tai*** (鯛), 'red seabream'
- ***medetai*** (めでたい) 'congratulatory'.



Japanese New Year's Food and Homonyms

- *Kobumaki* (昆布巻き) 'kelp rolls'
yorokobu (喜ぶ) 'be happy'



- *daidai* (ダイダイ), 'Japanese bitter orange'
➤ *daidai* (代々) 'many generations'



Word Magic Still Lives!

- KitKat キットカット /kittokatto/

Kitto katto (kitto katsu)

surely (you'll) win

“You will surely win!”

Word Magic Still Lives!



Various Tastes



Summary

- Human behavior, including use of language and food consumption, closely reflects social and cultural (belief system) background of the agents.
- Value judgments are socio-culturally mediated.