Object Mass Nouns in Japanese

Kurt Erbach, Hana Filip, Kathrin Byrdeck, based on joint work with
Peter Sutton
Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf

erbach@hhu.de, peter.r.sutton@icloud.com, filip@hhu.de, byrdeck@hhu.de

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Classifier languages (CLLs), like Japanese, are commonly taken to have no grammaticized lexical mass/count distinction. Chierchia (1998, 2010) argues all Ns in CLLs uniformly denote kinds, and the mass/count distinction is encoded through the syntax and semantics of classifiers. CLLs, therefore have a one-to-one mapping from syntax to semantics, whereby Ns are uniformly mapped to kinds. We contest this view and show that Japanese has a mass/count distinction grammaticized in classifier-less constructions with quantifiers like *nan-byaku to iu* 'hundreds of', which are felicitous with Ns like *hon* 'book' but infelicitous with Ns like *doro* 'mud' or *yūbinbutsu* (partly based on Sudo 2016). Our acceptability judgment study, with 50 native speakers, shows that such quantifiers are not sensitive to atomicity alone as a bi-partite split between nouns denoting objects and nouns denoting stuff could suggest: the quantifier *nan-byaku to iu* 'hundreds of' is not acceptable with some collective artifacts like *yūbinbutsu* 'mail', despite the fact that such nouns have sets of individuable units in their denotations. Building on Sutton & Filip (2016), Japanese Ns are analyzed as having lexical entries consisting of tuples: $\langle qualities,\ c\_base_p,\ presuppositions \rangle$ with **qualities** as the number neutral predicate P, representing the perceptual/functional properties of the relevant N. The *counting base*, $\mathbf{c\_base}_p$, is the (possibly overlapping) set of entities that count as 'one' with respect to P. The **presuppositions** slot is used to track conditions of compositions with, e.g., classifiers. We therefore reject the one-to-one mapping between syntactic categories and semantic types of Ns in CLLs, and instead propose a one-to-many mapping, based on our conclusion that Japanese has a grammaticized lexical mass/count distinction.

References: • Chierchia, G. (1998): Reference to Kinds Across Languages. *Natural Language Semantics* 6, 339–405. • Chierchia, G. (2010): Mass Nouns, Vagueness and Semantic. *Synthese* 174, 99–149. • Sudo, Y. (2016): The Semantic Role of Classifiers in Japanese. Baltic International Yearbook of Cognition, Logic, Communication, 11. • Sutton, P. and Hana Filip (2016): Counting in Context. In: *Moroney, M. et al.* (eds.) Semantics and Linguistics Theory (SALT) 26, 350–370. LSA and CLC Publications.