

# Connecting language, vision and force: Analyzing emotional forces of FRUSTRATION in Japanese manga

Sayaka Abe  
Middlebury College  
[sabe@middlebury.edu](mailto:sabe@middlebury.edu)

Keywords: causation, emotions, facial expressions, force, (inter)subjectivity, manga

Emotions are not necessarily expressed through direct predicative forms (e.g., *I'm angry*) (Minagawa 2016), if expressed at all. This tendency is prevalent in Japanese, which has a rich inventory of grammaticalized and discursive markers of emotivity spanning across the domains of subjectivity and intersubjectivity (Maynard 1993, Suzuki, 2006). Furthermore, emotions are encoded visually, for example, through facial expressions, inviting observers' speculations, judgments or empathy concerning how people feel. The present study offers an integrative approach to emotions, language and vision by employing the framework of "force," focusing on expressions of FRUSTRATION in Japanese. Drawing on data from selected manga works (20,000+ characters, 500+ images), the study aims to schematize the concept in question in terms of causation and force, as has been discussed in previous work on emotions (Lakoff 1990, 1993; Kövecses 2000, 2015), and links the schemata to visual and linguistic contexts in manga. The analysis begins with conceptual labelling tasks by informants as readers, who assign to each image "facial expression tags" judged based solely on facial expression, and "emotion tags" judged together in the context of the story (Tokuhisa et al., 2006). It then employs Talmy's (1988, 2000) *force dynamics* (FD), a schematic system, which contains two opposing force elements, Agonist (AGO) and Antagonist (ANT); FD can be extended to psychological and social domains and thus, in this case, can represent the ambivalence that exists within a speaker's (or character's) psyche (Abe 2007, 2016 on Japanese). Two types of situations are identified: 1) frustration over a state/event that does not occur or is not realized ("inability to move"); and 2) frustration over a state/event that occurs or is realized ("inability to suppress"). The former is represented in terms of a blockage that prevents and overpowers the ego's inclination to "move" (Ago blocked by Ant); the latter, in terms of him/her being forced to "move" despite of resistance against doing so (Ago forced to move by Ant). A preliminary study shows that the "inability to move" type tends to be associated more often with explicit facial expressions, as well as open class items, while the "inability to hold" type tends to correspond to less intense visual cues and closed-class markers. The visual and linguistic analysis further tackles the dimensions of subjectivity and intersubjectivity (Traugott and Dasher, 2002), exploring the possibility that the second type of frustration is more closely associated with these non-propositional domains, which may partially explain the results above.

## References (selected)

- Abe, Sayaka. (2007). *Space, time, subjectivity and beyond: The cognitive semantic development of the Japanese marker -te-shimau*. Doctoral dissertation: University at Buffalo.
- Abe, Sayaka. (2016). An L2 Corpus study of the Japanese grammatical marker *-te-shimau*: An application of force dynamics. In Kaori Kabata & Kiyoko Toratani (eds.), *Cognitive-Functional Approaches to the Study of Japanese as a Second Language*, 203-236. Boston/Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Kövecses, Zoltan. (2000). Force and emotion. In Albertazzi (ed.), *Meaning and Cognition: A Multidisciplinary Approach, Converging Evidence in Language and Communication Research* 2, 145–168. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Lakoff, George. (1990). The Invariance Hypothesis. In *Cognitive Linguistics*, 1(1): 39-74.
- Maynard, Senko. K. (1993). *Discourse Modality: Subjectivity, Emotion and Voice in the Japanese Language*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Minagawa, Harumi. (2016). Submergence of lexically encoded egocentricity in syntax: the case of subjective emotion predicates in Japanese. *Journal of Japanese Linguistics*, 32 (1): 5-29.
- Suzuki, Satoko. (2006). Emotive communication in Japanese: An introduction. In Satoko Suzuki (ed.), *Emotive Communication in Japanese*, 1-13. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Talmy, Leonard. (2000). *Toward a Cognitive Semantics, Volume I: Concept Structuring Systems*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Traugott, Elizabeth. C. & Richard B. Dasher. (2002). *Regularity in Semantic Change*. Cambridge; New York; Cambridge University Press.