

# Similative Plurality and Its Related Functions: The Case of Japanese *X toka*

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This study presents cognitive-semantic analyses of *X toka*, one of the similative plural constructions in Japanese. The SPL is a type of plural construction meaning ‘X and similar things’ (Daniel 2005). In this construction, heterogeneous entities are grouped on the basis of their similarity, and the referents are ranked according to their saliency, with only the focal referent(s) X being denominated.

Some functions of *X toka* in the literature include: (i) exemplification [Example 1], (ii) hedging to attenuate the speaker’s commitment to information [2], (iii) hedging to attenuate the force of speech act [3], (iv) and highlighting [4] (cf. Taylor 2010). Previous studies have also indicated that the exemplification function is reminiscent of other functions of the construction (Satake 1997; Amano 2001; Barotto 2018) and that these functions are interrelated (Sunakawa 1999; Kajitani & Lee 2011; Horasawa & Okumura 2015).

The current study analyzes these previously illustrated functions using a cognitive approach and shows that they are facets of the exemplification function construed in different ways. The analyses also show that different functions of *X toka* form a radial functional continuum, stemming from more objective exemplification to more (inter)subjective functions. Moreover, the study examines other less frequently discussed functions of *X toka*, such as topic-marking (Nakamata 2007) [5] and self-mockery (Suzuki 2001) [6] and shows how they can also be explained in terms of the proposed model.

This study contributes to the current knowledge of the functions of *X toka* and other SPLs in Japanese (e.g., *nado*). It also has implications for the studies of the SPLs in different languages, such as general extenders and echo-reduplications. Finally, it expands our understanding of the configuration of similative plurality and other functions in conceptual space.

**Examples:** (The underlined terms indicate X.)

- [1] keeki toka no amai mono ga suki da. ‘I like sweets such as cakes, etc. (other sweets).’  
[2] nyokki toka iu no wo tsukutta. ‘I made something called gnocchi (or something like that).’  
[3] esu-enu-esu toka de shiriatte... ‘I met her through Social Networking Service...’  
[4] saabee toka yatterarenai. ‘I cannot do be doing (such a thing as) a survey.’  
[5] nee are toka doo natta? ‘Hey, what happened to that thing? (lit. That thing, what happened to it?)’  
[6] “isshoni ikanai?” toka itte. “Won’t you go with me?” (such a thing) I say (just kidding).’

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