

Language and Food

Verbal and nonverbal experiences

EDITED BY

Polly E. Szatrowski



John Benjamins Publishing Company

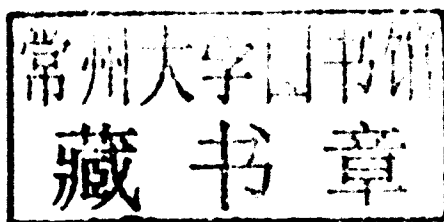
Language and Food

Verbal and nonverbal experiences

Edited by

Polly E. Szatrowski

University of Minnesota



John Benjamins Publishing Company

Amsterdam / Philadelphia



The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences – Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

CIP data is available from the Library of Congress.

Pragmatics & Beyond New Series, ISSN 0922-842X ; v. 238

ISBN 978 90 272 5643 0 (Hb ; alk. paper)

ISBN 978 90 272 7088 7 (Eb)

© 2014 – John Benjamins B.V.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form, by print, photoprint, microfilm, or any other means, without written permission from the publisher.

John Benjamins Publishing Co. · P.O. Box 36224 · 1020 ME Amsterdam · The Netherlands
John Benjamins North America · P.O. Box 27519 · Philadelphia PA 19118-0519 · USA

Language and Food

Pragmatics & Beyond New Series (P&BNS)

Pragmatics & Beyond New Series is a continuation of *Pragmatics & Beyond* and its Companion Series. The New Series offers a selection of high quality work covering the full richness of Pragmatics as an interdisciplinary field, within language sciences.

For an overview of all books published in this series, please see
<http://benjamins.com/catalog/pbns>

Editor

Anita Fetzer
University of Augsburg

Associate Editor

Andreas H. Jucker
University of Zurich

Founding Editors

Jacob L. Mey
University of Southern
Denmark

Herman Parret
Belgian National Science
Foundation, Universities of
Louvain and Antwerp

Jef Verschueren
Belgian National Science
Foundation,
University of Antwerp

Editorial Board

Robyn Carston
University College London

Thorstein Fretheim
University of Trondheim

John C. Heritage
University of California at Los
Angeles

Susan C. Herring
Indiana University

Masako K. Hiraga
St. Paul's (Rikkyo) University

Sachiko Ide
Japan Women's University

Kuniyoshi Kataoka
Aichi University

Miriam A. Locher
Universität Basel

Sophia S.A. Marmaridou
University of Athens

Srikant Sarangi
Cardiff University

Marina Sbisà
University of Trieste

Deborah Schiffrin
Georgetown University

Paul Osamu Takahara
Kobe City University of
Foreign Studies

Sandra A. Thompson
University of California at
Santa Barbara

Teun A. van Dijk
Universitat Pompeu Fabra,
Barcelona

Yunxia Zhu
The University of Queensland

Volume 238

Language and Food. Verbal and nonverbal experiences
Edited by Polly E. Szatrowski

Table of contents

Part I. Introduction

1. Introduction to *Language and food: Verbal and nonverbal experiences* 3
Polly Szatrowski

Part II. Process and structural organization

2. Negotiating a passage to the meal in four cultures 31
William O. Beeman
3. The structural organization of ordering and serving sushi 53
Satomi Kuroshima

Part III. Talking about the food while eating

4. It's delicious!: How Japanese speakers describe food at a social event 79
Mari Noda
5. Food and identity in Wolof and Eegimaa: We eat what we are 103
Mamadou Bassene and Polly Szatrowski
6. Modality and evidentiality in Japanese and American English
taster lunches: Identifying and assessing an unfamiliar drink 131
Polly Szatrowski

Part IV. Experiences and stories related to food

7. Food experiences and categorization in Japanese talk-in-interaction 159
Chisato Koike
8. Repetition of words and phrases from the punch lines of Japanese stories
about food and restaurants: A group bonding exercise 185
Mariko Karatsu

Part V. Talk about food with and among children

9. Family mealtimes, yuckiness and the socialization of disgust responses by preschool children <i>Sally Wiggins</i>	211
10. Early experiences with food: Socializing affect and relationships in Japanese <i>Matthew Burdelski</i>	233
11. “I needa cut up my soup”: Food talk, pretend play, and gender in an American preschool <i>Amy Sheldon</i>	257
12. Healthy beverages?: The interactional use of milk, juice and water in an ethnically diverse kindergarten class in Denmark <i>Martha Sif Karrebæk</i>	279
Author index	301
Subject index	305
Food names and descriptor index	313
Commensality index	317

PART I

Introduction

Introduction to *Language and food:* *Verbal and nonverbal experiences*

Polly Szatrowski

University of Minnesota

1. Introduction

What could be more central to our lives than language and food?¹ We learn language and the tastes, textures, smells, visual features, and sounds which we associate with food early in and throughout our lives. Both form an important part of our identities. This book focuses on how people use verbal and nonverbal resources to experience food in actual conversations among people eating and talking about food in a variety of languages. The languages include American and British English, Japanese, Eegimaa and Wolof (two African languages spoken in Senegal), Danish, German, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. We explore the relation between language and food based on observations from fieldwork and surveys in the countries where these languages are spoken, and analyzing video (in some cases together with audio) recordings of spontaneous casual conversations, conversations over food, and food assessment and family mealtime conversations.

The analyses address the following questions:

1. How do we organize our language and bodies around food, i.e., how do we use them to get to and from the table, and to proceed during a meal (e.g., while ordering at a sushi restaurant)?
2. How do we use our language and bodies to taste, identify and assess food, and influence others' preferences, and how do these distinctions and discriminations define us as people and construct identities?
3. How does food trigger the memory of past experiences, and how do we talk about our experiences with and tell stories about food and restaurants?

1. We would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their careful reading and comments on this volume, Prof. Dr. Anita Fetzer (Augsburg University), Editor for the Pragmatics and Beyond Series, for her help and the efficiency with which she moved this book through the review process, and Isja Cohen and others at John Benjamins for everything they did to make this book go to press.

4. How does language and nonverbal behavior in conversations over and about food socialize children (novices) and adults to food practices, affect, taste, gender norms, identity, etc.?

The book is divided into 5 parts: "Introduction," "Process and structural organization," "Talking about the food while eating," "Experiences and stories related to food," and "Talk about food with and among children." The contributors come from backgrounds including linguistics, applied linguistics, Japanese linguistics, anthropology and psychology. The chapters focus on the verbal and nonverbal behavior observed or in videotapes of conversations related to food using conversation analysis, linguistic ethnography, observational discursive psychology, and anthropological approaches. Common themes in the papers in this volume include the relation of language and food to "ritual and performance," "food description, identification and assessment," "food, language and identity," "child and adult socialization through food," and "verbal and nonverbal resources in talk about food."

The question "Why food?" might be raised because many aspects of the interactions over food (socialization, group identity, etc.) that we analyze can be observed in other contexts. Our answer is that food is a very central part of human life; without food we could not exist, and regardless of age, gender, etc. everyone is concerned with the food that they eat, and has memories of past food experiences. Ochs and Beck (2013, p. 63) point out that "sharing a meal is a universal opportunity for strengthening the ties that bind a family." Language and food coincide daily and on repeated occasions; no other social or cultural practice occurs so frequently or has such a potential to be overlooked due to its habitual nature. It is important to note that the contributors do not treat food or language as an OBJECT, but rather as part of a SOCIAL ACTIVITY through which people construct their lifeworlds by displaying stances (e.g., assessment), identities, shared values, beliefs, etc. The ubiquitous nature of interactions involving language and food makes them a prime area where aspects related to the four themes of this volume intersect and are negotiated and communicated over time. Thus, these interactions are an important context in which to examine "ritual and performance," "food description, identification and assessment," "food, language and identity," "child and adult socialization through food," and "verbal and nonverbal resources in talk about food."

The regular way in which we eat and deal with food daily and transmit information over time has given rise to distinctive rituals and performances in our interactions involving language and food. We also have a need to describe, identify and assess food in order to survive, cook, maintain our health and raise the quality of our lives. Patterns in these interactions influence and contribute to our identities and socialization. These identities are multifold; the relation between language

and food in social activities reveals aspects of identity not only on a group level (e.g. as members of nations, ethnic groups, etc.), but also on an individual level (e.g., individual tastes, preferences, and experiences). Although assessment, socialization, construction of group identity, etc. are not limited to food-related contexts, they are highlighted in interactions involving language and food. Indeed we might go so far as to suggest that interactions involving language and food are a primordial context where ways we use our language and bodies emerge and can be extended to other aspects of human life.

In this chapter, I will review prior research on language and food, give an overview of the chapters in this volume, and present a synthesis of the common themes across the chapters. Appendix A gives important information about the data, transcription conventions, English translation, and Japanese romanization used in this volume, and Appendix B describes the taster meal analyzed in Chapters 5 and 6.

2. Previous research related to language and food

Food is more than a nutrient. We experience food through all five senses, smell, touch, hearing, taste, and sight. It is also important for the formation of identity and culture, and intricately involved in the way we use language.

French gastronome Brillat-Savarin's (1926, p. 13) famous aphorism "*Dis-moi ce que tu manges, je te dirai ce que tu es.*" "Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are" suggests the intimate connection between food and identity. Similarly, the French sociologist, Bourdieu (1984) demonstrated that people show their affiliation and disaffiliation with communities through their food preferences.

Taste, a class culture turned into nature, that is, *embodied*, helps to shape the body. It 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, p. 190)

Taste in food is dependent on "other dimensions of the relationship to the world, to others and to one's own body" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 193), and it shapes and organizes everyday life experiences, behaviors, perceptions, values, etc. According to Bourdieu (1984), the life-style of each class is constructed in relation to the other through distinctive ways of treating, serving, presenting and offering food.

Despite the claims of these studies that food is intimately related to identity and one's relationships with others, one's body, etc., much of the previous linguistic research on language and food has focused primarily on lexical items. There have been semantic studies of cooking terms in a variety of languages (Lehrer, 1969, 1972; Kunihiro, 1967, 1970; Lévi-Strauss, 1997; Fukutome et al. 2011),

expressions used in wine tasting (Lehrer, 1983; Caballero, 2007), Japanese taste terms (Backhouse, 1994; Takasaki, 2012), the use of onomatopoeia and other terms for food texture in Japanese (Akiyama, 2003; Hayakawa, 2006; Hayakawa, Ioku, Akuzawa, Saito et al., 2005; Hayakawa, Ioku, Akuzawa, Yoneda, Kazami, Nishinari, Baba et al., 2006; Hayakawa, Ioku, Akuzawa, Yoneda, Kazami, Nishinari, Nakamura et al., 2007), Chinese texture terms (Hayakawa, Chen et al., 2004), eating and drinking verbs (Newman, 2009), the connection between language and the senses (Majid & Levinson, 2011), and words for taste and flavor in Tzeltal (Brown, 2011) and Southeast Asia (Enfield, 2011). There have also been studies on Japanese informants' preferences for taste terms (Ohashi, 2010), analyses of menus (Zwicky & Zwicky, 1980), recipes (Fisher, 1969; Akiyama, 2002; Lakoff, 2006; Harada, 2012), television and magazine food advertisements in Japan and Korea (Koo, 2006, 2008), television food commercials in the U.S., Japan, and Korea (Strauss, 2005),² and e-mail discussions about food (Sneijder & te Molder, 2006). However, these studies focus on the relationship between language and food outside of its normal habitat – eating in everyday life.

Rarely, with a few exceptions, has language and food been studied in ways that reveal their intricate interplay in spontaneous conversational interaction. Research on language socialization, “the process by which children and other novices acquire sociocultural competence through language and other semiotic modalities” (Ochs & Shohet, 2006, p. 36) has focused on the use of language in naturally occurring contexts (Duranti, Ochs, & Schieffelin, 2011; Garrett & Baquedano-Lopes, 2002; Kulick & Schieffelin, 2004; Ochs, 2002; Ochs, Pontecorvo, & Fasulo (1996); Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984, 1985, 2006; Ochs & Shohet, 2006; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Using this approach, there have been several groundbreaking studies that have looked at how children are socialized around food.

For example, Ochs et al. (1996) and Ochs and Shohet (2006) claimed that mealtimes are “pregnant arenas for the production of sociality, morality and local understandings of the world” (Ochs & Shohet, 2006, p. 35), and revolve around themes related to Bourdieu’s “taste of necessity” and “taste of freedom” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 177; Ochs et al. 1996). They showed how food becomes “charged with specific sociocultural meanings” through practices involved in socializing taste in actual mealtime conversations in the U.S. and Italy (Ochs & Shohet, 2006, p. 39). “American families gave high priority to food as nutrition, a material good, and reward; whereas Italian families gave priority to food as pleasure” (Ochs et al.

2. Strauss (2005) focused to some extent on the interaction in commercials in her analysis of the tendency for Japanese commercials to use generic taste descriptors, while commercials in Korea and the U.S. used explicit taste descriptors, hyperbole and emphatic expressions, and associated sensual pleasure of food with other sensual pleasures.

1996, p. 7). While U.S. families favored equal food distribution, food distribution in Italian families favored the child over the parents. In contrast to U.S. mealtimes that often involved conflict and children's negative assessments of food that they disliked, Italian parents oriented to pleasure using a rich grammar of positive affect to praise the food and the preparer, and nurture the child's individual tastes. Ochs and Beck (2013) refine this analysis further in a recent study of what U.S. families eat for dinner, and how this relates to whether or not they eat it together and what they say when they do. They found that families that eat preprepared convenience foods eat together less than those that eat meals made with fresh ingredients, and children may prefer not to eat together to avoid food negotiations, parents' health imperatives, and conflict over eating habits. Mandelbaum (2010) showed how story recipients' disruption and intervention during storytelling at family dinners contribute to the interactive construction of family roles and relationships.

Clancy's (1986) research on the acquisition of Japanese communicative style is based on interactions between caretaker and child(ren), many of which relate to food. Burdelski (2006) develops this work further in his research on language socialization using videotaped recordings of spontaneous interactions between Japanese two-year olds and a range of interlocutors in a variety of settings including mealtime in Japan. There have also been studies on how Japanese (Cook, 2006, 2012) and Indonesian (DuFon, 2006) language learners are socialized through food.

Research in conversation analysis has developed methodologies that can be used to characterize the intricate interplay between language and food through careful attention to talk-in-interaction. Furthermore, Goodwin (1981, 1986, 2000, 2003, 2007), Karatsu (2004, 2012), Koike (2001, 2009, 2010), Streeck, Goodwin and LeBaron, (2011), Szatrowski (2000a, 2000b, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2004b, 2005, 2008, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2013) and others have demonstrated that human actions are embedded within complex semiotic systems constituted by multi-modal resources including talk, bodies, gaze, artifacts, and material surroundings.

Studies of assessments and emotion in conversational interaction are particularly relevant to research on language and food. Conversational participants often assess the food they are eating, and use verbal and nonverbal behavior in assessments to create "congruent understanding" (Goodwin, 1981, 1986; C. Goodwin & M. Goodwin, 1987: 28–33; Szatrowski, 2004b, 2013; Koike, 2009; and others). C. Goodwin and M. Goodwin (1987) confirmed that assessments are not lodged solely in the individual. Rather, participants co-construct assessments as in (1) using one another's verbal/ nonverbal behavior to project what is coming in an "intricate, temporally unfolding sequence of embodied action" (C. Goodwin & M. Goodwin, 1987: 32), and they do so even in situations in which they did not share the same experience. In (1), Clacia projects an upcoming assessment from Diane's lengthened intensifiers *so:: so//:* and body movement, and overlaps Diane's *goo:d*

(accompanied by a nod and an eyebrow flash) with her congruent assessment *I love it* and nods. Thus, assessments are dynamic accomplishments embodied in the conversational interaction.³

(1) Diane: **Jeff** made en asparagus pie

Lowers *Nod with*
Upper *Eyebrow*
Trunk *Flash*

Diane:	it wz	s:: so//:	goo:d.
Clacia:		I love	it.
		Nod	Nod

(C. Goodwin & M. Goodwin, 1987: 32)

Emotion is also an embodied performance, involving intonation, gesture, body posture and timing (M. Goodwin & C. Goodwin, 2000, 2001), and is organized as an interactive practice, rather than merely as a private internal experience (M. Goodwin, A. Cekaite, & C. Goodwin, 2012). Participants use emotion and assessments “to display that their minds are together,” “evaluate the events being assessed in a similar way” (M. Goodwin & C. Goodwin, 2001, p. 254), and build events that “constitute their lifeworlds” (M. Goodwin & C. Goodwin, 2001, p. 239).

Research by Wiggins, Potter, and Wildsmith (2001) and Wiggins and Potter (2008) outlines discursive psychology, a new area of psychology grounded in the analysis of conversational interaction. Wiggins (2001, 2002) and Wiggins and Potter (2003) show how food evaluation is constructed in mealtime interaction focusing on evaluation, *mmm*, and subjective versus objective constructions, and Wiggins (2004) investigates the interactive construction of children’s healthy eating practices.

Karatsu (2010) analyzed how a Japanese storyteller shared her personal discovery of a new taste and her assessment of the taste with her story recipient. She demonstrated that the participants used distal demonstratives to refer to entities in their individual minds as well as co-experienced shared entities, and how these entities converged in the storytelling.

Szatrowski (2011) investigated the verbal and nonverbal behavior in a taster meal between 3 Japanese women under 30. She found that they used: a. immediate responses to the food (exclamations, intensifiers, and postposing) similar to Goffman’s (1981) response cries, b. evaluations related to taste, smell, and texture (often with onomatopoeic adverbs), c. comments on the food preparation

3. In (1) **bold** = emphasis (italics in original); // = overlap ([in the original).

(including health benefits), and how well specific ingredients go together, d. comments on the effects of the food and appropriateness for the season, e. comparisons with other foods, f. comments that negative preconceptions about the food had been overturned, g. comments on how to eat the food, h. agreement (*aizuti* ‘back channel utterances,’ laughter, repetition), i. comments on size and quantity of the food, and j. loanwords. Nonverbal behavior included noodle slurping and other sounds made while eating the food, manipulation of various eating utensils, pointing at the food with the index finger or chopsticks, and beat gestures. Szatrowski (2013) shows that *amai* ‘sweet’ can have a negative connotation in taster lunch interactions, contrary to Backhouse’s (1994) claim that descriptive taste terms such as *amai* ‘sweet’ have a +OISII ‘good-tasting’ affective value (based on a semantic study of Japanese taste terms in question-answer sentences out of context).

A few papers have begun to explore the interplay between gender, language and food. There have been studies on the use of dessert metaphors to refer to women (Hines, 1994, 1999), gender and age differences in the use of Japanese texture vocabulary (Hayakawa et al., 2006), gender differences in Japanese words that mean “delicious” (Takasaki, 2012), and the use of sweet foods/ words for lovers and/ or children (Dolinar-Hikawa, 2007). A few studies have focused on narratives about food and gender, for example, DeVault (1994) investigated women’s narratives about their family food preparation, Counihan (1999) showed that in stories about food, girls referred to eating and drinking as a comestible, while boys talked about the process of devouring food, and Shohet (2007) explored how women use narratives to reframe and recover from anorexia.

Building on this previous research, the chapters in this volume take a dynamic approach by focusing on language and food not as objects, but rather as part of social activities in naturally occurring interactions. Part II “Process and structural organization” consists of 2 chapters that give overall perspectives on the relation between language and food in the process, events, and actions involved in getting to and from the table for a meal, and the structural organization of ordering and serving sushi in sushi restaurants in Japan. Part III “Talking about the food while eating” consists of 3 chapters that deal with food description, identification, and assessment in contexts in which people are eating and tasting food. The focus is on the actual use of language to describe, identify and assess food while eating at a potluck party and in a workplace office, and in conversations over a 3-course taster meal in Japanese, Wolof, Eegimaa, and American English.⁴ Part IV “Experiences and stories related to food” has 2 chapters that focus on how Japanese speakers talk about their experiences with and tell stories about food in casual conversations.

4. Details on the taster meal are given in Appendix B of this chapter.

Part V “Talk about food with and among children” consists of 4 chapters concerning how children are socialized and socialize others regarding food affect, taste, gender, identity, etc. By examining the structure and interactions in actual contexts involving language and food we hope to put the spice back into research on language and food that previously tended to focus on the somewhat bland meaning of words out of context.

3. Emerging themes related to language and food

Emerging themes in the papers in this volume include the relation of language and food to “ritual and performance,” “food description, identification and assessment,” “food, language and identity,” “child and adult socialization through food,” and “verbal and nonverbal resources in talk about food.” I will discuss these themes below while referring to relevant chapters in the volume.

3.1 Ritual and performance

Ritual and performance are intricately related to food consumption and talk about food. This is particularly evident in the 2 chapters in Part II “Process and structural organization.” The ubiquitous, essential nature of food gives rise to highly structured patterns in the ritual and performance of “commensality,” “the practice of sharing food and eating together in a social group” (Ochs & Shohet, 2006, p. 37). Across cultures this can be analyzed in terms of events, social scenes, etc. In Chapter 2, Beeman focuses on the stages of commensality that participants pass through when going from the outside world to the meal and back. He presents a model that encompasses social rituals, manners, customs, and set linguistic phrases that serve as “pragmemic triggers” for each stage, based on fieldwork in four cultures (Middle East, Japanese, German, and American).

The phases in the overall structural organization of ordering and serving in Japanese sushi restaurants are constructed and delimited through an intricately coordinated and multi-modal performance. In Chapter 3, Kuroshima demonstrates that the overall structural organization consists of three phases (opening, continuing state of incipient ordering/talk, and closing), which are systematically and intricately coordinated by the customer and chef using verbal and nonverbal resources. These 2 chapters set the stage for the other chapters in the book. While the other chapters focus more on what Beeman refers to as the “commensality stage,” i.e., the actual eating/ drinking context, they are also understood to be part of larger cultural and structural organizations.