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Punctuation marks in quotations: Based on the Japanese blogs

Abstract

The current paper aims to identify the major patterns of punctuation use in Japanese quotations. The material for the study comprised quotes selected from Japanese electronic blogs by continuous sampling. The platform www.ameba.jp containing electronic diaries on everyday topics was chosen as the source of the material. An approach of using several authentic Japanese texts from one author was adopted to identify the patterns characteristic for that particular author. A contextual-semantic analysis was used to examine the quotes. As a result, it was found that punctuation marks in modern informal-style Japanese was author-dependent: rather than adhering to strict rules, an author could employ them freely to convey his/her modal and expressive messages in particular quotes. Quote-final marks enable to create a vivid “theatrical” atmosphere of presence in the readers’ minds. The most frequently used marks were question mark (Rank 1), full stop (Rank 2) and exclamatory mark (Rank 3). Full stop turned out less frequent than expected. This fact shows high emotional load of the examined quotes. The obtained results provide deeper insights concerning the phenomenon of quotation in general and the patterns of punctuation in modern informal Japanese in particular.

Keywords: citation, narrator, speaker, punctuation marks, pragmatic function, Japanese language

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