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Representing Gestural Idioms in the Lexicon¹

Abstract. Gestural idioms are verbal expressions based on conventionalized body movements and can therefore be regarded as the interface between nonverbal and verbal communication. This article examines the challenges of encoding gestural idioms in lexicography. An analysis of Japanese dictionaries yields patterns for the comprehensive and manageable description of gestural idioms not only in dictionaries but for language learning in general.

Key words: *gestures, lexicography, nonverbal communication, phraseology, Japanese*

1. Introduction

A number of somatic idioms derive their meaning from body language or, more specifically, from gestures. Through linguistic encoding, these nonverbal conventions are transformed into phraseological units, which reflect the metaphorical meaning of the gesture to a varying degree. Conventions evolve over time in a group; therefore the ability to interpret another person's body language is greatly dependent on the observer's cultural background, and cannot easily be transferred to a different culture. Typical examples would be shaking of the head or hands, which can be regarded as universally understood, at least in the cultures of Western Europe and North America, whereas the Japanese gestures of tilting one's head (*kubi o hineru*) or placing one's hands together (*te o awaseru*) are quite culture-specific.

In some cases, the linguistic encoding of nonverbal behavior survives the change in social conventions and can therefore outlive the actual gesture or

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body movement from which it was originally derived. These idioms tell tales of times past, for instance *ashi o arau* (lit. washing one's feet)²; in Japanese, it evokes the picture of a traveler washing his feet before entering the house, because the etymology is well known.

In order to elucidate ways to define gestural idioms, I analyzed the representations of a number of Japanese gestural idioms and their counterparts in mono- and bilingual dictionaries (Japanese-Japanese, Japanese-English). Examples in monolingual and specialized dictionaries illustrate that the comprehensive representation of gestural idioms is possible and manageable. Bilingual dictionaries, however, tend to be rather vague in their description of this phenomenon. The comparison of different dictionaries reveals different ways and patterns of describing the facets or layers of meaning. The translations given for the monolingual dictionary entries are quasi literal translations of the Japanese definitions. They provide the basis for discussing the differences between the paraphrases used in the monolingual dictionaries. They are not intended or suitable in any way to represent the idioms in the bilingual dictionary context. The goal of this work is to derive best practice patterns for the representation of gestural idioms in dictionaries and language learning material.

2. Semantic levels of gestural idioms

Gestural expressions are a special case with regard to their semantics within the field of phraseology, as Burger points out (Burger 1976: 316). The specific nature of these *kinograms*, as Burger calls them, lies in the double-layered semantic structure, constituted by the factual behavior and the meaning of the behavior (communicative value of the behavior). The co-occurrence of the gesture and the phrase or simultaneous activation of both readings in a text is Burger's condition for a phraseological unit to qualify as a phraseological *kinogram* (e.g. *to shake one's head*). The fact that both layers of meaning, factual and idiomatic, are active at the same time is the constitutive characteristic of this group of idioms. The general rule, that a dominant idiomatic meaning in a certain context tends to shift the literal meaning into latency, does not apply here. The reason is that the symbolic meaning of the gesture

² In the time when people in Japan traveled on foot, they usually washed their feet before entering a house or inn, leaving the dust and dirt of the journey behind. The Japanese idiom *ashi o arau* (lit. washing one's feet; meaning: *get out, leave, cut ties with*) originates from this obsolete tradition and is now only used in its idiomatic interpretation of someone leaving the dirty deeds of the past behind.

is superimposed over the literal meaning, which leads to the characteristic semantic double-layeredness.

Burger distinguishes four semiotic levels (Burger 2003: 61–62):

1. the factual behavior (the “form” of the nonverbal behavior),
2. the conventional interpretation of this behavior (the “meaning” of the nonverbal behavior),
3. the linguistic encoding (the “form” of the utterance),
4. The double-layered meaning of the linguistic utterance:
 - a) The depiction of the meaning of the factual behavior (= 1),
 - b) The depiction of the meaning of the nonverbal behavior (= 2).

3. Contrastive Research on Gestural Idioms

Hashimoto (1993) and Otsuka (1994) found in their research on Japanese L2 teaching that Japanese learners have difficulty with deducing the meaning of unknown idioms if they involve cultural differences and the learners are not familiar with similar conventionalized behavior (Hashimoto 1993, Otsuka 1994). In addition, the existence of partial equivalents in the mother tongue leads to an increase in mistakes or misinterpretations (Otsuka 1994: 56–57). They classify idioms by grounding their nonverbal component in reality, distinguishing idioms based on real, semi-real and fictional body movements, their co-occurrence with the verbal manifestation, and their figurative, emblematic, rhetorical or metaphorical nature. The following analysis is based on these features in combination with the semiotic levels. The goal is to pinpoint potential sources for these erroneous interpretations and outline patterns for a comprehensive representation of gestural idioms in the dictionary.

4. Gestural idioms in the dictionary

To better understand what descriptive methods are used to encode information specific to gestural idioms for language learners, I analyzed entries in electronic dictionaries with regard to their representation of semiotic levels. Because of the abundance of dictionaries on the Japanese market, this analysis focuses on a selection of common mono- and bilingual dictionaries. Preference was given to online versions of the dictionaries, if available. Special attention is given to the following questions: How can the double-layered meaning be represented in a differentiated manner? What methods can be used to represent the correlation between the factual and the figura-

tive meaning in the description of the idiom? What kind of information is needed in a dictionary entry describing the meaning and use of a gestural idiom in order to bridge the cultural gap?

In order to obtain a clearer picture of the descriptive methods used in the dictionaries, the examples are arranged in four distinct groups, depending on their specific semantic features: Type 1 idioms are based on real body movements and both layers are active simultaneously. Type 2 comprises semi-real nonverbal behavior, where both layers still appear to be active. Types 3 and 4 are what phraseological research usually calls *pure idioms*, in which the factual meaning and the idiomatic meaning are distinct from one another. Type 3 are ‘real idioms’, which are based on real nonverbal behavior but the factual and the idiomatic layers are never active at the same time, whereas in Type 4 the gesture or body movement is totally imaginary and the meaning purely metaphorical. The examples chosen for this analysis and the grouping method are greatly indebted to the work of Hashimoto (1994) and Otsuka (1993), but idioms that do not denote a gesture in the narrower sense³ or phrases whose meaning is strongly based on the metaphorical interpretation of one constituent⁴ are not included in this analysis.

4.1. Expressions based on real movements

The analysis starts with gestural idioms based on real body movements. Since the comprehensive verbal descriptions of the gesture itself given in specialized dictionaries tend to be quite lengthy (Lynn 2014: 1504–1506) and go far beyond the scope of any general dictionary, illustrative material would be helpful for learners, especially for the group of idioms in which the nonverbal communicative behavior and the phrasal expression are directly linked (Hashimoto 1998: 154). Traditionally, however, lexicography is reluctant to use graphic material and relies strongly on verbal descriptions, because of the limited available space. None of the following dictionary examples provides an illustration for the factual layer. In the cases where double-layered semantic information is given, paraphrases rely on verbal descriptions of the factual layer. In this respect, digital editions of dictionaries are no different from their printed versions. The methods of description for the different

³ The Japanese idiom *tsume ni hi o tomosu* (literally: to light up your finger nail) as an expression of extreme stinginess is totally imaginary, but not a bodily action in the narrow sense, at least for a human.

⁴ This analysis also excludes metonymy: e.g. the meaning ‘intelligent’ of *atama ga yoku kireru* (lit: the head cuts well) is strongly based on the association of *head (atama)* with its function (*thinking, intelligence*).

types of gestural idioms were subjected to the following analysis. The focus lies on the definition sections of semantic commentary in the dictionaries. Example phrases are only taken into account if they make a substantial contribution to the encoding of semantic features by providing an interpretation different from the definition(s) or are the sole description contained in the dictionary. The reading of the lemma itself is presented in italics before the entry and a rough English translation of the Japanese definitions is given in square brackets. Japanese explanations within the English part of dictionary entries are marked with italic letters.

The group of expressions denoting nonverbal behavior in the narrower sense can be further divided into three subgroups, depending on whether: 1a) the simultaneous performance of the gesture is required in order to understand the meaning, 1b) the simultaneous performance of the gesture is optional and 1c) the expression is only used separately from the performance of the gesture. The first example of Type 1a is *atama o kaku* (lit. scratch one's head):

- (1) *atama o kaku*: 失敗を自ら恥じたり照れたりするさま。[Feel ashamed due to one's own failure.] (KJE)
- (2) *atama o kaku*: 思わず頭に手をやって軽くかく。恥ずかしく思ったり、てれたりしたときのしぐさ。[Inadvertently move one's hand to the head and scratch lightly. Gesture when feeling embarrassed or ashamed.] (DJR)
- (3) *atama o kaku*: 恥ずかしく思ったりはにかんだりして、思わず頭に手をやって軽くかく。失敗を恥じたり、はにかんだりする。閉口する。[Feel embarrassed and shy and inadvertently scratch one's head. Feel embarrassed and shy because of a failure. Be at a nonplus.] (NKDJT)

Most of the monolingual dictionaries encode both layers of the gestural idiom *atama o kaku*, with the exception of the Kôjien (KJE), where only the figurative meaning is represented (1). With regard to the simultaneous and obligatory nature of the gesture, the definitions state this clearly with expressions like *no toki no shigusa* (lit. gesture when [...]) (2) or a conjunctive sentence structure (~te, [...]) (3).

Polysemy is a phenomenon that also exists apart from the semiotic layers, as the example of *te o awaseru* (lit. place the hands together) shows:

- (4) *te o awaseru*: 1 手のひらを合わせて神仏を拜む。転じて、心から物事を頼む。心から感謝する。[Place the hands together and pray to the gods or Buddha. Figuratively, to wish something from the bottom of one's heart. To thank someone from the bottom of one's heart.] 2 手合せをする [Compete with someone.] (KJE)

- (5) *te o awaseru*: 1 両方の手のひらを合わせる。感謝の気持ち、懇願の気持ちなどを表す。[Place the palms of both hands together; expressing the feeling of gratitude or supplication.] 2 拝む。合掌する。[Fold one's hands in prayer.] 3 相手として勝負する。手合わせをする。[Compete with someone; enter a competition.] (DJR)
- (6) *te o awaseru*: 1 両方のてのひらを合わせる。拝む。また、心をこめて頼む。[Place both palms of one's hands together; pray. Also to wish something from the bottom of one's heart.] 2 相手となって勝負をする。手合わせをする。[Compete against an opponent; enter a competition.] (DJS)

The secondary reading of *te o awaseru* (to compete; to enter a competition) is purely figurative, not motivated by a specific gesture or bodily movement and therefore not included in this analysis. For the first reading, which is based on the verbal encoding of nonverbal behavior, all the dictionary entries take account of both semiotic levels in their definition. The most obvious difference between the dictionaries is that the Daijirin (DJR) (5) treats the placing of the hands together in prayer as a distinct reading, indicating that the motivation of the gesture is regarded as a distinctive feature. Another notable difference is that while all the dictionaries closely correlate the gesture of placing the hands together with the emotion, suggesting that the gesture is an integral part of the expression, KJE (4) uses the expression *tenjite* (lit. figuratively). This typical way of marking disjoint semantic layers calls into question the obligatory nature of the body movement. With *~toki no shigusa* (lit. gesture when ~), DJR (2) states the co-occurrence of the gesture more clearly than DJR with *~kimochi o arawasu* (lit. expresses the feeling of ~) in the later example (5). In the bilingual dictionaries the factual layer is most prominent within the definitions of Type 1a gestural idioms:

- (7) *atama o kaku*: scratch one's head (考えるジェスチャー) [(gesture of thinking)] (KWEDJT4)
- (8) *atama o kaku*: 褒められた彼は、照れくささを、あたまをかいてごまかした。He scratched his head to hide his embarrassment at this praise. (KWEDJT5 within examples under the lemma *atama*)
- (9) *te o awaseru*: 1 (pray) (posture during prayer) place one's hands together; (posture of solicitude) fold [clasp] one's hands. 2 (take on as opponent) play against sb. (KWEDJT5)

The fourth edition of Kenkyūsha's New Japanese-English Dictionary (KWEDJT4) translates *atama o kaku* with *scratch one's head* and supplies an interpretation of the semantic layer in Japanese explaining the conventionalized meaning of the English gesture and accordingly the English phrase (7).

It shows that within an English (or German⁵) context one typically associates this gesture with thinking or pondering over something; in Japanese culture, however, it is strongly associated with embarrassment. The choice of metalanguage and the fact that the common Japanese interpretation is not mentioned shows that this additional information is directed at a Japanese readership. The interpretation of embarrassment only surfaces in an example sentence in the fifth edition of Kenkyūsha's New Japanese-English Dictionary (KWEDJT5) (8).

The second subgroup (Type 1b) consists of gestural idioms based on real gestures, for which the performance of the corresponding motion is optional. There is no mention of the polysemic nature of *shita o dasu* (lit. stick out one's tongue) in Hashimoto (1993), but all of the monolingual dictionaries acknowledge it. For the secondary reading, three (12–14) of the four dictionaries refer to the fact that the gesture is not optional, therefore this facet of interpretation belongs to Type 1a rather than 1b.

- (10) *shita o dasu*: 1 陰でそしたり、ばかにしたりするさま。[Libel someone or make fun of someone behind their back.] 2 自分の失敗を恥じたり、てれかくしをしたりするさま。[Be embarrassed because of one's own failure and feel ashamed.] (KJE)
- (11) *shita o dasu*: 1 陰でばかにする。心の中であざわらう。[To secretly make fun of someone. To inwardly sneer at someone.] 2 自分の失敗を恥じたり、ごまかしたりするしぐさにいう。[Describes a gesture used to gloss over the shame caused by a failure.] (DJR)
- (12) *shita o dasu*: 1 陰で人をばかにしたり、あざけり笑ったりする。また、そういうときの動作。[Make fun of a person and laugh at them behind their back. Also the motion on such occasions.] 2 恥ずかしさなどをごまかす動作。[Manner of glossing over embarrassment.] (DJS)
- (13) *shita o dasu*: 1 陰でそしたり、嘲（あざけ）ったりするさまを表わすしぐさ。[Gesture expressing secret criticism or when ridiculing someone behind their back.] 2 自分の失敗を恥じたりてれたりするさまを表わす動作。[Manner of expressing one's shame and embarrassment at a failure.] (NKDJT)

⁵ In German the meaning of the gesture *sich am Kopf kratzen* (to scratch one's head) is not as conventionalized as in Japanese, for example, and is often accompanied by a semantic interpretation. This interweaving of the interpretation of the gesture within the idiom is quite a common phenomenon in German (Vogel 2016: 26).

With regard to their figurative (primary) meaning (the motion of sticking out the tongue), the definitions in the monolingual dictionaries are quite similar. There are differences, however, in the way they represent the interrelation of the semiotic levels: In KJE (10) there is no mention of the factual interpretation, whereas in *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten* (NKDJT) (13) the primary and secondary readings are phrased in a similar way, mentioning the motion as an integral part of the interpretation. The expression *kokoro no naka* (inwardly) in *Daijirin* (DJR) (11) could be interpreted as a hint suggesting that the co-occurrence of the motion is facultative, but only DJS (12) clearly states the optionality of the factual layer.

The bilingual KWEDJT5 also distinguishes the two readings of *shita o dasu* (14) but with regard to the Type 1b reading, the figurative use (optionality of the gesture) is conveyed by the example phrase, where *shita o dasu* is translated by ‘laughs at her behind her back’ or disrespect in general.

- (14) *shita o dasu* stick out one’s tongue in embarrassment [shame];
 〈陰であざけて〉 stick out one’s tongue ((at sb)); express contempt for sb. ⇒ あいつは先生の前で神妙にしているが、陰では～を出している。 He is all docility in front of the teacher, but he laughs at her behind her back [really doesn’t respect her at all]. [KWEDJT5]

Finally, Type 1c also comprises gestural idioms based on real body movements, with the difference that the physical performance typically does not co-occur with the verbal use of the phrase. One example is *ago o dasu* (lit. stick one’s chin out), used metaphorically for being exhausted.

- (15) *ago o dasu*: ひどく疲れる。[Be very tired.] (KJE)
- (16) *ago o dasu*: ひどく疲れて、足が動かず、あごだけが前に出る。疲れ切ってしまうにもならない状態をたとえていう。[To feel exhausted to such an extent that the feet don’t move and only the chin sticks out. Used metaphorically for being exhausted to such a degree that nothing can be done.] (DJS)
- (17) *ago o dasu*: (長い間歩いて疲れると、腰がひけて顎が出る格好になるところから) 弱り果てる。疲れ切る。転じて、自分の手に負えないで困る。
 [(From the posture one assumes after being tired out from a long walk, when bending forward and sticking one’s chin out) Be exhausted. Be totally tired out. Figuratively, be troubled beyond one’s control.] (NKDJT)

Again, KJE does not mention the body motion, focusing only on the figurative meaning (15). DJS and NKDJT, however, acknowledge the fact that

the metaphorical interpretation is based on the posture somebody assumes when very tired after a physically demanding task like a long walk (16), (17). That this is purely a motivation, not an accompanying motion, is expressed by *tatoete iu* (used as an example/metaphorically for) (16) and *tenjite* (figuratively) (17) respectively.

The bilingual KWEDJT5 puts the sole focus on the communicative value (18):

(18) *ago o dasu*: get exhausted [tired out, worn out] (KWEDJT5)

Given that that there is no comparable figurative expression in the target language of the dictionary, it would be especially valuable for language learners to illuminate the background of the idiom in a similar way to some of the monolingual dictionaries (16), (17).

4.2. Type 2: Expressions based on semi-real body movements

Type 2 consists of idioms illustrating a posture, gesture or facial expression that represents a certain partly imaginary behavior or gesture. Examples of this type are *me o sankaku ni suru* (lit. to make one's eyes triangular) and *hana no shita o nagaku suru/nobasu*⁶:

(19) *me o sankaku ni suru*: 激怒するさまの形容。[Appearance when being infuriated.] (KJE)

(20) *me o sankaku ni suru*: 目を怒らす。怖い目つきをする。目に角(かど)を立てる。Give an angry look; glare at someone. *Me ni kado o tateru* (lit. to put up corners in the eyes).] (DJS)

(21) *me o sankaku ni suru*: 目に角(かど)を立てこわい目つきをする。目を怒らす。[*me ni kado o tate* (lit. to put up corners in the eyes) and look angry. Give an angry look.] (NKDJT)

The definitions of *me o sankaku ni suru* in the monolingual dictionaries DJS and NKDJT depend mostly on a synonymous idiom (*me ni kado o tateru*) and the causative construction *me o okorasu* (lit. to anger the eyes) (20), (21). DJS adds at least one non-figurative paraphrase *kowai metsuki o suru* (lit. give a frightening look) to the definitions, while KJE regards the appearance in general as essential, thereby expressing semi-factuality in a more generic fashion.

⁶ The idioms *hana no shita o nagaku suru* and *hana no shita o nobasu* are synonymous expressions and treated together in the dictionaries.

- (22) *me o sankaku ni suru*: give [shoot] an angry look «at...»; look daggers [menacingly] «at...» (KWEDJT5 under the lemma *sankaku*)
- (23) *me o sankaku ni suru*: have an angry look in one's eyes; look angrily «at...» (KWEDJT5 under the lemma *me*)

KWEDJT5 provides slightly different English equivalents in the entries for *sankaku* (22) and *me* (23) respectively. To *look daggers* in example (22) aligns quite neatly with the Japanese factual layer (*sankaku ni suru* meaning literally *make triangular*), and *have an angry look in one's eyes* in example (23) describes the expression of the eyes by means of its interpretation. The factual layer and the semi-realness of the facial expression do not need to be isolated here, because the expressions in the target language are quite similar.

The second example *hana no shita o nagaku suru* (lit. to lengthen the part below the nose (= between nose and mouth)) is much more culture-specific and therefore an interesting case for this analysis. Again KJE does not address the semi-real gesture (24) whereas DJS introduces the semi-real factual layer as a *kaotsuki* (facial expression) that refers to a certain look (26):

- (24) 女にあまい。女性に迷いやすい。鼻下長。[Have a soft spot for women. Be easily taken with feminine charms. Amorous sort of man.] (KJE)
- (25) 好色そうな顔つきをする。女性に甘いようすについていう。鼻の下を長くする。[Have a lustful look on one's face. Said about someone who has a soft spot for women. *Hana no shita o nagaku suru.*] (DJS)

Hashimoto regards these Type 2 expressions as a transitional area between reality and figurativeness (Hashimoto 1993: 144), but comparison of *me o sankaku ni suru* with *hanano shita o nagaku suru/hana no shita ga nagai* reveals a perceptible difference within this group. Examining the bilingual dictionaries, it appears that displaying anger by changing the appearance of the eyes is a more universal concept across cultural borders than expressing an amorous nature with the part between nose and upper lip. It is not surprising that the only gestural idiom given as equivalent in KWEDJT5 *have one's head turned* (26) is based on a different gesture, which is a movement rather than a facial expression.

- (26) [*hana*]no shita ga nagai: ~の下が長い be spoony [on] [over] a woman, be easily taken with [susceptible to] feminine charms, be an amorous sort ~の下を伸ばす[長くする have one's head turned [be struck silly] by the sight of a woman (KWEDJT5)⁷

⁷ Mentioned as a collocation within the entry of 鼻の下 (*hana-no shita*).

4.3. Type 3: Figurative expressions based on real body movements

Type 3 consists of the so-called pure idioms that are based on real gestures or motions, but where the performance of this gesture or motion is linked to the literal interpretation of the phrase. Only then is the factual layer active. The figurative interpretation of this gesture or motion is typically triggered by the verbal manifestation if the factual layer is inactive. To put it differently, the idiomatic use of the phrase depends on the absence of the gesture, which leads us to *agura o kaku* (lit. sit cross-legged) and *te o nobasu* (lit. reach out with the hand/arm):

- (27) *agura o kaku*: 1 両足を横にひろげ前に組んで、楽にすわる。[Sit comfort by spreading the legs to the sides and crossing them in the front.] 2 (既得の地位や権力をよりどころとして)自分では何もしないで、いい気な態度でいる。(Due to one's acquired status or authority) do nothing. Be complacent.] (KJE)
- (28) *agura o kaku*: 1 あぐらを組んで座る。[Sit cross-legged style.] 2 のんきにかまえて、何の努力もしないことのたとえ。[Metaphorical for a carefree attitude, without making any effort.] (DJR)
- (29) *agura o kaku*: 1 足を組んで楽な姿勢で座る。[Sit comfortably with the legs crossed.] 2 自分は何の努力もせず、あるものに頼ってゆうゆうと構えている。ずうずうしく構える。[Attitude of not making any effort oneself, but relying on what is there and taking it easy. Conduct oneself in an impudent manner.] (DJS)

Distinct readings represent the disjunctive nature of the semiotic layers in *agura o kaku* in all four⁸ monolingual dictionaries (27–29). Surprisingly, KWEDJT5 only mentions the phrase as a collocation of *agura* and does not give the figurative reading (30).

- (30) sit [squat (down)] cross-legged [tailor fashion, Indian fashion, Turkish fashion]; sit with one's legs crossed, sit in the lotus position (KWEDJT5)

The style of sitting down described by *agura o kaku* and *sit tailor fashion* is comparable between the languages, but the implications are slightly different. In Japanese *agura o kaku* nowadays has the implication of sitting in a relaxed fashion as opposed to *seiza* (lit. the proper way of sitting), for example during the tea ceremony. Sitting tailor fashion refers to the style previously used

⁸ The entry in NKDJT is very similar to the ones in KJE and DJS.

by tailors when working. Since it lacks the implication that there is a different, 'proper' way to sit, the mention of the second reading (complacency) should be encoded, as done in the monolingual dictionaries. The second example for disjoint semiotic layers is *te o nobasu* (lit. reach out with the hand):

- (31) *te o nobasu*: 取引先や仕事を広げる。手を広げる。[Expand the reach of one's dealings or business. *Te o hirogeru*.] (KJE)
- (32) *te o nobasu*: 今までしなかった事をやってみる。勢力をひろげる。手をひろげる。[To do something one has not done yet. Extend one's influence. *Te o hirogeru*.] (NKDJT)

There is no mention of the factual layer *reach out* in the monolingual dictionaries, possibly because of its compositional nature. In the bilingual KWEDJT5 dictionary, there is an apparent shift between editions: In the fourth edition of the dictionary both layers were represented together in one single entry, clearly marking the figurative use with *hiyuteki-ni* (figuratively)⁹. In the more recent fifth edition the editors moved the factual interpretation into the main entry of the first component *te*, while keeping a separate entry for the figurative meaning.

- (33) [*te*]o *nobasu*: ~を伸ばす stretch out (one's) hand; reach out ((to do, for sth)); put out one's hand; reach out ((to do, for sth)), put (out) one's [a] hand; reach after [across, over] ..., reach for ((a book)) (KWEDJT5 within the entry for the lemma *te*)
- (34) *te o nobasu*: 〈仕事などの範囲を広げる〉 become concerned in [with] ((a matter)) (KWEDJT5 as separate entry)

4.4. Gestural idioms based on imaginary body movements or functions

The section of gestural idioms for which there is no equivalent body motion or function known to us is etymologically the most interesting group. Literal meanings like *a hand reaches out from one's throat* or *to boil water with the belly button* are quite removed from any gesture in the world we know. Therefore this contra-factual literal meaning plays no part in the entries for *nodo kara te ga deru* in the monolingual dictionaries:

⁹ The entry for *te o nobasu* in KWEDJT4 mentions two distinct readings: 1. stretch (out) one's hand; reach out 《to》 [...]; 2. [比喩的に] concern oneself in [with] 《a matter》 (Vogel 2016: 18).

- (35) *nodo kara te ga deru*: 欲しくてたまらないたとえ。[Metaphorical for strongly yearning for something.] (KJE)
- (36) *nodo kara te ga deru*: 欲しいと思う気持ちが、抑えかねるほどであることのとえ。[Metaphorical for the feeling of wanting something so strongly that it is hard to suppress.] (DJR)
- (37) *nodo kara te ga deru*: ほしくてたまらないたとえにいう。[Metaphorical for wanting something to a degree that is hard to bear.] (NKDJT)

This truly strange image of a hand reaching out from someone's throat is clearly marked as a metaphor in all the monolingual dictionaries. The bilingual dictionary KWEDJT5 supplies the most common context of this phrase *nodo kara te ga deru* you na (as if ..) (38) and *nodo kara te ga deru* hodo hoshii (to an extent...), which provides clues for the contra-factual nature of the expression.

- (38) *nodo kara te ga deru*: ⇒ ~から手が出るような [*~kara te ga deru you na*] extremely tempting ((offer)); ((□)) mouthwatering / ~から手がでるほど欲しい [*~kara te ga deru hodo hoshii*] would desperately like; would absolutely love ((sth, to do)); covet; desire eagerly; feel like jumping ((at..)) (KWEDJT5)

The entries for *heso de cha o wakasu* (and its variations) are a good example of the absence of any encoding of the factual layer within the encoding of the semantic features of the idiom.

- (39) *heso de cha o wakasu*: おかしくてたまらないことにいう。[Said about something so ridiculous that it is hard to bear.] (KJE)
- (40) *heso de cha o wakasu*: おかしくてたまらないこと、また、ばかばかしくてしょうがないこと。多く、あざけていう場合に用いる。[Something unbelievably strange or absolutely absurd. Often used to ridicule someone/something.] (DJS)
- (41) *heso de cha o wakasu*: おかしくてたまらない。腹の皮がよじれる。また、ばかばかしくて話にならない。ちゃんちゃらおかしい。[Unbearably funny. To split one's sides. Also, too ridiculous to be worth considering.] (NKDJT)

KWEDJT5 does not even assign the idiom an entry but provides an example as a secondary layer of information in the semantic commentary (42).

- (42) *heso de cha o wakasu*: 彼は歌手志望だって?お〜で茶を沸かすよ。He wants to become a singer? What a joke! [Don't make me laugh!] (KWEDJT5)

5. Conclusions

Analyzing the gestural idioms with regard to the different semiotic layers (Burger 2003) and the facet of realness of the body movement (Otsuka 1994, Hashimoto 1993) provided a framework for showing how the aspects of embodiment and figurativeness can be encoded in definitions of dictionary entries. But it also revealed some shortcomings of the previous research for lexicography. Firstly, the classification into different types of gestural idioms needs to be done at the level of readings, since one lemma can belong to different groups, depending on the context. Polysemy can also be manifested at the level of the factual layer, which means that one verbal description can evoke different images, as seen in case of *te o awaseru* (lit. place the hands together).

Differences between the dictionaries show varying approaches: KJE and KWEDJT appear to target a mostly Japanese readership, as they focus strongly on the communicative interpretation and are not concerned with representing the factual layer, for instance by giving information on gestural elements accompanying the use of an idiom. This is very unfortunate, since gestures can support language learning in acquisition (Goldin-Meadow 2005: 253–254, Goldin-Meadow 2013).

In general, bilingual dictionaries add a different layer of complexity. Here the question of whether a figurative and a factual layer are encoded often depends on the inventory of the target language. If there is an idiom matching all aspects of the verbal and nonverbal communicative value, there seems to be no need to paraphrase the complex of verbal and nonverbal interpretation. Looking at the examples in detail, however, reveals that there is very little total equivalence between gestural idioms. Differences are manifested not only in the communicative value of the expression but also in the form of the gesture, as has been shown for *te o awaseru* (4–9). The complexity of an adequate verbal description of a gesture goes beyond the scope of a general dictionary, and equivalents in languages where the cultural background is different can be misleading. This might be another reason why KWEDJT5 mostly focuses on the figurative meaning, shying away from the challenge of adequately describing the factual layer. The complementary interpretations in different sections of the entry (like sub-lemma (33) versus separate entry (34)) and differing interpretations in the example sentences (14) are easily missed by the reader. The selective comparison between the previous fourth edition and the current fifth edition of KWEDJT suggests a shift towards more specifically targeting a Japanese readership.

Especially the monolingual dictionaries DJS, DJR and NKDJT contain many best practice examples for representing most aspects of the meaning of gestural idioms. For a more detailed analysis of the patterns expressing different semiotic aspects of the dictionaries, other factors such as the motivation of the metaphorical interpretation (emotion, religious or cultural practice, bodily function...) should be taken into consideration, since some examples have already shown that they are applicable in only very specific situations.

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Leksykograficzny opis idiomów gestualnych

Streszczenie

Idiomy gestualne to jednostki frazeologiczne oparte na skonwencjonalizowanych ruchach ciała, które z tego powodu mogą być traktowane jako interfejs między komunikacją werbalną i niewerbalną. Niniejszy artykuł bada aspekty związane z leksykograficznym opisem tych idiomów. Analiza japońskich słowników pozwala na wskazanie modeli całościowego i zarazem praktycznego opisu idiomów gestualnych nie tylko w słownikach, ale i ogólnie na płaszczyźnie glottodydaktycznej.