



Features of Language Exploration in Japanese *Dokkai* Authentic Materials: SFL-based Analysis

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Abstract

This study examines the linguistic features of Japanese product packaging texts, focusing on beverages, medicines, and instant noodles. Using a qualitative case study design, it analyzes 30 authentic Japanese labels to identify naturally occurring language features relevant to beginner-level Japanese learners. The analysis reveals eight linguistic features in beverage labels and ten features each in medicine and instant noodle packaging. Across all categories, packaging texts rely on nominalization, technical labels, scientific terminology, numerical data, and dense noun-based structures to convey precise and regulated information. Interpersonally, polite imperatives, evaluative expressions, honorific forms, and consumer-oriented phrases reflect Japanese communicative norms. Textually, list structures, discourse markers, and parallel formatting contribute to clarity and efficient information processing. At the same time, each category shows distinct rhetorical tendencies: beverage packaging employs persuasive and hybrid Japanese English expressions, medicine packaging foregrounds safety and scientific neutrality, and instant noodle packaging combines instructional sequencing with promotional language. The findings show that Japanese packaging texts function as hybrid genres integrating descriptive, procedural, and persuasive meanings. Their linguistic density, functional organization, and cultural relevance indicate strong potential as authentic dokkai materials in genre-based pedagogy for beginner-level Japanese reading and writing instruction.

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is a core component of language learning, understood as a complex information-processing activity in which readers interact with texts to construct meaningful discourse, involving processes from letter-sound correspondence to interpreting meaning across larger units such as phrases, sentences, and paragraphs (Johnston, 1983; Ogawa, 1984; Silberstein, 1994; Brandl, 2008). More simply, reading is the ability to comprehend written text (Rubin, 1993; Burns, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Pang et al., 2003; Lenz, 2005), requiring active interaction between prior knowledge and textual input (Carrell, 1987). As a multidimensional skill developed throughout human life (Fonseca et al., 2019), reading entails both bottom-up and top-down processes, strategic engagement, and sensitivity to social context (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986; Nunan, 1999; Brown, 2001; McDonough & Shaw, 2003; Brandl, 2008; Gebhard, 2009), enabling learners to interpret not only literal meanings but also the linguistic and contextual features that shape meaning (Alderson, 2000; Zheng et al., 2007; Noda, 2011).

This definition implies that learning to read extends beyond decoding written language to include engaging with and expanding one's understanding of the world, as reading the world precedes and must accompany reading the word (Freire, 1981). It highlights the dynamic relationship between language and reality, suggesting that genuine comprehension through critical reading requires recognizing the connection between a text and its broader context (Freire, 1981).

Despite its significant roles in language learning, learning reading can really be challenging, particularly when the learners and the language they learn have a great contrast both in the cultural and language operation system and when the text used for teaching is authentic (texts originally produced for native speakers). These types of texts are increasingly utilized in JFL classrooms because they expose learners to real linguistic patterns, register variations, and socio-cultural contexts (Gilmore, 2007). However,

these materials also present challenges due to their complex lexico-grammatical structures and high contextual dependency (Saito, 2015).

It is aligned with the core results of studies on students' challenges in learning Japanese reading, for example in Indonesian learners who learn Japanese (which is also the context of the present study). For them, Japanese reading or also known as Dokkai presents considerable challenges (Febriyanti, 2016; Philiyanti & Emzir, 2019; Mahira et al., 2024; Dirgandini et al., 2025). The difficulties mainly arise from two aspects. The first concerns understanding the content or meaning of a text, which is closely tied to situational and cultural contexts, as texts are always constructed within specific contexts (Freire, 1981; Gerot & Wignell, 1995; Droga & Humphrey, 2002; Knapp & Watkins, 2005; Emilia, 2011). The second involves recognizing and interpreting the linguistic features that shape meaning through grammatical and lexical choices, as well as the writing system itself (Kaneko, 2011; Kuwana, 2016; Hasegawa & Nonis, 2018; Wahidati & Rahmawati, 2019; Quintos, 2021; Ide et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2023; Nakano, 2023; Rahayu et al., 2023; Dirgandini et al., 2025). These challenges highlight the lengthy and demanding process of developing Japanese reading proficiency, as learners must simultaneously master comprehension, grammatical and lexical structures, and the complex writing systems of Kanji and Kana.

Several studies have addressed these issues and offered solutions to the problems. One of them is the improvement in the teaching and learning materials, especially the authentic ones. One way to enhance authentic based materials used for reading learning is by exploring how authentic texts construct experience, enact interpersonal relations, and organize information. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), originally developed by Halliday (1994) and later elaborated by Martin & Rose (2007), provides a comprehensive framework for examining the interconnection between language and meaning. Through its three metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal, and textual), SFL

facilitates an in-depth analysis of how linguistic choices in authentic texts realize particular meanings within specific contexts.

When applied to Japanese dokkai materials, this framework allows researchers to investigate how texts represent experience, establish interpersonal relationships, and structure information (Teruya, 2007). Such an approach extends beyond surface level comprehension, offering a deeper understanding of language as a system for constructing meaning (Eggins, 2004).

Previous research on Japanese reading instruction has largely focused on cognitive strategies and vocabulary development (e.g., Underwood et al., 2011; Gorsuch et al., 2015; Saneyoshi & Inada, 2025). Underwood et.al (2011) investigated the effects of a six-month speed reading course on English reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and reading rate among Japanese high school students using an experimental design with control and treatment groups, and the results showed that while both groups improved in comprehension and vocabulary, only the experimental group significantly increased reading speed, suggesting that speed reading mainly enhanced fluency rather than comprehension or vocabulary growth.

Similarly, Gorsuch et al, (2015) studied the effects of a Repeated Reading (RR) program on reading speed, comprehension, and strategy use among beginning American university students learning Japanese using a time-series experimental design over a semester, and the results showed that repeated reading with audio support improved students' hiragana and word decoding skills, reading comprehension, and confidence in reading authentic Japanese texts. Finally, Saneyoshi & Inada (2025) studied the developmental relationship between visual cognitive abilities and hiragana reading skills in Japanese children aged 4–8 years using an experimental method involving online visual cognitive and reading tasks. The results showed that figure ground discrimination, left-right reversal recognition, and spatial relational

processing each contributed differently to reading letters, words, and pseudo words, highlighting the key role of spatial processing in early literacy development.

As previously mentioned, prior studies have mainly focused on cognitive strategies and vocabulary acquisition, while limited attention has been given to examining the linguistic features of dokkai materials through a systemic functional lens. This research seeks to analyze the language characteristics of authentic dokkai texts to uncover the discourse structures and linguistic resources that facilitate meaning-making in real Japanese contexts. It specifically explores how linguistic choices in authentic dokkai texts contribute to meaning construction by employing Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The insights gained are expected to inform the development of pedagogical models that integrate authentic materials with functional linguistic awareness, thereby enhancing learners' reading proficiency and genre literacy (Emilia, 2014).

METHOD

This research examines linguistic features in Japanese Dokkai authentic materials, product labels for drinks, medicines, and noodles, via an SFL framework. These labels are ideal due to their everyday prevalence, concise functional language mirroring real communication, and distinct discourse domains (commercial, health, food packaging) with unique registers and meaning-making strategies. The study employed a case study qualitative research design as it aims to provide a detailed, contextualized account of naturally occurring language phenomena without attempting generalization (Dörnyei, 2007; Creswell, 2014;). The data consisted of 30 Japanese descriptive texts from product labels (drinks, medicines, and noodles). This number is sufficient for qualitative analysis, allowing in-depth examination while capturing recurring patterns across varied data (Creswell, 2014)), and ensuring balanced representation for comparing linguistic features across categories. The selection of these products was based on the consideration that these three products are potentially searched

by people at first arrival at the country. From the perspective of pedagogical materials, these texts were chosen based on their accessibility and pedagogical relevance to beginner-level Japanese instruction.

Data were analyzed using document analysis (Travers, 2001), focusing on and linguistic features of the texts. The analysis adopted the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1994; Martin & Rose, 2007), specifically Hasan's (1985) Generic Structure Potential (GSP) model, to identify the lexicogrammatical patterns that realize meaning within the genre. To further examine the pedagogical implications, the Genre-Based Pedagogical Approach (Joyce & Feez, 2012; Emilia, 2014) was employed to explore how authentic descriptive texts can be adapted for teaching reading and writing skills at the beginner level of Japanese.

Further, the analysis of data involved several processes. First, the data were coded, as also highly suggested for qualitative researchers and actually is an important aspect in qualitative data analysis (Merriam, 1998; Seidel, 1998), by assigning a unique, either textual or alphanumeric, marker system (Hood, 2009). The 30 texts collected were coded differently; TLDRK, TLMDN, and TLNDL. This labelling is configured as follows: T stands for Text; L stands for Label; DRK stands for Drink, MDN stands for Medicine, and NDL stands for Noodle. Number following DRK, MDN, and NDL indicates the number of the texts to differentiate of those the total texts (1-10). Therefore, TLDRK1 means Text Label of Drink 1, TLMDN1 means Text Label of Medicine1, TLNDL1 means Text Label of Noodle 1 and so forth. Second, the data were categorized based on the similar themes and finally those were analyzed by using the aforementioned frameworks. The results of the analyses were then elaborately outlined in the results section and interpreted in the discussion section by referring to the informing theories used and previous studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examines the linguistic features of authentic Japanese *dokkai* materials, focusing on three categories of product labels, including beverages, medicines, and noodles by using a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework. The results are illustrated below.

Features of Language of Label Text in Drinks

There are eight key linguistic features associated with beverage packaging texts, as outlined in the table below.

Table 1. Features of Language of Label Text in Drinks

No	Features of Language	Function	Examples from Data
1	Nominalization & Technical Labels	Provide official and technical identification of the product	「名称：清涼飲料水」, 「原材料名」, 「栄養成分表示」
2	Imperative Clauses (Instructions)	Direct consumers with polite command forms	「よく振ってお飲みください」, 「開封後は 10℃以下で保存してください」
3	Persuasive/Promotional Language	Attract attention and build a positive product image	「滋養豊富」 (nutritious), 「風味絶佳」 (excellent flavor), 「カラダにビース」
4	Use of Numbers & Objective Data	Provide factual information, create a scientific and trustworthy impression	「エネルギー 100kcal」, 「たんぱく質 1.9g」
5	Warning Language	Ensure safe product use	「凍らせないでください」, 「容器が破損する場合があります」
6	Japanese-English Mixing	Create a modern, international impression and global branding	「100% Grape Juice」, 「since 1981」, 「Calpis Water」
7	Concise & Compact Style (Nominal Phrases)	Efficient use of packaging space; easy to read quickly	「豆乳で美味しい」, 「国産大麦若葉・ケール・緑茶」
8	Interpersonal Language (Consumer Relationship)	Build emotional closeness with consumers	「愛されて ロングセラ」, 「始めよう! 青汁習慣」

The table above identifies 8 linguistic features commonly found on Japanese beverage packaging. The first is the use of nominalization and technical labels, such as in 「名称：清涼飲料水」 and 「栄養成分表示」 which function to construct scientific classification and strengthen technical authority. This aligns with Hasan & Martin (1989) noting that texts realize a generic structural potential shaped by their social context. It also reflects Japanese cultural orientations toward precision, regulatory clarity, and transparency in consumer information (Sato, et.al., 2025).

Second, polite imperative clauses like 「よく振ってお飲みください」 exemplify the interpersonal metafunction, in which instructions

are conveyed through the polite linguistic forms typical of Japanese communication as also outlined by Haugh (2005) stating that Japanese communication is rooted in the value of *wa* (harmony) and that politeness in Japanese conversation is an important strategy for maintaining social relations, explaining why instructions on packaging are presented in a soft manner that does not threaten the consumer's face.

Third, persuasive language or promotional expression (e.g., 「滋養豊富」, 「風味絶佳」) is another feature of language that illustrates the interpersonal function in constructing a positive product image. It is in line with Moeran (1996) in his anthropological study of Japanese advertising emphasizing that promotional language is designed to build an emotional bond with consumers through aesthetic and symbolic expressions. Likewise, the use of a concise and compact style, along with efficient nominal phrases such as 「豆乳で美味しい」 is a semiotic strategy that, according to Eggins (2004), shows how the text organizes its message so that it can be easily processed by readers in accordance with the medium's context.

Fourth, the mixing of Japanese and English such as in 「100% Grape Juice」 and 「Calpis Water」 describes the influence of globalization on Japanese consumer discourse. With respect to this, Clammer (1997) explains that Japan's urban consumer culture often blends local and global elements to assert a modern identity while maintaining cultural authenticity. The inclusion of warning expressions like 「凍らせないでください」 underscores the cultural importance of *anzen* (safety), aligning with Japanese health regulations and broader social norms that prioritize consumer protection (IM&D, 2023). Finally, interpersonal phrases like 「愛されて ロングセラー」 illustrate strategies for constructing a sense of collective identity. It is related to what Kowner (2005) has stated, emphasizing that consumption in Japan is often associated with the values of *uchi-soto* (inside-outside), in which language is used to strengthen

the symbolic closeness between producers and consumers.

Features of Language of Label Text in Medicines

The analysis shows that medicine packaging texts contain 10 features of language, as listed in the following table.

Table 2. Features of Language of Label Text in Medicines

No	Features of language	Function	Examples from Data
1	Nominalization & Technical Labels	Provide a standardized, clear, and formal structure for drug information	「成分」, 「効能・効果」, 「用法・用量」, 「注意」
2	Use of Medical/Scientific Terms	Indicate scientific accuracy and inform readers of the active ingredients	「セチルピリジニウム塩化物水和物」, 「アセトアミノフェン」, 「ジフェニヒドラミンサリチル酸塩」
3	Imperative Clauses (Polite/Formal Instructions)	Give direct instructions to consumers in a formal command form	「服用しないでください」, 「よく読んでください」, 「水またはお湯で服用してください」
4	Warning/Regulatory Language	Ensure safe use and storage of the medicine	「小児の手の届かない所に保管してください」, 「直射日光の当たらない湿気の少ない涼しい所に保管してください」
5	Restrictions (Negation & Prohibition)	Limit usage to prevent potential harm	「服用しないこと」, 「使用しないでください」, 「長期連用しないでください」
6	Use of Numbers & Quantitative Data	Provide factual and precise dosage information	「1日量(6個)中セチルピリジニウム塩化物水和物6mg」, 「アセトアミノフェン900mg」
7	Interpersonal Language (Consumer Relations)	Offer direct communication access to consumers	「相談してください」, 「お問い合わせ先」
8	List and Point Formats (Bullet Points/Enumeration)	Facilitate readability and emphasize clarity and organization	(1) (2) (3), 「・アセトアミノフェン 900mg」
9	Legal/Regulatory Language	Provide legal and compliance with pharmaceutical regulations	「指定医薬部外品」, 「第2類医薬品」, 「副作用被害救済制度」
10	Objective & Neutral Language (without excessive promotion)	Convey the function of the medicine scientifically without hyperbolic claims (unlike beverage packaging)	「効能・効果: 口腔内の殺菌・消毒・口臭の除去」

As shown in the table, Japanese medicine packaging texts employ a range of linguistic features aimed at conveying information with accuracy, clarity, and safety. To begin with, nominalization and technical labels such as 「成分」, 「効能・効果」, 「用法・用量」, and 「注意」 establish a standardized, official, and easily recognizable format for presenting pharmaceutical information. Further, the use of medical or scientific terminology, for example, 「セチルピリジニウム塩化物水和物」 and 「アセトアミノフェン」 reinforces scientific precision while clearly specifying the active ingredients. Next, formal or polite imperative clauses such as 「服用しないでください」 and

「よく読んでください」 function as direct instructions to consumers. Warning or regulatory language—for example, 「小児の手の届かない所に保管してください」 —is used to ensure the safe use and storage of the product. In addition, restrictions or prohibitions such as 「長期連用しないでください」 limit potentially harmful actions. Quantitative information and precise dosage details are provided through numbers and data, as in 「1日量（6個）中セチルピリジニウム塩化物水和物 6mg」.

Interpersonal expressions such as 「相談してください」 provide consumers with a direct channel for communication, while list formats and bullet points enhance readability and emphasize the orderly organization of information. To meet legal requirements, regulatory designations such as 「指定医薬部外品」 are included to signal official legitimacy. Finally, objective and neutral phrasing like 「効能・効果：口腔内の殺菌・消毒・口臭の除去」 conveys the product's functions scientifically without resorting to promotional language, distinguishing medicine packaging from consumer-oriented products such as beverages or snacks. Collectively, these linguistic choices underscore the orientation of pharmaceutical packaging toward clarity, safety, and both scientific and legal credibility (Aalto University, 2020).

In the context of medicine packaging, nominalization and technical labels, such as 「成分」 (ingredients), 「効能・効果」 (indications and effects), and 「用法・用量」 (dosage and administration), serve as systematic and technical representations of content, creating a standardized and authoritative structure (Halliday, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

The use of medical or scientific terminology as can be seen in 「アセトアミノフェン」 (acetaminophen) and 「ジフェンヒドラミンサリチル酸塩」 (diphenhydramine salicylate), reinforces scientific accuracy and conveys detailed information about active ingredients (Halliday, 2004; Almurashi, 2016).

Formal or polite imperative clauses, such as 「服用しないでください」 or (“please do not take this”) and 「よく読んでください」 (“please read carefully”), operate as direct instructions to consumers while maintaining a polite interpersonal tone (Halliday, 2004; Almurashi, 2016). Warning or regulatory expressions, e.g., 「直射日光の当たらない湿気の少ない涼しい所に保管してください」 (“store in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight”), ensure proper usage and storage, reflecting the regulatory function identified in SFL (Halliday, 2004; Davies, 2014).

Restrictions and prohibitions like 「長期連用しないでください」 (“do not use for extended periods”) limit potentially harmful behaviors (Halliday, 2004; Davies, 2014). Quantitative information and precise dosage are communicated through numerical data, as in 「1日量（6個）中セチルピリジニウム塩化物水和物 6mg」 (“the daily dose of six tablets contains 6 mg of cetylpyridinium chloride”). Interpersonal expressions such as 「相談してください」 (“please consult”) again facilitate communication, while list and bullet-point formats aid comprehension and reinforce information structure (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). To ensure legal compliance, terms such as 「指定医薬部外品」 (“designated quasi-drug”) provide regulatory legitimacy (Halliday, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Finally, objective and neutral wording like 「効能・効果：口腔内の殺菌・消毒・口臭の除去」 presents medicinal functions scientifically without excessive promotional tone, setting pharmaceutical packaging apart from other consumer goods (Tanaka, 2005; Halliday, 2004; Almurashi, 2016).

Features of Language of Label Text in Instant Noodles

The data analysis indicates that Japanese instant noodle packaging texts exhibit ten key linguistic features, as outlined in the table below. Table 3 Features of Language of Label Text in Instant Noodles

No	Features of Language	Function	Examples from Data
1	Dominance of technical noun groups	Provide factual information about ingredients, nutritional content, and the product.	「油揚げめん (小麦粉 (国内製造)、植物油脂...)」 「栄養成分表示 1 食 (100g) 当たり」
2	Scientific/technical terminology	Provide scientific legitimacy and build trust in product quality.	「調味料 (アミノ酸等)」 「酸化防止剤 (ビタミンE)」
3	Material processes (concrete actions)	Describe cooking steps in practical terms.	「水 220ml を入れ、沸とうさせ、めんを入れる。」
4	Circumstances (expressions of place/time/manner)	Provide additional information for use or storage.	「直射日光をさけ、常温で保存してください。」
5	Imperative mood	Give firm yet polite instructions to consumers.	「火を止める前にスープを入れてください。」 「ご注意ください。」
6	Modality (obligation & options)	Balance mandatory instructions with consumer flexibility.	「～してください」 (obligation), 「お好みにより～」 (optional)
7	Evaluative language (Appraisal)	Persuade consumers through positive assessments.	「風味絶佳」「栄養豊富」「すごくおいしい」
8	Politeness strategies	Maintain a respectful relationship with consumers.	「お召し上がりください」
9	Discourse markers & formatting	Help navigation and highlight key information.	「①②③」「●」「※」「<お願い>」
10	Parallel structure in lists	Make nutritional information easy to scan.	「エネルギー 490kcal」 「たん白質 9.7g」

The table above shows that there are 10 linguistic features found in Japanese instant noodle packaging texts. First, the texts are dominated by technical nominal groups, which present factual information about ingredients, nutritional content, and product characteristics. Examples include 「油揚げめん (小麦粉 (国内製造)、植物油脂...)」 and 「栄養成分表示 1 食 (100g) 当たり」, which provide scientific and objective representations.

Apart from that, the use of technical terms such as 「調味料 (アミノ酸等)」 and 「酸化防止剤 (ビタミンE)」 reflects scientific legitimacy. Likewise, the use of technical terms such as 「調味料 (アミノ酸等)」 or 「酸化防止剤 (ビタミンE)」 demonstrates scientific legitimacy, in line with the tendency of Japanese texts to prioritize factual detail and precision (Hasan, 1996; Martin & Rose, 2007).

Further, the use of material processes such as 「水220mlを入れ、沸とうさせ、めんを入れる。」 and circumstances like 「直射日光をさけ、常温で保存してください。」 reflects the Japanese cultural focus on concrete processes and structured instructions to avoid ambiguity as

also highlighted by Teruya (2007). The use of polite imperative forms such as 「～してください」, for example, 「火を止める前にスープを入れてください。」, illustrate how packaging language balances directive force with politeness. This is in line with Japanese communication norms that emphasize wa (harmony) and amae (reciprocal relational dependence) as also outlined by Doi (1973) and Ide (1989). Likewise, the modal expression 「お好みにより～」 signals flexibility and accommodates consumer choice, in consistent with Japanese culture, which values individual preferences while still maintaining rules (Maynard, 1997). Evaluative expressions such as 「風味絶佳」「栄養豊富」「すごくおいしい」 are used as resources for constructing a favorable product image. Likewise, polite expressions like 「お召し上がりください」 exemplify keigo (honorific language) as a culturally grounded politeness strategy (Ide, 1989; Haugh, 2005).

From a textual metafunction perspective, Japanese packaging makes extensive use of visual discourse markers such as 「①②③」「●」「※」「<お願い>」 to organize information and guide consumers systematically. Finally, the parallel formatting of nutritional details, for instance, 「エネルギー 490kcal」「たん白質 9.7g」 that reflects a communication style that prioritizes orderliness and rapid comprehension. This is consistent with the principle of miyasusa (readability) in text design (Kress & Leuween, 2006; Teruya, 2007). It is also related to the cultural value of anshinkan (a sense of safety), which is important in producer-consumer relations in Japan (Sugimoto, 2010). This suggests that Japanese instant noodle packaging functions not only as a medium for product information but also as a reflection of core cultural values, including factual precision, polite instructional practices, consumer respect, and well-structured information delivery.

Across the three product categories, linguistic features vary distinctly according to communicative purpose and risk level. Although

drinks, medicines, and instant noodles all use nominalization, technical labels, and polite imperatives, their semantic orientations differ markedly. Medicine labels stand out as the most formal and regulatory, featuring technical terms, exact dosages, and firm prohibitions (e.g., 「服用しないでください」), which underscore priorities of safety, risk management, and legal adherence. Drink labels, by comparison, employ a persuasive and emotive approach with promotional, identity-evoking phrases (e.g., 「風味絶佳」, 「愛されてロングセラー」) to foster consumer attraction and emotional connection. Instant noodle labels strike a middle ground, blending clear instructions with tempered persuasion through procedural directives and adaptable phrasing (e.g., 「お好みにより」). These patterns demonstrate the genre sensitivity of Japanese packaging language: medicines prioritize authority and safety, drinks emphasize persuasion, and noodles balance the two, aligning with SFL's principle that linguistic choices reflect the context of situation (field, tenor, and mode).

Within Japanese cultural and communication theory, interaction is generally characterized by indirectness and deference to social hierarchy. This is evident in the polite and formal language found on medicine packaging, which signals respect for consumers and compliance with Japanese social expectations (Tanaka, 2005). Likewise, as Tanaka (2005) highlights, the use of symbolism and metaphor in Japanese advertising illustrates how language functions to create emotional resonance with consumers.

In the framework of linguistic theories on Japanese advertising, employing language that is simple yet rich in meaning, combined with a focus on cultural values like beauty and harmony, functions as a strategy to capture consumer interest and strengthen brand identity, in this case, the inclusion of cute or *kawaii* characters, for instance, not only grabs attention but also fosters an emotional bond with the audience (Tanaka, 2005).

To conclude, Japanese medicine packaging exemplifies the integrated application

of systemic functional linguistics, cultural communication norms, and advertising discourse principles to communicate information effectively, build consumer relations, and reflect key Japanese cultural values (Tanaka, 2005; Halliday, 2004; Davies, 2014; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Almurashi, 2016).

The linguistic features found in Japanese product packaging (instant noodles, beverages, and medicines) offer valuable insights for designing effective *dokkai* (reading comprehension) materials. These packaging texts make strategic use of linguistic resources to deliver information that is accurate, clear, and safe, rendering them highly suitable as authentic reading sources. From an ideational perspective, the prevalence of dense nominal groups, technical labels, scientific terms, and numerical data demonstrates a degree of informational precision that mirrors the cognitive challenges of *dokkai* tasks. Such features help learners practice identifying essential details within concise, information-packed texts.

From an interpersonal standpoint, the use of polite imperatives, evaluative wording, *keigo*, and culturally embedded politeness strategies in packaging language reflects key Japanese communicative values, including social harmony (*wa*), relational attunement (*amae*), and respect toward consumers. Comparable interpersonal meanings often appear in *dokkai* passages, where learners must interpret tone, degrees of politeness, and culturally informed expectations. Engaging with packaging texts thus enhances learners' capacity to recognize and analyze interpersonal subtleties within more formal reading materials.

On the textual level, the organized layouts, list structures, discourse markers, and parallel arrangements characteristic of product packaging align closely with the cohesion and coherence techniques employed in instructional reading texts. These textual features orient readers through the information, support efficient processing, and foster a sense of clarity and security (*anshinkan*). Since *dokkai* tasks similarly depend on clear structural organization,

packaging texts offer easily accessible yet authentic examples for developing learners' awareness of textual structure.

Furthermore, product packaging operates as a blended genre (macrogenre) that integrates descriptive, procedural, and persuasive components, genres that also feature prominently in dokkai instruction. Its layered thematic structure, succinct promotional statements, Japanese-English hybrid expressions, and multimodal features mirror the types of materials now commonly used in modern reading assessments. Engaging with packaging texts therefore helps learners develop the ability to interpret condensed information, handle genre hybridity, and read multimodal texts, ultimately offering valuable support for reading comprehension pedagogy.

The follow-up research program focuses on the development of beginner-level dokkai materials for teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL). The program is designed to introduce learners to text structures, obligatory and optional elements, and typical lexicogrammatical patterns of Japanese cultural descriptive texts through teaching modules, dokkai exercises based on simplified authentic texts, thematic vocabulary, and the integration of visual or multimedia cultural elements. This approach not only enhances students' reading skills and cultural understanding, but also equips them with linguistic awareness and critical analytical abilities.

In addition, the materials serve as a practical guideline for JFL teachers in designing systematic, research-based genre-oriented instruction, while also opening opportunities for the development of advanced modules for intermediate and higher proficiency levels.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of Japanese product packaging across instant noodles, beverages, and medicine demonstrates that these texts employ linguistic and semiotic resources in a systematic and functional manner to ensure accurate, clear, and culturally appropriate communication. The

ideational use of technical terminology and quantitative data reflects a strong commitment to informational precision, while interpersonal features such as polite imperatives, evaluative language, and keigo embody cultural values including wa, amae, and consumer respect.

Textual features such as structured layouts, list formats, and parallel organization further enhance readability and create a sense of reassurance (anshinkan). These findings also reveal meaningful parallels between packaging texts and dokkai (reading comprehension) materials. Both rely on dense nominal groups, clear thematic structuring, multimodal cues, and mixed-genre patterns that require readers to navigate descriptive, procedural, and persuasive meanings.

Fundamentally, packaging texts provide authentic models that mirror the linguistic complexity and discursive diversity encountered in dokkai, offering valuable pedagogical potential for fostering learners' comprehension of real-world Japanese texts. To conclude, the study shows that Japanese product packaging integrates systemic functional linguistic principles, cultural communication norms, and semiotic strategies in ways that not only reflect Japanese identity but also align closely with the design and instructional aims of reading comprehension materials. These insights highlight the relevance of everyday texts as meaningful resources for both linguistic analysis and Japanese language education.

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