

【Articles】

German Grammar Lesson Using the Pun: A Study Based on Jokes and Humor Theory

だじゃれで覚えるドイツ語文法：
ジョーク理論とユーモア理論を援用して

Yamazaki Asuka
(山崎明日香)

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[Abstract]

This study focused on the teaching strategy of German grammar lessons using *dajare* (puns) that are not considered part of the conventional studies of German-language didactics in Japan. Based on joke theory and humor studies, this study examined the effects of puns on memorization and the creation of a relaxing classroom atmosphere, as well as the disadvantages that occur during such lessons. Particularly during the early stages of grammar learning, promoting memorization by introducing the dual meaning of the pun into the grammar concept is problematic. In a controlled learning environment, the author attempted to determine whether such grammar lessons only used the pun as a temporary auxiliary teaching model to support efficient and effective memorization.

[Article]

1 . Introduction

The Japanese popular television drama series 99.9 刑事専門弁護士 (in Eng. *99.9 Criminal Lawyer*) began broadcasting in April 2016, with the second season beginning in January 2018.¹⁾ 深山 (Miyama: starring actor 松本潤 Jun Matsumoto), the hero of the drama, is an unconventional criminal defense lawyer that makes use of his high reasoning skill and great energy. He revisits difficult cases to prove the innocence of accused people who would otherwise be convicted of crimes with 99.9% certainty. Despite the drama dealing with serious crime themes, Miyama is a very humorous character. This is because he has a habit of making 駄じゃれ (or 駄洒落 *dajare*, in Eng. “pun”) amongst his colleagues quite naturally. This occurs not only in the character’s daily life, but especially during his criminal investigations. For example, when taking a seat at a table, people commonly utter table-etiquette clichés, such as いただきます! (Itadaki-masu!, in Eng. “Thank you for the meal!”). However, instead of using such phrases correctly, Miyama alters words. For instance, he alters the phrase “Itadaki-masu!” while still retaining the same auxiliary ending ます (masu) by saying いただきマンガース! (Itadaki Mangūsū, in Eng. “Thank you for the mongoose!”).

In this way, *dajare* involves wordplay by creating new meaning through the substitution of a certain defined word with one that contains the same or similar syllabic sound. Since Miyama is both a lawyer (an honorable profession in society) and an extremely good-looking man, but frequently uses humor, this features not only his uncompromising attitude regarding the repeal of any conventional norms and order, but also his resourceful and witty personality. Such an unconventional sense of humor enables solutions to serious incidents that were considered unsolvable by the power structure while using humor to neutralize the seriousness of a drama that deals with violent murder cases. Through this wordplay, serious atmospheres instantly become comical, thereby bringing laughter to the audience and releasing tension. Therefore, the program skillfully incorporates *dajare* into its content in order to sustain the audience’s concentration until the end of the story.

According to Yushi Odajima (2001, p. 46-47), *dajare* originated in ancient Japanese poetry collections such as 万葉集 (*The Manyōshū*, in Eng. *A Collection of a Myriad Leaves: 7-8th Century*) and 古今和歌集 (*The Kokin Wakashū*, in Eng. *The Collection of Japanese Poems of Ancient and Modern Times: 10th Century*), in which 枕詞 (Makura Kotoba) poetical epithets began to function as pivot words. It is surprising that such wordplay was introduced into elegant competitions featuring the ability and originality of poetic art among aristocrats. This is because 駄じゃれ (*dajare*), from the modern cultural point of view, is defined as つまらないしゃれ (Tsumaranai Share) (in Eng.

“boring pun”) by attaching the word 駄 (da), meaning “bored,” to the word 洒落 (Share), meaning “chic” or “stylish” (Morioka, 2000, p. 1076). This type of *dajare* involves rhetorical expressions aimed at the pivot word itself, and sometimes adds meaningless words in doing so (Ibid., p. 1076). It has therefore become a widespread genre of wordplay.

The literary and cultural situation surrounding *dajare* is slightly different in the English-speaking sphere, in which there is a literary tradition involving the wordplay of puns. According to Katie Wales (1989, p. 384-385), the pun was introduced relatively early in British literature, and involved the use of polysemous words “to suggest two or three meanings or the use homonyms, i.e. different words which look or sound the same but which have different meanings.” Puns consist of figurative language produced through the disintegration of a certain word constituted by significant and signifié and by the disharmonizing of the sentence syntax. However, opinions of the pun in the English-speaking sphere are divided. Frederick Ahl (1988, p. 21, 22 and 25) states that the “pun is both not respectable and is regarded as crass,” and that “it is rejected in academic culture.” Thus, while the pun is considered a very low form of humor, Wales (1989, p. 385) analyzes that the pun has gained high respectability in modern literary theory as a serious means of revealing subtle conceptual differences in addition to the “endless play” meaning in Jacques Derrida’s deconstruction theory. In his book *La Différance*, Derrida discusses the “déplacé” (displace) concept. This involves the use of similar words (e.g., “différence” and “différance”) with different spellings (Derrida, 1984, pp. 67-101). Derrida believes that such differences produce a sign, while the “motility of play” produces an effect that transcends the category of truth. In this way, the pun is recognized in Western Europe as a highly appreciated form of rhetorical wordplay through a reevaluation from the literary point of view for the play concept contained therein.

Regarding this point, Shuzo Kuki, a prominent Japanese philosopher of the early 20th century, developed his thoughts about the pun in his philosophy of 粹 (Iki) as a value of sick or excellent culture or a fashionable taste linked with Edo (the old name of Tokyo) in Japan. Kuki highly appreciated the effect of the pun during his experiences studying abroad, and noticed that “light laughing throws a cheerful reflection in a serious gloomy daily life” (Kuki, 1991, p. 36). Furthermore, he indicates that there are two kinds of structures involved in *dajare*; the former can simply be reduced to quantitative relations as being based on identity, the latter is predicting qualitative relationships on the basis of similarity (Ibid., p. 38). In this meaning, the former refers to almost the same one in similar pronunciations such as アマゴ (Amago, “amago salmon”) and アナゴ (Anago, “congroidei”), which belong to the same class of fishes and contain homophonic elements that are connected in parallel. The latter juxtaposes

phonetic similarities, such as 九鬼 (Kuki), クッキー (cookie), and ぐきっ (Gukittu, “crack”). This type of mutually similar relevance or irrelevance induces laughter.

Besides, two important points emerge when referring to Kuki’s analysis of the *dajare* or pun. The first is that the laughter created by using the pun changes the atmosphere and mood of a living space. This means that the pun is a powerful tool for controlling cultural and mental spaces. The second point involves the linguistic structure of the pun. By respecting word sound and homogeneity as well as the similarity of meaning, the pun generates unexpectedness, incongruity, and surprise as it deviates from usual word usage to show subtle nuance. Thus, everyday life is actively and constantly updated, and the perception of the world is altered. There is a phenomenon of mutual linguistic and cultural affinity between the pun-user and the listener. Incongruity in the language arouses the integration of concept and sound while a comic element is inserted. This is most likely a form of dramatic communication that can be recognized as a highly poetical art.

The author of this paper teaches university-level German and believes this wonderful *dajare* tradition is an appropriate pedagogical tool. German grammar is far more difficult for beginners than English. For example, English only uses the definite article “the,” while German uses 16 articles depending on the declensions and changes in case. Since learners must remember these complicated changes, it is necessary to create a simple tool to support memorization. This paper examines the effects of a German grammar teaching method that uses the pun in order to analyze its language strategy. Until now, this subject has not been considered in the research on didactics regarding German as foreign language in Japan. In this regard, since the 1970s, the research on the mnemonic technique for acquiring vocabulary in a second foreign language based on the psychological and mathematical model became popular, especially in the United States. This learning method involves the setting of a “keyword” (e.g., the use of a foreign language word, sound, or image that is the same or similar as one in the native language) to enable efficient memorization for the learner. There have many studies of this theme regarding the use of mnemonics for acquiring second foreign languages, including those by Richard C. Atkinson (1973), Paivio and Desrochers (1981), Pressley, Levin, and Delaney (1982), and Horst G. Sperber (1989).

During the same era, Rainer Scheckel (1991) examined the keyword method introducing similar sounds or puns along with illustrations. Furthermore, a German vocabulary study book collection introducing the pun was published by Scheckel and Narita (1997). With the exception of German language education, study books using puns have been published for a variety of subjects, including English and history. This gives the impression that the teaching method has been popularized as a standard memorization technique in Japan.²⁾

Regarding this trend in the didactic method, this study examines the pedagogical themes involved in memorizing German by especially focusing on grammar rules that use the pun. Until now, this theme has not been studied through conventional research conducted in either Germany or Japan. Teaching methods that introduce the pun are very unusual in the didactic traditions of Japan. This is because the “keyword” method (borrowing the words of Scheckel, 1991, p. 187 and 190) is an “outsider method” as it is necessary to make the effort to develop such teaching materials. This also relates to the fact that keywords similarly pronounced in the native language do not work as common and universal mnemonic techniques in other countries. Indeed, in the comprehensive and systematic research book on the methods of teaching German in German and Japan published by Huneke and Steinig (2002) and Yoshijima and Sakai (2003), there is no reference to the mnemo technique, which indicates that this pedagogical method is a minor one.

Surprisingly, the author realized that many university lecturers are concerned with using the pun during German grammar lessons. This was discovered when the author held a poster session under this theme at the Spring Research Conference of the *Japanese Society for German Studies* (日本独文学会) on May 28, 2016. This presentation received unexpectedly significant interest from both Japanese and German participants. During the subsequent exchange of opinions, it was revealed that some conference participants had their own mnemo techniques using the pun.

Although teaching methods using the pun are individually introduced as part of personal mnemo techniques during German lessons, there are problems because such techniques have not received much public recognition, and thus have not gained evaluation as official pedagogical methods. For that reason, the advantages of their efficiency and memorability are only privately emphasized while the negative effects are not considered. Based on such awareness of this issue, this paper not only discusses the language education strategy verified through this theme, but also examines the problems and efficiency involved in grammar learning that uses the pun.

The research method involved German grammar courses that targeted beginners; puns originally created by the author were used for the memorization and explanation of grammar rules. The intention was then to build the pun as a narrative architecture on each grammatical item as it connected to the word, thus awakening collective cultural images. In order to support the memory work of students, the author attempted to convert the grammar system of an unknown foreign language into an already-known image. It was also expected that *dajare* or puns, which create laughter and humor, would increase the learning effect by utilizing the function of disassembling the original meaning of the language, as well as by promoting the emotional involvement of the learner to the grammatical matter. For more comprehensive argumentation, the

disadvantages that resulted from this experiment were also examined.

This research was performed during grammar courses for beginners at four different universities in Japan (i.e., Mie University (Apr. 2015 – Jan. 2016), Kyoto Sangyo University (Sep. 2015 – Jan. 2017), Kyoto University (Apr. 2016 – Jan. 2017), and Ryukoku University (Apr. 2016 – Jan. 2017)). The questionnaire survey was carried out only at Mie University. Since the target readers of this article range from undergraduate students to German language teachers and researchers of didactics, it is noted here that amusing grammar explanations are later introduced to promote reading enjoyment.

2. Using Puns in the Narrative Construction

As already mentioned, a *dajare* is referred to as a pun in the English-speaking sphere, and is studied as part of joke theory not only from the viewpoints of pragmatic and cognitive linguistics, but also from relevance theory. From the viewpoint of conventional communication theory, Jutta Muschard (1999), Francisco Yus (2008; 2012), and Isao Higashimori (2011) developed the relevance theory of the joke, in which reasoning, implication, incongruity, and unexpectation are put into focus as constituting the joke while the reader or listener's process of understanding is also considered. In addition, sociocultural and commercial values of the pun are found in linguistics. For instance, Jacques Durand (1987), Edward McQuarrie and David Glen Mick (1996), Nobuyoshi Matsui (2007), and Folake Abass (2007) analyze that the pun is often used as a language strategy in the advertisement industry due to its high effectiveness when communicating with the consumer. In this way, there have been many foreign and domestic studies on wordplay that consists of jokes and puns, with the sociocultural stereotypes involved in the use of these jokes also being clarified. Taking the abovementioned studies into consideration, this section focuses on the memorization method incorporated into the narrative element through which basic German grammar categories are learned by Japanese students in the first half of the semester. Resulting problems are also examined.

2.1. Conjugation of Regular Verbs in the Present Tense

The grammatical category first learned by the beginner is the conjugation of the regular verb in the present tense. Verbs are modified depending on the persons and number of subjects by connecting endings to the bare form. For example, as table 1 shows, “lern” (the infinitive form of “lernen,” in Eng. learn) is conditionally conjugated into six types (i.e., lern-e, lern-st, lern-t, lern-en, lern-t, lern-en). In order to facilitate the memorization of basic verb-ending modifications, there is a well-known memorization

人称 personal pronoun	現在形 present form	音声 pronunci- ation	物語的な暗記術 story-like memorization	in Eng.
ich	lern- e	エ (e)	えー (Ē!)	Oh!
du	lern- st	スト (sto)	ストだって! (Suto datte!)	Strike!
er/sie/es	lern- t	テン (ten)	てん (Ten)	Incredibly
wir	lern- en			
ihr	lern- t	テン (ten)	てこまいだ! (tekomai-dal)	terrible!
sie	lern- en			

technique in German language education in Japan in which the six ending types are integrated into four words (e.g., エ, スト, テン, テン (e, st, ten, ten)). This unit of simple and comfortable pronunciations provides a great mnemonic effect. Its efficacy is such that it is seen in almost every German grammar textbook intended for Japanese beginners.

However, apart from this popular way of using this memorization type, it is possible to create a story based on these word pronunciations. For example, traffic strikes occur frequently in Germany. It is thus easy to imagine a situation in which one is suddenly encountered with a strike and shouts the following sentences: えー、ストだって！てんてこまいだ。(Ē!, Suto datte! Tenteko maida!) (in Eng. “Oh! Strike! Incredibly terrible!”)

When I used this pun unit in conjunction with a story in each of the five German classes, it did not promote laughter. Such an unsuccessful attempt to arouse the audience is a risk that can often occur for the user of the pun. According to slang scholar Akihiko Yonekawa (2003, p. 215), a situation in which a joke or gag fails to obtain the favor of the audience is called a すべる (滑る, Suberu) (in Eng. “slip”). However, humor researcher Willibald Ruch (2008, p. 34) indicates that it is also a reaction belonging to a certain form of humor. That is, the “slip” occurs when a group develops a negative mood that involves mockery, irony, cynicism, or sarcasm as a response to the performer’s humor. The term “slip” indicates that the structured laughter of an active performer does not match the passive listener’s recognition. By laughing at the performer’s failure, the listener’s passive position becomes active. In Japan, the teacher is often regarded as a classroom authority that students are hesitant to speak to or question. It can be said that a cynical situation in which the すべる “slip” is made by the teacher paradoxically helps to create a relaxing classroom atmosphere. It is sometimes necessary to “slip” because continually attempting to make the learner

laugh is not successful from a pedagogical viewpoint.

2.2. Conjugation of “sein” in the Present Tense

I hope I will not “slip” here. In this subsection, the author explains how the conjugation of the German verb “sein” (in Eng. “to be”) is memorized in the present tense. This activity involves a fictional conversation between speaker A and B about “throwing away trash.” Speaker A first asks B, 瓶を、瓶を捨てて！ (Bin wo, Bin wo Suttee!) (in Eng. “Bottle, throw the bottle!”). In response to A, B quickly answers, いーよ捨てるよ。(Ī yo Suteru yo.) (in Eng. “Yeah, I throw it away.”). Speaker A is very impressed by B’s helpfulness, and says, ジーンと感動、斉藤さんも、ジーンと感動。(Jīn to Kandō, Saitō-san mo, Jīn to Kandō.) (in Eng. “Touched my heart, Mr. Saito is also, touched.”). During this emotional conversation, the combination of homonyms between the first and second halves of the sentences would be heard as meaningless.

人称 person	現在形 present	物語的な暗記術 story-like memorization	in Eng.
ich	bin	瓶を、(Bin wo.)	Bottle,
du	bist	瓶を捨てて！ (Bin wo Suttee.)	throw the bottle!
er/sie/es	ist	いーよ捨てるよ。(Ī yo Suteru yo.)	Yeah, I throw it away.
wir	sind	ジーンと感動、(Jīn to Kandō.)	Touched my heart,
ihr	seid	斉藤さんも、(Saitō-san mo.)	Mr. Saito is also,
sie	sind	ジーンと感動。(Jīn to Kandō.)	touched.

However, with the sudden appearance of the word 斉藤さん (Mr. Saito), this unit of pun is very easy to memorize because it brings an emotional impact that is emphasized in the advertisement effect to the listener: they learn the grammar issue as a memorable phrase; it is difficult to forget regardless of the context.³⁾ Nevertheless, there may be a problem with the way such a meaningless story is used for easy memorization. This point will be discussed in the next subsection.

2.3. Conjugation of “haben” in the Present Tense

Yus (2012, p. 276) asserted the existence of a “joke frame” that is built into a conversation or text. The joke frame is the full structure of a conversation or sentence that is contextualized and related to a joke. It follows the typical set-up/punchline format. Without recognizing the joke frame or adhering to this process, the recipient will not understand when they are supposed to laugh. In the process of supplying sequential information, it is necessary for the listener and reader to identify this joke frame in order to understand the humor. This subsection deals with the present-tense

conjugation of the German verb “haben” (in Eng. “have”) based on the joke frame theory. Then, a unique story involving the joke frame is created that uses phonetic similarity to the verb form. The theme here is the act of “smoking illegal herb,” which is forbidden by Japanese law and has recently become a social problem due to increased use. Since the word “herb” is popular among young people, the author created the following situation using a pun.

人称 person	現在形 present	物語的な暗記術 story-like memorization	in Eng.
ich	habe	ハーブ、(Hābu,)	Herb,
du	hast	ハーブを吸ったら、(Hābu wo <u>suttara</u> ,)	I smoke herb,
er/sie/es	hat	はっとした！(hatto shita.)	surprising!
wir	haben	葉は便利、(Ha wa <u>benri</u> ,)	Herb is useful,
ihr	habt	歯がぶっ飛んだ、(Ha ga <u>buttonda</u> ,)	teeth blown off,
sie	haben	葉は便利 (Ha wa <u>benri</u>)	herb is useful.

In this story, a monologue involving an anonymous person is developed. This person relates an extraordinarily surprising experience by saying ハーブ、ハーブを吸ったら、はっとした！ (Hābu, Hābu wo suttara, hatto shita.) (in Eng. “Herb, I smoke herb, Surprising!”). It seems that this person experienced a stimulating effect. Fascinated by the herb, he utters the following phrase: 葉は便利、歯がぶっ飛んだ、葉は便利。(Ha wa benri, Ha ga buttonda, Ha wa benri) (in Eng. “Herb is useful, teeth blown off, Herb is useful.”). In this way of memorizing, unusual and illegal fictional events are connected with a serious grammar topic. In this regard, Youichi Kanari, a scholar of literature and reader of this article, commented that a totally monotonous verb change is presented as a complex of word rhythms (e.g., 五七調 (Go-Shichi-chou) (“five-and-seven syllable meter”)) with an attached story. In Japan, there is a poetic tradition utilizing this syllable meter; poems or sentences that employ the technique provide an elegant and harmonized impression to the listener or reader. Students therefore laughed at the strange result, in which a serious grammar topic sounded phonetically systematic, but was semantically comical. This is successfully employed in most German classes.

At the author’s poster session, however, Tokyo-based political scholar Masaya Watanabe (NHK Enterprises) indicated a problem with the “illegal herb” theme. Since Japanese students who take second foreign language courses at the university level are mostly between 19 and 21 years of age, ethical issues may arise when using such a cheerful theme in combination with the mention of illegal acts. Watanabe personally liked this pun unit, and laughed many times when I tried to explain it. However, he was

worried that the 粋 (Iki) or 洒落 (Share) (in Eng. “stylish,” “witty,” or “humor”) of the pun would not be understood by many students when the joke was performed by a teacher. This is because many students that have recently graduated high school may lack the appropriate experience to process the information.

In response to Watanabe’s criticism, Hiroki Iwamoto (an undergraduate at Kyoto University and one of the highest-performing students in the author’s German grammar courses) provided an opinion from the student perspective. Hiroki related an understanding of the attempt to use a teaching method that involved the pun for both memorization and humor in the classroom setting; he is already an adult with experience and discernment. Therefore, even if the contents of a theme deal with social taboos, Hiroki comprehends it as 洒落 (Share) (in Eng. “witty” or “humor”), and does not regard it as a particularly moral or ethical problem. Hiroki lives in the 関西 (Kansai) region in the west of Japan. His tolerant attitude is related to the region’s cultural climate, in which people understand humor. In Kansai, humor is pervasive in everyday life, and has become a medium for the smoothing of interpersonal relations.

The opinion of Arthur Asa Berger (Levis, 1997, p. 475) can be referred to regarding this point. He regards the comic spirit of jokes or humor as destructive to sociocultural codes and customs. The relater of a joke does not intend to recommend an illegal act or taboo within the creativity of the joke’s frame. Rather, he takes an antipodal attitude toward authorities and taboos. Nevertheless, when dealing with social taboos that occur within the frame of a joke, it is necessary to consider the balance between the emotional responses of students and institutional morals. When introducing a radical pun or joke, it should be regarded as a tool to support the creation of a positive and relaxing classroom environment.

2.4. Declension of Indefinite Article Ending: “ein”

Wilson Bryan Key, a media scholar and author of the famous book *Media sexploitation* (1976), indicates that introducing and presenting sexual topics unnoticeably or perceptibly in advertisements interacts with the reader’s unconsciousness and produces a large subliminal effect. Mixing sexual messages into advertising creates a

		masculine	feminine	neutral
1	nominative	ein	eine	ein
2	genitive	eines	einer	eines
3	dative	einem	einer	einem
4	accusative	einen	eine	ein

highly emotional appeal that effects the consumer, thereby making it easier for them to remember the advertised products. In this subsection, I refer to these advertisement strategies during grammar memorization techniques by using the pun to include sexual topics, and also examine the associated and inherent problems.

The grammatical category dealt with here is the infinitive article ending “ein,” (equivalent to the English “a”). As table 4 shows, the article “ein” is inflected not only according to the four grammatical cases (i.e., the nominative, genitive, dative, and accusative), but also the gender (i.e., masculine, feminine, and neutral). In most Japanese textbooks, these cases are practically treated as the numbers 1-4 to facilitate understanding.

Because this declension is complicated, learners must memorize all 12 endings of this grammatical category. Therefore, a number of students lose their motivation to learn each year at this early stage. Regarding this problem, the author especially focuses on grammatical genders and modifies them into biological-cultural gender categories, such as “male,” “female,” and “transgender” (following: TG), thereby creating a unit of puns in the frame of a joke. Within the framework of the resulting story, the article “ein” is transformed into Japanese homophony “愛” (Ai) (in Eng. “love”), and the “idea of love” of each of the four men, women, and TG-persons are explained.

2.4.1. The Case of Declension in the Masculine Form

It is first necessary to explain the fictional story to the student, as follows: “the men have a very romantic and platonic thinking about love.” Such preliminary information seems to entail that a joke will be made. This has nothing to do with the change of the case or that the case has an imaginary role that is built into the joke frame.

Then, the following stories are told: Mr. “ein,” the first man, tells us that he believes that 愛は一つ (Ai wa hitotsu.) (in Eng. “Love is for soulmates.”). He seems to have an image of pure love. The second man, Mr. “eines,” says the words 愛の巣 (Ai no su.) (in Eng. “The nest of love.”). He dreams of the beautiful life of the lovers. The third man,

格 case	男性 masc.	各4人の男性による愛の観念 Ideas of love of each of the four men	in Eng.
1	<u>ein</u>	愛は一つ (<u>Ai</u> wa hitotsu.)	Love is for soulmates.
2	<u>eines</u>	愛の巣 (<u>Ai no su</u> .)	The nest of love.
3	<u>einem</u>	僕の愛は、眠っている (Boku no <u>ai</u> wa, <u>nemutte</u> iru.)	My love is sleeping.
4	<u>einen</u>	愛は、念じるものだ (<u>Ai</u> wa, <u>nenjiru</u> monoda.)	Love is prayer.

Mr. “*einem*,” answers, 僕の愛は、眠っている (*Boku no ai wa, nemutte iru.*) (in Eng. “My love is sleeping.”). He seems to have nothing to do with a love affair. According to the fourth and final man, Mr. “*einen*,” 愛は、念じるものだ (*Ai wa, nenjiru monoda.*) (in Eng. “Love is prayer.”). He seems to have no sexual desire. In this story, the author ensures that the ideas of romantic and platonic love involving the characters introduced are regarded as fiction. Now, what ideas do the women have about love?

2.4.2. The Case of Declension in the Feminine Form

Compare to the men, the women in the fictional story have extremely pragmatic and cold ideas about love. The first woman, Ms. “*eine*,” says with absolute certainty that 愛は無(ね) — (*Ai wa nē-*) (in Eng. “There is no love.”). She does not believe in love. The second female, Ms. “*einer*,” has a more physical and sexual idea love, and vehemently insists that 愛は寝ることよ (*Ai wa neru koto yo.*) (in Eng. “Love is to sleep with man.”). Agreeing with that, the third woman, Ms. “*einer*,” likewise says that 愛は寝ることよ (*Ai wa neru koto yo.*) (in Eng. “Love is to sleep with man.”). She thinks a sexual relationship is necessary for her. Similar to the first woman, the fourth one, Ms. “*eine*,” utters the words 愛は無(ね) — (*Ai wa nē-*) (in Eng. “There is no love.”). She seems to be completely disillusioned with love. Unlike the belief of pure love held by the men, the women conceive of a practical and cynical love.

格 case	女性 fem.	各4人の女性による愛の観念 Ideas of love of each of the four women	in Eng.
1	eine	愛は無(ね) — (<i>Ai wa nē-</i>)	There is no love.
2	einer	愛は寝ることよ (<i>Ai wa neru koto yo.</i>)	Love is to sleep with man.
3	einer	愛は寝ることよ (<i>Ai wa neru koto yo.</i>)	Love is to sleep with man.
4	eine	愛は無(ね) — (<i>Ai wa nē-</i>)	There is no love.

2.4.3. The Case of Declension in the Neutral Form

The inflection of “*ein*” in the neutral form is basically similar to the masculine form. In this story, different ideas of love are expressed by the transgender persons. As with the men, the first TG, “*ein*,” confesses that 愛は一つ (*Ai wa hitotsu.*) (in Eng. “Love is for soulmates.”). The second TG, “*eines*,” says 愛の巣 (*Ai no su.*) (in Eng. “The nest of love.”), while the third TG, “*einem*,” modestly says 私の愛は、眠っている (*Watashi no Ai wa, nemutte iru.*) (in Eng. “My love is sleeping.”). The fourth TG, “*ein*,” asserts with confidence that 愛は一つ (*Ai wa hitotsu.*) (in Eng. “Love is for soulmates.”). Like the men, the TG-persons seem to think of love as pure and romantic. This similarity exists

格 case	中性 neut.	各4人のTGによる愛の観念 Ideas of love of each of the four TGs	in Eng.
1	ein	愛は一つ (<u>Ai</u> wa hitotsu.)	Love is for soulmates.
2	eines	愛の巣 (<u>Ai</u> no su.)	The nest of love.
3	einem	私の愛は、眠っている (Watashi no <u>Ai</u> wa, <u>nemutte</u> iru.)	My love is sleeping.
4	ein	愛は一つ (<u>Ai</u> wa hitotsu.)	Love is for soulmates.

because of the same grammatical change in the male and neutral cases. Therefore, the story of the grammar change here is similar and memorable.

As mentioned above, while using the idea of the social-cultural gender categories, the contrast between men, women, and TG-persons is emphasized in order to meet or confound the expectations of the listener. In this regard, Yus (2012, pp. 290-292) analyzes that the joke produces humor based on the listener's background knowledge about information on cultural, sexual, and social stereotypes. However, the joke is performed whether or not listeners individually support the stereotypical information. The memorization method using the pun that the author created also takes into account the categories of jokes involving sexual roles and ideas.

However, performing a "sexist joke" using such sexual implications and gender stereotypes often results in discomfort to the listener by disturbing them emotionally. As already mentioned when discussing advertising strategies, sexual topics have an emotional appeal effect, and are considered to be important factors for evoking the confidence of consumers. In another study of Key's *The Age of Manipulation* (1989), unknowingly altering consciousness and controlling the recipient's mind through a manipulating of meaning occur when the sender uses sexual implications commercially and sends message related to the sexually consumed body. Considering these perspectives warned about by Key, there is concern that providing memorization tips to the student that involve sexual motives may produce feelings of uneasiness. As indicated by other research (Levis, 1997, p. 460 and 490), it is also undeniable that such "sexist jokes" may be defined as "sexual harassment."⁴⁾

Of course, from the teaching viewpoint, research shows that mnemo tips using keywords related to male-female relationships or love and romance are particularly preferred by students, and thus increase their memorization effects (Scheckel, 1991, p. 203). Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the negative and positive aspects of students' attitudes when demonstrating such a memorizing technique using these types of puns.

2.5. Discussion of Related Problems

Paivio and Desrochers (1981, p. 792) introduced an opinion opposing the idea that the mnemo technique of calling a keyword for learning vocabulary when studying a second foreign language is different from the learning process under natural circumstances. Rather, they especially recommended the memorization method using keywords for adult learners because it is easy to set goals. As the author performed, an artificial learning circumstance involving the pun to memorize a grammatical category can be immediately used as a simple written test on German grammar.

However, as other researchers emphasize, figurative language (e.g., the pun) involves ambiguous meaning, and may thus falsify word meaning while leaving the listener to oscillate in semantic space (McQuarrie & Mich, 1996, p. 433; Abass, 2007, p. 48). Considering these points, the risk of introducing double meanings or images into one grammatical matter when promoting memorization cannot be ignored in the initial grammar-learning stage of a new foreign language. There are items of strong impact among the pun units within the story designed by the author. Thus, the learner should be provided with a dual meaning for one grammatical matter by receiving another unrelated story. There are concerns that learners consciously remember these items for long periods of time, and thus retain them whenever utilizing German grammar. This may lead to the distortion of their recognition of pure grammatical knowledge.

I can offer a humorous example concerning this point. A beginning learner of English in Japan may never forget the case in which they memorize the number “one” in English by repeating the Japanese word ワン (Wan), which is similar to the English word “bowwow” in the story 犬がワンと一回吠える (in Eng. “A dog barks once as ‘one’”). In this regard, I refer to an investigation by Dwight Bolinger (1980, p. 107) (author of the famous book *Language - The Loaded Weapon*). Bolinger analyzed that the representation of some states of affair are “skewed by some linguistic mismatch - a word with a double meaning or a construction that makes a false connection.” Therefore, double-meaning and structural non-uniformity that is constructed through a distortion of the original message created by the pun is sent to the listener. Mnemo techniques that create inconsistency and a disintegration of the word cause very big problems during the mental process of repeatedly memorizing.

Another example of the double-meaning problem can be referred to by examining a Japanese history lesson at the junior high school level in Japan. That is, it is necessary for the student to memorize that 平安京 (Heian-Kyo), the ancient imperial capital, was established in 794. Thus, useful memorization tips are often provided by the teacher, such as the famous phrase 鳴くよウグイス平安京 (Naku-yo Uguisu Heian-Kyo) (in Eng. “Singing nightingale at the capital Heian-Kyo”). This is not only multiplied by the number 794 (Na Ku Yon), which uses a homophony 鳴くよ (Naku-yo) (in Eng.

“Singing”), but the image of the spring bird うぐいす (Uguisu) (in Eng. “nightingale”) is also attached. The memorization of this matter is reinforced through the imaginative visualization of the city’s grand establishment.

This is called the “keyword” method in the study of mnemo techniques. The above way of memorizing the year 794 is very popular in Japan. For this reason, even when long periods of time have passed after students finish school or university entrance examinations, cases of cognitive bias exist due to the harmful effect of people continuing to recall 鳴くウグイス (“Singing nightingale”) as a Pavlovian response whenever they hear the word 平安京 (“the capital Heian-Kyo”). The historical, cultural, and multiple images of the capital Heian-Kyo are consolidated into one static image of “Singing nightingale” through the intensive memorization process for the high school and university entrance examinations, meaning that the consciousness of the students has been altered.⁵⁾

Scheckel (1991, p. 190) offers similar criticism. He recommends memorization techniques that use keyword and illustrations, however, introduces an opponent opinion to this argument, saying that these methods negatively affect the mental potential of students through banalization. I also argue in favor of this critical view. That is, memorization through the convenient using of the *dajare* or pun is intended to force students to wear a restrictive cloth of one image; the stronger the impact of the pun and laughter, the stronger the restriction of this cloth. It then becomes a powerful corset that oppresses the human imagination. In promoting memorization techniques that use the pun, the teacher should be aware that these cognitive restraint corsets will be put onto students for long periods of time.

Furthermore, according to the student questionnaire (see page 26, “Questionnaire Survey”), although there is a voice that is pleased to be able to support his or her own memorization, in the positive opinion of a student who feels this attempt as an advantage and provides a comment such as “unforgettable once I memorize it,” we can find the problem of distorted mental stamping in the word “unforgettable.” In this way, unlike the learning processes of native speakers, it can be understood that learning grammar by using the *dajare* or pun for memorization to focus on efficiency is not only a wonderful and advantageous method. In reality, the negative consequences should be taken into consideration. These include the introduction of information that is unnecessary for learning grammatical matters, a dependence on memorizing puns, and a distortion of recognition that cannot be resolved in a short period of time.

3. The Effects of Humor and Laughter as a Result of Using the Pun: Creating a Relaxing Classroom Atmosphere

Regarding speech techniques, the effects of laughter and humor have been found as early as the classical period. Cicero wrote in his *De Oratore* (*On the Orator*) that “Jesting too and shaft of wit are agreeable and often highly effective” (1948, II, liv, p. 357). In the case of political speeches that must win audience favor, it is necessary to utilize a rhetorical technique that results in laughter. This is because such laughter can sometimes enable a speaker to overcome an adversary. In his *Ars Rhetorica* (*The Rhetoric*, 1966, III, ii, p. 1412a/b), Aristotle recommended the use of humor and jokes in order to gain a lively expression during a speech. In addition, he emphasized rhetoric, unexpected words, jokes that depend on changing the letters of words, and homonyms. When rhetorical words are used in comical contexts, they are regarded as innovative and lively expressions. Thus, they produce unexpected, pleasant, and enjoyable results. In this classical book, humor and laughter are highly evaluated in terms of their function and efficiency regarding rhetorical techniques. Even in modern times, it is often argued in humor studies that *dajare* or puns are important elements for creating laughter during a speech or other form of social communication.

This section especially focuses on the production of laughter caused by the pun, which is based on the tradition of rhetoric. Each subsection will discuss domestic and foreign research on laughter as well as the cultural functions of humor as indicated in studies by Éric Smadja (1993), Avner Ziv (1995), Levis (1997), Willibald Ruch (2008), Akira Shimizu (2000), and Yoji Kimura (Ed. 2010). It will also demonstrate the memorization tips for each grammar category and examine the problems that occur during these lessons.

3.1. Declension of the Definite Article “der”



New students enter Japanese universities in mid-April. This is also when people in Japan celebrate the cherry blossom. There is much excitement about going on an outing for cherry blossom viewing. Flower-viewing parties or banquets with お弁当 (Obentou) (in Eng. “a basket lunch”) (fig. 1) and drinks are popular events. When the spring season concludes, students of German learn the changing forms of the definite article “der.” However, as shown in table 8, there are 16 total ending forms. Thus, many students become confused when attempting to learn them. In response to this problem,

the author attempted to convert the four grammatical genders into biological and cultural gender categories, such as “male,” “female,” “transgender,” and “groups.” These grammar tables are then modified to include four variable dishes that are packed into tiered lunch boxes based on the image of the spring cherry blossom viewing.

	m.	f.	n.	pl.
1	der	die	das	die
2	des	der	des	der
3	dem	der	dem	den
4	den	die	das	die

(1) In the Masculine Case: “der”

First, the food variations eaten by the man during lunch are mostly heavy and bountiful. In his lunch box, which is four-tiered for “der,” “des,” “dem,” and “den,” he packs the following culinary delights from top to bottom: 照り焼き、てっさ、田楽、おでん (Teriyaki, Tessa, Denngaku, Oden) (in Eng. “Teriyaki beef, thinly sliced fugu, baked dishes pasted with miso, and stewed food ingredients”). The Japanese fugu (fig. 2) cuisine packed into this second fold is a risky food that could bring the eater death in the event that the poison it contains is not completely removed. Despite this risk, the dish is known to epicureans for its great taste. Although it seems like a high-risk lunch to the students, it stimulates the appetite and promotes the subconscious learning of German.



	m.	cuisines	in Eng.
1	der	<u>照り焼き</u> (Teriyaki)	Teriyaki beef
2	des	<u>てっさ</u> (Tessa)	thinly sliced Fugu
3	dem	<u>田楽</u> (Denngaku)	baked dishes pasted with miso
4	den	<u>おでん</u> (Oden)	stewed food ingredients

(2) In the Feminine Case: “die”

What foods do the women have for lunch? Carefully looking at table 10, it can be seen that cases 1 (“die”) and 4 (“die”) are blank. Only cases 2 (“der”) and 3 (“der”) are packed with cuisines. The cuisines are the same i.e., テリーヌ、テリーヌ (terrine, terrine) (in Eng. “terrine and terrine”). The makes the lunch box seem nearly empty. Is this woman on a diet? This is not to say that the author is too lazy to think of suitable ingredients, but that this is a rhetorical and teaching strategy.

	f.	cuisines	in Eng.
1	<u>die</u>		
2	<u>der</u>	テリーヌ (<u>terr</u> ine)	terrine
3	<u>der</u>	テリーヌ (<u>terr</u> ine)	terrine
4	<u>die</u>		

In this regard, we can refer to the study of “unsaid” rhetoric conducted by Marcella Bertuccelli Papi (1996, pp. 191-196). That is, “unsaid” words or attitudes are often connotatively implied in text or speech. These hidden items are incorporated into sentence structures. This “unsaid” component complements the semantically logical and clear “said” sentences in order to constitute perfect meaning. Referring to this rhetorical theory, the author showed the students this unfinished schema involving the lunch box by incorporating a pun with the expectation that they would complete cases 1 and 4 by themselves.

In fact, according to ad-rhetoric researcher Jacques Durand (1987, p. 308), the unusual suppression and ellipsis involved in these rhetorical items are designed for readers to fall into a process that requires an understanding of what is missing. This is considered to be a very difficult rhetorical technique. Therefore, students may be able to memorize “die” from the presence of the blank spaces during the process of filling the words in on their own. In such a way, it is sometimes important for teachers not to prepare everything perfectly. Rather, they should incorporate playfulness into the process since it allows students to voluntarily fill incomplete ellipses. (For that reason, if someone knows an appropriate pun for the article “die,” please let me know!)

(3) In the Neutral Case: “das”

The lunch box for a transgender person is filled with unusual and eclectic cuisines that combine Japanese and Mexican dishes. Thus, the box contains the following foods for cases 1 to 4: タコス、てっさ、田楽、タコス (Takosu, Tessa, Denngaku, Takosu)

	n.	cuisines	in Eng.
1	<u>das</u>	<u>タコス</u> (<u>Takosu</u>)	taco
2	<u>des</u>	<u>てっさ</u> (<u>Tessa</u>)	thinly sliced fugu
3	<u>dem</u>	<u>田楽</u> (<u>Denngaku</u>)	baked dishes pasting with miso
4	<u>das</u>	<u>タコス</u> (<u>Takosu</u>)	taco

(in Eng. “taco, thinly sliced fugu, baked dishes pasted with miso, and taco”). This is a curious assortment of foods. One must be careful to eat the fugu, a perishable fish. (The explanation of the plural form “die” is omitted at this time.)

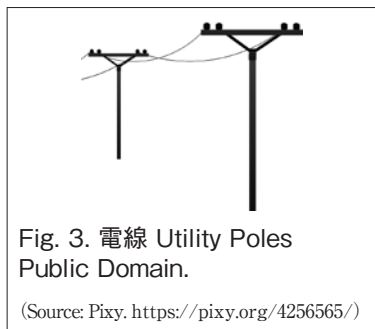
As explained above, the grammatical items are connected to the beautiful scenery that accompanies traditional cherry blossom viewing by using homonymy and the similarity of words and sounds. These collective cultural images and memories (which are well-known to students) often evoke emotional reactions in the recipient. In this regard, researcher of literature Aleida Assmann (2007, pp. 83-404) analyzes that collective cultural images, symbols, or landscapes directly link to the national memory, which functions as a cultural tool to evoke national identity and emotion. The grammatical matter is associatively bridged by the mental scenery of the learner, which means that another image is overlaid onto the grammatical information. This contributes to a reduction in learning time since students do not have to memorize the grammar system from the beginning. By changing an unknown and foreign grammar system into a known image through the creation of a narrative relation, the emotional involvement of learners is promoted. This facilitates grammar programming.

3.2. Declension of the Relative Pronouns: “der/die/das/die”

In this subsection, we will learn a way to memorize the declensions of the relative pronouns according to case and gender. Looking at table 12, it can be seen that there is a great deal of overlap between the relative pronouns and the definite articles with

	m.	f.	n.	pl.
1	der	die	das	die
2	<u>dessen</u>	<u>deren</u>	<u>dessen</u>	<u>deren</u>
3	dem	der	dem	<u>denen</u>
4	den	die	das	die

the exception of the five declensions shaded in gray (i.e., “dessen,” “deren,” “dessen,” “deren,” and “denen”). The author created a joke framing a narrative story for these five changes. First, as fig. 3 shows, there are two utility poles with very sloppy electric wires attached. The state of these wires is depicted as follows: 電線が、でれーん。電線が、でれーん。送電ねん！ (Densen ga, derēn, Densen ga, derēn, Sōden nen!) (in Eng. “The electric wire hangs lo-oosely. The electric wire hangs lo-oosely. What a power transmission!”).



Using the rhetorical anadiplosis and homology of the sound, the pun gains rhythms that are easily memorized regarding the grammatical items. In addition, a loose image of the electric wire is reinforced through repetition. Despite this, however, the

<u>dessen</u>	<u>deren</u>	<u>dessen</u>	<u>deren</u>	<u>denen</u>
電線が、 (<u>Densen</u> ga.) ("The electric wire")	でれーん。 (<u>derēn</u> .) ("hangs lo-o- oosely.")	電線が、 (<u>Densen</u> ga.) ("The electric wire")	でれーん。 (<u>derēn</u> .) ("hangs lo-o- oosely.")	送電ねん！ (<u>Sōden nen</u> .) ("What a power transmission!")

contrasting visual image of the powerful transmission combines with it to present a funny impression. In the last phrase, 送電ねん (Sōden nen.) (in Eng. "What a power transmission!"), the word ねん (nen) is a form of dialect in the Kansai region. It is a particle meaning assertiveness, and represents the word related to standard Japanese なのだ (nanoda) (in Eng. "It is.") (Makimura, 1979, p. 543). Many prominent comedians come from the Kansai region. Thus, the Kansai dialect is well-known by audiences of television comedy programs or talk shows. In this context, Makoto Yoshimura (2017, pp. 19-67) says that the Kansai dialect is called "language in life," which symbolizes a language that counters the standard and normative. It is strategically used for producing laughter by countering standard Japanese values. Therefore, the author introduces such local words and sounds to create laughter in order to help students to enjoy their environment and time spent learning.

3.3. The Cases of the Personal Pronoun in the Accusative

Here, we discuss the German personal pronouns in the accusative form only; there are four singular cases (i.e., "mich," "dich," "ihn," and "sie") and three plural forms (i.e., "uns," "euch," and "sie"). As fig. 4 depicts, the author designed a nice story by casting ミッフィー Miffy (a famous small female rabbit characterized by the Dutch painter Dick Bruna). Using the cases "mich," "dich," "ihn," "sie," and "es" (shaded gray in the schema), we can follow the next story, as such: ミッフィーちゃんの弟子は、インド人でーす。(Miffi-chan no, deshi wa, Indo-jin dē-ē-su.) (in Eng. Miffy's assistant i-i is an Indian.) For the three plural cases (i.e., "uns," "euch," and "sie"), I provide the following phrases: うん そーだねー。美味いね〜。Gだよ〜。(Un sō-ō-da ne. Oishi nē, G dayō) (in Eng. "Yea-a-ah, that's ri-ght. Wonderfu-ul...! Go-od!").



Fig. 4. Miffy

Illustrations Dick Bruna
© Mercis bv, 1953-2018.
(Source: Miffy, <https://www.miffy.com/>)

ich	du	er	sie	es
mich ミッフィーちゃんの (Miffi-chan no) (Miffy's)	dich 弟子は、 (deshi wa.) (assistant i-i-is)	ihn インド (Indo) (an)	sie 人 (Jin) (Indian.)	es でーす。 (dē-ē-su.)
wir	ihr	sie		
uns うんそーだねー。 (Un sō-ō-da nē-.) (Yea-a-ah, that's ri-ight.)	euch 美味しいね～ (Oishi nē-.) (Wonderfu-ull!)	sie Gだよ～。 (G dayō) (Go-o-od!)		

the rhetorical figures, says that the rhetorical arrangement of constituents emulating the grammatical formal rules is called an anacoluthon, which brings about impossible images. Here, feelings of incongruity are created by placing Miffy in a mismatch, which produces an emotional impact to the listener by fantasizing the grammar item.

Students were pleased with this memorization tip. I remember a grammar class at Mie University in which the students normally took their lesson quietly and without socialization. However, when I presented this memorization method using “Miffy,” I heard the students begin to bustle. They were whispering to each other about what had occurred in the class while suppressing laughter. Perhaps they were upset and desperate to internalize their joviality. Such a strange scene may be unique to Japan. This point will be problematized later on in the discussion.

3.4. The Declension of Adjectives: Weak Inflection

It is especially difficult to muster the weak inflection of adjectives among German grammar categories because the forms are made complicated by adding the endings “e” or “en” to the adjective according to the gender and case. As such, the author developed well-suited puns for students. As table 15 shows, there are eleven “en” endings in the adjective inflections shaded in gray. Japanese words with the same alliteration 宴会 (Enkai) (in Eng. “party”) are used as paronomasia and repeated in

	m.	f.	n.	pl.
1	der gut-e Mann	die gut-e Frau	das gut-e Kind	die gut- en Kinder
2	des gut- en Manns	der gut- en Frau	des gut- en Kindes	der gut- en Kinder
3	dem gut- en Mann	der gut- en Frau	dem gut- en Kind	den gut- en Kindern
4	den gut- en Mann	die gut-e Frau	das gut-e Kind	die gut- en Kinder

each case in order to achieve the effect of epizeuxis, which increases emotional intensity. Furthermore, the grammatical gender categories are converted into biological and cultural ones (i.e., “male,” “female,” “transgender,” and “groups”). The grammatical cases from 1 to 4 are replaced by the number of days, from the first to the fourth day, on which people schedule their parties. Thus, in this joke frame, the party plans of different genders and groups are arranged for the fourth day. See below:

【☆ Party Schedule: From the First Day Until the Fourth ☆】

As the end of December approaches in Japan, restaurants and bars everywhere are full of people engaging in parties and banquets (fig. 5). The man in this story particularly loves a drink of alcohol, and, with the exception of the 1st day, is very busy getting ready to party. As shown in the schedule (table 16), the man plans to drink on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th days. Looking at his schedule, it can be seen that the plans are to 宴会、宴会、宴会 (Enkai, Enkai, Enkai) (in Eng. “Party, party, and party”). The depiction here creates a humorous atmosphere through the repetitive effect of the word, which is a consecutive and typological repeat.



Fig. 5. Party 「かんぱーい☆」 (Cheers!)

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In contrast, the woman and the TG person will not drink as much alcohol. Their party schedules show nothing for the 1st or 4th day. However, there are parties on the 2nd and 3rd days. This is noted with the words 宴会、宴会 (Enkai, Enkai) (in Eng. “Party and party.”). What will happen if many people gather? It is a matter of course that parties are held every day. The following phrases describe the situation: 宴会、宴会、宴会、宴会、それでええんかい! (Enkai, Enkai, Enkai Enkai. Sorede een kai!) (in Eng. “party, party, party, and party. Is such a thing really ok?!”). I think it is really extravagant!

The exaggerated drinking-party image is derived from the epizeuxis using the

Table 16 宴会のスケジュール (4日間) Party Schedule (4 days)				
	呑み助の男性 a hard-drinking man	女性 a woman	トランスジェンダー a TG-person	にぎやかなグループ a busy group
1 st day	e	e	e	<u>en</u> 宴会 (<u>Enkai</u>)
2 nd day	<u>en</u> 宴会 (<u>Enkai</u>)	<u>en</u> 宴会 (<u>Enkai</u>)	<u>en</u> 宴会 (<u>Enkai</u>)	<u>en</u> 宴会 (<u>Enkai</u>)
3 rd day	<u>en</u> 宴会 (<u>Enkai</u>)	<u>en</u> 宴会 (<u>Enkai</u>)	<u>en</u> 宴会 (<u>Enkai</u>)	<u>en</u> 宴会 (<u>Enkai</u>)
4 th day	<u>en</u> 宴会 (<u>Enkai</u>)	e	e	<u>en</u> 宴会 (<u>Enkai</u>) それでええんかい! (<u>Sorede een kai!</u>)

sound “en.” The last phrase, それでええんかい! (Sorede een kai!), which is placed opposite to the word 宴会 (Enkai) (in Eng. “party”), indicates a chiding voice. However, it includes a homonym of “party” 宴会 (Enkai), and is an epanalepsis to repeat the phrase for emphasis. In this phrase, the old adjective ええ (Ee), “good” (良い, Yoi) in the standard language remains only in the Kansai dialect (Makimura, 1979, p. 86-87), is used. This sentence provides an ironic nuance, and indicates a surprising (but fun) feeling for the group that is drinking every day.

3.5. Discussion

According to this experiment’s questionnaire survey, the majority of respondents positively evaluated the German grammar lessons that used the pun in terms of their memorization effects and atmosphere. A total of 82% responded that they regarded this method as an easy memorization tool, while 72% acknowledged its memorization effects. However, some negative evaluations were included through comments such as the following: “As the lesson become enjoyable, I cannot concentrate” and “It was for me better to memorize the grammar in usual way.” These minority opinions cannot be ignored. Evoking laughter during lessons is not necessarily good.

In this regard, humor studies researchers Akira Shimizu (2000, p. 68-72) and Kimura (2010, pp. 6-12) analyze that laughter is understood as a “release” in the mental mechanism. It thus becomes a trigger for the discharge of suppressed mental stress and energy. Indeed, even in research involving the effects of laughter from the medical viewpoint (Shimizu, 2000; Morita, 2010; Hirosaki, 2010), only the positive effects of laughter on the body and the mental mechanism are emphasized as if such an emotional phenomenon solves everything in this sick and depressed society. In this type of research, laughter is idealized as a panacea.

However, laughter is not only a physical and mental phenomenon of “release.” It is also a certain experience that places a load on the mind and body. Therefore, evoking laughter through the use of a pun during class should result in mental stress for the students. Due to the strong impact of laughter, using the pun to learn grammar may cause problems. For instance, the student may only memorize the pun as useless information or only store information about an amazing scene presented during class, which can remain as a traumatizing mental picture for long periods of time. The author has particular concerns about this point, which does not emerge through a simple questionnaire survey. Even though this research achieved satisfaction and the method was favorable among students, it is not possible to accurately estimate its effects unless the resulting negative effects are observed over the long term. We must pay attention to the fact that there are cases in which learning through artificial memorization that evokes laughter by using the pun at the early grammar-acquisition stage could bring

disadvantages that are not visible to the teacher.

Nevertheless, we should positively acknowledge the comments from students who regard this method as “relaxing” and “enjoyable.” According to a study by Tetsuya Hattori (Morita, 2010, p. 74), the generous culture of humor that had been enjoyed in Japanese society until 1889 receded into the background; laughter rapidly disappeared. This is a result of changes in the Japanese political and social systems. That is, people were placed under great stress because it became necessary to constantly learn information from the West. Hattori sees pre-modern authoritarianism as having caused the loss of laughter in Japan.

As the laughter-suppressing tradition was formed in modern educational settings, students tend to repress both opinions and laughter during class. Under such suppression, students are often seen quietly fighting off laughter when teachers make jokes. It seems as if they are afraid to diminish the teacher’s authority through laughter. This trend is particularly prominent in the Kanto region around Tokyo, while the Kansai region around Osaka and Kyoto is relatively released from such authoritarianism. (The author mentioned the case of Watanabe in Tokyo and Hiroki in Kansai. See the argument presented in section 2.3.)

In this regard, catharsis is exerted when a certain tension arises between the person making the joke and the target of the joke, but it is impossible to successfully make a joke under too much tension (Levis, 1997, p. 458). Therefore, when introducing a pun, it is first necessary to build a relationship of mutual trust between the teacher and the students while creating a relaxing atmosphere. Furthermore, humor researcher Ziv (1995, pp. 48-70) observed that laughter and humor gain more efficiency when they are performed by people in higher positions than those to whom the gestures are directed. This is because such gestures release tension while building mutual communication, regardless of position and class. Therefore, I believe that using the pun during grammar classes brings relaxation and eases authoritarianism whether the teacher slips or not. (Regarding the meaning of “slip,” see section 2.1.)

4 . Conclusion

This examination of German grammar lessons involving the *dajare* or pun indicated their usefulness in promoting memorization. This method also created a relaxing atmosphere despite individual differences. As the puns resulted in laughter, the tense classroom atmosphere relaxed, thereby altering student attitudes. Even students who are skeptical about the effects of the pun acknowledge the effects of creating a positive atmosphere. The questionnaire survey revealed that many students regarded this teaching method as one without disadvantages. However, problems exist. These include

the continued distortion of recognition regarding grammar matters and the long-term harmful aftereffects of language learning owing to correct and original knowledge through other representations.

Further examination is required to study these problems from the long-term perspective. Japanese educational institutions and examination industries that place excessive emphasis on memorization are deeply relevant to teaching methods that use the *dajare* or pun. Thus, this figurative rhetoric must be regarded as an educational and socially important tool or strategy for processing information, as we can already confirm its usefulness in and cultural significance. On the other hand, as mentioned in the discussion in section 2, we must also consider disadvantages such as the flattening and uniformizing of thought when teaching through this method.

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This research began when a student at Kyoto Sangyo University asked me in 2011 or 2012 whether I knew any memorization tips for German grammar except for “e · st · ten · ten.” After that time, I occasionally thought of puns while on a train or in a café, which gave me much enjoyment. I remember nearly everything about this law student, including his face, attitude, and high motivation to learn German. Unfortunately, I cannot recall only his name. However, this is a good thing; here, I can thank him for the opportunity to think of this research theme, which I dedicate to all people who require such a way to memorize German grammar, from students to teachers and researchers of didactics. I also thank Youichi Kanari as the first reader of this paper. Kanari provided me with valuable insight and encouraged me throughout this study. I also give my appreciation to all reviewers for their many useful comments. This advice helped me greatly in my revisions. Finally, I would like to thank Masaya Watanabe, Hiroki Iwamoto, and Junichi Yoshimura for their cooperation in preparing this paper.

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Questionnaire Survey on the German Grammar Lesson Using the *Dajare* / Pun

This questionnaire survey was conducted at Mie University during the 2015 winter semester. It targeted 47 students in two classes. The majority of these students positively evaluated the teaching of German grammar using the pun in terms of its memorization effects and creation of a positive atmosphere. They provided many positive opinions, but there were also some negative evaluations. I specify them below for reference. (The respondent numbers are indicated in parentheses.)

1. Are the puns easy for memorizing grammar?	very easy	normal	not easy
	82% (39)	17% (8)	0.4% (2)

2. How do you estimate the memorizing effect?	very effective	normal	ineffective
	72% (37)	14% (7)	0.4% (2)

3. Is the pun an obstacle to your learning?	no hindrance	normal	interrupted
	91% (43)	0.6% (2)	0.2% (1)

Positive Comments:

“It is easy to memorize.” “I can memorize it while having fun.” “Easy to memorize.” “I want you to introduce more puns.” “I can take the lesson while relaxing.” “Once I learn it, it is hard to forget.” “The lesson becomes interesting.” “Miffy’s pun is good.” “I can use it for exams.” “I want you to also introduce proverbs, etc.” “I was able to concentrate on the lesson all the time.” “The effect is enormous.” “Great.” “As an intentional pun, it has enough effect.” “It is easier to memorize than just to explain the grammar.” “Enjoyable.” “Easier to memorize compared to when it is not used.” “I wanted to know more about other puns.” “I could concentrate on the lesson all the time when I did not stay focused.”

Negative Comments:

“It was not effective.” “It was for me better to memorize it in the usual way.” “It is important whether I want to transcribe the pun.” “As the lesson become enjoyable, I could not concentrate.” “It was funny, but I did not remember the pun.” “Although there is an effect, it is suitable for high school students.” “Ordinary.” “‘e-st-ten-ten’ was best.” “It was easy to memorize, but sometimes I do not notice the pun.”

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[注]

- 1) The drama series *99.9 刑事専門弁護士 “99.9 - Criminal Lawyer”* of the Japanese commercial broadcasting station TBS. I referred to the following website: Accessed 24 Feb. 2018. (<http://www.tbs.co.jp/999tbs/>) I really recommend this television program for the pun-user and -lover.
- 2) In addition, my colleague and linguist Junichi Yoshimura (The University of Shiga Prefecture), who is a witty man and loves *dajare*, actively uses it during his German courses, which attracts students.
- 3) I created this pun with the word “Mr. Saito” when I recalled my colleague whose name is Sho Saito (The University of Tokyo). He is a researcher of Western history of philosophy. Although he is a respectable and serious person and I have never heard of him using puns, I thank him for his cooperation.
- 4) Here, Watanabe and Kanari commented that male teachers should especially be careful about this sensual topic because the Japanese university system attempts to prevent sexual harassment in all cases.
- 5) Regarding this point, Kanari considers the pun as a great form of study support because it is easier to use than the normal technique. He still remembers a famous phrase used for an examination question from long ago, as follows: Such the year “962,” the year of the crowning of Otto the Great of the Holy Roman Empire (オットー大帝苦勞人 (Otto Taitei Kuro-ninn), which means “Otto the Great was a hardship person”). This is multiplied by the number 962, “Ku Ro Ninn”. However, we are not sure whether Otto the Great experienced these hardships to obtain success or whether he had seen the world. Nevertheless, his fictional depiction as “a hard-working man of difficulty” is fixed in the memories of Japanese students.

要旨

本稿は、日本におけるドイツ語教授法において従来まで考慮されてこなかった、「だじゃれ」を導入したドイツ語文法の教授成果とそのストラテジーについての報告を行うものである。だじゃれやジョークの言語研究は、英語圏で盛んである。だじゃれには社会文化的な高い価値が見出されており、そのコミュニケーション効果や訴求効果により、広告業界で言語戦略として導入されている。本稿では、これらのジョーク理論だけではなく、笑いの作用について研究したユーモア理論を援用しながら、本テーマの教授方法を実践するなかで得られた記憶効果や良い雰囲気作りの効果のみならず、その問題点についても検証する。とりわけ、初期文法学習の段階において、文法概念にダブル・ミーニングを導入して暗記を促すことに、問題を見出せる。人工的な学習プロセスにおいて、効率を重視した暗記対策のための「だじゃれを利用した文法学習」が、一時的で補助的な教授モデルとしてのみ利用される可能性を見出すことを試みる。

