



MSc and MPhil in Japanese Studies 2022/2023

Texts in Japanese Linguistics

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Michaelmas Term, 2 hours of tutorial per week.

Prerequisites: Modern Japanese at level 2 or higher.

Course description:

The purpose of this option is for students to examine a particular set of issues in Japanese linguistics in some detail, while assimilating the necessary concepts and vocabulary in the process. Students will read, translate, and critically comment on two parts of the book *'Boku wa unagi da' no bunpō: da to no* by Okutsu Kei'ichirō (1979).

This is a classic work on Japanese grammar that takes as its starting point various possible uses and interpretations of the sentence *boku wa unagi da* sometimes literally (but usually mistakenly) translated 'I am an eel'. Depending on context, this sentence can be used in reply to questions such as "What did you order?", "What are you fishing for?", or "What is your favourite fish?" amongst many others. Okutsu examines the many sentences that can be formed on the same basic pattern from the perspectives of syntax and semantics.

The book addresses in particular the question of the status of the 'copula' within Japanese. This topic raises further questions about focus, presupposition, etc., and thus covers some basic notions in pragmatics. The book covers a range of issues using basic intuitions about meaning and grammaticality in a very accessible, though by no means unproblematic, way.

Course Assessment:

The main assessment will be through a three-hour examination in Trinity Term.

Statement of Coverage

This document applies to students starting the MSc and/or MPhil in Japanese Studies in Michaelmas Term 2022. The information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years.

Disclaimer

The information in this document is accurate as at 02 September 2022, however it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained at www.graduate.ox.ac.uk/coursechanges. If such changes are made the department will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes and students will be informed.