

The Grammar of Japanese Racialized Discourse in Hate-Korea Books

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In the early 2010s, throughout Japan, far-right groups held numerous racist demonstrations against Asian peoples, especially people of Korean descent. Also during this period, non-fiction books and magazine articles that denigrated South Korea coalesced into a literary genre known as *ken-kan* or hate-Korea, and two hate-Korea books reached the bestseller lists in 2014. The authors of hate-Korea books also wrote *nihon raisan* (praise-Japan) books that excessively glorified Japan and its culture. Published by mainstream publishers and shelved along with other books in ordinary bookstores, hate-Korea books, alternately called *heito bon* (hate books), are a form of hate speech that requires a specific examination. Using Goldberg's (1993) grammar of racialized discourse, this paper analyzes the two hate-Korea bestsellers and a praise-Japan book written by the author of one of the bestsellers to examine their grammar and the intersection of Japanese racism and nationalism embedded there.

Keywords Racism, nationalism, hate speech, Korea, Japan

I. Introduction

In the early 2010s, throughout Japan, far-right groups held numerous racist demonstrations against Asian peoples, especially people of Korean descent. Also during the same period, non-fiction books and magazine articles that denigrated South Korea coalesced into a literary genre known as *ken-kan* (hate-South Korea; hereafter, hate-Korea),¹ particularly attracting male readers over 40 years old (“*Heito bon*” 2017, September 16). Hate-Korea books, alternately called *heito bon* (hate books), are a form of hate speech that requires a specific examination. Published by mainstream publishers and shelved along with other books in ordinary bookstores, hate-Korea books are a

¹ The word *kan* in *ken-kan* stands for *kankoku* or South Korea in Japanese. In this paper, the word Korea refers to South Korea.

more formal or authorized form of knowledge than racist remarks made online or at racist demonstrations.

In 2014, two hate-Korea books, *Bōkanron* (Stupid South Korea) (Murotani, 2013) and *Chikanron* (Shameful South Korea) (Lee, 2014), reached the bestseller lists (Nippan, 2014; Tohan, 2014).² The former was written by Katsumi Murotani, a Japanese journalist who had served as a special correspondent in Seoul in the 1980s for Jiji Press, one of the two major Japanese wire service agencies, and retired from the news agency in 2009. The author of the latter was Sincere Lee, a self-described Korean dentist living in Korea, whose Japanese blog began in 2009 and attracts more than 100,000 page views per day.³ The publishers of the two books are the right-wing publishers Sankei and Fusōsha. One estimate holds that more than 200 hate-books (including anti-China ones) were published between 2013 and 2014, the years of their peak popularity (Oizumi et al., 2015: 3). The popularity of the two bestsellers from among numerous hate-Korea books can be partly attributed to the fact that Murotani was a former special correspondent in Seoul for Jiji Press and Lee's claim to be Korean.

Due to an anti-racism backlash and the belated enactment of a law against hate speech in June 2016, explicitly racist book publication decreased. Between 2015 and 2016, the trend shifted to *nibon raisan* (praise-Japan) books, which excessively glorified Japan and its culture (e.g., Oguni, 2015, February 25; Shirona & Ikeda, 2016, December 23). Some authors of hate-Korea books also wrote praise-Japan books,⁴ which is hardly surprising,

² Each sold more than 200,000 copies. Nippan and Tohan are the two largest oligopolistic book distributors in Japan. *Bōkanron* (Murotani, 2013) ranked third in the business category of Nippan's 2014 bestseller list and *Chikanron* (Lee, 2014) ranked ninth in its paperback nonfiction category (Nippan, 2014). The former ranked first and the latter seventh in the paperback nonfiction category of Tohan's 2014 bestseller list (Tohan, 2014). *Bōkanron* was one of the twenty bestselling books of the year, ranking twentieth on Nippan's list and seventeenth on Tohan's.

³ Timestamps on the former blog site (<https://ameblo.jp/sincerelee/>) indicate the oldest article was dated August 18, 2009. The current blog site is <http://sincereleeblog.com/>. See the author's biography on the book cover for the number of page views (Lee, 2014).

⁴ Sincere Lee, the author of *Chikanron*, published *Naze nibon no goban wa oishii no ka* (Why Is Japanese Rice Delicious?). Bunyu Ko, who is originally from Taiwan and a naturalized citizen of Japan, published two hate-Korea books titled *Hankanron* (Grudging Korea) and *Hikanron* (Miserable Korea) in 2014. Ko also wrote praise-Japan books, including *Sekai kara sukarete iru nibon* (The World Loves Japan) in 2016 and *Sekai wo kando saseta nibon seisbin* (The Japanese Spirit Impressed the World) in 2017.

considering that racism is intertwined with nationalism (e.g., Balibar, 1991b; Castles, 2000; Kawai, 2016). In 2017, the number of hate-Korea books again increased. A hate-book targeting both Chinese and Koreans, *Jukyō ni shibai sareta chūgokujin to kankokujin no bigeki* (Tragedies of Chinese and Koreans Controlled by Confucianism) (Gilbert, 2017) became a bestseller (Nippan, 2017; Tohan, 2017).⁵ The book was authored by Kent Gilbert, a white American lawyer and TV personality in Japan and published by Kōdansha, one of the three largest publishers in Japan. This enduring popularity of this genre demonstrates the depth of racism against people of Korean (and Chinese descent) in Japanese society.

In this paper, using Goldberg's (1993: 41-60) grammar of racialized discourse, I analyze the two 2014 hate-Korea bestsellers and a praise-Japan book titled *Naze nihon no goban wa oishii no ka* (Why Is Japanese Rice Delicious?) (Lee, 2016), written by Sincere Lee, to examine their grammar and the intersection of Japanese racism and nationalism embedded there. Goldberg (1993) argues that specifying a unifying grammar is crucial to encourage people to oppose racism (47). Applying Foucault's (1972) notion of the discursive field to the study of racism, Goldberg views the field of racialized discourse as consisting of all expressions constituting the discourse and as "the (open-ended) theoretical space in which the discourse emerges and transforms in and through its expression(s)" (42).

Goldberg (1993) makes a distinction between analyzing *racialized discourse* and *racist expression*. The analysis of racialized discourse corresponds to the analysis of the "preconceptual level" in Foucault's (1972) theory of discourse (60). It involves identifying its epistemological or structural elements and their relations among one other, i.e., grammar. These elements are "both reflective and constitutive of power" (Goldberg, 1993: 48), enabling variations on racist expression while securing their coherence. Racist expressions, equivalent to *statements* in Foucault's theory, vary in form, meaning, and purpose, depending on the target and the context in which the expressions are used. For example, pre-1945 Western racial expressions such as the anti-Semitic expressions "the Jewish conspiracy" or "the Jewish hunger for money" (Mosse, 1964: 126-145) and the

⁵ Selling more than 400,000 copies, the book ranked first in the paper-back non-fiction category on both Nippan's and Tohan's 2017 bestseller lists (Nippan, 2017; Tohan, 2017).

anti-Japanese one “the Japanese are childish and pathological” (Dower 1986: 133) differ in style and metaphor. Yet, following a grammar of racialized discourse, these expressions share epistemological or structural elements.

Clarifying the structural components of racialized discourse in racist expressions is extremely important because it enables scrutinizing a variety of racist expressions, including those promoting racism without using blatantly hateful words. Although Sincere Lee’s praise-Japan book may appear less offensive than his hate-Korea book, they share the field of Japanese racialized discourse. What is needed is to attack not only the overtly racist expressions but also what enables them—the grammar of Japanese racialized discourse—so as to problematize that which does not seem to be hate speech but is nevertheless constitutive of the racialized discourse.

Moreover, it is not enough to elucidate the rhetorical patterns used in hate-Korea books. For instance, Kim (2014) identifies four rhetorical patterns in hate-Korea books: separation and exclusion, war and attack, falsification and fabrication, and superiority and inferiority. These patterns do not function well for combatting racism because first, they mix discursive and expressional levels, and second, they are framed as a matter of ethnocentrism, not racism (Kim, 2014; 20-28). Ethnocentrism, first defined by Sumner (1906), is the view that “one’s own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it” (13). Designating the hate-Korea genre as merely ethnocentric is limiting, because ethnocentrism, which has been studied mainly in social psychology and also intercultural communication, is often conceptualized as a universal human trait and thus is not necessarily viewed as negative, despite its connection to racism. As Neuliep (2017) argues, “To be ethnocentric but not racist may be possible. To be racist and not ethnocentric is unlikely” (335) and “ethnocentrism is innately human; that is we are born ethnocentric” (336).

The importance of identifying the grammar of racialized discourse also lies in not being caught up in discussions of “facts.” Kizo Ogura (2016b), a Japanese scholar of Korean studies at Kyoto University, contends that the problem of hate-Korea books is that they are based on inaccurate information (15-17). Ogura claims that, because the knowledge of Korea offered in hate-Korea books is not completely false but is in part accurate, what is necessary is to seek objective knowledge of Korea without reacting

emotionally or politically to such books (Ogura, 2016a: 4-5). Conscientious scholars and activists often focus on rectifying the factual distortions found in hate-Korea books (e.g., Kang et al., 2006). Although this is extremely important, doing so without investigating the presumptive aspects of racialized discourse is insufficient, because accurate information can still be interpreted to serve racism.

Academic studies of the hate-Korea genre in English and Japanese include works investigating a comic book titled *Kenkanryū* (Hating the Korean Wave) (Yamano, 2005), which set a precedent for the establishment of this genre (e.g., Kang et al., 2006; Sakamoto and Allen, 2007; Tanaka and Itagaki, 2007), a study focusing on book-styled magazines (Kiyohara, 2017) and newspaper and in-train advertisements of magazines that publish hate-Korea articles (Nogawa and Hayakawa, 2015), and a quantitative study of hate-Korea books (Lee, 2017). However, except for Kim's (2014) study on the rhetorical patterns used in those books, discursive studies seem to be unavailable. In addition, very few existing studies have used Goldberg's (1993) grammar of racialized discourse as an analytical framework (e.g., Liggett, 2008). In the following sections, first, I explicate Goldberg's grammar of racialized discourse and racist expressions. Then, analyzing the two hate-Korea bestseller books and the one praise-Japan book, I clarify the grammar of Japanese racialized discourse employed in those books and their racist expressions that are constitutive of the discursive field. Last, I discuss how Japanese racism and nationalism intersect in the hate-Korea genre.

II. The Grammar of Racialized Discourse and Racist Expressions

1. Four Chains of Grammatical Elements

According to Goldberg (1993), analyzing racialized discourse involves identifying its epistemological or structural elements and their relations among one other—grammar. Goldberg proposes four groups or “chain[s] of elements” (50): “classification, order, value, hierarchy; differentiation and identity, discrimination and identification; exclusion, domination, subjection, and subjugation; as well as entitlement and restriction” (49). Like words and

phrases arranged into a sentence, the elements of one group are linked together like a chain, and the four chains are connected to produce racist expressions.

The elements of the first chain, which I call *racial hierarchization*, include classification, order, value, and hierarchy. This was mainly used in the era of biological racism, from the establishment of the Western concept of race in the 18th century until its demise after World War II. This classification is a product of the 18th century European Enlightenment, which promoted the objective observation and classification of natural and social phenomena as the foundation of the scientific method (e.g., Hannaford, 1996: 187-233). Believing that human beings are classifiable into distinct groups based on phenotype, culture, and behavior, European intellectuals proposed numerous variations of racial categorization, such as Linnaeus's four categories (Americans, Asians, Africans, Europeans) and Blumenbach's five categories (Caucasians, Mongolians, Africans, Americans, and Malay) (e.g., Jackson and Weidman, 2006: 12-24).

However, classifying people cannot be completely objective because it requires distinguishing them according to particular criteria, which "contain within them sociopolitical values" (Balibar, 1991a: 56). Goldberg (1993) posits that "racial classification—the ordering of human groups on the basis of putatively natural (inherited or environmental) differences—implied a racial hierarchy of races" (50). European racial classification entails not only classifying humans but also ordering them based on European or white values, thereby establishing a hierarchy of humankind that places whites on top—hierarchization.

Japan's *racial hierarchization*, however, did not simply emulate its European counterpart, in which the Japanese along with other Asian peoples were categorized as the yellow race and placed under the white race. The Japanese translation of the Western concept of race—*jinsbu* (人種)—was popularized in the latter half of the 19th century (Yamamuro 2000: 55-56). In the late 19th century, Japanese elites and intellectuals introduced another concept of race—*minzoku* (民族)—to differentiate the Japanese from other Asians, creating a Japanese version of the racial hierarchy (9-10). Retaining the core value of *jinsbu* or race, "the schema of genealogy" (Balibar, 1991c: 100), *minzoku* defined the Japanese as "a group of people who are related to each other, sharing the same blood from the same

ancestors” or as children of the emperor, their symbolic father (Yasuda, 1992: 69). The Japanese as a *minzoku* was tied to the dominant prewar nationalist ideology, in which Japan was a family nation (*kazoku kokka*), and the Japanese language, culture, and nation were indivisible (Sakai, 1996: 131-145). According to this ideology, Japanese language and culture were essentialized or naturalized as something to be transmitted biologically from parents to children. The Japanese (*Yamato* or *Nipon*) *minzoku*, a racialized cultural group, was designated as more modernized, civilized, and superior to other Asian groups and thereby legitimized Japanese colonization.

Since the end of World War II, the Japanese have avoided the word *minzoku* in self-reference, due to its strong association with the militarist and imperialist nationalism of prewar Japan. However, the idea of *minzoku*, the three unities of language, culture, and nation in particular, has persisted in the notion of Japan as a single racial and ethnic nation (*tan'itsu minzoku kokka*), although the increase in the number of migrants and mixed-race Japanese has challenged the dominant meaning of being Japanese.⁶

The second chain, *racial differentiation*, consists of two pairs: differentiation and identity, and discrimination and identification. Goldberg (1993) argues that hierarchy, an element in the first chain, has been replaced by differentiation (51). In parallel with this change, terms referring to racialized groups have shifted from race to ethnicity, and the modality of racism has transformed from biological to cultural racism, in a process starting in the 1960s (Kawai, 2015: 39-40). However, this second chain has not taken the place of the first. Goldberg suggests that the elements of classification, order, and value still constrain people in creating relations with others (51). Racist expressions based on the second chain assert the domination of a group not by making other groups inferior but by distinguishing themselves from other groups while constructing their own and other groups' identities, in which the three elements of the first chain—classification, order, and value—remain in operation.

The pair differentiation and identity is not identical to but overlaps with

⁶ See Kawai (2015) for a more detailed discussion about the use and non-use of *minzoku* following World War II.

the pair discrimination and identification. Goldberg (1993) proposes the two pairs to indicate both disparity and affinity between non-racist and racist identity construction. The first process—creating identity through differentiation—is not necessarily racist, although it is inherent in the concept of race and racial classification (51). However, it becomes racist when identity construction process triggers identification. Identification is not simply making a meaning of who we are (i.e., identity) but internalizing racialized identities, in which “racial differentiation begins to define otherness, and discrimination *against* the racially defined other becomes at once *exclusion* of the different” (51: emphasis in original). In other words, a collective identity created by essentializing differences and assigning negative meanings to others leads to discrimination—treating them unfairly and as outsiders. Goldberg argues that “differential exclusion” or combining differentiation and exclusion—an element of the third chain—is “the most basic primitive term of the deep structure underlying racist expression” (52).

The third chain, consisting of exclusion, domination, subjection, and subjugation, can be labeled *racial exclusion*. The difference between *racial differentiation* and *racial exclusion* is materiality: the former is concerned with the construction of meaning, while the latter pertains to the consequence or realization of that meaning. Goldberg (1993) posits that “racist exclusion finds whatever authority it has in a discourse of the body” (53). The body is “a symbol of a ‘bounded system’” (55). The body’s immediacy, materiality, and centrality for human existence are useful for the differentiation and exclusion of a group. Humans are differentiated on the basis of values of corporeal purity, such as biological (e.g., blood or genes), hygienic (e.g., body odor), and cultural (e.g., language) ones (54). Goldberg contends that “to succeed so long in effecting the materiality of differential exclusions, racialized discourse has to be grounded in the relations of social subjects to each other and in ways of seeing, of relation to, (other) subjects” (53). In other words, the exclusion of the Other is realized when people become racialized subjects by learning to see a group deviating from those bodily or corporeal standards as different and/or lesser, by subjugating and dominating racialized others, and by thinking it natural to expel the racialized others from the community of racialized subjects or to eradicate them through assimilation. Typical examples are phrases thrown at racialized minorities: “go back to your country” or “go home” (Kawai, 2016:

114-115).

Thus, exclusion is inseparable from entitlement and restriction—the fourth chain or *racial control*. Entitlement implies “rights of accessibility (to enfranchisement, opportunity, or treatment), and of endowments (goods and the means thereto),” while restriction indicates rights “of denial (disenfranchisement or restriction), of prohibition (to entry, participation, or services), and of alienation (of goods and the means to them)” (Goldberg, 1993: 55). The fourth chain typically operates in immigration and naturalization policies. The entry of non-Japanese people to Japan is strictly controlled, and while they are staying in Japan, their rights are limited. For example, ethnic Koreans have lived in Japan for generations without Japanese nationality, mainly because Japan’s nationality law adopts the *jus sanguinis* principle and does not recognize dual nationality. Consequently, they were barred from enrolling in the national pension plan until 1982, have been denied voting rights, and have limited opportunities to work in the public sector. Japanese laws legitimate the restriction of Koreans’ rights, viewing them as not being entitled to the same rights as Japanese nationals.

2. Norms and Style of Racist Expressions

Racist expressions, which are enabled by the four chains, tend to follow prevailing norms and style (Goldberg, 1993: 47-8). Racist norms are “established in terms of a series of descriptive statements about others that delimit the way we perceive them” (47). For example, the anti-Semitic descriptive statement “the Jewish conspiracy” shapes the perception of Jewish people by giving the impression that Jewish people are actually conspiratorial. Style refers to “the dominant mode of discursive expression” (47). Examples of the style of racist expressions include the “aversive, academic or scientific, legalistic, bureaucratic, economic, cultural, linguistic, religious, mythical, or ideological” (47). Before the end of World War II, Western racism had an academic or scientific style, espousing biological racism, which then shifted to the cultural style or cultural racism after 1945. The scientific style lost its legitimacy due to international criticisms triggered by, among others, the Holocaust and independence movements in Asia and Africa. Examples include UNESCO’s four statements on race published in 1950, 1951, 1964, and 1967 (UNESCO, 1969). It could be argued that since

the September 11, 2001 attacks, religious-cultural racism has become the prevailing style in the West.

1) *Denial of Racism*

One notable style that emerged in tandem with the rise of the cultural style is aversion, equivalent to what van Dijk's (1992) calls "the denial of racism." Studying everyday talk, media texts, and political speeches, van Dijk suggests that the denial of racism is frequently practiced in the era of cultural racism because social conventions prohibit blatant expressions of prejudice against racialized groups. The desire for positive self-representation motivates people to practice various types of the denial of racism (89). Individuals and the media often deny that their remarks are racist because being associated with racism is detrimental to their reputation.

van Dijk (1992) identifies six types of denial: *defense*, *mitigation*, *justification*, *excuse*, *provocation and blaming the other*, and *reversal*. *Defense* and *mitigation* are "denial proper" (93), in which committing an action is denied. *Defense* refers to engaging in maintaining a positive self-image or saving face by denying that one has said or done something racist in the face of accusation or preemptively. Examples of defensive denial are "I did not intend it that way" or "I did not do that on purpose" (91-92). *Mitigation* involves "downtoning, minimizing, or using euphemisms when describing one's negative actions" (92), exemplified by the comment "I did not insult her, but told her my honest opinion" (92). Another example is that the word "racism" itself tends to be euphemized as "discrimination," "prejudice," "stereotype," "bias," and "xenophobia," and is rarely used in reference to cultural racism (93).

The remaining four—*justification*, *excuse*, *provocation and blaming the other*, and *reversal*—are similar in their admission that an action has been committed but deny that the action is negative. They are differentiated in terms of the degree and the ways in which the action is rationalized. *Justification* is the assertion of an action as legitimate, while in the case of *excuse*, the blame of the action is cast upon particular circumstances or on others (van Dijk, 1992: 93). In 2015, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe resorted to *justification* at a press conference after speaking before the UN General Assembly as a wave of refugees and asylum seekers was crossing

into Europe. Prime Minister Abe said that “before accepting immigrants or refugees, we need to have more activities by women, by elderly people and we must raise our birth rate” (McCurry, 2015, September 30).⁷ Abe made this remark because he thought that the classic principle of “one nation, one state” granted nation-states the sovereign right to exclude non-nationals. If Abe had rationalized his statement by arguing that migrants and refugees would not fit into Japanese society because Japan is a single racial and ethnic nation (*tan'itsu minzoku kokka*), this would become an *excuse* case.

Provocation and blaming the other are “stronger excuse strategies” (van Dijk, 1992: 94). A racist action is legitimized on the grounds that racialized minorities engage in provocative actions and thus are themselves to blame. For example, police brutality against racialized minorities is justified by the victims’ alleged or actual provocations; the government’s tough measures against minorities are justified due to their lack of cultural assimilation, educational failure, unemployment, or dependence upon welfare (94). Lastly, *reversal* is “the strongest form of denial” (94). In this type, people accused of racist words and actions redirect the accusation, claiming, for instance, “We are not the racists, *they* are the *real* racists” (94; emphasis original).

III. Analysis

I analyze the two hate-Korea books and one praise-Japan book, using Goldberg’s (1993) grammar of racialized discourse to examine their grammar as well as descriptive norms and style. *Bōkanron* (Stupid South Korea) (Murotani 2013) is referred to as Book 1, and *Chikanron* (Shameful South Korea) (Lee, 2014) as Book 2, and the Book 2 author’s praise-Japan book *Naze nihon no goban wa oisbii no ka* (Why Is Japanese Rice Delicious?) (Lee, 2016) Book 3.

All three books are underpinned by *racial exclusion*, *racial hierarchization*, and *racial differentiation*. They deploy essentialization as a way of excluding Koreans or of making Korean people and culture a

⁷ In 2014, one year before this speech, Japan admitted only 11 refugees although it received about 5000 applications. The numbers of admitted refugees in the subsequent years were: 27 (7,586 applications) in 2015 and 28 (10,901 applications) in 2016 (Ministry of Justice, 2017).

completely separate bounded system or a “body,” ignoring phenotypical and cultural similarities between Korean and Japanese people. Moreover, although Goldberg (1993) argues that hierarchy has become outdated and been replaced by differentiation, hierarchy, rather than differentiation, is central to devaluing Koreans and thereby constructing a positive Japanese identity.

1. Essentialization for Exclusion

One means of essentialization is depicting Korean society and culture as historically static. In Book 1, the author claims that “the culture of false accusation (or snitching) has existed in the Korean peninsula since the Silla era” (Murotani, 2013: 18) and that “discrimination based on occupational and educational hierarchies characterize today’s Korean society and constitute a class system identical to the one in the Choson dynasty” (154). The United Silla dynasty ruled from 668 to 935, and the Choson dynasty lasted from 1392 to 1910. By claiming that these practices have existed for hundreds of years, the author misrepresents Korean culture as an unchangeable body that is transmitted biologically.

Another means employs the notion of blood. In Book 2, the author contends that “I respect nature. My argument is not that Group A is superior to Group B, but that the influence of ‘blood’ cannot be ignored” (Lee, 2014: 250). The idea of blood is brought in to explain what the author calls the “invisible gap [*mienai sa*]” between Korea and Japan, examples of which include “water, air, thought, consideration for others, places on which people walk” as well as “the tissues that touch the skin of babies who cannot speak yet” (249). As seen in the Nazi slogan “blood and soil,” the blood or “the biological essence of a group of shared descent” (MacMaster, 2001: 6) is used to draw strict boundaries among cultural groups and to define the cultural or other characteristics of a group. Moreover, the notion of blood is constitutive of the idea of *minzoku*, which is still a dominant part of what it means to be Japanese. For instance, Yatsuka Hozumi, a constitutional law scholar who was most influential in connecting *minzoku* with the prewar ideology of Japan as a family nation (Yasuda 1992), stated that the Japanese *minzoku* is “a group tied in blood [*ketō dantai*]” (1) and children of the emperor (Hozumi, [1897]1910: 1-27).

When defined as what only a particular group can practice and create, culture is also a useful resource for essentialization. Insisting that non-Japanese clerks cannot smile at their customers in the way that Japanese clerks do, the author of Book 3 contends that “foreign clerks can learn very inadequately what the Japanese acquire. Frankly speaking, I am disappointed when I am not welcomed with the phrase ‘*irasshaimase*’ [welcome] and the Japanese smile when entering a shop” (Lee, 2016: 65). The author also praises the Japanese way of walking through crowds without bumping into other people: “it is not just a custom that was just created in a moment. The Japanese must have spent a long time turning it into a shared value before acquiring it” (64). Another example is the claim that food in Japan tastes better than food in Korea because it is cooked with the Japanese spirit of *omotenashi* or hospitality (100-102). Then the author adds that the most important thing in the taste of food is “the taste of the people [*bito no aji*]” (102). Balibar (1991a) posits that “culture can also function like a nature” (22), and these statements treat both tangible (i.e., bodily) and intangible entities (i.e., smiling, a way of walking, spirit, and taste) as biological traits that can be only possessed by Japanese people.

2. Hierarchization and Identification

1) *Koreans as Deceptive*

Essentializing and thereby excluding Korean culture and people simultaneously relegates them to inferior status—hierarchization. In both Books 1 and 2, the Koreans are depicted as deceptive, a descriptive norm frequently used in hate-Korea books (e.g., Kim, 2014). The author of Book 1 supports this depiction by citing Korean newspapers and a few anecdotes. For example, the author contends that “Korea is a liars’ nation and a haven for swindlers. Successive Korean administrations, public offices, and municipal governments nonchalantly deceive and engage in fraudulent acts” (Murotani, 2013: 45). Then the author mentions a political scandal in 2013, when the mayor of Gwangju city forged the signatures of the Prime Minister and the Culture Minister in their bid documents to host the 2019 World Swimming Championships and gave the impression that they had secured financial support from the government (Kim, 2015, November 12).

In another example, sparing one chapter, the author of Book 1 accuses

Koreans of claiming that Japanese cultures such as *shabushabu* hot-pot,⁸ karaoke, and *enka* (a genre of Japanese popular song) originated in Korea (Murotani, 2013: 138-152). The author calls it *uriginaru*—a combination of the Korean word *uri* (our) and the English word original in Japanese—, which is a frequently used term in hate-Korea books (e.g., Gilbert, 2017; Hyakuta, 2017). The author tells a story told by a journalist who had worked in Germany for a long time: the Korean owner of a karaoke bar in Berlin told the journalist that karaoke originated in Korea. The author ends this chapter by declaring, “You win if you lie first” (152).

Book 2 asserts that there are many cases of false accusation in Korea. In the section titled “The nation of rampant accusations,” the author argues that “Koreans tend to quickly file lawsuits against people that they do not like and criminalize them even by making false statements” (Lee, 2014: 52). The author supports this argument by citing a Korean newspaper article dated February 25, 2012: the number of accusations is a few hundred times higher in Korea than in Japan, but only 20-25 percent of the accusations go to court (52). Whether these statistics are true or not true, these numbers alone do not prove that the Koreans are dishonest.

The descriptive norm of the Koreans as deceptive is used to cast Japanese identity in a better light. The authors of Book 1 and Book 2 use this depiction to delegitimize Korea’s demand to settle historical disputes, such as the “comfort women” issue and deny Japan’s responsibility for the atrocities committed against Korean people during the period of colonization. The “comfort women” were “girls and women who are ‘recruited’ in a variety of ways that often included violence, deception, and coercion” to provide sexual services to Japanese soldiers at Japan’s military installations during the Asia-Pacific War (Muta, 2016: 621). The Japanese government has refused to accept responsibility, although it acknowledged the Japanese military authorities’ involvement in establishing “comfort stations” and violating the women’s human rights.⁹

⁸ *Shabushabu* is a dish in which very thinly sliced meat is quickly boiled with chopped vegetables and served with sauce.

⁹ Examples of this include a statement issued in 1993 by Yohei Kono, then Chief Cabinet Secretary of the Japanese government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1993), and a letter from the incumbent Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in 2001 that was distributed to the victims who received compensation from the Asian Women’s Fund (AWF) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

In chapter 3 titled “Telling blatant lies to attack Japan,” the author of Book 1 calls the “comfort women” issue “a fantasy” (Murotani, 2013: 70). Referring to a photo of “comfort women” published on the *Joongang Ilbo* website (Bae and Kang, 2013, June 18), he argues that “their faces are round, and they are wearing neat clothing. They absolutely do not look like women who have been forced to work as sex slaves for a long time” (74). The author even uses the number of “comfort women,” which is in dispute among historians (e.g., Asian Women’s Fund n.d.), as an evidence of Koreans as deceptive. On October 11, 2013, the Minister of Gender Equality and Family, Yoon-sun Cho, in a speech at a meeting of the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, mentioned that there had been more than 100,000 “comfort women” (*Kankoku* 2013, October 12). Contending that Korean governmental officials had previously claimed that there had been 200,000, the author condemns and asks, “how dare do they say one thing here and another there?” (71).

Both Book 1 and Book 2 dismiss the “comfort women” issue by connecting it to prostitution and sex work in Korea. Although each book devotes one chapter to prostitution in Korea, I focus here on analyzing the relevant chapter of Book 2 because it more explicitly conflates the two issues.¹⁰ *Reversal*, the strongest form of van Dijk’s (1992) denial of racism, is applicable here. In chapter of Book 2 (Lee, 2014) titled “Korean sex slaves that Korea hides” (113-136), the author makes the following three points in support of the claim that Koreans have no right to criticize the Japanese for sexually exploiting women: Korean military forces used “comfort women” during the Korean War, the Korean government maintained such a system for American soldiers in Korea, and the Koreans care more about the “comfort women” of the past than about women who work as prostitutes today (117-118). Referring to these historical matters that have been also studied academically (e.g., Soh, 2008: 211-225), the author deflects Japan’s responsibility, shifts the blame for this issue, reverses the victim and the victimizer, and ultimately attempts to make Japanese identity look more

2001). The AWF, established in 1994, was a private organization funded by the Japanese government.

¹⁰ The title of chapter 8 in Book 1 is “The thick mask of a major exporter of prostitutes” (Murotani, 2013: 174-192).

positive. This is well expressed in the following statement: “The central issue of the ‘comfort women’ issue is not violation of women’s rights! Its purpose is to denigrate Japan. The ‘comfort women’ issue is the most powerful weapon to consolidate hostility to Japan [*ban-nichi*]” (Lee, 2014: 135).

2) Koreans as Discriminatory

Another descriptive norm depicts the Koreans as discriminatory. In chapter 7 titled “A horrifyingly discriminatory country,” the author of Book 1 contends that Korean culture is hierarchical and therefore discriminatory (Murotani, 2013: 154-172). After claiming that “one’s occupation, title, income, and age determine one’s position in Korea’s social hierarchy. One’s dress, accessories, and car are also determining factors,” the author goes on to insist that “if a person is aware of his or her own higher position and knows that others acknowledge it, he or she behaves very arrogantly, whereas the others become extremely submissive” (156). The author supports his opinion with the following facts: the Korean language has more complex honorifics, and minicars do not sell well because what a person owns determines his or her status in the social hierarchy (156). The author also defends this negative descriptive norm, referring to the income disparity between Koreans working for *chaebol* companies and others (155), regional discrimination against people from Cholla and Jeju Provinces (163), and ethnic discrimination against people of Korean descent in China (166) and in Japan (165). However, none of these are unique to Korean society.

This derogatory representation is tied to defining the Koreans as anti-Japanese (*ban-nichi*). The author of Book 1 sprinkles the term “*ban-nichi* (anti-Japanese)” throughout the book, including the titles of chapters 3 and 4.¹¹ For instance, using the term three times in one sentence, the author claims that “it is obvious that South Korea implements *anti-Japanese* education, disseminates *anti-Japanese* propaganda, and engages in *anti-Japanese* lobbying globally in order to disgrace Japan by any means” (Murotani, 2013: 22; emphasis added). Furthermore, the author portrays the Japanese as victims of Koreans’ anti-Japanese discrimination, reversing the perpetrator

¹¹ Chapter 3 is titled “Telling blatant lies to attack Japan (*ban-nichi nara suguni bareru uso demo baku*)”; chapter 4 is titled “The world despises Korea’s pathetic anti-Japan syndrome (*sekai kara keibetsu sareru awarena ban-nichi byō*).”

and the victim of hate speech: that “hate performances [*beito*] against the Japanese, such as burning a doll of the Japanese Prime Minister or tearing apart a pheasant—Japan’s national bird—occur routinely. Yet the Koreans shamefully accuse Japan of hate speech [*beito*] against ethnic Koreans in Japan” (68).

Book 2 similarly depicts Koreans as hierarchical and therefore discriminatory. The author mentions as examples the heated competition for university admission and jobs and the gap in economic and social status between employees of *chaebol* companies and other workers, referring to statistics from newspapers and TV news (Lee, 2014: 142-149). In addition, the author, who claims to be Korean, is thus able to express his opinion without offering supporting evidence. For instance, the author contends that “Koreans cannot live without hierarchy. They are overly submissive to the more powerful and extremely arrogant to the less powerful” (140) or that “Korean society is characterized by an extremely strong sense of hierarchy. Koreans are obsessed with having a sense of superiority to other people and looking down on them” (141).

The main theme of Book 2 is *han-nichi* or hostility to Japan. Claiming that anti-Japanese sentiment is the core value of Korea, the author asserts in the introduction that “in this book I discuss the absolute power that controls Korea. This is ‘a religion in a negative sense’ called anti-Japanism [*han-nichi kyō*]. It is a very useful religion, which attributes everything evil to Japan” (Lee, 2014: 24). The author argues that Korea as “a nation founded on anti-Japanism” (67) because Korea’s Constitution mentions the March First Independence Movement in the preamble (73): “We, the people of Korea, [...] [uphold] the cause of the Provisional Republic of Korea Government born of the March First Independence Movement of 1919” (Ministry of Government Legislation, 2010). The March First Movement, which sought independence from Japan, began first on March 1, 1919 in Seoul and spread across the Korean peninsula. Among approximately half a million Korean participants in the movement, Japan’s colonial authorities killed 7500 and arrested 45,000 (Cumings, 2005: 155).

This descriptive norm used in Books 1 and 2 reflects van Dijk’s (1992) *reversal* type of denial of racism. The books were published in 2013 and 2014 when racist demonstrations were at their peak (Center for Human Rights and Education, 2016: 34). The victimizers in this context are the authors, the

publishers, the readers of the books, and, by extension, Japanese society where such demonstrations were held, and these books became bestsellers. However, the books portray Koreans as victimizers who are prejudiced against the Japanese and even place Japan in the role of the victim of the colonization of Korea. This absurd logic is possible because the authors consider colonization to have been good for Koreans, which also explains their aggrieved response to the reference in the Korean Constitution to the March First Movement as anti-Japanese. Both books justify the Japanese colonial rule of the Korean peninsula. For example, claiming that Japan abolished the class hierarchy of the Choson dynasty after colonizing Korea, the author of Book 1 states that “I believe that Koreans should thank the Empire of Japan for this” (Murotani, 2013: 159). The author of Book 2 claims that “Japan brought almost all modern technologies to Korea while annexing Korea” (Lee, 2014: 93).

3) *Japanese as More Sophisticated and Egalitarian*

Book 3, a praise-Japan book, more explicitly illuminates the construction of a positive Japanese identity. The Japanese are depicted as more sophisticated by means of diminishing Koreans. The self-described Korean author of Book 3 compares Japanese products, services, and behaviors favorably to their Korean counterparts, citing his travel experiences in Japan. In Japan, for example, the food (Lee, 2016: chapter 2), used products (127-131), convenience store services (135-139), water and air (161-169), chopsticks (172), driving style (188-192), and hot springs (201-215) are superior. Moreover, Book 3 contends that “if Koreans traveling in Japan find good parts of Japan, they often feel it their duty to complain rather than praise them because they have been brainwashed with anti-Japanism” (74). The author even gives chapter 4 (146-221) the title “Brand Japan and the soul of Japan that Koreans wish to purchase” and argues that “Japan is a kind of ‘brand’ for Koreans. But they cannot buy it” (157).

The Japanese are also depicted as more egalitarian than Koreans. Book 3 refers to the lopsided power relationships between *chaebol* companies and smaller ones, the hereditary ownership system of *chaebol*, and status and income gaps between *chaebol* employees and everyone else (Lee, 2016: 110-118). Noting that many Koreans are self-employed because there are very limited positions available for full-time *chaebol* employees, the

author praises Japan for having fewer self-employed people and a smaller disparity between employees of large and small companies (118). Another example is the author's admiration for Japanese subcultures. Referring to Japan's *otaku* (geek) cultures, the author praises Japan for its "diverse subcultures, beyond the imagination of Koreans" (120) and goes on to claim that "Koreans lack respect for such cultures" (121) because "Koreans must have what others have including hobbies and clothes" (125). Arguing that this tendency has been influenced by the nationalist ideology "one people-ism" promoted by President Syngman Rhee (1948-1960), the author depicts the Koreans as totalitarian because their ideology barred them from having the freedom of thought to fight the communist North and "the tendency not to allow diverse opinions has not changed since then" (124).

3. Conclusions

The grammar of racialized discourse used in the three books combined *racial exclusion*, *racial hierarchization*, and *racial differentiation*. The books demarcated Koreans and Japanese as two completely separate groups, denigrating Koreans as deceptive and discriminatory (i.e., descriptive norms), and constructed a positive Japanese identity as people who are *not* Korean (*not* deceptive and discriminatory) as well as more sophisticated and egalitarian.

Moreover, the books demonstrated a common style of racist expressions—*reversal*—by using the two negative descriptive norms and making the victim of racism into the victimizer. This strongest form of denial was necessary because the grammatical element hierarchy is "widely considered obsolete" (Goldberg, 2013: 51). That the writer of Books 2 and 3 claims to be a Korean is also indicative of the *reversal* of racism. Whether the writer is actually Korean does not matter. The claim that he is makes it possible for the Japanese public to see Japanese racism against Koreans as not their own problem. There is precedent for this. The 1993 bestseller *Minikui kankokujin* (Ugly South Koreans) (Park, 1993) was published under a Korean name, but it is widely accepted that the main author was a conservative Japanese writer (e.g., Shin, 1996, October 4).

Racism and nationalism intersect in the hate-Korea genre. This is apparent from the fact that identification or constructing a positive

Japanese identity at the expense of Koreans is a crucial grammatical element in the three books. This genre is comparable to another literary genre called *nihonjinron* (discussions of the Japanese). *Nihonjinron* was popular in the 1970s and 80s when internationalization was a key part of the national agenda in light of Japan's ascendance as a world economic power and the intensifying accusations from the United States and West European countries that the Japanese market was unfairly closed to its Western competitors (Dower, 1993: 31-32). Numerous books and articles discussing Japanese cultural uniqueness were published, and some sold more than one million copies (e.g., Ben-Dasan, 1971; Doi, 1971).

The West was the central discursive Other for Japanese identity construction in *nihonjinron*, which involved what Befu (2001) calls "auto-Orientalism" or "a process of accepting the Orientalism of the West by the very people who are being Orientalized" (127). In *nihonjinron*, it was "'our' [Japanese] difference that [was] actively used for the reaffirmation of Japanese identity" (Yoshino, 1992: 11) whereas in Western Orientalism, it was "their" (i.e., Eastern or Oriental) difference that was used for Western identity construction (Said, 1979). The central premise of *nihonjinron* was "equivalency and mutual implications among land, people (i.e., race), culture, and language" (Befu, 1993: 116) or, in short, Japan as a single racial and ethnic nation. Not simply accepting but appropriating the Western definition of the Japanese, *nihonjinron* writers essentialized and characterized Japanese cultural uniqueness as homogenous, collectivistic, high-contextual, and hierarchical in contrast to Western cultural characteristics defined as heterogeneous, individualistic, low contextual, and egalitarian (e.g., Befu, 2001; Yoshino, 1992). Put differently, *nihonjinron* attempted to construct a positive and depoliticized cultural identity through differentiation from the West, displacing a more politicized identity based on the prewar ideology of Japan as a family nation or of the Japanese as children of the emperor (Kawai, 2015). Therefore, *nihonjinron* or self-Orientalism, characterized by "race thinking" (Yoshino, 1992: 22-32), followed a grammar of racialized discourse: *racial exclusion* and *racial differentiation*.

However, it is not self-Orientalism but racism that is used for Japanese identity construction in the books examined in this study. The rise of the hate-Korea genre pertains to the reemergence of Asia, especially Korea and China, as a significant discursive Other for Japan. Apart from *racial*

exclusion, while *racial differentiation* was an important factor in the grammar of the *nihonjinron*, the grammar of the hate-Korea genre mixes *racial hierarchization* and *racial differentiation*. In short, the crucial grammatical element that distinguishes the two genres is hierarchy. This difference indicates that the grammar of Japanese racialized discourse changes depending on the Other used for Japan's identification. When Korea, or more broadly Asia, is cast as the Other, the element of hierarchy is brought in. This demonstrates the tenacity of the prewar concept of *minzoku*, which distinguished the Japanese from other Asians and valorized the Japanese as the superior race, justifying Japanese imperialism and colonialism.

Understanding the grammar of Japanese racialized discourse may grant the Japanese public a way of detecting racist expressions and combating racism. The authors of the three books examined in this study do not simply present opinions but support them with news reports, statistics, history, anecdotes, and their own experiences, which cannot be always refuted. Apart from those who are already knowledgeable about Korea, it is not always feasible to detect misinformation. However, knowing the grammar makes it possible to tell whether a book, article, or comment is an expression constitutive of racism. Considering racism's close connection to nationalism, it is also necessary to explore a way of creating an alternative meaning of being Japanese without taking advantage of the Other, and for this, identifying the grammar of Japanese racialized discourse is indispensable.

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