

Humor and Food Storytelling in Talk-in-Interaction

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Abstract

This study investigates interaction between native Japanese speakers in food-related storytelling, focusing on how participants share their food and culinary experiences in the past and present humorously, deploying linguistic devices, prosody, laughter, and embodied actions. Building on studies of storytelling, food talk in interaction, laughter, and humor, I explore how humorous laughter is used to accomplish three actions in humorous storytelling: to display “surprise,” to “ridicule,” and to express “funniness” (Nakamura, 2002). I show that ridicule laughter was used to recount episodes about the story character’s poor cooking skills or failure to cook or do the dishes, and funny laughter was used in stories about story characters’ eating behaviors that were contradictory, unusual, or inappropriate for the occasion and in stories about unexpected or extraordinary ingredients in food or dishes in a meal. I also demonstrate that story recipients actively contributed to the humor by bringing surprise laughter to the storytelling to upgrade the storyteller’s assessments in funny or surprising stories and by using exaggeration and metaphor in their response comments to transform the characterization of surprise or complaint stories into humorous ones. This study illuminates the interactional process through which participants collaboratively co-construct humorous food storytelling in talk-in-interaction, by elucidating how storytellers and story recipients co-experience incongruity between their predictions and reality, collaboratively (re-)discover humor in the event together, and achieve mutual understanding of the different social actions accomplished by humorous laughter. It reveals that humorous food-related stories are told based on fixed ideas, knowledge, cultures, social norms, and identities that the participants share about food aspects among their group members. It suggests that humor in food talk dynamically changes in the interaction among co-participants in social and interactional contexts and that food humor is continuously modified, as we expand our food experiences and revise our concepts related to food.

Keywords

Storytelling, Food, Humor, Laughter, Talk-in-Interaction

1. Introduction

Talking about food is a common activity in our daily lives, and people often talk about their experiences with mundane food humorously in social interaction. However, mundane foods such as fried rice, sandwiches, and chocolate themselves are not ordinarily humorous. This raises the question of what makes mundane food and such daily activities as cooking and doing dishes humorous to us in our ordinary lives. What aspects of food or culinary activities do people find humorous? How do people share humor with others, as they tell stories about their food and culinary experiences? In this study, I investigate interaction in food-related storytelling, focusing on how participants in talk-in-interaction share their food and culinary experiences in the past and present humorously, while deploying linguistic devices, prosody, laughter, and embodied actions.¹

Although a large number of studies have been made on storytelling, few studies thus far have examined storytelling related to food. Further, while humor has been widely researched, to date little attention has been given to different functions of humor and laughter in natural, spontaneous conversations. To investigate the above-mentioned questions, I explore the way in which “humorous laughter” is used to accomplish three actions in humorous storytelling about food-related topics: to display “surprise,” to “ridicule,” and to express “funniness” (Nakamura, 2002; my translation). I demonstrate how storytellers humorously recount episodes about the story character’s food or culinary experiences by analyzing how they utilize ridicule and funny laughter to bring humor into the storytelling. I show how the organization of funny storytelling is designed in such a way that story recipients not only recognize but also vicariously co-experience incongruity between their predictions and reality, to (re-)discover humor in the event together with the storyteller collaboratively. I also explicate how story recipients’ active participation contributes to humorous storytelling through their transformation of the characterization of stories, via analysis of the story recipients’ surprise laughter, their use of exaggeration and metaphor in their story response comments, and their assessments of the stories. With a focus on interaction and humor in storytelling about food and cooking, my analysis illuminates how participants achieve mutual understanding of the different social actions accomplished by humorous laughter and how they collaboratively and dynamically co-construct and transform humorous food storytelling by exploiting multiple linguistic and non-linguistic resources. The present paper re-

¹An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 16th International Pragmatics Conference in Hong Kong, June 9-14, 2019 (Koike, 2019). I am grateful to the audiences at the above conference for their valuable comments on the earlier version of this paper. I am solely responsible for any mistakes and problems that remain in this paper.

veals how humor in food-related stories is co-created based on such concepts as the participants' shared views, values, cultures, norms, and identities pertaining to food.

2. Previous Studies

In this section I give a brief review of relevant previous studies on storytelling, food-related talk-in-interaction, laughter, and humor. One of the major research themes in this study is investigating the organization of humorous storytelling. Among numerous studies made on the sequential organization and participation framework of storytelling in conversations (e.g., Goodwin, 1984, 1986; Goodwin, 1990; Jefferson, 1978, 1988; Koike, 2010; Labov, 1972; Norrick, 2000; Ochs & Capps, 2001; Sacks, 1974, 1992), Sacks's (1974) analysis of story sequences provides a point of departure for the present study on humorous storytelling. In his analysis of a joke's telling, Sacks (1974) proposed "three serially ordered and adjacently placed types of sequences": "the preface, the telling, and the response sequences" (p. 337). The story preface sequence contains components including an offer or a request to tell a story, the source of the story, the initial characterization of the story, and the time of occurrence or reception of the story. He pointed out that the initial characterization (e.g., it was so funny) "inform[s] recipients about the sort of response teller seeks after his telling" (p. 341). After the telling sequence reaches a possible completion point, the response sequence may follow, preferably with no or a minimal gap or silence. For example, collective laughter of the story recipients should occur in the response sequence immediately after the completion of a punch line in the joke-telling sequence.

Labov (1972) also developed a foundational structure of narrative. He described the "abstract" as a component of "one or two clauses summarizing the whole story" (p. 363), and the "evaluation" as "the means used by the narrator to indicate the point of the narrative, its *raison d'être*," which is distributed throughout the narrative (p. 366). He argued that through evaluative devices, the narrator indicates to the listener that the story event "was terrifying, dangerous, weird, wild, crazy; or amusing, hilarious, wonderful; more generally, that it was strange, uncommon, or unusual—that is, worth reporting. It was not ordinary, plain, humdrum, everyday, or run-of-the mill" (p. 371). Goodwin and Goodwin's (1992) study on assessments in conversations is also relevant to the present study. They defined an assessment as an interactional activity of "evaluating in some fashion persons and events being described within their talk" (p. 154). They pointed out that the assessment activity is extensively used at the closure of storytelling "to foreshadow topic closure and to show heightened involvement in the topic" (p. 171). They argued that the assessment is an activity that "the participants collaboratively accomplish by deploying as resources talk, intonation, body movement, etc." (p. 172).

Few studies have examined the social interaction of food talk in conversations thus far. Szatrowski (2014) compared Japanese and American-English taster

lunch conversations and examined how speakers used modality/evidentiality and body movements to identify and assess an unfamiliar drink. She pointed out that “verbal and nonverbal expressions of modality/evidentiality are used to adjust and involve others in identifications and assessments that emerge moment-by-moment in the interaction” (p. 155). [Karatsu \(2014\)](#) analyzed repetition in storytelling about food and restaurants and showed how the participants utilized words and phrases from the punch lines in story round sequences. She found that the previous story’s punch line words and phrases that provided humor “acquire[d] evaluative/symbolic meanings through the participants’ repetition, laughter, and hand gestures” (p. 189) and that the participants used repeated punch line phrases “to give evaluative comments on their taste and evaluate subsequent stories later on in the conversation” (p. 205). [Holmes, Marra, and King \(2013\)](#) analyzed how food talk was used in formal and informal interactions at New Zealand workplaces. They showed that food talk was often used at the beginning and the end of meetings or between meeting topics to “generate humor and deformatize the workplace atmosphere” (p. 199) and that food talk occurring in non-boundary positions tended to reduce the formality of the talk. They claimed that food talk functioned to “index both boundaries and informality” (p. 201), suggesting that food talk is used “to contribute to rapport building and informality or to reduce the seriousness of an intense discussion” (p. 205). In previous research on food talk and categorization in Japanese conversations ([Koike, 2014](#)), I examined talk about food experiences in two different contexts in which participants talk about familiar food and unfamiliar food. I demonstrated “how eating habits and experiences are culturally and socially embedded, how conventionalized eating lifestyles shape our conceptual organizations of the world, and how these conceptual organizations are shared, revised, and created anew in the emerging talk-in-interaction” (p. 182). I argued that the participants consolidated their group identity by blending their individual perceptions and experiences through the talk about categorizing food in social interaction.

A considerable number of studies have been conducted on laughter² and humor in various different fields including philosophy, psychology, literature, semantics, pragmatics, and conversation analysis. [Attardo \(2015\)](#) astutely pointed out that humor in spoken and written language must be identified based on several factors, such as 1) vocal and non-vocal laughter and smiling, 2) “a full semantic/pragmatic analysis of the text, along the lines of the cognitive theories of humor, to uncover the incongruity of the potential humor,” and 3) “any meta-linguistic indications of the humorous intention of the speakers” (p. 182). The second factor, “incongruity,” has been one of the central aspects in the study of humor (e.g., [Koizumi, 1997](#); [Raskin & Attardo, 1994](#)). The incongruity theories explain humor by employing the concepts of contrast and incongruity/resolution and “claim that humor arises from the perception of an incongruity between a set of expectations and what is actually perceived” ([Attardo, 2008](#):

²Regarding the analysis of laughter as a dynamic paralinguistic device in the field of conversation analysis, see [Clift \(2016\)](#), [Glenn and Holt \(2013\)](#), [Holt \(2016\)](#), and [Jefferson \(1979, 1984, 2004\)](#).

p. 103).

Nakamura's (2002) classification of types of laughter provides a foundation for the present study because it encompasses various types of laughter observed in my data, though his study concerns laughter in literary works. In his classification, laughter is first categorized into two groups: direct laughter, which occurs without involving conceptualization of phenomena, and indirect laughter, which occurs after processing the interpretation of a target that is recognized. The latter is "*okashimi no warai* 'humorous laughter'" and is further subcategorized into three types: 1) "*odoroki no warai* 'surprise laughter,'" which occurs when puzzled about an unbelievable, incoherent phenomenon, 2) "*hatarakikake no warai* 'ridicule laughter,'" which is an offensive type including ridicule, teasing, and self-mockery, and 3) "*kokkei no warai* 'funny laughter,'" which arises after finding out a contradiction or incongruity in a relationship of phenomena (Nakamura, 2002: p. 47; my translation). He claimed that the common base shared by all types of humorous laughter is a "*hakkentekina odoroki* 'surprising discovery,'" which people experience when they find an unbelievable incongruity between the fact or result and their standards, common sense, predictions, or expectations (Nakamura, 2002: p. 46).

Although laughter and humor are regularly observed in mundane conversations, laughter and humor as social practices in talk-in-interaction have not been extensively investigated thus far. Norrick (1993, 1994, 2001, 2003) examined conversational joke performances in terms of the structure of jokes, linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of the language, and interpersonal dimensions in various types of jokes and joke-telling sequences observed in spontaneous English conversations. He argued that conversational humor is interactionally achieved and that it provides the opportunity for play and entertainment to the participants, who "present a personality, share experiences and attitudes, and promote rapport" (Norrick, 2003: p. 1348). Matsumoto's (2011) study also has relevance to the present study because it examined laughter and humor in conversational narratives about a specific topic: older Japanese women's painful experiences about their husbands' death and illness. Having observed that such painful self-disclosure narratives were frequently accompanied by humor and laughter among the participants, she claimed that these narratives about psychologically loaded events were recounted from a "quotidian self" stance and collaboratively reframed as a "quotidian frame". She argued that the participants in the narratives about the psychologically painful, extraordinary events talked with laughter and humor "[b]ecause of the incongruity inherent in reframing extraordinary and tense events as quotidian" (p. 612).

Building on these studies on conversational storytelling, food talk, humor, and laughter, I will investigate how storytellers recount their mundane food-related experiences entertainingly and bring humor into storytelling and how story recipients' active participation through their comments and assessments contributes to humor in storytelling and influences the storytelling sequences and participation framework. In this study, I will extend Nakamura's (2002) classifica-

tion of types of “humorous laughter” to laughter in interaction and explore how laughter is used to accomplish three social actions (i.e., to display surprise, to ridicule, and to express funniness) in humorous storytelling in talk-in-interaction. Through the analysis of various types of laughter as social actions, I will illuminate how humorous storytelling about food-related topics is interactively, dynamically co-constructed by the storyteller as well as the story recipients and how the participants share their social cultural values and world views with other members of a social group through the practice of humorous storytelling about such ubiquitous topics as food and cooking.

3. Analysis

In this analysis I investigate ten excerpts from eight different videotaped, spontaneous face-to-face conversations in Japanese, in which participants are talking over coffee, lunch, or dinner at their home or in public spaces such as restaurants, coffee shops, and school cafeterias. The participants (a total of 18 people) vary in terms of several factors, including gender (male and female), age (late teens to mid-thirties), dialect (Tokyo and Kansai dialects), occupation (undergraduate students, graduate students, and office workers) and personal relationships among the speakers (friends, colleagues, and couples) to encompass various phenomena within different Japanese populations. They were not given any specific topics to discuss but instead were encouraged to talk about anything as usual. Out of these conversations, I selected storytelling segments³ in which audible or visual laughter were observed in the participants’ verbal utterances or body movements including facial expressions, while they were talking about their food and culinary experiences in any temporal frame. To protect participants’ privacy, pseudonyms are used in all excerpts.

In this section, I first analyze ridicule laughter (Section 3.1) and funny laughter (Section 3.2) in food storytelling, focusing on how the storyteller depicts the story characters’ actions humorously. Second, I examine how story recipients’ responses and comments inject humor into food storytelling and transform the story characterization in some cases, through analysis of the story recipients’ surprise laughter (Section 3.3.1) and of the use of exaggeration and metaphor in their comments (Section 3.3.2).

3.1. Ridicule Laughter in Food Storytelling

Ridicule laughter was used when the storytellers talked about the story character’s poor cooking skills or negligence toward cooking and dishwashing, as in Excerpts 1 through 3. Laughter found in these types of stories is categorized as ridicule laughter because the laughter occurred with the participants’ negative, dismissive, or derogatory commentary expressions toward the depicted story characters or events, through which the participants indicated their stance of

³In this study, in order to capture various humorous food storytelling phenomena regardless of temporal contexts, I broadly define storytelling in conversation as a coherent sequence of turns in talk-in-interaction in which participants recount past or present events that they experienced firsthand or secondhand and future events that they hypothetically created in social interactions.

despising the inferior ability or quality of these characters or events. In Excerpt 1, Waka (mid-thirties) is telling a story to her husband Hayato (mid-thirties) about the fried rice she cooked and what her stepson said about it, and the storyteller Waka uses ridicule laughter as she describes her poor cooking skills in her story.

Excerpt 1: Fried rice

- 23 Hayato: *tabekake yatta yan. h*
(It) was half-eaten, huh?
- 24 Waka: *e, soo na n [yo.*
Oh, that's right, yeah.
- 25 Hayato: *[hhhhh 'h*
- 26 Waka: *chaahan tsukutta kedo, doo? tte ittara, hitokuchi tabete, (0.4)*
ee wa [tte iwa(h)re(h)te(h). hhhh
When (I) said, "(I) made fried rice, do (you) want some?"
(he) had a bite, and (I) was told, "No, thank you" and,
- 27 Hayato: *[hhhhh*
- 28 (0.4)
- 29 Waka: *maa, (0.4) are wa anmari (2.6) jishinsaku de wa nai node.*
Well, that's not a (dish) that (I) can proud of, so.
- 30 Hayato: *soo ka.*
I see.
- 31 Waka: *'un. h °*
Yeah.
- 32 (2.0)
- 33 Waka: *'ee n ya kedo na. °*
That's fine, though, you know.

In line 26, after Waka explains a situation in which she asked her stepson if he would like to eat the fried rice she had made, she says, *hitokuchi tabete, (0.4) ee wa* "(he) had a bite, and 'No, thank you.'" She "demonstrates" (Clark & Gerrig, 1990)⁴ what her stepson said and did, imitating his facial expressions and re-enacting the scene in which he took a moment after he had a bite before saying, "No, thank you" with a 0.4-second pause. Immediately after exiting from her demonstration of his utterance, Waka says, *[tte iwa(h)re(h)te(h). hhhh* "(I) was told, and" with concurrent laughter indicated by laughter within a word (h) and post-utterance laughter, using the indirect passive *iwarete* "to be told" to convey the negative emotion that she experienced.⁵ The laughter in the punch line that describes the storyteller's undesirable event using the negative expression (i.e., the indirect passive) is ridicule laughter used for self-mockery. After the story

⁴Clark and Gerrig (1990) claimed that "[t]he prototypical quotation is a demonstration of what a person did in saying something" that depicts a quoted speaker's linguistic properties such as his accent and voice quality as well as nonlinguistic actions (e.g., emotional state and body movements) and events (p. 769).

⁵Iwasaki (2013) pointed out that the indirect passive in Japanese "depicts some psychological impact, usually identified as 'psychological adversity,' experienced by the human referent denoted by the passive subject" (p. 160).

recipient's laughter occurs in the response sequence, Waka extends her story in line 29, *maa*, (0.4) *are wa anmari* (2.6) *jishinsaku de wa nai node*. "Well, that's not a (dish) that (I) can proud of, so" and in line 33, *°ee n ya kedo na*. ° "That's fine, though, you know" to provide a self-defending rationalization of her step-son's negative evaluation of her fried rice.

Excerpt 2 is taken from a conversation between Eiko, a single woman in her late twenties, and her female subordinate in the office, Shizu, who is a single woman in her mid-twenties. Prior to Excerpt 2 Eiko told Shizu that she drinks beer every night after coming home from work. In Excerpt 2 Eiko talks about how she neglects to cook, first by relaying a story in which she let food such as eggs go bad and then by talking about how even boiling eggs is troublesome through a hypothetical story.

Excerpt 2: Eggs

- 1 Eiko: *de, tsumami wa nani ga an no? tte ittara anmari nai n da yo ne.*
And, when I think about what (I) have for hors d'oeuvres (for beer), (I) don't have much (at home), you see?
- 2 (1.4)
- 3 Shizu: *maa, toohu toka.*
Well, things like tofu.
- 4 (2.2)
- 5 Eiko: *soo. soo. nanka, (0.4) kaeri no suupaa ni yotte sono toki wa taberu tsumori de katta hazu na noni, ki ga tsuitara, ree zooko de, itsu no da ka wakaranai joutai ni nattetari toka suru toki mo atte sa,*
Right. Right. Like, sometimes (I) stop by at a supermarket on my way home and buy (food) thinking (I) would eat (it) at that time, but before (I) knew (it), (it) has often gone (so old) in the refrigerator that (I) don't know when it was (that I bought it).
- 6 Shizu: [°moo° sake dake de ii n desho?
Well, just alcohol is fine (with you), right?
- 7 Eiko: [aho da yo na: to..
(I think I) am a fool.
- 8 Shizu: *ei(h)ko(h)-[sa(h)n.*
Eiko.
- 9 Eiko: [kawanakya ii noni: toka omou n [da kedo ne..
(I) think (I) shouldn't buy (food), but, you know.
- 10 Shizu: [okane nai noni.
(You) don't have money, though.
- 11 Eiko: [ne..
Right.

- 12 Shizu: [ne.
Right.
- 13 Eiko: soo. tamago toka sa:, hitopakku kaccha[tte,
Right. Things like eggs, (I) ended up buying a dozen
(eggs), and,
- 14 Shizu: [aa.
Oh.
- 15 Eiko: ikko shika tabetenai noni:, ato zenbu (0.6) hu(h)ru(h)ku
natte(h)ru(h):.. hhhh °h kanari [setsunai.
Although (I) have eaten only one (egg), all the rest (of
eggs) have gone old. Quite sad.
- 16 Shizu: [tsukaimashoo yo.
Let's use (them), you know.
- 17 Eiko: [a:., sonna koto dekinai yo:.
Oh, (I) cannot do such a thing, you know.
- 18 Shizu: [yudetamago ni shite asa mottekite tabereba ii ja nai desu ka.
All you have to do is to make boiled eggs, bring them (to
the office) in the morning, and eat (them), you know?
- 19 Eiko: sono yuderu no ga me(h)ndo(h)kusa(h)i no(h) yo(h) mo(h)o.
That (process of) boiling (eggs) is too much trouble al-
ready, you know.
- 20 (1.2)
- 21 Shizu: datte juppun gurai de dekimasu [yo:.
But (you) can make (them) in about ten minutes, you
know.
- 22 Eiko: [a:., datte nabe dasanakya
ikenai n da yo:?: mizu kunde hi mo tsukenakya ikenai n da
yo:?
Oh, but (I) have to take out a pan, you see? (I) have to
pour water (in the pan) and also turn on (the gas), you
see?
- 23 (0.6)
- 24 Shizu: biiru nonderu aida ni sa?
While (you) are drinking beer, you know?
- 25 (0.4)
- 26 Eiko: aa, aa, a(h)a. hhh
Oh, oh, oh.
- 27 (1.2)
- 28 Shizu: sootoo setsunai seikatsu desu ne.
(You) have a very sad life, huh.
- 29 Eiko: e:?: sono ato nabe katazukenakya ikenai n da(h) yo(h):? hhh
What? After that (I) have to clean up the pan, you see?
- 30 (0.4)

- 31 Shizu: >°moo°< *hitorigurashi no sui(h) mo ama(h)i mo shi(h) tta mi(h) tai ni na(h) ttema(h) su kedo.*
**Like, it looks like (you) have learned the sweets and bit-
 ters of living alone, though.**
- 32 Eiko: °h soo. *nanka ne., ryoori o yaru ki ni nareba chanto yareru kuse ni., nanka yaru ki ni naru made ga., su:goi kakaru kara., jissai moo, ryoori no yarikata o [wasurekaketeru=*
**Right. Like, (I) can cook well, if (I) feel like cooking, but,
 like, it takes a really long time before (I) feel like (it), so
 actually, (I)’m already beginning to forget how to cook,**
- 33 Shizu: [°a:..°
Oh.
- 34 Eiko: =to yuu yoonu ki ga suru.
(I) feel that way.

In line 5 Eiko says that she sometimes buys food and leaves it in the refrigerator for such a long time that she does not remember when she bought it and then gives a negative, self-deprecating assessment in line 7, ([*aho da yo na: to:* “(I think I) am a fool”) and a negative comment in line 9, ([*kawanakya ii noni: toka omou* “(I) think (I) shouldn’t buy (food)”) about her behavior of wasting food because of her failure to cook. She then continues to elaborate upon her story, giving a specific case of wasting eggs in line 13, *tamago toka sa., hitopakku kaccha[tte*, “Things like eggs, (I) ended up buying a dozen (eggs), and” and in line 15, *ikko shika tabetenai noni., ato zenbu* (0.6) *hu(h)ru(h)ku natte(h)ru(h)::.* *hhhh °h kanari [setsunai.* “Although (I) have eaten only one (egg), all the rest (of eggs) have gone old. Quite sad”. In lines 13 and 15 Eiko uses several linguistic devices to indicate her negative assessment about the event: 1) the expression *chau*, a contracted form of *te-shimau*, as in line 13 *kacchatte* “end up buying, and” to express an overtone of the speaker’s negative feeling; 2) the particle *shika* “only” in line 15 to emphasize lack of an object or state, implying the speaker’s dissatisfaction; 3) the conjunction *noni* “although” in line 15 to indicate a sense of “contrary to the speaker’s expectation” and express the speaker’s emotions such as disappointment in this story; and 4) Eiko’s story evaluation *kanari set-sunai* “quite sad” uttered at the story completion point in line 15 to express her negative sentiments about the event. What is of significance is that she uses laughter to turn her story about being remiss in cooking into a humorous one, rather than a serious troubles story about wasting food and money.⁶

Shizu’s suggestion to make boiled eggs and eat them in the office in line 18 prompts Eiko to tell a hypothetical story about making boiled eggs from line 19. After saying boiling eggs is too much trouble with concurrent laughter in line 19, Eiko provides recipe-like, step-by-step cooking directions in a storytelling for-

⁶In Excerpt 2, Eiko develops her troubles story into a humorous self-disclosing story. As Ervin-Tripp and Lampert (2009) pointed out, a troubles talk that begins without laughter can become a source of laughter for the storyteller and it leads into a humorous, self-disclosing narrative accompanied by laughter on the continuing topic.

mat in line 22, *datte nabe dasanakya ikenai n da yo?: mizu kunde hi mo tsukenakya ikenai n da yo?:* “but (I) have to take out a pan, you see? (I) have to pour water (in the pan) and also turn on (the gas), you see?” and in line 29, *sono ato nabe katazukenakya ikenai n da(h) yo(h):? hhh* “After that (I) have to clean up the pan, you see?” Eiko formulates this hypothetical story about making boiled eggs as a complaint story to justify her claim that even boiling eggs, which takes about ten minutes according to Shizu, is troublesome, utilizing these linguistic devices: 1) the conjunction *datte* “but” in line 22 at the utterance-initial position to justify the speaker’s previous assertion to pursue agreement from the hearer; 2) the expression *nakya ikenai* “have to” to indicate the speaker’s strong sense of obligation about her own actions; 3) the sentence-final expression *n da* “it is that” to explain her situation; and 4) the sentence-final particle *yo* to indicate the speaker’s strong assertion. Significantly, she sets the tone of humor with laughter at the onset of the story in line 19 and maintains it by using laughter again at the story completion point in line 29, thus framing this complaint story as a humorous one. In the response sequence, Shizu gives her negative assessment in line 28, *sootoo setsunai seikatsu desu ne*. “(You) have a very sad life, huh” and in line 31, *>’moo’< hitorigurashi no sui(h) mo ama(h)i mo shi(h) tta mi(h) tai ni na(h) ttema(h) su kedo*. “Like, it looks like (you) have learned the sweets and bitters of living alone, though” showing her agreement with the storyteller through repetition of Eiko’s assessment *kanari setsunai* “quite sad” in line 15 and her acknowledgement of the humorous tone of Eiko’s story through laughter in line 31. The storyteller in Excerpt 2 tells stories about her laziness about cooking, not about her inability to cook, as Eiko herself says in line 32 that she can cook well if she feels like cooking. In the “wasting eggs story” and “making boiled eggs story” Eiko employs ridicule laughter for self-mockery from lines 15 through 29, and the story recipient Shizu, though she is Eiko’s subordinate, also uses ridicule laughter in her negative comments on Eiko’s neglect of cooking, thereby collaboratively rendering Eiko’s trouble or complaint stories as playful and co-constructing humorous storytelling.

Ridicule laughter in food storytelling can also be identified in a story about neglecting to do the dishes, as in Excerpt 3. Excerpt 3 comes from the same conversation of Excerpt 2 between Eiko and her subordinate Shizu. Prior to Excerpt 3, Shizu said she is not good at doing housework and relayed that when she was in high school she left her lunch box unwashed during a summer vacation, even after it became covered in mold. This leads Eiko to recount a second story, about a college friend who neglected to do the dishes for years, with accompanying ridicule laughter.

Excerpt 3: Miso soup saucepan

- 11 Eiko: *atashi no tomodachi tte yuu ka tonari no heya ni sundeta hito mo nanka sugoi hito datta kedo na. daigakusee no toki.*
My friend, rather, a person living in the apartment next door, was also, like, an astounding person, though, you know. When (I) was in college.

- 12 (1.0)
- 13 Eiko: *ninen ka sannen onnaji apaato ni sundeta n da kedo, hikkoshite
sugu tsukutta misoshiru no nabe o, hikkosu sono toki mo
sono mama motteku tte ihatteta.*
**(She) was living in the same apartment for two or three
years, but (she) made (and left) miso soup in a saucepan
when (she) moved in, and when (she) moved out, (she)
was insisting that (she) would take (with her) that sau-
cepan with miso soup in it, as it was.**
- 14 (1.6)
- 15 Shizu: *sono mama?*
As it was?
- 16 Eiko: *un.*
Yeah.
- 17 (0.8)
- 18 Shizu: *sono mama.=*
As it was.
- 19 Eiko: *= () kabi ga haeta ato ni, hikarabiteiku katei o zenbu mite,
demo kowai kara minai ttoka itte sono mama ho(h)tto
[i(h) te(h), hh*
**(She) saw the whole process of it going moldy and drying
up, but (she) said, “(I)’m scared, so (I) won’t look at (it)”
and left (it) as it was, and,**
- 20 Shizu: *[onna desu ka.*
Is (she) a woman?
- 21 Eiko: *so(h)o(h).*
Right.
- 22 Shizu: *minai ja nee yo mitaina.*
((Shizu smiles.))
Like, don’t (say), “(I) won’t look at (it)”!
- 23 Eiko: *’h*
- 24 Shizu: *sutete[ke yo mitaina.*
((Shizu smiles.))
Like, throw (it) away!
- 25 Eiko: *[’h ’h hh ’h e, demo nanka zutto sono mama de tottoita
kara aichaku ga waichatte. toka itte, nan no ko(h)ccha(h):.*
**But like (she) said, “(I) kept (it) as it was for a long time,
so (I) became attached to (it)” and (I’m like), What is
(she) saying?**
- 26 Shizu: *tsukatte na(h)i no(h)ni ne(h).*
(She) didn’t use (it), though, you know.
- 27 Eiko: *soo.*
Right.
- 28 (1.4)

- 29 Eiko: °h
 30 (0.8)
 → 31 Eiko: *baka deshita*. [hhh
 (She) was a fool.
 → 32 Shizu: [he(h)nna hi(h)to de(h)su ne. daibu.
 (She) is a bizarre person, huh. Quite.
 33 (1.2)
 34 Eiko: °soo. °
 Right.

Eiko begins her story with a story preface to provide a story character (her next door neighbor), time of the event (when she was in college), and story characterization (*sugoi hito datta* “(she) was an astounding person”). Eiko next gives an abstract of the story in line 13, saying that her friend made and left miso soup in a saucepan when she moved in and that a few years later when she moved out, she insisted that she would take with her that saucepan with miso soup in it as it was. After responding to Shizu’s confirmation request in line 15, Eiko goes on to elaborate her story and demonstrate about what and how her friend said regarding the moldy, dried-up miso soup saucepan in line 19, *demo kowai kara minai ttoka itte sono mama ho(h)tto[i(h)te(h):*, hh “but (she) said, ‘(I)’m scared, so (I) won’t look at (it),’ and left (it) as it was, and” accompanying her words with ridicule laughter after she finishes demonstrating her utterance. Eiko’s demonstration of her friend’s utterance triggers Shizu’s request for clarification in line 20, *onna desu ka*. “Is (she) a woman?” After receiving an affirmative response from Eiko, Shizu makes scornful comments toward the story character in line 22, *minai ja nee yo mitaina*. “Like, don’t (say), ‘(I) won’t look at (it)’!” and line 24, *sutete[ke yo mitaina*. “Like, throw (it) away!” using rough male speech expressions that are at the same time overlaid with her playfulness through a hedge expression *mitaina* “like” at the utterance-final position and with her smiling face. It is interesting to note that Shizu’s clarification request and her negative comments here suggest that she assumes it is extraordinary for women to do such things described in Eiko’s story, alluding to stereotypical and traditional gender roles and behavior with regard to cooking-related housework.

Eiko then continues to demonstrate her friend’s utterance, mimicking her voice and action after laughing at the turn-initial position in line 25, °h °h hh °h e, *demo nanka zutto sono mama de tottoita kara aichaku ga waichatte. toka itte*, “But like (she) said, ‘(I) kept (it) as it was for a long time, so (I) became attached to (it),’ and” and then she provides her negative assessment to it, saying, *nan no ko(h)ccha(h):*. “(I’m like), What is (she) saying?” with concurrent ridicule laughter. In line 26, Shizu also points out Eiko’s friend’s utterance is nonsensical by saying *tsukatte na(h)i no(h)ni ne(h)*. “(She) didn’t use (it), though, you know” with concurrent laughter. After the story reaches a completion point, the storyteller and the recipient give their negative assessments toward the story character in line 31, *baka deshita*. [hhh “(She) was a fool” and in line 32,

[*he(h)nna hi(h)to de(h)su ne. daibu.* “(She) is a bizarre person, huh. Quite” respectively, derogatory comments marked by ridicule laughter.

3.2. Funny Laughter in Food Storytelling

Funny laughter can be seen in stories about story characters’ eating behavior deemed inappropriate for the occasion, contradictory, or unusual, and in stories about unexpected or extraordinary ingredients in food or dishes in a meal. Excerpt 4, from a conversation between two female friends in their late teens, highlights a case of inappropriate eating behavior for an occasion: The storyteller Kazue talks about what she usually does every year with her family on Christmas. In Excerpt 4, although the storyteller’s utterances do not indicate audible verbal laughter, she tells a story while smiling throughout, and more importantly, the story recipient Rieko provides funny laughter as well as surprise laughter as her responses.

Excerpt 4: Christmas

- 1 Kazue: *maitoshi, (0.4) demo atashi kurisumasu ni sonna tanoshii kurisumasu nai kedo betsu ni.*
Every year, but on Christmas I don’t have an enjoyable Christmas in particular.
- 2 Rieko: *un.*
Yeah.
- 3 Kazue: *itsumo tabun kazoku de,*
Always probably with (my) family,
((37 lines omitted.))
- 41 Kazue: *nanka itsumo konna kanji. soreka tabesugite kimochi waruku [natte sa,*
Like, always (it)’s like this. Or, (I) eat too much and feel sick, and, you know?
- 42 Rieko: *[hhhhh un.*
Uh-huh.
- 43 Kazue: *uchi no okaasan mo, kurisumasu ni: nanka imosarada o tabesugi[te,*
My mother also ate, like, potato salad too much on Christmas, and,
- 44 Rieko: *[hhhh*
- 45 Kazue: *nanka:, ha- haku:: gurai [tabete,*
Like, (she) ate so much that (she) threw up, and,
- 46 Rieko: *[hhhhh*
- 47 Kazue: *nekonda rashiku.,*
Looks like (she) got laid up in bed, and,
- 48 Rieko: *ε(h):.....?*
What?
- 49 Kazue: *soo yuu hito da kara.*
(She) is that kind of person, so.

- 50 Rieko: *hhhhh iden da.*
(It)’s heredity.
- 51 Kazue: *iden?* [*hhh*]
Heredity?
- 52 Rieko: [*hhhhh*]
- 53 Kazue: *niteru no* [*nanka.*]
(We) are alike somewhat.
- 54 Rieko: [*ne(h):... hhh hee::*]
Right. I see.

In line 1, Kazue says she does not have enjoyable Christmases in particular, after which she talks about what she does with her family on that holiday. Subsequently, Kazue says in line 41, *soreka tabesugite kimochi waruku* [*natte sa*], “Or, (I) eat too much and feel sick, and, you know?” which becomes the pre-telling sequence that triggers the storytelling about a family incident to further illustrate her joyless Christmases. After receiving Rieko’s funny laughter and a minimal response token *un* “uh-huh” in line 42, Kazue describes what her mother did on Christmas, saying that she also ate potato salad to the degree that she threw up and then became laid up in bed, in lines 43, 45, and 47. During Kazue’s pre-telling and telling sequence, the story recipient Rieko continuously contributes funny laughter, in lines 42, 44, and 46. However, as the character’s eating behavior and condition become increasingly incongruous for a festive Christmas day, from eating too much and throwing up to eventually getting laid up in bed, the recipient Rieko upgrades her laughter from funny laughter to *e(h):.....*? “What?” the elongated interjection *e*? “what?” with concurrent surprise laughter and eyes wide open, in line 48. In line 49 Kazue completes her story with her assessment about her mother: *soo yuu hito da kara*. “(She) is that kind of person, so”. Kazue not only uses the deictic expression *soo yuu* “that kind” in line 49 to specifically refer back to her mother’s incident of getting sick from overeating on Christmas described in her story but also appropriates the expression *soo yuu hito da* “(She) is that kind of person” to generalize the incident as an example of her mother’s ordinary but jarring behaviors. Then, in the response sequence, the recipient Rieko provides a comment to further generalize the point of the story by exploiting the storyteller’s assessment about the story character. In line 50 Rieko inserts funny laughter at the turn-initial position and says *hhhhh iden da*. “(It)’s heredity” encompassing the telling sequence about Kazue’s mother’s overeating incident as well as the pre-telling sequence in line 41 about Kazue’s behavior of overeating and feeling sick on Christmas. This recipient’s comment prompts the storyteller’s clarification request (line 51 *iden?* [*hhh* “Heredity?”) as well as confirmation (line 53 *niteru no* [*nanka*. “(We) are alike somewhat”) and generates another round of funny laughter in the response sequence from lines 51 to line 54. My analysis of funny laughter in Excerpt 4, the story about eating behaviors deemed inappropriate for the occasion, demonstrates that food-related humor does not exist in isolation in linguistic texts; ra-

ther, it is embedded in our social behaviors of eating, in context.

Excerpt 5 is a conversation between three female friends in their mid-twenties—this excerpt exemplifies funny laughter occurring in a story about contradictory eating behavior. In this excerpt the storyteller Kayo relays a story about an incident in which she and her friends went to an Asian restaurant that serves mainly hot, spicy food. As she describes the contradictory eating behavior of the story character, the story recipients Eri and Yumi contribute funny laughter.

Excerpt 5: *Nasi goreng* (Indonesian hot fried rice)

- 30 Kayo: *un. danna wa na?* ((*sniff*)) *are ya nen te. karai mon taberarehen katta n ya [tte.*
Yeah. (Her) husband, you know, (he) said (he) couldn't eat hot, spicy food.
- 31 Eri: [*un.*
Uh-huh.
- 32 Kayo: *atashi mo kekkoo wa: suki ya shi na:, wa: demo ii to omotte n kedo:, moo koko iku mitaina kanji yatta shi na?*
I also rather like Restaurant Wa, so (I) thought Wa is fine, but it looked like (they had) already (decided) to go this place, you know?
- 33 Eri: *°un. °*
Uh-huh.
- 34 Kayo: *de, koko de ii. zenzen tabereru kara sonna n ii yo: ttsutte itte n ya kedo:,*
And, (he) said, "This place is fine, (I) can totally eat (their food), so (it)'s fine, (I) tell you" so (we) went (there), but,
- 35 Yumi: *°un. °*
Uh-huh.
- 36 Kayo: *karai yan ka.*
(It)'s hot, spicy, you know.
- 37 Yumi: *un.*
Uh-huh.
- 38 Kayo: *karai mon taberarehen kara zenzen tabehen ne yan ka:. moo kore mo karai kore mo karai toka [tte.*
(He) cannot eat hot, spicy food, so (he) doesn't eat at all, you know? Like, he said, "This is hot, too, this is hot, too".
- 39 Yumi: [*sonna [karai mon bakkari na n?*
Do (they serve) only hot, spicy food like that?
- 40 Eri: [*sonna akan no ya.*
(He) cannot eat (hot, spicy food) that much, huh.
- 41 Kayo: *de, karakunai no tanomi ya: tte yutten no[ni:,*
And, although (I) said (to him), "Order food that isn't spicy"

- 42 Yumi: [un.
Uh-huh.
- 43 Kayo: *nashigoren toka tte karashi maaku sanko tsuiteru yatsu toka*
[*tanomu n yan ka.*
(He) orders food with three chili pepper marks like nasi goreng, you know?
- 44 Eri: [hhhhh
- 45 Yumi: [hhhhhh
- 46 Eri: ['h 'h
- 47 Kayo: [*n:* *karai toka tte tabehen nen kekkyoku.*
(He) says, "Oh, (it)'s hot" and (he) doesn't eat (it) after all.
- 48 Yumi: *dooka shite(h)ru(h) wa(h).* hh
Something is wrong with (him).
- 49 Kayo: *u.n.*
Yeah.
- 50 Eri: hhh

Prior to Excerpt 5, Kayo reveals that she and her friends went to an Asian restaurant that serves mostly hot, spicy food, and from line 30, Kayo continues to provide further story settings, explaining that her friend's husband said he cannot eat hot, spicy food (line 30) but that he also said this spicy food restaurant is fine and he can eat their food (line 34). Then, in line 38, she describes the problem after going into the restaurant, relaying that he cannot eat spicy food so does not eat at all, saying, "This is hot, too". In the subsequent turns, story recipients Yumi and Eri share their responses to this trouble in the story by asking a question in line 39, [*sonna [karai mon bakkari na n?* "Do (they serve) only hot, spicy food like that?" and in line 40, [*sonna akan no ya.* "(He) cannot eat (hot, spicy food) that much, huh" respectively. Without responding to the story recipients' question and comment, Kayo moves on to depict the story character's contradictory eating behaviors in two-part turns. First, she quotes her speech and says in line 41, *de, karakunai no tanomi ya: tte yutten no[ni,* "And, although (I) said (to him), 'Order food that isn't spicy,'" in which she exploits the conjunction *noni* "although" (with the meaning of "contrary to one's expectations") at the turn-final position to project the ensuing of unexpected actions. In the next turn Kayo describes the husband's action in line 43, *nashigoren toka tte karashi maaku sanko tsuiteru yatsu toka [tanomu n yan ka.* "(He) orders food with three chili pepper marks like nasi goreng, you know?" Even though Kayo instructed him to order food that was not spicy, the husband, who cannot eat hot, spicy food, orders *nasi goreng* "Indonesian spicy fried rice" a very hot dish with three chili pepper marks, indicating the highest level of heat on the menu. This punch line showing the incongruity of the story character's behavior invites funny laughter from the story recipients in lines 44 and 45. Kayo depicts his action further in line 47, [*n:* *karai toka tte tabehen nen kekkyoku.* "(He) says, 'Oh, (it)'s hot,' and (he) doesn't eat (it) after all" to further emphasize the degree of

incongruity of his behavior. Upon completion of the story punch line, the story recipient Yumi proffers her assessment toward the story character's contradictory eating behavior recounted in the story in line 48, *dooka shite(h)ru(h) wa(h). hh* "Something is wrong with (him)" accompanying her words with funny laughter.

The below Excerpt 6 illustrates funny laughter used in a story about unusual eating behavior. In Excerpt 6, Taka, a male speaker in his mid-twenties, is talking about the food he ate during his three-day trip to Korea with funny laughter. Moto, his female friend in her mid-twenties, offers her responses with funny laughter as well as surprise laughter, as she listens to his story.

Excerpt 6: *Samgyetang* (Korean ginseng chicken soup)

- 60 Taka: *shikamo tte(.) chau kedō,*
(It)'s not besides, but,
- 61 Moto: *un.*
Uh-huh.
- 62 Taka: *kankoku. kankoku ittara,*
Korea, when (I) went to Korea,
- 63 Moto: *un.*
Uh-huh.
- 64 Taka: *ichinichi sanshoku. sangetan ku(h)t(h)te n. hh=*
(I) ate samgyetang three times a day.
- 65 Moto: *[e(h):...? nande sangetan bakkari na n?*
What? Why only samgyetang?
- 66 Taka: *[=hhhhhhhh*
- 67 Moto: *'h 'h*
- 68 Taka: *gyakuni karada ni warui ka[naa.*
(I) wonder if (it)'s bad for the health, rather.
- 69 Moto: *[hhh*
- 70 Taka: *are.*
That.
- 71 Moto: *iya: meccha jiyoo kyoosoo ga tsuite ii n chau?*
No, (you) get lots of nutrition and stamina, so (it)'s good, isn't it?
- 72 Taka: *datte sanshoku ya de?*
But three times (a day), you know?
- 73 Moto: *nande sanshoku tabeta n. >sonna< akihen?*
Why did (you) eat (it) three times (a day)? Don't (you) get sick of that?
- 74 Taka: *choosen shiyoo to omotte. [hhhhhhhhh*
(I) was going to challenge (myself).
- 75 Moto: *[hhhhhh a(h)ho ya(h):..*
(You) are an idiot.
- 76 Taka: *['h cha(h)u ne(h)n.*

No.

77 Moto: [hhh

78 Taka: *asa ku- asa kutte n yan ka.*

Morning, in the morning (I) ate (it).

((Taka's story continues.))

Taka says he went to Korea for three days and then launches into storytelling, offering an abstract of his story in lines 62, 64, and 66, *kankoku: kankoku ittara, ichinichi sanshoku: sangetan ku(h)t(h)te n. hhhhhhhhhh* "Korea, when (I) went to Korea, (I) ate samgyetang three times a day" with loud, funny laughter that characterizes the ensuing story as an uproarious one. Yet, in line 65, the story recipient Moto first responds with surprise laughter, [*ε(h).....*? "What?" the elongated interjection *ε* "what" in a rising intonation with laugh tokens, and asks a question, *nande sangetan bakkari na n?* "Why only samgyetang?" Since we expect people to eat different food for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in our ordinary daily lives, eating the same food three times a day, even just for a couple of days, seems somewhat unusual, barring special or extraordinary circumstances. Moreover, when people travel to foreign countries, they often tend to try eating different local foods there. In view of these expectations about our eating habits in our daily lives and people's eating tendencies during travel, Taka's behavior of eating the same food (*samgyetang* "Korean ginseng chicken soup") three times a day every day during his three-day stay in Korea is quite unusual and surprising for the story recipient, which leads her to respond with surprise laughter, rather than funny laughter, in line 65. After Taka indicates that eating *samgyetang*, which is thought to be nourishing food, three times a day may be rather bad for the health, Moto asks for a reason again in line 73, *nande sanshoku tabeta n. >sonna< akihen?* "Why did (you) eat (it) three times (a day)? Don't (you) get sick of that?" Taka answers the question in line 74, *choosen shiyoo to omotte. [hhhhhhhhh* "(I) was going to challenge (myself)" with post-utterance elongated laughter. Not only his behavior of eating the same food three times a day every day during his three-day stay in a foreign country but also his reason for his behavior is odd, unusual, and amusing. Taka's answer triggers a burst of funny laughter from both Taka and Moto and elicits an assessment toward the unusual reason for his unusual behavior from Moto in line 75, [*hhhhhh a(h)ho ya(h)::*. "(You) are an idiot" with funny laughter.

Excerpt 7 below represents an archetypal case of joke storytelling, incongruity humor, and funny laughter about unexpected or extraordinary food in a meal. In Excerpt 7, Midori and Honami, two female friends in their early twenties, talk about a lunch that Momo, who is their senior in the same student club, brought to school the other day, with accompanying funny laughter.

Excerpt 7: Ms. Momo's *onigiri* "rice ball" lunch

→ 1 Midori: *kono aida no momo senpai hirugohan choo omoshirokatta n da kedo.*

Ms. Momo's lunch the other day was so funny, though.

2 Honami: *nani?*

What?

- 3 Midori: *nanka*, (0.4) *konbini no onigiri an jan*.
Like, there is a rice ball (sold) at a convenience store, you know.
- 4 Honami: *un*.
Uh-huh.
- 5 Midori: *inageya na n da kedo*,
(It)'s an Inageya (store)'s (rice ball), but,
- 6 Honami: *un*.
Uh-huh.
- 7 Midori: *koo yuu onigiri aru jan. are to*,
((Midori makes a triangle shape with the thumb and the index finger of both her hands, raised in front of her.))
There is a rice ball like this, you know. That one and,
- 8 Honami: *un*.
Uh-huh.
- 9 Midori: *de okazu ga detekita no. okazu mitara*, *onigiri hu(h)ta(h)tsu*,
[hhhhh]
Then, (she) put side dishes (on the table). When (I) looked at (her) side dishes, (they were) two rice balls.
- 10 Honami: [hhhhhhhhhhhhhh]
- 11 Midori: *'h sugokatta*.
(It) was great.
- 12 Honami: *da(h)me(h) jan*.
No good, huh.
- 13 Midori: *kitto onigiri ga kitto tabetakatta n da*.
Surely, it's that (she) surely wanted to eat rice balls.
- 14 Honami: *hhhh*

Midori's story characterization in the story preface in line 1, *kono aida no momo senpai hirugohan choo omoshirokatta n da kedo*. "Ms. Momo's lunch the other day was so funny, though" frames the story to be told as a hilarious one and sets up the story recipient's expectation as such. In addition, this story characterization implies that the storyteller presumes and expects that the recipient shares with her not only the same sense of humor but also the same social cultural norms and values of the group they belong to, enabling her to discover humor in the ensuing humorous story. After the story recipient's "go-ahead" response⁷ in line 2, (*nani?* "What?"), Midori starts telling about the first food in Momo's lunch, a rice ball, in lines 3 and 5, *konbini no onigiri an jan. inageya na n da kedo*, "there is a rice ball (sold) at a convenience store, you know. (It)'s an Inageya (store)'s (rice ball), but" and depicts it in detail in line 7, *koo yuu onigiri aru jan. are to*, "There is a rice ball like this, you know. That one and" by making a triangle shape with the thumb and the index finger of both her hands,

⁷Schegloff (2007) pointed out that a "go-ahead" response "prompts progress of the sequence by encouraging its recipient to go ahead" with the first pair part of an adjacency pair that the pre-sequence action was projecting (p. 30).

raised in front of her, thereby vividly describing the rice ball Momo brought. She subsequently talks about Momo's side dishes in the first part of line 9, *de okazu ga detekita no*. "Then, (she) put side dishes (on the table)". A typical Japanese packed lunch that people bring to school or the office has rice (a Japanese staple food), and side dishes in the packed lunch are usually foods such as eggs, meat, fish, and vegetables. This cultural knowledge about a typical Japanese packed lunch that is shared among members of Japanese society leads the story recipient to anticipate hearing in the next story stage that the side dishes in Momo's lunch will be such foods as eggs, meat, and vegetables. However, the story unfolds in an unpredictable way. In the second part of line 9, Midori says, *okazu mitara, onigiri hu(h)ta(h)tsu:*, [hhhhh "When (I) looked at (her) side dishes, (they were) two rice balls". The combination of one rice ball as the staple food and two additional rice balls as side dishes, in other words, having the same staple food as side dishes, is unexpected and oddly funny in light of the common view Japanese people have about a Japanese-style packed lunch. This incongruity and oddness of the extraordinary side dishes depicted in the punch line evokes elongated funny laughter in Honami's response in line 10, [hhhhhhhhhhhhh. In the subsequent turns, Midori brings the storytelling to completion with her assessment in line 11, *'h sugokatta*. "(It) was great" and the story recipient Honami offers a negative assessment in line 12, *da(h)me(h) jan*. "No good, huh" uttered in a playful tone with concurrent funny laughter. Then, Midori extends the storytelling by providing her own presumptive account in line 13, *kitto onigiri ga kitto tabetakatta n da*. "Surely, it's that (she) surely wanted to eat rice balls" to justify Momo's action of choosing such unusual side dishes for her packed lunch. Excerpt 7 above demonstrates how the organization of funny storytelling is designed in such a way that story recipients not only recognize, but also vicariously co-experience, incongruity between their predictions and reality, to collaboratively (re-)discover humor in the event together with the storyteller.

3.3. Story Recipients' Laughter in Food Storytelling

In Sections 3.1 and 3.2, I mainly examined storytelling sequences, focusing on what kinds of food-related topics the storytellers are humorously recounting. In this section I will explore the story recipients' roles more closely and investigate how they bring laughter into the food storytelling, even when the storyteller is not telling a humorous story, analyzing story recipients' surprise laughter (Section 3.3.1) and story recipients' use of exaggeration and metaphor as well as their actions to transform stories (Section 3.3.2).

3.3.1. Story Recipients' Surprise Laughter in Food Storytelling

As discussed previously in Excerpt 4 (Rieko's line 48) and Excerpt 6 (Moto's line 65), story recipients bring surprise laughter into the storytelling, especially in surprising stories as in Excerpt 8. Prior to Excerpt 8, Mai and Aiko, two female roommates in their early twenties, were talking about their experiences with service in international flights. Mai said if you travel economy class in international

flights and ask for some food when you are hungry, they serve instant noodles in a plastic bowl or snacks. Then, in Excerpt 8 Mai launches into storytelling about her luxurious in-flight meal experiences when she unexpectedly traveled business class, and the story recipient Aiko responds with surprise laughter.

Excerpt 8: Sandwich snack in business class

- 34 Mai: *demo ne? mae ikkai machigatte bijinesu noreta no. tte yuu ka, osoku:=*
But you know? (I) once could fly business (class) by mistake. I mean, late,
- 35 Aiko: [*aru yo ne.*
(That) happens, right.
- 36 Mai: [*=toojootetsuzuki shite,*
(I) went through boarding procedures, and,
- 37 Aiko: *un. un.*
Uh-huh. Uh-huh.
- 38 Mai: *tara sandoicchi kureta no.*
Then, (they) gave (me) sandwiches.
- 39 Aiko: *e:?*
What?
- 40 Mai: *rippa na chanto koo,*
Excellent, proper, like this,
- 41 Aiko: *deru mon ga chigau jan.*
Things (they) serve are different, huh.
- 42 Mai: *zenzen chigau no ni, a sore buritissu earain datta n da ke[do,*
To totally different things, oh, that was British Airways, but,
- 43 Aiko: [*un.*
Uh-huh.
- 44 Mai: *sandoicchi no sara mo koo yuu setomono de,*
The plate of sandwiches was also chinaware like this and,
- 45 Aiko: *e::,*
((Aiko smiles as she is looking at the food in her bowl in her left hand.))
What?
- 46 Mai: [*ni tii ga tsuitekita no.*
To (that), tea was served (with it).
- 47 Aiko: *su(h)go:(h)::i(h).*
((Aiko laughs as she is looking at Mai.))
Amazing.
- 48 Mai: *gohan mo mochiron fooku to naihu de saabu shite kuren no. mein kara koo apetaizaa kara saigo made.=*
(They) serve (regular) meals with forks and knives (for us). From the main (dish) like this from appetizer to the end.

- 49 Aiko: =zenbu?
Everything?
- 50 Mai: un.
Yeah.
- 51 Aiko: 'uso. ° yappa chigau n da.=
Really. (It)'s different after all.
- 52 Mai: =un. zenzen chigau to omotta.
Yeah. (I) thought (it)'s totally different.

In lines 34 and 36, Mai relays that she once unexpectedly received the chance to fly business class when she went through boarding procedures late and then talks about the food they served when she requested something to eat between regular meal services, saying in line 38, *tara sandoicchi kureta no*. “Then, (they) gave (me) sandwiches”. After Aiko responds with an elongated, high-pitched interjection *e* “what” in a rising intonation in line 39, *e::?* “What?” to indicate her surprise,⁸ Mai continues to describe the sandwiches in more detail in line 40, *rippa na chanto koo*, “Excellent, proper, like this” and in line 44, *sandoicchi no sara mo koo yuu setomono de*, “The plate of sandwiches was also chinaware like this and”. Again, Aiko responds with an elongated, high-pitched interjection *e* “what” in line 45, *e:::*, “What?” as she smiles, thereby expressing her surprise laughter. When Mai describes another item in their snack service in line 46, [*ni: tij ga tsuitekita no*. “To (that), tea was served (with it)” the story recipient Aiko gives her assessment about the snack they served in line 47, *su(h)go:(h)::i(h)*. “Amazing” with enhanced concurrent surprise laughter, as she laughs while looking at Mai.

The fact that no audible or visible laughter was observed in the storyteller’s utterances and facial expressions throughout the storytelling from line 34 until line 52 indicates that she told her surprise story merely to share her amazement about the in-flight meal service, without making it humorous. However, as shown in Excerpt 8, the story recipient’s responses with surprise laughter upgrade Mai’s surprise story by making it more surprising, to a laughable degree. As Mai’s story unfolds moment by moment, the story recipient vicariously and vividly experiences Mai’s luxurious in-flight snack meal herself for the first time. It can be said that the story recipient’s escalating responses with surprise laughter from line 39 to line 47 are reenactments of the fresh feeling of amazement that the storyteller experienced at the time of the event. Their expectations about in-flight meals, more specifically about the occasional snacks served for hungry passengers who request some food, are so different from the reality that the sto-

⁸Goffman (1981) claimed that “response cries” i.e., exclamatory interjections, are “natural expressions, namely, signs meant to be taken to index directly the state of the transmitter” and “some (such as *Uh?* and *Shh!*) are clearly part of directed speech, and often interchangeable with a well-formed word (here *What?* and *Hush!*)” (p. 116). Koike (2008) demonstrated how the interjection *e* “what” in Japanese can display different functions depending on the accompanying intonation and body movements. I showed that the turn initial interjection *e* “what” that displays the speaker’s surprised affective stance is either elongated or short with a glottal stop, uttered in a higher pitch with a rising and exclamatory intonation, and often accompanied with such body movements as opening eyes wide and moving the head or upper half of the body forward or backward.

ryteller experienced on a business class flight that their surprised feelings become inconceivable, to a laughable degree, at least for the story recipient. Their shared surprised feelings about the difference between their expectations and the reality are manifested at the end of the storytelling in the story recipient's assessment in line 51, *yappa chigau n da*. "(It)'s different after all" and in the storyteller's assessment in line 52, *zenzen chigau to omotta*. "(I) thought (it)'s totally different". It is important to note that their surprised feelings do not spring from the food themselves (i.e., the sandwiches and tea); the concord of the participants' assessments (*chigau* "different") and their shared surprised feelings, even to the laughable level, are rooted in their presupposed understanding that they share the common experiences of always flying not business class but economy class, as well as the same or similar social values and world views based on such experiences.

3.3.2. Story Recipients' Exaggeration, Metaphor, and Story Transformation

Story recipients' comments can also bring funny laughter into the storytelling. As M. H. Goodwin (1997) insightfully pointed out, one of the ways that story recipients respond to stories is to "embellish the talk by exploiting possibilities for playful rendering, reframing it while appreciating it" (p. 80). In this section I will analyze how the story recipients use exaggeration and metaphor to respond to stories and will examine how their participation in the storytelling through such comments changes the trajectory and participation framework of the storytelling and transforms the stories. Excerpt 9, a conversation between three female friends in their mid-thirties, illustrates a case of story recipients' use of exaggerated comments. In Excerpt 9, as the storyteller Hiro is recounting about the food that she and her senior colleagues at her office ate at a restaurant, the story recipient Jun gives an exaggerated comment about the food, which induces laughter in the storytelling.

Excerpt 9: Egg dish at a Cuban restaurant

- 36 Hiro: >soo. soo. soo.< *atashi wa takosu o tabete n ke[do*,
Right. Right. Right. I ate tacos, but,
- 37 Iku: [u::n.
Uh-huh.
- 38 Hiro: *sono: nanka: kaisha no hoka no: senpai toka wa:, nanka: ano:*
sono: (0.6) [omuretsu o [tabete n.
Well, like, the other senior colleagues at (my) office, like,
um, well, ate an omelet.
- 39 Iku: [omuretsu?
Omelet?
- 40 Jun: [°omuretsu. °
Omelet.
- 41 Hiro: *omuretsu tte yuu ka:, nanka:, (0.6) [shi-*
Omelet, I mean, like,

- 42 Iku: [*tamago na n?*
Are (they) eggs?
- 43 Jun: [*hhh*
- 44 Hiro: [*tamago no katamari ya nen kedo,*
(It)'s a chunk of eggs, but,
- 45 Iku: *un.*
Uh-huh.
- 46 Hiro: *nanka chái[ro:i n yan ka.*
Like, (it)'s brown, I tell you.
- 47 Jun: [*dachoo no tamago to(h)ka(h)?*
(Jun smiles, looking at Hiro.)
An ostrich egg or something?
- 48 Iku: [*da(h)cho(h)o(h). chairoi no.*
Ostrich. Brown one.
- 49 Hiro: [*nde,*
And,
- 50 Iku: °*h*
- 51 Hiro: *nanka sono senpai ga tabenagara,*
Like, while that senior colleague was eating (that omelet),
- 52 Iku: [°*un. °*
Uh-huh.
- 53 Hiro: [*nanka shippai shita jibun no ryoori tabeteru [mitai toka,*
Like, (she) said, "It's like (I)'m eating my own dish that
(I) messed up".
- 54 Jun: [*hhh*
- 55 Iku: [*hhh[hh*
- 56 Hiro: [*de,*
And,
- 57 Jun: *soo.*
Really.
- 58 Hiro: *sorede nanahyakugojuu en ka nanka gurai torarete,*
And then, (we) were charged like 750-yen or so (per
person), and,
- 59 Iku: *un. un.*
Uh-huh. Uh-huh.
- 60 Hiro: *kore wa doo [kana: tte yutte,*
(We) said this is not right, and,
- 61 Iku: [*dorinku betsu?*
Drink not included?
- 62 Hiro: *iya, dorinku komi, a, dorinku tsuiteta kke na.*
Well, drink included, oh, was drink included? (I don't
remember.)
- 63 Iku: *un.*
Uh-huh.

- 64 Hiro: *nanse nanka koo: (1.4) ka- kanashiku [natte. minna.*
Anyway, like, um, everyone became sad.
- 65 Iku: *[nattoku ikahenka] te n ya.*
(You) were not satisfied with (it).
- 66 Hiro: *[un.*
Yeah.
- 67 Iku: *[soo na: n?*
Is that so.
- 68 Hiro: *[hona: sore irai: itte nai n yo.*
Then, (I) haven't been (there) since then, you know.

Prior to Excerpt 9, Hiro, Iku, and Jun were talking about a new Cuban restaurant near Jun's house. That prompted Hiro to talk about her experience at that restaurant: She told them that she and her senior colleagues at her office went there to eat lunch but that the food was awful, including menu items that are not considered Cuban cuisine, such as omelets and tacos. In Excerpt 9, Hiro continues describing their food experiences at the restaurant and says in lines 36 and 38 that she ate tacos and her senior colleagues ate an omelet. However, Hiro self-initiates repair of part of her prior utterance, *omuretsu* "omelet" in line 41, *omuretsu tte yuu ka: nanka:*, "Omelet, I mean, like" and repairs her utterance partially by replacing a name of the dish *omuretsu* "omelet" with a description of the dish in line 44, *[tamago no katamari ya nen kedo:*, "(It)'s a chunk of eggs, but" and in line 46, *nanka chái[ro:i n yan ka:*. "Like, (it)'s brown, I tell you". Overlapping with Hiro's utterance in line 46, the story recipient Jun asks a question with concurrent funny laughter in line 47, *[dachoo no tamago to(h)ka(h)?* "An ostrich egg or something?" smiling and looking at Hiro. Jun's question in line 47 is not a true question, which asks for an answer from an addressee; rather, it is a "playful joke question" (Koike, 2009).⁹ Jun playfully twists the storyteller's prior words *tamago no katamari* "a chunk of eggs" into *dachoo no tamago* "an ostrich egg" with unthinkable exaggeration and displays her non-serious playful stance through her concurrent funny laughter and smiling facial expression. Jun's playful joke question aimed at making a jest not only elicits laughter from another story recipient, Iku, but also disrupts the storytelling sequence and participation in the next turn. Iku, who has been listening to Hiro's story while looking at her (see Figure 1), partially repeats part of Jun's utterance with concurrent laughter to savor the expression in line 48, *[da(h)cho(h)o(h). chairoi no.* "Ostrich. Brown one" shifting her gaze from Hiro to Jun (see Figure 2), thus shifting the focus of the storytelling from the storyteller to the story recipient.

⁹Playful joke questions are "designed to be jokes about the words or content in the storyteller's preceding utterance" and "they typically disrupt the storyteller's storyline and lead to a digression because of one or more of the following reasons: 1) they shift the focus of the story to a particular word in the prior utterance or other topics, 2) they bring incoherent, inappropriate, or unrealistic ideas into the story, 3) they make serious stories non-serious through concurrent laughter, 4) they jokingly doubt the truth of the story, or 5) they imply that the unknowing story recipients do not esteem the storyteller's narrative proficiency" (Koike, 2009: pp. 158-159).

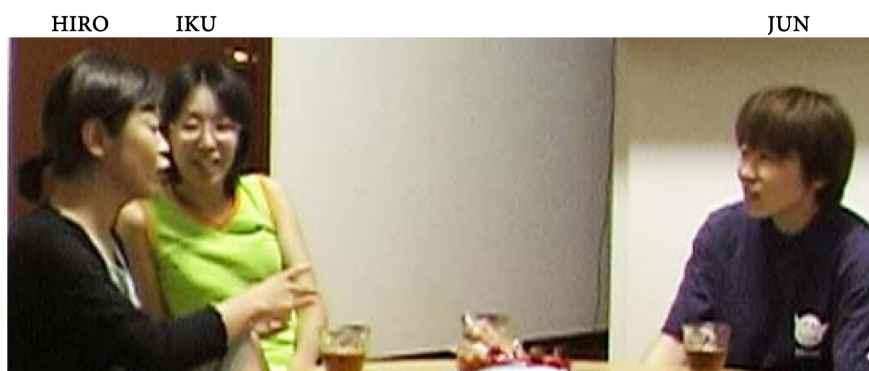


Figure 1. (From the left: Hiro, Iku, and Jun): Iku's gaze toward Hiro in line 46.



Figure 2. (From the left: Hiro, Iku, and Jun): Iku's gaze toward Jun in line 48.

- 46 Hiro: *nanka chái[ro:i n yan ka.*
Like, (it)'s brown, I tell you.
- 47 Jun: *[dachoo no tamago to(h)ka(h)?*
((Jun smiles, looking at Hiro.))
An ostrich egg or something?
- 48 Iku: *[da(h)cho(h)o(h). chairoi no.*
Ostrich. Brown one.

However, the storyteller Hiro, recognizing Jun's stance as playful and non-serious, sequentially deletes her question and moves on to depict the next scene of the story from line 49. It should be noted here that Hiro's story is a complaint story about the Cuban restaurant's food, as manifested by 1) her initial assessment in the story preface about the restaurant's awful food and non-authentic menu, 2) the use of the indirect passive in line 58 (*torarete* "be charged") to indicate her negative affect, and 3) the final negative story evaluation in line 64 (*kanashiku [natte. minna:* "everyone became sad"). Yet, the storyteller delivers the humorous climax in her complaint story in lines 51 and 53, *nanka sono senpai ga tabenagara, [nanka shippai shita jibun no ryoori tabeteru [mitai toka*, "Like, while that senior colleague was eating (that omelet), like, (she) said, 'It's like (I)'m eating my own dish that (I) messed up.'" In the following turns the story recipients show their uptakes toward this punch line through their collective laughter in lines 54 and 55. Excerpt 9 above showed a case in

which through her exaggerated comment in the form of a playful joke question, the story recipient brought funny laughter into the complaint storytelling before the storyteller reached the humorous twist. This excerpt illustrates the intricate and competitive nature of humorous storytelling: Story recipients' active participation through humorous comments may "steal" laughter ahead of the storyteller and disrupt the story sequence and participation framework in the storytelling, since a story that started as a complaint story may contain a humorous twist as it unfolds, as in Excerpt 9.

Story recipients also use metaphor in their comments to bring humor into the storytelling. The following Excerpt 10 is a case in point. In Excerpt 10, which comes from the same conversation as Excerpt 9, the storyteller Iku talks about very expensive chocolate sold at a fancy confectionary shop famous for New York-style cheesecakes, and the story recipient Jun uses metaphor in her comments and transforms the story characterization.

Excerpt 10: Chocolate at Keith Manhattan

- 3 Iku: *kiisumanhattan tte yuu [nanka nyuuyooku no=*
(It)'s called Keith Manhattan, like, New York-style
- 4 Hiro: *[un.*
Uh-huh.
- 5 Iku: *=chiizukeeki no omise ga suggoi narandete,*
(The) cheesecake shop is so (popular and people are) lining up, and,
- 6 Hiro: *un.*
Uh-huh.
- 7 Iku: *toka itte, chokoreeto mo ittsumo suggoi oishisoo ya de. toka yuu kara na?*
(She) said, and (their) chocolates always look so delicious, too, (she) said, so, you know?
- 8 Hiro: *un.*
Uh-huh.
- 9 Iku: *mi ni itta n yan ka.*
(I) went to see (them), you know.
- 10 Hiro: *u:n.*
Uh-huh.
- 11 Iku: *de chokoreeto uttete n kedo na?*
And, (they) were selling chocolates, but, you know?
- 12 Hiro: *u:n.*
Uh-huh.
- 13 Iku: *konna(h) ya(h)tsu(h) na? ikko sa(h)nbya(h)ku(h) en*
[yatte. yo(h)o kawa(h)nka(h)tte n. hh °h
(Iku makes a small circle with the thumb and the index finger of her left hand in front of her.))
A thing like this, you know? (It) was 300-yen a piece, so (I) just couldn't buy (it).

- 14 Hiro: [e:::?
What?
- 15 Jun: *nanka* (0.2) *hansuu sena akan yan na.*
 ((*Jun cups her right hand to below her neck.*))
Like, (you) have to ruminate, you know.
- 16 Iku: [hhhh *se ya na.*
That's right, yeah.
- 17 Hiro: [hhhh[hhh
- 18 Jun: [nomikomi[soo ni natte u tte [da(h)shi(h)te,
 ((*Jun first closes her eyes and cups her right hand to her throat area, then she sticks out her lips, and finally she moves her right hand in front of her mouth, as she is smiling.*))
When (you) are about to swallow (it), like “ugh” (you) throw (it) up (into your mouth), and,
- 19 Iku: [mo(h)ttai(h)nai shi(h) na.
(It)'s a waste (not to savor it), right.
- 20 Hiro: [hhhhhh
- 21 Iku: °h san[byaku en bun.
For the price of 300-yen.
- 22 Jun: [>moo<ekitai ni naru ma(h)de(h).
Well, until (it) becomes liquid.
- 23 Hiro: hhhh
- 24 Iku: °h mottaina(h)ku(h)tte. °soo. [nanka, ° sanbyaku en to wa omowankatta mitaina.
(It)'s a waste. Right. Like, (I'm) like, (I) didn't think (it) was 300-yen.
- 25 Hiro: [hhh °okashii. °
Funny.
- 26 Jun: *honma ya na.*
Really, yeah.

From line 3 to line 9, Iku relays that her friend said a New York-style cheese-cake shop called Keith Manhattan is very popular, people are lining up, and their chocolates also always look so delicious, so she went there to check out their chocolates, in order to set up the story background through a description of the shop and the reason why she went there. Next, interspersing concurrent laughter throughout her utterance, Iku describes what happened at the shop in line 13, *konna(h) ya(h)tsu(h) na? ikko sa(h)nbya(h)ku(h) en [yatte: yo(h)o ka-wa(h)nka(h)tte n. hh °h* “A thing like this, you know? (It) was 300-yen a piece, so (I) just couldn't buy (it)” as she makes a small circle with the thumb and the index finger of her left hand in front of her. The storyteller's laughter in line 13 is surprise laughter, as evidenced by the story recipient Hiro's response in the next turn. In line 14, [e::: “What?” (the elongated loud interjection *e* “what?” uttered in a rising intonation), Hiro is vicariously co-experiencing and reenacting the moment of Iku's “surprising discovery” (Nakamura, 2002) of the unexpectedly

high price of chocolate at the time of the event, as she listens to Iku's story. Subsequently, another story recipient, Jun, provides a comment in line 15, *nanka* (0.2) *hansuu sena akan yan na*. "Like, (you) have to ruminate, you know" employing metaphor, as she cups her right hand to below her neck (see **Figure 3**). Human beings cannot ruminate, but you have to ruminate like cows to savor an expensive piece of chocolate. This metaphor brings a burst of funny laughter from Iku and Hiro into the storytelling. In line 18, Jun elaborates her metaphor as she demonstrates how human beings would ruminate a piece of chocolate step by step, using her hand gestures and facial expressions. As she says [*nomiko-mi*] *soo ni natte u tte* [*da(h)shi(h)te*], "When (you) are about to swallow (it), like 'ugh,' (you) throw (it) up (into your mouth), and" she first closes her eyes and cups her right hand to her throat area (see **Figure 4**), then she sticks out her lips (see **Figure 5**), and finally she moves her right hand in front of her mouth, as she is smiling (see **Figure 6**). In line 22, Jun continues to elaborate her metaphor of rumination, saying [*>moo< ekitai ni naru ma(h)de(h)*]. "Well, until (it) becomes liquid" with concurrent funny laughter. Furthermore, it is worth noting that Jun's metaphor in her comments is an instance of hypothetical storytelling that extends Iku's story. The storyteller Iku said that she could not buy chocolate because it was too expensive, but in lines 15, 18, and 22, the story recipient Jun continues her storytelling and tells a hypothetical story: If you had bought the chocolate, you would have had to ruminate to savor it by eating it, throwing it up in your mouth, and repeating this until it became liquid.



Figure 3. (From the left: Hiro, Iku, and Jun): Jun's hand gesture in line 15.



Figure 4. (From the left: Hiro, Iku, and Jun): Jun's hand gesture and facial expressions in line 18-a.



Figure 5. (From the left: Hiro, Iku, and Jun): Jun's hand gesture and facial expressions in line 18-b.



Figure 6. (From the left: Hiro, Iku, and Jun): Jun's hand gesture and facial expressions in line 18-c.

- 15 Jun: *nanka* (0.2) *hansuu sena akan yan na.*
 ((Jun cups her right hand to below her neck.))
Like, (you) have to ruminate, you know.
- 18-a Jun: [*nomikomī* *soo ni natte*
 ((Jun first closes her eyes and cups her right hand to her throat area.))
When (you) are about to swallow (it),
- 18-b Jun: *u tte*
 ((Then she sticks out her lips.))
like “ugh”
- 18-c Jun: [*da(h)shī(h)te,*
 ((And finally she moves her right hand in front of her mouth, as she is smiling.))
(you) throw (it) up (into your mouth), and,

The storyteller Iku responds to Jun's humorous comments in lines 19 and 21, [*mo(h)ttai(h)nai shī(h) na. 'h san[byaku en bun.* “(It's a waste (not to savor it), right. For the price of 300-yen” with funny laughter, and then she delivers her final story evaluation and the point of her story at the completion point of her storytelling in line 24, *'h mottaina(h)ku(h)tte. 'soo. [nanka, 'sanbyaku en to wa*

omowankatta mitaina. “(It)’s a waste. Right. Like, (I’m) like, (I) didn’t think (it) was 300-yen”. Overlapping with the storyteller’s story evaluation in line 24, the story recipient Hiro, who has been continuously laughing after Jun’s comment in line 15, gives her assessment in line 25, [*hhh* *’okashii*. “Funny”. Hiro’s assessment here is not targeted toward the storyteller Iku’s point of the story, that is, that a small piece of chocolate was surprisingly expensive, but toward the story recipient Jun’s metaphor and demonstration in her comments. This reveals that the story recipient Hiro’s focus has shifted from Iku’s surprising story to another story recipient Jun’s humorous comments about the story. As illustrated in Excerpt 9 and Excerpt 10, story recipients used exaggeration (an ostrich egg to comment on a chunk of eggs) and metaphor (ruminating to savor an expensive piece of chocolate) in their comments, which were limited within the domain of food and eating to bring out humorous aspects in the storytelling without causing digression from the food topic. Yet, the story recipients’ active participation brought funny laughter into the storytelling, caused gaze diversion from the storyteller to the story recipient, shifted the story sequence and participation framework, and even transformed the story characterization and developed a surprising and complaint story about food into a humorous story.

4. Conclusion

In this study, I demonstrated that storytellers and story recipients collaboratively co-constructed humorous food storytelling in talk-in-interaction, exploiting the different social actions accomplished by humorous laughter: to ridicule, to display surprise, and to express funniness. First, storytellers humorously told their food stories to ridicule story characters’ inability to manage cooking and doing dishes. Ridicule laughter occurred with the participants’ negative, dismissive, or derogatory comments that indicated their stance of despising the inferior ability or quality of these characters or events. When talking about their own inability to cook or do dishes, the storytellers used ridicule laughter to make fun of themselves and frame their trouble or complaint story as a humorous one, while they provided justification in defense of their poor culinary skills or habits. I also found that the story recipient’s comments in the story about neglecting to do the dishes alluded to stereotypical and traditional gender roles and behavior with regard to cooking-related housework. Since the story characters in the stories about poor culinary skills examined in this study were all women in their twenties and thirties and ridicule laughter was used by mostly female participants, further studies are needed to investigate how gender and age of the story characters and the participants affect the phenomenon of ridicule laughter in storytelling about culinary skills.

Second, storytellers humorously told their stories about story characters’ eating behavior deemed inappropriate for the occasion, contradictory, or unusual, and also shared stories about unexpected or extraordinary dishes in a meal. Funny laughter occurring in these stories revealed that food-related humor is

not limited to the incongruent linguistic texts themselves, but in our social behaviors of eating, in context. These stories also illuminated that funny laughter was caused by the participants' recognition of the incongruity between their predictions about the event to be unfolded and the reality relayed in the stories, and that their predictions are based on their expectations about eating behavior that are formed through their own food experiences in their particular cultures and societies: for example, eating different food for breakfast, lunch, and dinner or having foods such as eggs, meat, and vegetables as the side dishes together with rice as the staple food in Japanese-style packed lunches. I also explicated that the organization of humorous storytelling was designed in such a way that the story recipients vicariously co-experience, moment by moment, the storyteller's funny and surprising discovery of incongruent phenomena and collaboratively (re-)discover humor in the event together with the storyteller.

Third, I examined how story recipients' active participation through their responses contributed to humorous food storytelling, by analyzing their surprise laughter and their use of exaggeration and metaphor in their comments. The story recipients superimposed laughter over the interjection *e* "what"—which was often uttered in a rising intonation, elongated, high-pitched, and loud—or story assessments (e.g., *sugoi* "great, amazing") to express surprise laughter. Their surprise laughter upgraded the storyteller's story by making it more surprising, to an inconceivable, laughable degree. I argued that the participants' shared surprised feelings even to a laughable degree, as well as their shared assessments about the point of the story, were rooted in their presupposed understanding that they shared the same or similar social values and world views based on their common experiences. The story recipients used exaggeration and metaphor in their comments within the domain of food and eating without causing digression from the food topic, displaying their non-serious, playful stance with laughter and smiles. Their humorous comments not only generated funny laughter from the participants but also shifted the focus of the storytelling from the storyteller to the story recipient, thereby altering the trajectory of the storytelling and the participation framework, and even transformed the story characterization from surprising or complaint into humorous. Fourth, the participants employed multi-modalities to co-construct humorous food-related stories, utilizing linguistic devices, including the indirect passive, the interjection, and the sentence-final particle, to indicate the speaker's stance, as well as non-linguistic devices such as prosody, body movements, gaze, facial expressions, and various types of laughter.

Food is something that we experience daily throughout the day, and we often find humor in our mundane food experiences, as demonstrated in this study. However, the food itself examined in this study is not humorous. What makes it humorous is our fixed views and values about food. "She was a fool" "A very bizarre person" about a person who does not do dishes regularly; "Something is wrong" about a person who orders a very hot, spicy dish at a restaurant, even though he cannot eat it; "You are an idiot" about a person who eats the same

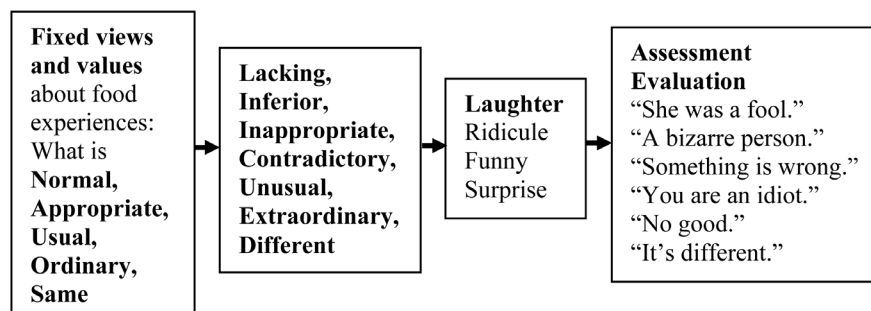


Figure 7. Our views and values, laughter in storytelling, and story assessments and evaluations.

food for every single meal for a few days in a row during his trip; “No good” about a person who eats rice balls as staple food as well as side dishes; “It’s different” about luxurious in-flight meal service in business class for a person who always flies economy class; “I didn’t think it was 300-yen” about an expensive piece of chocolate that the speaker could not afford to buy. These assessments or story evaluations found in my humorous food storytelling data reveal what fundamentally lies beneath ridicule, surprise, and funny laughter. When things, events, or people involving food are perceived as lacking, inferior, inappropriate, contradictory, unusual, extraordinary, or different, they become humorous in light of our fixed views, values, and norms about what is normal, appropriate, usual, ordinary, or the same in relation to our food experiences (see **Figure 7**). Moreover, they become humorous and generate laughter, rather than becoming serious and creating antipathy, because the nature of the “informality” of food talk (Holmes et al., 2013) reduces the seriousness of these gaps between the reality relayed in the stories and our expectations based on our views and values about food.

The participants in talk-in-interaction successfully tell humorous food-related stories in order to share their story-worthy food experiences and solidify their group membership, based on the presumption that they possess common fixed views, values, ideas, knowledge, cultures, social norms, and identities about food aspects among their “with” (Goffman, 1971) group members. However, as demonstrated in the analysis of story transformation in this study, humor in food talk dynamically changes in the interaction among co-participants in social and interactional contexts. Furthermore, food humor is not a fixed concept in that it is continuously modified, as we expand our food experiences and revise our concepts related to food.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Transcription Conventions

(Adapted from Schegloff, 2007: pp. 265-269)

In the English translation, words that are not verbally stated in Japanese are in parentheses.

.	falling intonation	[overlap
,	continuing intonation	↑↓	sharper rises or falls in pitch
?	rising intonation	> <	compressed utterances
!	exclamatory intonation	h	laughter
:	vowel lengthening	(h)	laughter within a word
=	"latched" utterances	°h	inhalation
-	a cut-off or self-interruption	(0.5)	silence; in tenths of a second
<u>word</u>	emphasis by loudness or high pitch	(.)	micropause; less than 0.2 second
()	uncertain transcription	(())	nonverbal behavior
°xxx° the talk between them is markedly softer than the talk around it.			