

Audio recordings of polite and non-polite speech produced by native and non-native speakers of Japanese

Author

Tsurutani, Chiharu, Shi, Shuju

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Project title

Acoustic recordings of polite and non-polite speech spoken by native and non-native speakers of Japanese

Contributors

Chiharu Tsurutani (Griffith University), Shuju Shi (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign)

Description

This data was gathered as part of a project funded by 10th Hakuho Foundation International Fellowship for Japanese Research. The project attempts to identify common prosodic features used by native speakers in polite speech and provide some strategies useful to deliver polite speech for L2 learners of Japanese.

We recorded common polite sentences (*Desu, Masu*) in polite and non-polite scenarios using 18 native and 11 non-native speakers. Only the sound files used for the project have annotations and acoustic measurements.

	Sound files and annotation <<Open using Praat>>	Acoustic measurements
Native speakers	Text-grid Mora (12 sentences)	8 sentences
	Text-grid Prosody (18 sentences)	
Non-Native speakers	Text-grid Prosody 18 sentences (aa) & (gar) are sound files only.	12 sentences

Project background

Intonation is one factor that can completely change the interpretation of an utterance. Despite that, second language learners have limited knowledge of Japanese intonation, such as the use of a falling tone for a declarative sentence and a rising tone for an interrogative sentence. The demands of teaching more advanced communication than at beginners' level has become more obvious as the number of Japanese language learners increases. The attitude associated with social behaviour can have language specific requirements. Since Japanese people are reportedly known to be polite and well-mannered in public, learning to sound polite is of particular importance for second language learners of Japanese. This project focuses on politeness as a variable in investigating possible language specific requirements for Japanese speech.

Data set

Native speakers

- 1) Text-grid mora = Annotation by *Kana* and *Romaji*.
- 2) Text-grid Prosody = Annotation of prosodic features (boundary tone, sentence focus, Silence)

- 3) Acoustic measurements (Sentences 1-10, 2-11, 6-17, 9-18)

Non-native speakers

- 1) Text-grid Prosody = Annotation of prosodic features (boundary tone, sentence focus, Silence)

- 2) Acoustic measurements (Sentences 1-10, 2-11, 4-13, 7-16, 8-17, 9-18)

Sentence list

Underlined sections can be compared between Sentences 1-9 (polite) and 10-18 (non-polite). e.g. 1-10, 2-11, etc.

1. (Asking the opinion of your Japanese boss. You are wondering what to do about one contract)

課長。この件について、意見をお願いできますか。

Boss, Can I ask your opinion about this matter?

2. (Answering your boss : Boss asks : Can I delete the file from the last month?)

いえ、まだ、ダウンロードしていませんので。そのままにしておいてください。

No, I have not down loaded, yet. Please leave it as it is.

3. (Asking your boss)

課長、申し訳ありません。こちらにサインをお願いします。

Boss, excuse me. Please sign here.

4. (Answering your boss : Boss asks : Is your project going well?)

いえ、実は、。資料が見つからないんですが、どこでさがしたらいいでしょうか。

No, actually..I cannot find the information. Where shall I search?

5. (You are visiting your client and inquiring)

申し訳ありません、こちらのWifiを使うことができますか。

Excuse me. Can I use your Wifi?

6. (You could not hear the name of your client, and ask again politely)

恐れ入ります。もう一度お名前をおしえてください。

I am sorry. Please tell me your name again.

7. (It is very difficult and awkward to decline but do so politely)

そうですね。ちょっと予定を見ますが、むずかしいと思います。

Let me see. I will check my schedule, but I think it is difficult.

8. (The number of participants exceeded the capacity of the venue. You have to decline their request regrettably)

申し訳ありません。また、次回にお願いできますか。

I am sorry. Could you please try again next time?

9. (You wanted to attend the reunion party of your school, but unfortunately you cannot due to your work schedule. Politely decline.)

出席したかったのですが、残念です。次の機会に出席させてください。

I wanted to attend, but it is shame. Please let me attend next time.

10. (Your committee members are quiet, and nobody contributes his/her opinion. As a chair, you request with authority.)

だれか、、、。この件について、意見をお願いできますか。

Anyone... Can I have your opinion about this matter?

11. (You are a teacher. Your students try to erase what you wrote.)

あ、白板は消さないで。そのままにしておいてください。

Oh, do not erase the whiteboard. Please leave it as it is.

12. (The waiter at the restaurant is slack and has not responded to your request.)

すみません。さっき注文したんですが。こちらにワインをお願いします。

Excuse me. We ordered a while ago. Please bring a bottle of wine.

13. (Asking the call centre which is in charge of web site navigation)

このサイトはとてもわかりにくいですね。

資料が見つからないんですが、どこでさがしたらいいでしょうか。

This site is hard to search. I cannot find the information. Where shall I search?

14. (Inquiring to the hotel you are staying as a guest)

すみません、こちらのWifiを使うことができますか。

Excuse me. Can I use your Wifi?

15. (asking the name of a strange caller)

すみません。もう一度お名前をおしえてください。

I am sorry. Can you tell me your name again?

16. (Reject the request = implying "NO")

そうですね。ちょっと予定を見ますが、むずかしいと思います。

Let me see. I will check my schedule, but I think it is difficult.

17. (Reject the offer from an annoying telephone sales person)

申し訳ありません。また、次回にお願いできますか。

I am sorry. Could you please try again next time?

18. (Reject the invitation to a sales event)

すみません。次の機会に出席させてください。

I am sorry. Please let me attend next time.

Recording condition

Speakers were called into a sound-proof recording studio one by one. The sentence list was given to participants before the recording so that they had time to practice reading.

The following instruction was given:

"Please say them, imagining you are situated in the setting described in the brackets). The first 9 sentences are supposed to say politely. The second 9 sentences are not."

Speakers' background

Native speakers from the metropolitan area, Japan

Speaker ID number PSF=Female PSM = Male	Age	Occupation	Length of residence in the metropolitan area if not born in the area.
PSF 01	44	Teacher	38 years (from Hokkaido)
PSF 02	38	Office worker	
PSF 03	49	Office worker	
PSF 04	48	Office worker	28 years (from Hokkaido)
PSF 05	38	Librarian	
PSF 06	55	Librarian	
PSF 07	50	Teacher	
PSF 08	37	Teacher	
PSF 09	54	Office worker	
Average	45		
PSM 01	32	Office worker	
PSM 02	42	Office worker	24 years (from Shiga)
PSM 03	57	Office worker	

PSM 04	39	Teacher	
PSM 05	28	Researcher	
PSM 06	63	Office worker	
PSM 07	57	Office worker	
PSM 08	59	Office worker	20 years (from Yamaguchi)
PSM 09	48	Office worker	
Average	45		

Non-native speakers who were studying Japanese in Japan as an exchange student at the time of recording

	Home country	Staying in Japan (months)	Gender	Age	Studying Japanese (years)	Learned Keigo	Learned politeness
Kri	Australia	14	F	20	3.5	Y	Y
Dou	Australia	12	M	20	4	Y	Y
Mic	Canada	12	M	29	4	Y	Y
Lac	Australia	12	M	21	6	Y	Y
El	Australia	12	F	21	3	Y	Y
Brit	NZ	12	F	26	5	Y	Y
Jar	Australia	12	M	27	2	Y	Y
Bra	Iceland	12	M	23	2	Y	Y
Nao	Canada	12	F	22	2	Y	Y
Sound files only							
Gar	Russia	12	M	21	10	Y	Y
Aa	USA	12	M	19	1.5	Y	Y