

Language in Social Interaction I: Introduction

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Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics studies the relation between language and society (as opposed to “core” linguistics, which focuses on sound, meaning, and grammar)

This course covers the basic ideas of sociolinguistics, with an emphasis on Japan and Japanese.

Topics of sociolinguistics

How do people use different languages, or different styles of the same language?

How do those factors interact with large-scale issues, such as education and immigration?

Warm-up questions

How many languages
are in the world?

How many languages are
there in the world?

According to Ethnologue, there are 7,102
languages in the world.

(Of course, it is not straightforward to count the
number of languages.. more discussions in the
later classes)

How many (indigenous)
languages are in Japan?

UNESCO

According to UNESCO, there are *eight*
endangered languages in Japan.

Ethnologue lists *fifteen* indigenous languages.

Languages in Japan

Ainu

Japonic languages

Japanese

Hachijo

Ryukyuan languages

Amami, Kunigami, Okinawan, Miyako, Yaeyaman,
Yonaguni

Japanese Sign Language (JSL)

Descriptivism and Prescriptivism

Descriptivism and prescriptivism

Everyone sometimes finds that someone speaks in a *bad* or *incorrect* manner.

The goal of our course is NOT to learn to speak in a good manner.

Descriptivism and prescriptivism

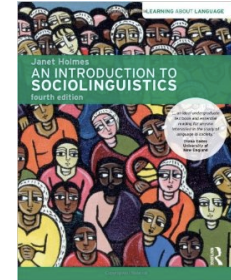
Descriptivism: Describe and explain how people speak, without value judgments.

- *Prescriptivism*: State how people *should* speak.
- Be descriptive, at least for a while.
- It is not saying prescriptivism is never useful; it is just not a part of academic enterprise.

About this course

Textbook

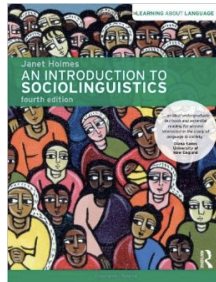
Holmes (2013) *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. (4th ed.)



You can get a copy from the NU co-op or online stores.

Classroom discussions will assume that you have read the relevant chapter.

Textbook



Part I: Multilingual Speech Communities

Part II: Language Variation: Focus on Users

Part III: Language Variation: Focus on Uses

Grading

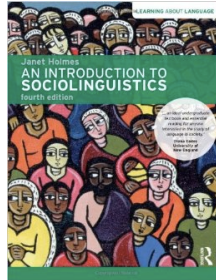
Attendance and participation: Reaction paper at the end of each class.

Quizzes: You will be asked to basic concepts that appear both in the textbook and lecture.

Final essay: You need to collect your own data outside the classroom. Details will be announced later.

Textbook

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About me

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Born in Chichibu, Saitama

A town not very far from Tokyo, but has clearly distinct dialect

Unfortunately, I moved to Tokyo at age 8, and I don't remember Chichibu dialect.

After that, I grew up in Tokyo, so my accent is basically that of Tokyo.

About me

I was a college student in Kyoto. As a result, my accent is sometimes influenced by Kansai dialect.

As an undergrad at Kyoto, I learned French, German, Latin and Korean, but I don't remember much. (My Korean is slightly better than the rest.)

About me

I studied linguistics in Buffalo, New York for five years.

Buffalo is near the border with Canada; Accordingly its accent is similar to Canadian English, although my English is not good enough to tell the difference ;(

About me

I moved to Nagoya this year. I'm paying attention to traditional Nagoya dialect, but young people barely speak it in public ;(

A few things I noted:

みえる, honorific of いる

えらい to mean 'tiring, exhausting'

difference in accent, such as ありがとう

Reaction paper

Your name, student ID #, program (G30/NUPACE/ etc.), major (if any), and languages you speak.

Make groups of four to six people. Introduce your language background to your group, just like I did. Write down the information you have collected from your group.

If you have any question or concern about this course, please indicate.