

## ENGLISH ABSTRACTS

Sentence-final intonation of the *-ka* questions in *Shin Nihongo no Kiso I*  
-Based on auditory impressions of rising versus non-rising intonation  
of Tokyo native speakers-

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The three researchers in this project recorded Tokyo native speakers' renditions of the *-ka* questions (sentences ending in *-ka*) taken from the conversations in the textbook, *Shin Nihongo no Kiso I*, and analyzed the sentences according to whether the sentence-final intonation was rising or non-rising. It was found that the sentences were not always spoken with a rising intonation and that this could be attributed to three possible reasons: phonetic considerations, communicative function, or discourse type. The three researchers' perceptions of sentence-final intonation did not always agree. It is suggested that the reasons are, first, that when the sound immediately preceding *-ka* is de-voiced the *-ka* sounds stronger and is perceived by some listeners as rising intonation. Another possible explanation for the divergence of opinion is that sentences which tend to be spoken with non-rising intonation for communicative function or discourse considerations readily take on an indeterminate intonation, resulting in varying judgments.

## The Discourse Structure of Telephone Messages

Machiko Netsu, Ryoko Murano

This paper examines the discourse structure of telephone messages by native Japanese speakers in two situations. In the first situation one makes a promise to someone, but cannot keep that promise, so the individual calls this person again. In the second situation one wants to ask someone to go out together so the individual calls this person. Data was collected through the role playing of these two situations in an Oral Proficiency Interview by ACTFL.

In the first situation the following factors were examined: the age and sex of the speaker; whether the subject expressed an apology with the reason why one could not keep the promise; if an alternative plan was given; whether the subject would call back again; how one left a telephone message, especially the beginning and ending parts of the dialogue.

In the second situation the following factors were examined: the age and sex of the speaker; what kinds of expressions were used in asking someone out; how to get in touch with the person who one called again; how one left a telephone message, especially the beginning and ending parts of the dialogue.

The results show that in the first situation the expression of apology differed according to age and sex, and a small number of subjects indicated their intention of calling again. In the second situation many of the subjects used the expression "...tai to omou" regardless of age and sex. Concerning how to get in touch with a person again, 8 out of the 13 subjects left a message that they would wait for this person to call back. And only 4 subjects said that they would call again. These 8 subjects allowed those being called to decline in returning a message; and thus, from a view of pragmatic politeness, these 8 speakers tried not to be demanding. With regard to the ending of the telephone message, in the first situation approximately half of the subjects used "sayoonara"; but in the second situation only 3 out of the 13 subjects used "sayoonara". This suggests that the ending of a telephone message may use different expressions depending upon the content of the messages and the language functions.

## **The factors that influence JSL learners' acquisition of Japanese particles:**

### **The factor weights of Themehood and Objecthood of arguments**

Yutaka Sato

This paper demonstrated that it is the semantic role of Theme, rather than the grammatical function of Object, that has a greater influence on learners of Japanese as a second language when they mark noun phrases with an either case- or topic marker. I collected data from twelve English native speakers (four each from three levels of proficiency in Japanese: i.e. Novice, Intermediate-Low, and Intermediate-Mid) and their Japanese interlocutors (certified ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview testers). The Agent, Experiencer, and Theme arguments in their utterances were coded as to their phonological form (either marked by a particle or not), their semantic role (Theme or external argument, i.e. either Agent or Experiencer), their grammatical function (i.e. Subject or Object), the speakers' native language (English or Japanese), and the proficiency level of the interviewee (Novice, Intermediate-Low, or Intermediate-Mid). The total of 1820 tokens from the learners (NNS) and 1678 tokens from the Japanese testers (NS) were analyzed separately on VERBRUL with two dependent variables (whether the argument is marked with a particle or not) and three factor groups (interviewees' levels, grammatical functions of arguments, and semantic roles of arguments). The effects of the factor groups were statistically significant (NNS:  $df = 4$ , Chi-square = 14.8267,  $p < 0.01$ ; NS:  $df = 4$ , Chi-square = 15.3620,  $p < 0.01$ ). The factor weight of Theme was the highest (0.645 for both NNS and NS), and the factor weight of Object was the second highest (0.559 for NNS, and 0.603 for NS). It follows from this that (i) the factor weight of Theme was greater than that of Object for both NNS and NS, and (ii) the Themehood of an argument played a much greater role than the Objecthood when the speaker was a NNS.

## **Preconceptions toward Educational Media Used in Conversation Classes**

Yukari Kato

The purpose of this study was 1) to investigate preconceptions toward five educational media by three scales (preference, difficulty, and learning expectancy), 2) to examine the relationship between preconceptions toward media and background factors of subjects. Major findings were as follows:

- 1) Preference and learning expectancy scale correlated significantly with each other, but difficulty scale did not show such relationship.
- 2) Sex and nationality influenced subjects' preconceptions of listening Japanese songs on the scale of difficulty.
- 3) Prior study in Japanese negatively influenced subjects' preconceptions of listening Japanese songs on the scale of difficulty.
- 4) Difficulty scale correlated negatively and significantly with other scales concerning subjects' preconceptions of role-play related video.