

Introductory Note

This supplement to *Japanese: The Spoken Language, Part 1* (Yale University Press, 1987), hereafter *JSL, Part 1*, has been prepared for those who find the Structural Patterns in the textbook difficult to master in their present form. Here they have been transformed into a question-and-answer format, with most exchanges covering a single point. This format is also useful for review or for studying the Structural Patterns together with a fellow student.

Except for statements relating to accentuation, all the material in the Structural Patterns in the textbook has been included in what follows. It has simply been converted into a different format, using different language.

The romanization used in Japanese examples is identical with that of the textbook, except that accentuation is not marked.

Lesson 1

NOTE: Each lesson in *Japanese: The Spoken Language* contains sections called Structural Patterns. These pattern sections explain how the Japanese language is put together. In this supplement we examine the material that should be mastered but in question-and-answer format. The same material in a different format is found in the textbook.

REMEMBER: Japanese is not put together the way English is! For students who over the years have developed an allergy to anything that resembles grammar, here is a word of reassurance. First, there is no need to know any English grammar to understand what follows. Japanese grammar is DIFFERENT, and English grammar can only stand in the way. Second, if this material is mastered systematically, the way it is presented, there is no need to be afraid of it. The hope is that even the most vociferous grammar-haters will come to enjoy learning Japanese. The key is to take it one step at a time.

SECTION A

I. Verbals

(1) Q. What do we mean by a *verbal*?

A. A verbal is a word that has many forms (like 'sing,' 'singing,' 'sang,' and 'sung' in English), and one of these forms ends in **-masu** and another in **-masita**.

(2) Q. Which words introduced in *JSL, Part 1, Lesson 1A*, are verbals?

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| A. dekimasu | kimasu | tiġaimasu |
| ikimasu | nomimasu | tukurimasu |
| itadakimasu | simasu | wakarimasu |
| | tabemasu | |

All of these words also have a form ending in **-masita**.

(3) Q. How do we divide a **-masu** form into its meaningful parts?

A. We divide it into three parts: /verbal stem + **-mas-** + **-u**/.

Example: **si** + **mas** + **u**

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(4) Q. What does each part mean?

A. The verbal stem gives the dictionary meaning of the verbal ('do,' 'drink,' 'eat,' 'go,' 'come,' etc.). The **-mas-** is a *distal-style* marker, and the **-u** is an *imperfective* marker.

(5) Q. What is a *distal-style* marker?

A. *Distal* means not close. The distal-style puts distance between the speaker and the person spoken to; it is used to show respect and to show that the speaker is talking with some care. The distal-style is used in talking with teachers, superiors, strangers, and adult acquaintances and colleagues who are not close friends. It is *not* the style we ordinarily use with those we know well, including family members.

Later we will learn other styles. Everything said in Japanese is marked for style. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS STYLISTICALLY NEUTRAL SPEECH IN JAPANESE! In English I can say 'She came here this morning' whether I am talking about the First Lady, a professor, my sister, my closest friend, or the president of a corporation or the file clerk. This is not true of Japanese.

(6) Q. What is an *imperfective* marker?

A. *Imperfective* means unfinished. It can refer to repeated occurrences, including occurrence(s) in the future. For example, **nomimasu** means '(someone) drinks' or 'will drink' (and the speaker is using distal-style). It does *not* mean '(someone) is drinking.'

(7) Q. How do we divide **-masita** forms into their meaningful parts?

A. Here the distal-style marker is **-masi-**, followed by the *perfective* marker **-ta**, meaning finished. Thus, **nomimasita** means '(someone) drank (once or repeatedly)' (and the speaker is using distal-style).

(8) Q. What happens when the ending **-eñ** is added to **-mas-**?

A. The verbal becomes negative imperfective.

Example: **nomi-mas-eñ** '(someone) does not/will not drink' (distal-style)

(9) Q. How do we make the **-maseñ** form perfective?

A. We add **desita**.

Example: **nomi-mas-eñ desita** '(someone) did not drink' (distal-style)

(10) Q. What is the literal meaning of Japanese verbals?

A. Verbals refer to occurrences. There is nothing in Japanese like 'I eat' as a form different from 'he eats.' For example, **wakarimasu** means something like 'understanding

takes place' or 'there is understanding.' The situation, or context, tells us who (singular or plural) understands. (For some verbals, context tells us *what* is involved.) In questions, verbals that imply a person usually refer to the person(s) spoken to: 'Does understanding occur?' (i.e. 'Do you understand?'). In statements, verbals that imply a person usually refer to the speaker: 'Understanding occurs' (i.e. 'I understand'). If the context alone does not make the meaning clear, the person(s) who understands must be mentioned (this meaning will be practiced later).

A Japanese verbal in its **-mas-u** or **-masi-ta** form can occur as a complete, major sentence *all by itself*.

2. Sentence-Particles: **ka**, **ne**, **yo**

(1) Q. What is a *sentence-particle*?

A. A sentence-particle is one of a small group of words that occur only at the ends of sentences.

(2) Q. What does a sentence-particle do?

A. It in some way affects the meaning of what precedes.

(3) Q. What does the sentence-particle **ka** do?

A. It makes the preceding statement into a question.

Example: **Dekimasu**. 'It is possible.' > **Dekimasu ka** 'Is it possible?'

(4) Q. What does **ne** do?

A. It asks for agreement from the person spoken to with what the speaker just said.

Example: **Dekimasu ne** 'It's possible, isn't it?' 'It's possible—right?'

(5) Q. What does **yo** do?

A. It signals that the speaker believes that what she or he just said is new information for the person spoken to.

Example: **Dekimasu ne** 'It's possible—right?' . . . **Dekimaseñ yo**. 'It's not possible (I inform you).'

You should generally avoid this particle when speaking to a superior. It is usually considered rude to show, by your use of language, that you believe that you are providing new information for someone above you.

3. Negative Questions; Invitations

Q. Describe three uses of negative questions in Japanese.

- A. (a) *To make sure* that the negative is correct, when there is already information making you think that it is correct. Example: **Dekimaseñ**. ‘It isn’t possible.’ . . . **Dekimaseñ ka**. ‘It isn’t possible?’
- (b) *To check on the possibility* that the negative is correct when you, the speaker, assume that it isn’t. Example: **Tigaimaseñ ka** ‘Isn’t that wrong/different?’ (I.e. I think it *is* wrong.)
- (c) *To invite*. Example: **Nomimaseñ ka** ‘Won’t you have (*lit.* drink) [some]?’ Compare **Nomimasu ka** ‘Are you going to drink [some]?’ or ‘Do you drink [this]?’

4. Affirming and Negating

(1) Q. In answer to an affirmative question, what does **hai** (or **ee**) mean?

A. It means that the affirmative is correct.

Example: **Dekimasu ka** ‘Is it possible?’ . . . **Hai/Ee, dekimasu**. ‘Yes, it is possible.’

(2) Q. In answer to an affirmative question, what does **i(i)e** (or **iya**) mean?

A. It means that the affirmative is wrong.

Example: **Dekimasu ka** ‘Is it possible?’ . . . **I(i)e/Iya, dekimaseñ**. ‘No, it isn’t possible.’

(3) Q. In answer to a negative question, what does **hai** (or **ee**) mean?

A. In answer to a negative question of type 3(a) above (to make sure that the negative is correct), **hai** (or **ee**) shows agreement with what the questioner believes and means that the negative is indeed correct. Example: **Dekimaseñ ne** ‘It isn’t possible—right?’ . . . **Hai/Ee, dekimaseñ**. ‘That’s right. It isn’t possible.’

When the question is of type 3(b) above (to confirm the assumption that the negative is incorrect), **hai** (or **ee**) again shows agreement with what the questioner believes and this time means that the negative is *not* correct. Example: **Tigaimaseñ ka** ‘Isn’t it wrong/different?’ (i.e. I think it is wrong/different.) . . . **Hai/Ee, (Tigaimasu.)** ‘Yes.’ (i.e. It is wrong [as you suspected].)

When the question is of type 3(c) above, an invitation, **hai** (or **ee**) means acceptance. Example: **Tabemaseñ ka** ‘Won’t you eat some?’ . . . **Hai/Ee, arigatoo gozaimasu**. ‘Yes, thank you.’

- (4) Q. In answer to a negative question, what does **i(i)e** (or **iya**) mean?
- A. In answer to a negative question of type 3(a) above, **i(i)e** (or **iya**) contradicts what the questioner believes and means that the negative is wrong. Example: **Dekimaseñ neŋ** ‘It isn’t possible—right?’ . . . **I(i)e/Iya, dekimasu yo** ‘No, it *is* possible (I inform you).’

When the question is of type 3(b) above, **i(i)e** (or **iya**) again contradicts what the questioner believes and this time means that the negative *is* correct. Example:

Tiġaimaseñ ka ‘Isn’t it wrong/different?’ (i.e. I think it is) . . . **I(i)e/Iya, ti-ġaimaseñ yo** ‘No, it’s *not* wrong/different (I inform you).’

When the question is of type 3(c) above, an invitation, an **i(i)e** (or **iya**), if included at all in the answer, means a refusal. Example: **Simaseñ ka** ‘Wouldn’t you [like to] do it?’ . . . **(I[i]e/Iya,) tyotto.** ‘(No,) I’m afraid not.’

SECTION B

I. Adjectivals: Affirmative Imperfective and Perfective

- (1) Q. What do we mean by an *adjectival*? Give an example.
- A. An adjectival is a word that has a number of different forms, including one ending in **-i** and another ending in **-katta**. This is all the information we need to define the adjectival class. Additional information is that there is always a vowel other than /e/ before these two endings.
Example: **taka-i; taka-katta**
- (2) Q. Are there any special cases?
- A. Yes. The adjectival **i-i** has another, older form, **yo-i**, less commonly used now. All the other forms of **i-i** come from **yo-i**. Thus: **yo-katta**.
- (3) Q. What does the **-i** form mean?
- A. Like the **-mas-u** form of verbals, it is *imperfective* (i.e. unfinished). It indicates a continuing present state or a future state. Depending on the adjectival, it may refer to living beings or nonliving things, singular or plural.
Example: **taka-i** ‘[it] is/will be expensive’
- (4) Q. What does the **-katta** form mean?
- A. Like the **-masi-ta** form of verbals, it is *perfective* (i.e. finished). It refers to a state that is completed, no longer in existence.

Example: **taka-katta** ‘[it] was expensive’

- (5) Q. What is a big difference between the adjectival and verbal forms that we have discussed?
A. These adjectivals are *direct-style*. The verbals are all *distal-style*.
- (6) Q. What is *direct-style*?
A. This is the style used at ends of sentences in casual speech with close friends and associates and family members and in situations where the speaker is not showing particular respect or care.
- (7) Q. How do we change these direct-style adjectival forms into distal-style forms?
A. Just add **desu**.
Examples: **taka-i** is direct-style, and **taka-i desu** is distal-style; **taka-katta** is direct-style, and **taka-katta desu** is distal-style
- (8) Q. Do verbals have direct-style forms?
A. Yes, but those forms will be introduced later. During the early lessons, while you still know only a small bit of Japanese, we will be practicing only distal-style, even with adjectivals.
- (9) Q. Can adjectivals, like verbals, occur alone as complete major sentences?
A. Yes. Both direct-style and distal-style forms can occur alone as complete, major sentences—direct-style in casual speech and distal-style in careful speech.

2. Adjectivals: The **-ku** Form and the Negative

- (1) Q. How do we change an adjectival to a negative form? Give an example.
A. For the *negative imperfective*, drop the final **-i** and add **-ku + na-i**. Example: **takai** ‘it is/will be expensive’ > **taka-ku na-i** ‘[it] isn’t/won’t be expensive.’
For the *negative perfective*, change the **na-i** to **na-katta**. These are *direct-style negatives*. Example: **taka-katta** ‘it was expensive’ > **taka-ku na-katta** ‘[it] wasn’t expensive’
- (2) Q. **Na-i/na-katta** looks like an adjectival. Is it?
A. Yes. It is a direct-style adjectival meaning ‘there isn’t any.’
- (3) Q. Then can we make the *distal-style negatives* by adding **desu** to the direct-style negatives?
A. Correct.

Examples: **taka-ku na-i desu**

taka-ku na-katta desu

- (4) Q. What is **arimaseñ**?
- A. It is the negative of the distal-style verbal **arimasu**, which means ‘there is.’ Like **na-i desu**, **arimaseñ** is a distal-style negative meaning ‘there isn’t any.’
- (5) Q. Then can we use **arimaseñ** in the distal-style negative of an adjectival?
- A. Yes. For example, for the negative of **taka-i desu** we have a choice: **taka-i desu** ‘it is/will be expensive’ > **taka-ku nai desu** or **taka-ku arimaseñ** ‘it isn’t/won’t be expensive.’ For the negative of **taka-katta desu** we also have a choice: **taka-katta desu** ‘it was expensive’ > **taka-nu nakatta desu** or **taka-ku arimaseñ desita** ‘it wasn’t expensive.’
- (6) Q. Is there any difference between the combinations with **na-i/na-katta desu** and those with **arimaseñ**?
- A. Only that the patterns with **arimaseñ** are considered a bit more formal and perhaps more elegant.
- (7) Q. What do we call the **-ku** form of the adjectival?
- A. We call it the *stem*.
- (8) Q. Is the adjectival stem negative?
- A. No, no, no! In the combinations above, it is the **na-i** form or **arimaseñ** that is negative. **Taka-ku na-i** means something like ‘being expensive—there isn’t any.’
- (9) Q. In general, how is the **-ku** form used?
- A. It is used when the adjectival links up with a verbal or another adjectival, whether affirmative or negative.
- Examples: **Yasu-ku + simasita**. ‘[I] made [it] cheap.’
- Ooki-ku + dekimaseñ**. ‘[I] can’t make [it] big.’
- Atarasi-ku + tukurimasu**. ‘[I]’m going to make (construct, build, etc.) [it] over, again (i.e. anew).’
- This usage explains why we find the **-ku** form before **arimaseñ** and **na-i/na-katta**.
- (10) Q. What about the stem of **i-i**?
- A. Again, like **yo-katta**, it comes from **yo-**: **yo-ku**. Thus, the negative of **i-i** is **yo-ku na-i** (distal-style: **yo-ku na-i desu** or **yo-ku arimaseñ**) ‘it isn’t good.’

(11) Q. In general, how is **yo-ku** used with verbals?

A. Basically **yo-ku** refers to a large quantity, 'a good deal.' Depending on the verbal, it can have different equivalents in English: 'often,' 'a lot,' 'well.'

Examples: **yo-ku wakarimasu** 'understand a good deal or well'

yo-ku ikimasu 'go often'

yo-ku simasu 'do often' (*not* 'well!')

yo-ku dekimasu '(can) do well,' 'be very capable'; 'turn out well'

(12) Q. Is there a connection between **yo-ku** and **a(n)mari**?

A. Yes. **A(n)mari** is often used in a negative reply to a question containing **yo-ku**.

Example: **Yo-ku tukurimasu ka?** 'Do you make [it] often?' . . . **Ie, a(n)mari tukurimaseñ.** 'No, I don't make [it] very much.'

3. Sentence-Particle: **nee./ne!**

(1) Q. What are two uses of the sentence-particle /**nee./**?

A. (a) To indicate, in an exclamatory way, that the speaker assumes that the person spoken to agrees with what s/he has said. Example: **Omosiro-ku nai desu nee.** 'It's no fun, is it!' . . . **Ee. Tumarana-i desu nee.** 'That's right. It's boring, isn't it!'

(b) To indicate that the speaker is thinking things over in a thoughtful way, particularly something over which s/he has no direct control. Example: **Wakarimasu ka?** 'Is it clear?' . . . **Wakarimaseñ nee.** '(As I think about it), it isn't clear is it!'

(2) Q. What does the sentence-particle /**ne! /** mean?

A. It means about the same as /**nee./**, without the exclamatory force. Unlike /**ne! /**, it does not ask for an answer, although it is interested in *agreement* between the speaker and the person spoken to.

Obviously there is a connection between /**ne! /**, /**nee./**, and /**ne! /**. The difference in vowel length and intonation express different assumptions and expectations. Listen carefully!