

# Some Interpersonal Techniques Used in Casual Conversations by Young Japanese Native Speakers

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This paper analyzes young Japanese native speakers' conversations to observe some interpersonal techniques used in casual conversations.

Not much attention has been given to the instruction on casual conversations in traditional Japanese Language Instructions; it seems that the learner is expected to acquire proficiency in casual speech naturally through contact with native speakers. Some previous studies, however, report that the foreign students have various problems in communication with Japanese students even after a considerable amount of contact with them, and it suggested that explicit instruction needs to be given to the learner on the interpersonal techniques used in casual conversations.

Based on Chinami (2005a, 2005b, 2006 etc.), the author defines "conversational techniques" as expressional operations of stylistic markers, vocabulary, and discourse patterns that the speaker uses to modify any negative effect on the hearer. The author surveyed several representative intermediate Japanese textbooks but none of them gives any information on these techniques.

Eighty-one role-plays by fifty-seven university students are analyzed. The techniques (1)-(5) are observed.

- (1) Abruptly changing to the higher politeness level in order to indicate a change of the setting/phase of the conversation;
- (2) Employment of the style markers that indicate a personality other than the speaker to create a jocular tone;
- (3) Employment of vulgar vocabulary to consolidate in-group membership;

- (4) Patterned theatrical aggression to create a jocular tone;
- (5) Synchronizing with the tone created by one of the techniques above.

Contrary to the learner's typical expectation, casual conversations among close friends are not free from implicit and indirect expressions. For young learners who wish to construct long-term relationships with Japanese native speakers, we have to find out a better way to provide them with skills to manage casual conversations.

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