

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ)

DIJ History & Humanities Study Group



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Assessment in Japanese Conversation: Relationality and the Expanded Notion of Self

In every day social interaction, we constantly and mostly unconsciously rely on a whole arsenal of verbal and non-verbal resources in order to accomplish diverse activities. This paper examines the sequential organization of talk and how it is intricately related to the dynamics of social relationships in communication. As will be shown, such dynamics are at their most relevant when the sequence involves assessing activities, such as self-deprecations, criticisms, and praises. By pointing to the process through which participants display their orientation to the relationality among themselves and the persons assessed, I illustrate some aspects of the dynamic and subtle practices of maintaining social solidarity in Japanese talk-in-interaction.

The data set used is based on fifteen hours of audio- and audio-visual recordings of naturally occurring face-to-face conversations between native speakers of Japanese in the larger Tokyo metropolitan region. The analysis is backed up with ethnographic accounts of the participants and each particular setting.

Rie SUZUKI has recently received a PhD in Sociology from the University of Essex. Her research interests include conversation analysis, discourse analysis, interactional linguistics, sociolinguistics and cross-linguistic/cultural comparisons of various aspects of Japan with other societies.

The presentation will be given in English. Everybody is welcome to attend. Registration is appreciated (backhaus@diptokyo.org).

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