SOCIOPRAGMATICS
SYMPOSIUM 2025

———

Full Program

"Perspectives on East Asian Sociopragmatics and Beyond"

KANSAI
UNIVERSITY

科研費
KAKENHI

Introduction & Welcome

The Sociopragmatics Symposium 2025 (SpS2025) brings together scholars to examine how language, culture, and social interaction intersect in diverse contexts, with particular attention to East Asia. The program features papers on topics such as politeness, honorifics, apologies, digital communication, and intercultural interaction, reflecting the breadth of current sociopragmatic research across linguistic, institutional, and digital domains.

As the first symposium of its kind to focus explicitly on sociopragmatics in East Asia, SpS2025 marks an important step in consolidating and advancing research in this area. At the same time, contributions from other regions and traditions foster comparative perspectives and situate East Asian pragmatics within wider global discussions. We are proud to feature work from both established and emerging scholars, ensuring a balance of theoretical innovation and methodological rigor.

Building on the success of the Japanese Linguistics Symposium organized by colleagues at the University of Sydney and other institutions in Australia, SpS2025 seeks to follow their example by fostering a collegial and supportive environment. The symposium is designed not only to showcase completed research, but also to provide a welcoming space for emerging scholars and for work still in progress. Rather than deter, it aims to encourage the sharing of ideas at any stage of development, creating a forum where research can be discussed, refined, and strengthened in a spirit of collaboration. Beyond disseminating findings, SpS2025 aspires to facilitate critical dialogue, stimulate collaboration, and inspire new directions in the field. Our hope is that this symposium will mark the beginning of an ongoing series of gatherings dedicated to sociopragmatics, contributing to the continued growth of the field in East Asia and beyond.

We would like to acknowledge with appreciation our keynote speakers, Professor Michael Haugh and Professor Yasuko Obana, as well as our invited speaker, Dr. Yoko Yonezawa. Their contributions frame and enrich the discussions taking place at this symposium, and we are grateful for their engagement with this inaugural event. We also wish to extend our sincere thanks to the anonymous reviewers who generously gave their time and expertise in evaluating abstracts. Their thoughtful feedback has helped shape the quality and coherence of the program.

Finally, we warmly welcome all participants and thank you for joining us at SpS2025. We look forward to the presentations, discussions, and collaborations that will inspire new directions in sociopragmatics.

Sincerely,

Todd J. Allen, PhD
Symposium Convenor

Keynote Speaker Information

Professor Michael Haugh
(The University of Queensland)

Getting Acquainted Across Cultures

Getting acquainted with others is one of the most basic interpersonal activity types. Yet there have only been a limited number of studies that have examined the ways in which we establish relationships in initial encounters. In this talk I discuss some of the key practices that have been identified in an ongoing project investigating initial interactions amongst both L1 (American and Australian) and L2 (Taiwanese and Japanese) users of English. Throughout the talk I draw from examples arising in both intracultural and intercultural settings to highlight the inevitable variability across speakers with respect to the practices by which they get acquainted and the indexical meanings that are attached to those practices. I conclude that the long established tradition of analysing identity in pragmatics needs to be complemented by a greater focus on how relationships themselves are accomplished in interaction.

Emeritus Professor Yasuko Obana
(Kwansei Gakuin University)

Directness and Indirectness in Japanese Interaction
-Aiming at a more realistic view-

A stereo-typical view of Japanese interaction is that it is ideologically vague and obscure (Pizziconi 2009) and even powerless (Wetzel 1988), and so it is depicted as an indirect culture (van Dijk 1997; Grainger & Mills 2016). Indirectness in Japanese is also associated with its cultural values and ethos such as emphasis on *omoiyari* ('consideration') (Clancy 1986), reflection of *wa* ('harmony') in Japanese society (Ciubancan 2015), and symbolic representation of collectivism (Mičková 2003). On the other hand, directness in Japanese, although it is believed to occur much less frequently than indirectness, is a sign of intimacy between family members (Matsumoto & Okamoto 2003), and (in)directness distinguishes *uchi* ('inside') from *soto* ('outside') (Makino 1996).

However, reality is contrary to those theoretical assumptions. Directness is witnessed as frequently as indirectness in Japanese interactions. Children approach indirectly to their parents when they need a parental permission from them (Haugh & Obana 2011). Requests from juniors can be direct toward their seniors at work when juniors are entitled to request (Obana 2021). The same participants can switch between direct and indirect speech acts as the discourse develops into different phrases (Obana & Haugh 2023). Indirectness is not necessarily polite but can carry irony, retaliation and cunningness. On the other hand, directness is considered professional in certain situations.

In this lecture, I provide examples from data for analysis and discuss what distinguishes directness from indirectness and what effects (in-)directness brings about. By using the terms, *tachiba* ('standing-place' – role, duty, profession) and 'discourse alignment', I attempt to find the borderline between directness and indirectness and to probe into pragmatic effects of (in-)directness in Japanese. I also examine how non-performative verbs/adjectives allow directness in interaction.

Invited Speaker Information

Dr. Yoko Yonezawa (The University of Sydney)

Grammatical Framing of Gender-Based Harassment in Japanese Media: Pragmatic Motivations and Responsibility

This study examines how Japanese media outlets covertly 'frame' (Fillmore 1976; Enfield 2023) gender-based harassment through grammatical choices, revealing pragmatic motivations underlying linguistic framing strategies. Drawing on Fillmore's concept of framing as structured ways of interpreting experiences, this study analyses coverage of former Prime Minister Taro Aso's controversial remarks about Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa in January 2024, using framing analysis of four major newspapers.
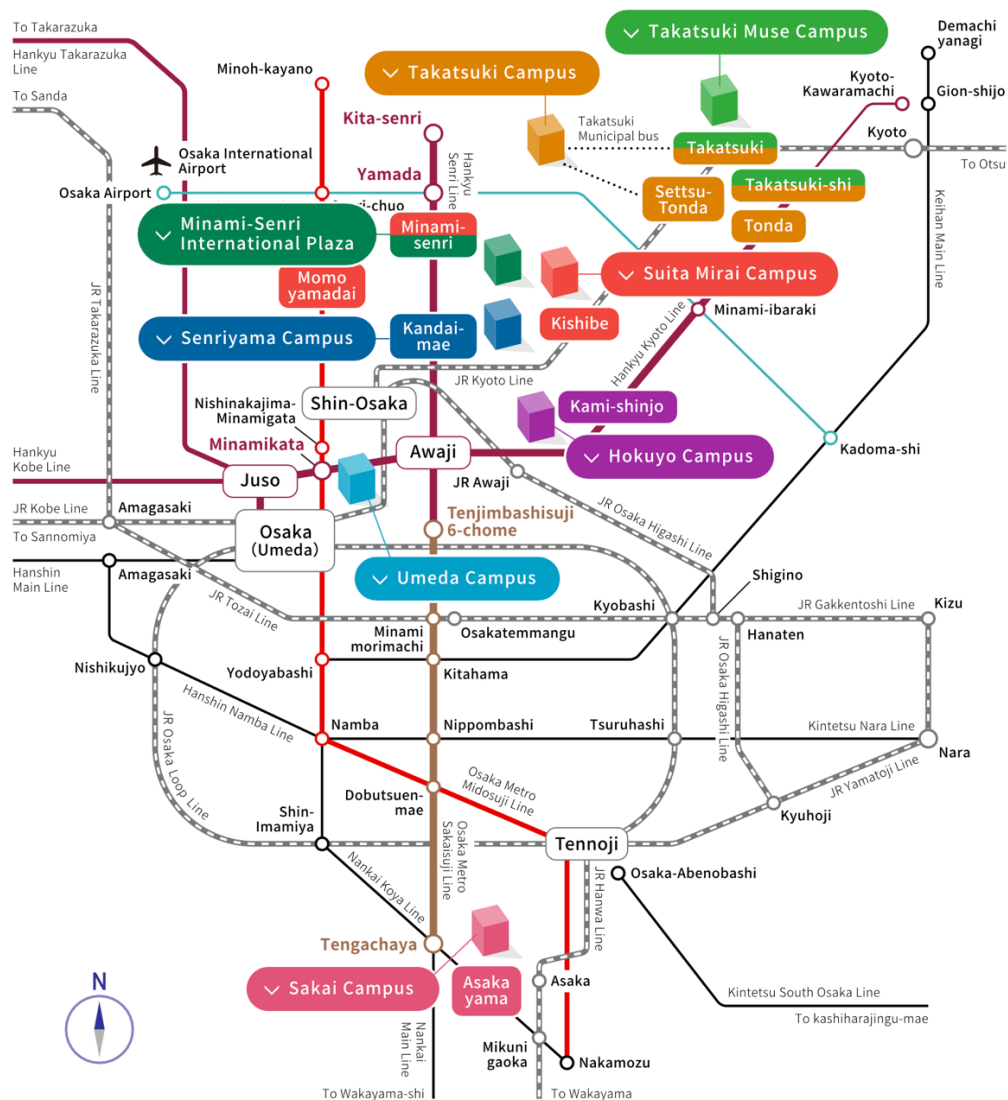
The analysis focuses on transitive verb constructions with Aso and Kamikawa as grammatical subjects, exploring how linguistic agency and structural transitivity serve pragmatic functions in constructing responsibility. As linguistic framing influences how situations are understood and responsibility is assigned, the study reveals how grammatical choices direct readers toward preferred interpretations.

Progressive outlets employed transitive constructions to emphasise Aso's responsibility while treating Kamikawa distinctly: Asahi minimised her grammatical agency to frame institutional constraints, while Mainichi constructed her as agentive yet criticised her restrained response. Conservative outlets used contrasting strategies, with Sankei employing sophisticated reframing that backgrounded problematic elements while foregrounding positive interpretations.

This research demonstrates how grammatical framing achieves pragmatic goals in gendered political discourse, highlighting the 'double burden' faced by women politicians who experience both original harassment and subsequent judgment of their response strategies.

Venue Information & Access

December 5th	**Kansai University, Umeda Campus** Access by train: 1-5 Tsuruno-cho, Kita-ku, Osaka-shi, Osaka, 530-0014	**Access by train:** • Get off at Hankyu Railway Osaka-Umeda Station, and then walk about five minutes. • Get off at JR Osaka Station, and then walk about eight minutes.
December 6th	**Kansai University, Senriyama Campus** Address: 3-3-35 Yamate-cho, Suita-shi, Osaka 564-8680	**Access by train:** • Get off at Kandaimae Station on the Hankyu Railway Senri Line, and then walk about five minutes to the Main Gate.

Schedule

Friday – Umeda Campus, 7F, Room 701

Time	Schedule	Speaker
8:00	**Registration**	
8:45	**Opening Remarks**	
	Session 1: Pragmatics in Asian Contexts (part 1)	
9:00	Sorry, Democracy, and the Director: The Sociopragmatics of Foreign Borrowings and Facework in Burmese Communication	Richard Dare
9:30	Pragmatic functions of the "new honorific" *ssu* in mixed-age teasing in Japanese	Keiko Okabe
10:00	**Keynote Speaker: Professor Michael Haugh** *Getting Acquainted Across Cultures*	
	Session 2: Pragmatics in Asian Contexts (part 2) (Parallel Session)	
11:00	Upgrades & Assessments: At the Interface of Pragmatics and Culture	John Campbell-Larsen
11:30	Evaluations of Chinese Compliment Responses: Accounting for Individual Differences in Attributed Pragmatic Reasons	Mian Jia
12:00	**Lunch Break**	
	Session 4: Sociopragmatics of Place, Media, and Identity in East Asian Contexts (Parallel Session)	
13:30	Mixed Use of Dialect and Standard Japanese in a Local Kansai Pub: The Case of Negative Forms of Verbs	Andrew Barke & Momoyo Shimazu
14:00	Small Hospitality Spaces as Sites of Metapragmatic Reflection: Evidence from a Japanese Neighbourhood Bar	Todd J. Allen & Xiangdong Liu
14:30	Relational Boundaries and Hierarchies: Fictive Kinship Terms in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese	Xiangdong Liu, Yoko Yonezawa, & Narah Lee
15:00	Compliment Responses in social media Contexts: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Influencers in China and Singapore	Mengyuan Tang
15:30	**Afternoon Break**	
	Session 6: Interaction, Institutions, and Intercultural Communication	
16:00	Beyond Culture: Intercultural Communication Breakdowns in the Courtroom **(Pre-recorded)**	Ziting Guo
16:30	Responding to Non-Response: Exploring Progressivity of Talk as a Site of L2 Interactional Competence	Sajjad Pouromid
17:00	~~Multilevel Identity Negotiation in Sino-Japanese Cyber Conflicts: A Pragmatic Recursive Framework~~ **CANCELLED**	Wei Zhang
17:00	**Closing Remarks**	

Friday – Umeda Campus, 7F, Room 702 (NOTE: Parallel Session)

Time	Schedule	Speaker
	Session 3: Situated Pragmatics: From Everyday Interaction to L2 Development (Parallel Session)	
11:00	A Comparative Study of the L2 Pragmatic Competence of University Students in Hong Kong and the Chinese Mainland	Scott Aubrey & Rod Ellis
11:30	A Preliminary Exploration of Mama's Discourse: Identity, Politeness, and Community in an Okinawan *Izakaya* in Osaka	Todd J. Allen
12:00	**Lunch Break**	

Friday – Umeda Campus, 7F, Room 702 (NOTE: Parallel Session)

Time	Schedule	Speaker
	Session 5: Politeness, Identity, and Digital Media (Parallel Session)	
13:30	I'm Sorry, but…: Public Ritual Apology and Identity Performance of Social Media Influencers	Yichen Li
14:00	~~Reframing (Im)politeness Ontology: From Strategy to Disclosure~~ **CANCELLED**	Chaoqun Xie
14:30	~~Interpreting Self-Praise in Esports: A pragmatic Study Based on the Principle of (Im)politeness Reciprocity~~ **CANCELLED**	Xinru Ding
15:00	~~Bending and Bonding in and through Complaint Responses: Webcare Acts on a University-Based Niche App~~ **CANCELLED**	Ying Tong
15:30	**Afternoon Break**	

Saturday – Senriyama Campus, Iwasaki Kinenkan (岩崎記念館), Room F402.

Time	Schedule	Speaker
	Session 7: Language, Media & Trends	
9:00	Recontextualizing 'Demure': Pragmatic Functions and Semantic Extension in a Viral Twitter Trend	Haruka Nishiyama
9:30	Linguistic Landscape of the Namdaemun Market: Focusing on the Japanese Repertoires	Benio Suzuki
10:00	**Keynote: Professor Yasuko Obana** *Directness and Indirectness in Japanese Interaction* *-Aiming at a more realistic view-*	
	Session 8: Microaggressions & Impoliteness Across Contexts	
11:00	Microaggressions and their Sociopragmatic Impact: Implications for Second Language Pragmatics Instruction in Japanese Higher Education	Gregory Paul Glasgow & Noriko Ishihara
11:30	Microaggressions in the Sky: Impoliteness in Aviation English as a Lingua Franca	Noriko Ishihara
12:00	**Lunch Break**	
13:30	**Invited Talk: Dr Yoko Yonezawa** *Grammatical Framing of Gender-Based Harassment in Japanese Media: Pragmatic Motivations and Responsibility*	
14:00	***Session 9: Kansai University Graduate Student Panel: Conflict, Politeness, and Intercultural Pragmatics in Japanese and Cross-Cultural Communication*** Pragmatic Differences in Expressing Dissatisfaction: Politeness Strategies among Japanese and English Speakers Communication Strategies in Conflictive Interactional Events in Japanese from an Interactional Sociolinguistic Perspective Intercultural Communication in Japanese Language Education aimed at Russian Students	Lenon Umeto Zihao Wei Aleksei Sagaidak
15:00	**Afternoon Break**	
	Session 10: Negotiating Meaning, Humour, and Stance	
15:30	Tracking Rapport and Common Ground Dynamics: Sociopragmatic Insights from Bilingual Storytelling by Japanese EFL Learners	Lala Takada
16:00	Negotiating Moral Stakes in Conversational Humour in English as a Lingua Franca	Amir Sheikhan
16:30	Epistemic Status in Japanese Sentence-Final Particle	Yosuke Ogawa
17:00	FTA Balance-Seeking Behaviours in Japanese Variety Shows	Ami Sato
17:30	**Closing Remarks and Future Directions**	

Abstracts

Session 1: Pragmatics in Asian Contexts (part 1)

Sorry, Democracy, and the Director: The Sociopragmatics of Foreign Borrowings and Facework in Burmese Communication

Richard Dare, International Leadership University
richard.dare@ilu.edu.mm

This research explores the functions of selected English loanwords in contemporary Burmese language, with special attention to how these adoptions facilitate politeness, manage face concerns, and navigate delicate power dynamics in academic, business, and personal interactions. Drawing on examples such as *sorry*, *hello*, *director*, *company*, and *democracy*, the research argues that certain English borrowings have become pragmatically marked expressions in Burmese, often invoked during socially or politically sensitive exchanges.

Rather than serving only as neutral linguistic imports however, these terms function as tools that allow speakers to subtly shift registers, imply deference, and manage accountability—particularly in situations where directness in Burmese might be socially hazardous. For instance, the use of *sorry*—typically pronounced in Burmese phonetics—is often deployed to defuse interpersonal tension, especially in hierarchical relationships. Similarly, *democracy* is frequently uttered in public discourse as an aspirational keyword but divorced one might argue from any clear grounded local meaning or context.

The study adopts an exploratory documentary research methodology, drawing on real-life discourse samples, recorded interviews, and field observations conducted in academic and professional settings in Myanmar. This approach is chosen to unearth the nuanced, often context-dependent nature of pragmatic borrowing and code-switching, particularly in a multilingual society marked by colonial legacies and currently shifting sociopolitical tides.

By comparing Burmese sociopragmatic usage with parallel examples in English and Japanese, the paper contributes to the broader conversation on intercultural communication, speech act theory, and facework across East Asian and Southeast Asian contexts. It aims to stimulate further inquiry into how language borrowing serves not merely lexical needs, but also social negotiation, subtle resistance, and identity performance.

Pragmatic functions of the "new honorific" *ssu* in mixed-age teasing in Japanese

Keiko Okabe, The University of Sydney
keiko.okabe@sydney.edu.au

A growing number of studies about teasing have been conducted in languages other than English (Cao, 2022; Chang & Haugh, 2022; Li, 2020). However, studies about teasing in Japanese are scarce and limited to the investigations of speakers between close friends (Otsu, 2004) or of older people who initiate teasing (Geyer, 2008).

To fill this research gap, this case study examines humour toward older people, which is often regarded as impolite in societies influenced by Confucianism (Kim & Plester, 2022). It uses a contemporary Japanese television drama as data and focuses on a younger Japanese man's playful use of "*ssu*" in teasing an older Japanese woman. According to Nakamura (2020), "*ssu*", a shortened form of the polite form "*desu*", is a "*shin keigo* (new honorific)". It is less polite than the polite form and more polite than the plain form "da". It may imply the speaker's easy-going and humorous character (Nakamura, 2022). Playful teasing sequences are selected based on Haugh's (2014) scheme of teasing and response. Spencer-Oatey's (2000) framework of rapport management is also applied when examining facework, sociality rights, and interactional goals of teasing.

The findings of this study indicate that the younger man uses "*ssu*" not only to show deference and alleviate the potential Face-threatening Act, but also to express intimacy and playfulness. He manages rapport by preserving the older woman's face within the given context and social norms while successfully teasing her.

Based on the findings, this study suggests that the current prevailing Japanese social norms governing language use are at variance with the traditional Japanese norms when facilitating effective

communication. Understanding situated language use will aid in comprehending the system of dynamic social interaction, particularly for languages that involve social constraints.

Session 2: Pragmatics in Asian Contexts (part 2) (parallel session)

Upgrades & Assessments: At the Interface of Pragmatics and Culture

John Campbell-Larsen, Kyoto Women's University
joncamlar@hotmail.com

In a seminal paper Pomerantz (1984) described the preference structure of assessment and agreement adjacency pairs in English, noting that agreement is the preferred second pair part of the sequence. One method by which English speakers perform agreeing is by use of an upgrade adjective. Rather than merely 'strong agreement' (Pomerantz, 1984, p.66), I suggest that the upgrading is performing a 'demonstration' of understanding rather than merely a 'claim' (Sacks, 1992). That is, the responder is not only showing agreement but proving that the initial assessment was heard and understood. This stands in contrast to Japanese agreements. Hayano (2007, p. 17) notes that in Japanese "the majority of agreements include either repetition or anaphorical reference to the descriptor in the first assessment". McCarthy (1998, p. 113) notes that for English speakers, repetition 'is not always pragmatically appropriate' and may even be odd.

A further aspect of difference between English and Japanese revealed by upgrade adjectives in assessments is found in the domain of sensory assessments. In Japanese, positive gustatory assessments are usually carried out with a gustatory specific assessor (*oishii*) often in serial repetition. The usual translation for *oishii* is the upgrade adjective *delicious*. English speakers seem to rely more on a wide menu of non-upgraded non-sense specific adjectives such as *nice* and *good* (Campbell-Larsen, 2025). In the realm of negative assessments, Japanese has separate terms for gustatory and olfactory sense domains (*mazui* and *kusai*) while English speakers generally conflate the sensory domains with upgrade adjectives like *disgusting* and *gross*. English seems poorly furnished with non-upgrade terms for negative sensory assessments, revealing a non-upgrade tendency for positive assessments and an upgrade tendency for negative assessments. Investigating upgrade adjectives gives interesting insights into pragmatic, cognitive and cultural aspects of language use beyond surface-level semantics.

Evaluations of Chinese Compliment Responses: Accounting for Individual Differences in Attributed Pragmatic Reasons

Mian Jia, City University of Hong Kong
mianjia@cityu.edu.hk

Recent studies on Chinese compliment responses (CR) have shown that the preferred response has evolved from rejection (Chen, 1993) to deflection/evasion and acceptance (Chen & Yang, 2010; Xia et al., 2021). When interpreting these findings, previous studies often rely on predefined cultural, regional, and sociological factors, running the risk of overlooking the inherent variabilities between different individuals in the same group (Haugh & Chang, 2019). To better account for people's varying perceptions of the compliment responses, this paper reports on an online survey experiment that tested Chinese college English majors' evaluations of three CR strategies (acceptance, deflection, rejection) in three compliment response scenarios (English proficiency, public speaking, new dress). Participants ($N = 512$) were randomly assigned to read one of the nine vignettes depicting a compliment made to Xiaohong and her response to the compliment. Then they were asked to evaluate the response and speculate the reasons for Xiaohong's response, such as being modest or seeking agreement with others.

The results showed that acceptance strategies were rated as more appropriate, less conceited, and left a better impression than deflection and rejection strategies. Moreover, while participants' evaluations of the same CR did not significantly differ by their sociological features such as age and gender (ps > .05), they differed significantly by the varying pragmatic reasons they attributed to Xiaohong at the time of making the evaluation (ps < .05). The evaluative contingency identified in this study suggests that people's varying perception of a face-sensitive act would be better explained by the individual differences that arise from a specific interaction than by predefined cultural, regional, and sociological factors. This

study contributes to the growing research landscape on the variability in (im)politeness perceptions by demonstrating the utility of examining participants' individual differences.

Session 3: Situated Pragmatics: From Everyday Interaction to L2 Development (Parallel Session)

A Comparative Study of the L2 Pragmatic Competence of University Students in Hong Kong and the Chinese Mainland

Scott Aubrey, Chinese University of Hong Kong & Rod Ellis, Curtin University

scaubrey@cuhk.edu.hk

This study investigates the differences in pragmatic competence between Hong Kong and Chinese mainland university students. Participants included 19 native speakers of English, 115 Chinese mainland students, divided into those who had spent time abroad in an English-speaking country (CM A) and those who had not (CM NA), and 97 Hong Kong students, divided into those from an English-medium secondary school (Hong Kong EMI) and those from a Chinese-medium school (Hong Kong CMI). Linguistic proficiency was measured by a C-test, and pragmatic competence by a Metapragmatic Knowledge Test, an Irony Test and a Monologic Role Play. Group scores were compared using ANCOVAs to control for differences in proficiency. The results point to a continuum of pragmatic competence—EMI > CMI > CM A > CM NA—reflecting the groups' access to English in real-life contexts. The differences between the Hong Kong groups and the Chinese mainland groups were clearest in those tests measuring processing capacity (i.e., Irony Response Time and the Monologic Role Play). CM A, but not CM NA, performed as well as the Hong Kong groups on measures of metapragmatic awareness. The results are discussed in terms of Bialystok's (1993) distinction between analysed representation and control of processing.

A Preliminary Exploration of Mama's Discourse: Identity, Politeness, and Community in an Okinawan *Izakaya* in Osaka

Todd J. Allen, Kansai University

tjallen@kansai-u.ac.jp

This study investigates the language practices of the *mama* (female owner-host) in an Okinawan-themed *izakaya* in Osaka, focusing on how identity, politeness, and interaction are negotiated in everyday encounters. Drawing on approximately 80 minutes of recorded conversation between the mama and her customers, we conduct a preliminary sociopragmatic analysis to highlight how she constructs a dual identity as both a business operator and a community figure. Particular attention is given to the mama's use of politeness strategies, terms of address, and shifts in register, which simultaneously index authority, intimacy, and care. Notably, she incorporates lexical items from the Okinawan language, which function as cultural markers that distinguish the establishment, invoke regional identity, and create an affective sense of nostalgia and authenticity. Despite being located in Osaka, this Okinawan *izakaya* highlights how the role of the mama and her identity are discursively constructed through interaction. This identity is also expressed through her work style, often described as *nonbiri* (easygoing, relaxed) and *mai pēsu* (at her own pace), further shaping the bar's atmosphere.

Session 4: Language, Relationships, and Identity in East Asian Contexts (Parallel Session)

Mixed use of Dialect and Standard Japanese in a Local Kansai Pub: The Case of Negative Forms of Verbs

Andrew Barke & Momoyo Shimazu, Kansai University

ajbarke@kansai-u.ac.jp

Studies on Japanese dialect use have tended to characterize dialect speakers as a homogenous group, and yet in naturally occurring discourse, individual speakers are observed to exhibit considerable variation in their use of dialectal and standard forms, reflecting differences in personal stylistic preferences and speaker capacities to adapt their language use to the context at hand (Barke, 2018; Kobayashi et al., 2007). Furthermore, the boundaries between dialect and standard Japanese are often not clear-cut, with speakers typically blending forms in shifting ratios depending on the interactional setting (Okamoto, 2008).

Compared to standard forms, use of dialectal forms is frequently associated with informality, spontaneity, emotional immediacy, and tradition (de Fina, 2007). Thus, shifts to use of dialect can signal changes in a speaker's persona and can index expressions of affect. Such subtle differences in the social meanings conveyed by these two types of language provide speakers with a rich repertoire of linguistic resources that can be tactically employed to construct self and other identities within the dynamic, culturally embedded processes of persona negotiation (Barke, 2018).

This study adopts a social constructivist/sociopragmatic approach in its analysis of close to 3,000 utterances that occurred in the 90 minutes of interactions among staff and customers in a local pub setting as it considers the interactional functions and contextual distribution of dialectal and standard Japanese forms that were employed. Focusing specifically on negative forms of verbs, the analysis reveals both inter-speaker and intra-speaker variation in the selection of standard and dialectal forms. Individual speakers were found to constantly adjust and adapt their use of these forms in response to shifting relational dynamics and their moment-by-moment interactional goals in their conversations with others, illuminating the complex, creative, and strategic nature of the selection process of these forms in the localized social space of a small Japanese pub.

Small Hospitality Spaces as Sites of Metapragmatic Reflection: Evidence from a Japanese Neighbourhood Bar

Todd J. Allen, Kansai University & Xiangdong Liu, Western Sydney University
tjallen@kansai-u.ac.jp

Small hospitality establishments such as bars and *izakayas* are ubiquitous in Japan but rarely examined from a pragmatic perspective. While recent studies have begun to explore interaction in these spaces (Allen & Liu, 2022, 2024, 2025), little is known about how owners and customers explicitly discuss language use. To address this, we analysed 100 minutes of conversation recorded in a neighbourhood bar in western Japan, focusing on metapragmatic reflection.

Participants highlighted dialectal expressions such as *itekomasu* ("beat someone up"), *hisshi no pachi* ("give 110%"), and *hona* ("well then"), discussing their regional distinctiveness, intensity, and local identity. Generational slang also featured prominently. Words like *kimoi* ("gross") and *gachi* ("seriously") were noted for shifting meanings, while *naui* ("trendy") was revived as a nostalgic marker of style. These reflections reveal how language indexes cultural change and intergenerational boundaries.

Finally, participants debated politeness and register, underscoring how language negotiates intimacy and hierarchy. Comments such as "foreigners wouldn't understand" highlight the cultural specificity and in-group nature of these practices. Overall, local bars serve as sites of metapragmatic reflection where speakers consciously shape meaning and identity.

Relational Boundaries and Hierarchies: Fictive Kinship Terms in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese

Xiangdong Liu, Western Sydney University, Yoko Yonezawa, The University of Sydney, & Narah Lee, The University of Queensland
x.liu@westernsydney.edu.au

This study investigates fictive kinship terms in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese, drawing on a self-reported survey of native speakers. The findings reveal distinct yet interconnected patterns shaped by culturally specific conceptualisations of relationality.

In Chinese, fictive kinship terms are used with the highest frequency, particularly towards senior addressees. Their use reflects a generational-hierarchy-based system, in which age and vertical relationships strongly condition address choices. Such practices highlight the persistence of Confucian hierarchical values in everyday interaction, while also allowing flexibility in building respect-based ties beyond the family.

In Japanese, the use of fictive kinship terms is minimal. Address practices are characterised by a strong family/non-family boundary, and the extension of kinship terms to non-kin, particularly senior interlocutors, can even be interpreted as impolite. Instead, Japanese speakers rely heavily on alternative honorific or neutral forms of address (e.g., "NAME + suffix -san/-chan") underscoring a linguistic ideology that carefully maintains distinctions between kin and non-kin domains.

In Korean, fictive kinship terms display the most complex and nuanced pattern, which reflects sensitivity to kinship ties and intimacy rather than being governed primarily by age. Korean speakers frequently extend kinship boundaries through relationship projection, for instance, addressing close

friends' parents as emeni 'mother' and apeci 'father' and older friends with kindship terms for their older siblings. This illustrates how Korean address practices prioritise relational closeness over strict generational status, often producing an "inverted" seniority pattern outside the family.

Our findings challenge oversimplified views about the linguistic similarity in these three Northeast Asian linguistic communities, often attributed to their shared Confucian values. They demonstrate distinct strategies for expressing relationality through the use of kinship terms in non-kin relationships in each community's social reality. The research contributes to understanding sociolinguistic practices of these three languages and their complex negotiation of traditional hierarchies with contemporary relationship dynamics.

Compliment Responses in social media Contexts: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Influencers in China and Singapore

Mengyuan Tang, City University of Hong Kong
mengytang8-c@my.cityu.edu.hk

Social media influencers, as professional content creators, strategically manage their public persona through audience-oriented interactions (Enke & Borchers, 2021). One important way they do so is by responding to compliments—an act that requires alignment with contextual norms to manage self-impressions and meet audience expectations (Marwick & boyd, 2011).

These norms, however, are not fixed. A changing CR preference has been observed among younger and digitally connected users (Eslami et al., 2020), highlighting that normative expectations are shaped by communicative context. Consequently, it becomes essential to consider the specific norms governing different communities and interactional settings. While much attention has been given to East-West dichotomy (Chen, 2010), variation within Eastern societies remains underexplored. Hence, this study compares how Chinese and Singaporean social media influencers manage their impressions when responding to compliments, aims to uncover intra-regional variation in emerging social media practices.

This study analyzes CR strategies used by mid-level influencers on RedNote (China) and Instagram (Singapore). Using Holmes's (1986) taxonomy and Placencia et al.'s (2016) digital extensions, responses were categorized as acceptance, rejection, evasion, or non-response.

Preliminary findings reveal both convergence and divergence. Across both groups, acceptance strategies were used far more frequently than evasion or rejection, departing from earlier research that emphasized modesty-oriented norms (Chen, 1993). However, Chinese influencers frequently opted for non-response, while Singaporean influencers commonly used like-only replies. These patterns reflect how CR strategies are shaped by the intersection of cultural expectations and the affordances of social media platforms.

This paper contributes to cross-cultural pragmatics by moving beyond the East-West dichotomy and addressing intra-Asian variation in digital communication. By focusing on Chinese and Singaporean social media influencers as professional communicators, it highlights how CR strategies are shaped by culturally embedded norms and the platform affordances, offering a more nuanced understanding of how audience design is negotiated in social media contexts.

Session 5: Politeness, Identity, and Digital Media (Parallel Session)

I'm Sorry, but...: Public Ritual Apology and Identity Performance of Social Media Influencers

Yichen Li, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies
ycli.lauren@gmail.com

Micro-celebrities, also known as social media influencers who cultivate a public persona through self-branding, are increasingly required to issue public apologies when their behavior elicits online backlash. Building on Kádár et al.'s (2018) notion of public ritual apology, an act aimed at re-establishing reputation and social order rather than merely resolving conflict, this study adopts a sociopragmatic perspective to examine how Chinese influencers use apology to negotiate blame and (re)construct identity.

The dataset comprises eight representative public apology events drawn from livestream shopping influencers, content creators, and technology reviewers. These cases cluster into four apology types: misconduct in speech or behavior, product-quality and after-sales issues, intellectual-property

infringement, and rumor-mongering. For each event, both written apology announcements and transcribed video statements were compiled into a small corpus and subjected to qualitative discourse analysis.

Preliminary results indicate that public ritual apologies simultaneously mitigate offence and perform strategic identity work. Influencers frequently frame themselves as accountable experts, responsible entrepreneurs, or well-intentioned yet misunderstood public figures, thereby realigning their personae with culturally sanctioned moral frames. Such dual functionality underscores the dynamic interplay between face management and identity performance in digital public spheres. The study hopes to contribute to research on online facework by demonstrating how ritual apology serves as a resource for reputation repair and self-positioning among Chinese social-media influencers.

CANCELLED: Reframing (Im)politeness Ontology: From Strategy to Disclosure

Chaoqun Xie, Zhejiang International Studies University
xiechaoqun@hotmail.com

The concept of (im)politeness has long occupied a central position in pragmatics, often viewed through the lens of strategy, normativity, or face management. Foundational models (Brown & Levinson, 1987) often define (im)politeness in terms of maintenance or violations of face wants, while subsequent discursive approaches (Locher & Watts, 2005; Watts, 2003) have emphasized its relational and co-constructed nature. Recent developments, such as Culpeper's (2011) comprehensive treatment of impoliteness, offer typologies based on linguistic cues and contextual evaluations. These perspectives have collectively shaped an influential trajectory that treats (im)politeness primarily as a pragmatic resource—a means of managing social relations, identity work, or strategic positioning.

Yet this predominantly functionalist orientation leaves important ontological questions underexamined. What does it mean to experience (im)politeness as recognition or a breakdown in social being? How is (im)politeness lived in affectively charged moments where recognition, care, and belonging are secured or withdrawn? Recent scholarship has begun to gesture toward such a reorientation. Haugh (2024), for instance, proposes a prismatic model in which (im)politeness is understood both as an object and as a perspective. This emphasis on perspectival multiplicity marks an important shift.

This study seeks to go a small step further by focusing on how (im)politeness is ontologically structured and affectively endured, with insights from existential phenomenology (Heidegger, 1962). Employing a phenomenologically informed discourse analysis, this paper shows that (im)politeness is not simply a matter of pragmatic strategy or social norm adherence; it is a disclosive event in which the world of being-with-others is revealed, strained, or fractured. This reframing shifts the ontology of (im)politeness from what is said and evaluated to what is disclosed through language, silence, and emotional attunement. It calls for a move away from concerning not only with meaning and strategy, but with vulnerability, recognition, and existential belonging.

CANCELLED: Interpreting Self-Praise in Esports: A Pragmatic Study Based on the Principle of (Im)politeness Reciprocity

Xinru Ding & Chaoqun Xie, Zhejiang International Studies University
ding-xinru@outlook.com

Self-praise is a speech act that involves making favorable statements about oneself and is commonly observed in the context of electronic sports (Esports), where identity performance, stance-taking, and competitive positioning are highly visible and often interactionally complex. This study adopts the Principle of (Im)politeness Reciprocity (PIR) as a theoretical lens to examine how Chinese Esports players engage in self-praise and how these utterances are handled in simultaneous interpreting for international audiences. The analysis is based on a self-compiled corpus of interpreted discourse drawn from the global finals of some popular Esport games such as *League of Legends*, encompassing both post-game interviews and real-time interactional speech acts.

The study investigates whether and how interpreters align with, moderate, or recalibrate the (im)politeness implications embedded in self-praise when rendering them into English. Particular attention is paid to instances where self-praise intersects with boasting, adversarial humor, or implicit facework, potentially challenging politeness expectations in the target culture. The findings show that interpreters rarely omit self-praising remarks. Instead, they tend to adopt attenuation strategies, such as hedging, downplaying, or restructuring the evaluative language to mitigate potential face threats or interpersonal imbalance.

Rather than assuming the transfer of politeness norms as fixed, the study treats interpreted self-praise as a site of pragmatic negotiation shaped by context, power dynamics, and audience responses. By examining the calibration of stance and interpersonal alignment in live bilingual performance, this research contributes to a more situated understanding of how real-time interpreting mediates culturally variable norms of evaluation and self-presentation in high-stakes, affect-laden settings like Esports.

CANCELLED: Bending and Bonding in and through Complaint Responses: Webcare Acts on a University-Based Niche App

Ying Tong, Nanjing Xiaozhuang University & Chaoqun Xie, Zhejiang International Studies University
xiechaoqun@hotmail.com

This paper explores the textual properties of complaints made in a semi-public arena, asking to what extent the salient Méng (lit. cuteness) style adopted by the web agent of a company in responding to solicited complaints can achieve the desired impression management and build up the brand identity for marketing purposes. Complaint responses styled as such are text-based digital narratives keyed by Méng elements, which will be elaborated in this paper as bending strategies that reframe direct complaints for the ultimate purpose of bonding with addressees concerned and imagined viewers alike. Our methodology is anchored in interactional sociolinguistics and ethnopragmatics. We use Goffman's (1974) concept of key and footing to understand the way complaints are reframed. We also take import from positioning analysis (Bamberg, 1997) to show how the WA balances between (new) customer reach and organizational control for rapport management. Apart from the web agent's strategies that shift an other-presented negative brand identity to a positive self- and professional (re)presentation, what will be highlighted in this paper is the latent gender order sourced by the web agent for the management of customer rapport. The paper is expected to contribute to research on the effective handling of customer dissatisfaction in app-mediated and community-based communication that is hitherto underrepresented from a sociocultural perspective.

Session 6: Interaction, Institutions, and Intercultural Communication

PRE-RECORDED: Beyond Culture: Intercultural Communication Breakdowns in the Courtroom

Ziting Guo
guo.ziting@outlook.com

Intercultural communication failures in courtrooms, exemplified by cases like Rachel Jeantel's discredited testimony in the Trayvon Martin trial, persistently undermine justice for linguistic and ethnic minorities. While prior research attributes these breakdowns to "cultural differences" in legal versus lay discourse (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982), it overlooks systemic power imbalances enabling dominant groups to marginalize minority participants' voices.

This paper critically examines the role of linguistic, cultural, and power asymmetries in courtroom miscommunication. It challenges the limitations of the "cultural differences" framework, advocating for a critical sociolinguistics approach to expose how institutional hierarchies perpetuate injustice for marginalized participants.

Through synthesis of sociolinguistics literature (Eades, 2012; Rickford & King, 2016), a detailed analysis of cases in relation to Aboriginal Australians, African American Vernacular English (AAVE) speakers, and child witnesses, alongside legal discourse features was carried out.

Linguistic barriers, including complex legal discourse and misinterpretations of non-dominant varieties like African American Vernacular English and Aboriginal English, disadvantage ethnic-minority and lay participants in courtrooms. Cultural norms are routinely categorized as problematic by legal professionals, eroding witness credibility. Crucially, the "cultural differences" framework overlooks institutional power hierarchies enabling Anglo-legal professionals to control narratives, silence minorities, and enforce "rule-oriented" communication that marginalizes lay perspectives. These power imbalances—not mere misunderstandings—underpin systemic communication failures, perpetuating inequities in legal outcomes for vulnerable groups.

The field of intercultural miscommunication in legal contexts has been enriched with a large volume of research following the "cultural differences" approach, which offer insights into how linguistic and cultural differences between ethnic-dominant legal professionals and ethnic-minority lay participants could result in communication breakdowns. However, future research must shift from cultural differences

to analyzing power hierarchies in courtroom communication (Eades, 2004), examining resistance strategies and spiritual worldviews in testimony.

Responding to Non-Response: Exploring Progressivity of Talk as a Site of L2 Interactional Competence

Sajjad Pouromid
sajjad.pouromid@setsunan.ac.jp

This study examines how participants in peer-led virtual exchange discussions maintain the progressivity of talk in the absence of a teacher. The preference for progressivity refers to participants' orientation toward advancing talk along a projected course of action, minimizing delays or disruptions such as insertions or repair (Schegloff, 2007). Drawing on conversation analysis, the study investigates how participants orient to, pursue, and co-construct progressivity when conditionally relevant responses are delayed or absent.

The data comprise video-recorded online interactions between five Japanese and two American university students participating in a virtual exchange project. Initially, the American participants, implicitly positioned as experts, engaged in practices often associated with teacher-led talk, such as rephrasing questions, offering candidate responses, and producing polar interrogatives to elicit delayed or missing responses (Hosoda, 2014; Koshik, 2002; Sert, 2013). Over time, however, some Japanese participants began to take up these practices themselves, offering candidate answers, pursuing unresponsive speakers, and managing gaps to sustain the conversational trajectory.

This orientation aligns with Stivers and Robinson's (2006) observation that non-selected recipients may treat furthering the sequence as preferable to maintaining the rights of selected next speakers when progressivity is at stake. In other words, the findings support the argument that preference for progressivity can sometimes override other preferences, like the preference for the selected speaker to take the next turn, if the forward movement of the conversation is stalled. Such development signals a gain in interactional competence, as learners become attuned to the contingencies of turn-taking and accountable to the temporal unfolding of talk-in-interaction. The study contributes to research on L2 pragmatics by highlighting how sensitivity to progressivity functions as both a resource and outcome of interaction.

CANCELLED: Multilevel Identity Negotiation in Sino-Japanese Cyber Conflicts: A Pragmatic Recursive Framework

Wei Zhang
zhangwei_fj@163.com

Despite impoliteness being widely recognized as a strategic discursive practice for identity construction in digital discourse, systematic investigations into its dynamic mechanisms across multiple identity levels remain underexplored. Drawing on Brewer and Gardner's (1996) identity leveling theory, this study adopts a mixed-methods approach on Sino-Japanese online debates on the Security Bills for a comparative pragma-linguistic analysis on Sino-Japanese impolite discourses and furthers the exploration on how impoliteness dynamically constructs identities across personal, relational, and collective levels, addressing cultural variations in underlying motivations. It is revealed that though no significant divergence is observed between Chinese and Japanese in macro-strategies of (in)direct impoliteness, significant differences emerge in micro-strategies such as criticism and exclusion, indexing moral codes of Confucian Ren-Yi-Li-Zhi-Xin and Japanese wakimae (discernment) and ba (proper positioning). More importantly, a recursive framework of impoliteness-driven identity construction is proposed, illustrating how identity work of impolieness at the personal level consolidates or undermines in-group cohesion at the relational level, which further reinforces or challenges collective identities through intragroup demarcation and intergroup positioning. By modeling the escalation from individual linguistic aggression to relational (dis)harmony and collective identity construction or destruction, this study offers a novel analytical lens to impoliteness and identity research, which, hopefully, contributes to understanding and mediating digitally mediated geopolitical conflicts.

Session 7: Language, Media & Trends

Recontextualizing 'Demure': Pragmatic Functions and Semantic Extension in a Viral Twitter Trend

Haruka Nishiyama, Keio University
haruka.nishiyama.3@gmail.com

This study investigates the sociopragmatic mechanisms underlying the viral use and subsequent meaning extension of the word demure on X (formerly Twitter) in 2024. The trend began with a TikTok video in which an influencer humorously described modest dress and behavior as "Very demure, very mindful." The phrase quickly spread across platforms and was reused in ironic or exaggerated ways.

Focusing on the first few days after the viral spread, this study collected over 9,300 English-language posts containing the word demure, using Twitter's advanced search features with date and language specifications. Posts were both quantitatively surveyed and qualitatively coded according to two criteria: (1) the pragmatic function (e.g., irony, exaggeration, parody) and (2) semantic targets—i.e., what was being labeled as demure. The latter involved identifying the types of behaviors, appearances, or situations that users humorously or seriously described using the term.

The analysis draws on the concept of recontextualization—the transfer and reinterpretation of discursive elements across contexts (Linell, 1988; Gruber, 2019)—as a central theoretical lens. Recontextualization has been identified as a core mechanism in the creation of internet memes (Shifman, 2013; Kirner-Ludwig, 2020; Bülow & Johann, 2023), where elements from one context are playfully repurposed to generate humor or commentary in another.

Findings reveal that demure was used ironically to describe flashy or extreme content, generating humor through contrast. Over time, the word detached from its original referent and came to signify a more generalized notion of moderation or subtlety, applicable even to non-human or abstract topics such as meals, earthquakes, or social gestures. In many cases, co-occurrence with mindful further expanded its semantic range to include empathy and self-restraint.

This study highlights how viral digital discourse enables collective pragmatic creativity and rapid meaning shifts through recontextualization, analogy, and semantic abstraction.

Linguistic Landscape of the Namdaemun Market: Focusing on the Japanese Repertoires

Benio Suzuki
ben300.tko@gmail.com

This paper analyses the use of Japanese in one Korean traditional market in Seoul to examine how Japanese repertoires communicate with the audience. The Namdaemun Market, one of the traditional markets in Seoul has been a popular destination amongst tourists from outside Korea. To accommodate communication with the tourists, various languages are used for the foreign tourists. Research of linguistic landscape in multilingual environments has given us insights into how various named languages co-exist in signs (Cameron, & Panović, 2014; Gorter & Cenoz, 2023). However, in some *de facto* monolingual communities where people may not have equal access to multiple named languages, the use of foreign languages plays a significant role in communicating with the users of the language. As Lee (2022) examined the "unfamiliar" language uses in signs written in the Korean language in various cities in several countries, it is worth exploring how a language is used in a foreign country where the language is not used socially. The present study examines the roles Japanese repertoires play in one area outside Japan. To obtain the data, I visited the Namdaemun Market in Seoul several times to collect signs written in Japanese. During my stay, I walked around the area and photographed the signs. The image files were compiled into computer software and examined the patterns. Of the 206 images, twenty-nine were selected for the analysis. The data shows two major findings: 1) providing health-related information about the food and 2) emphasis on the products in unique ways, which might be related to "weirdness". Based on the findings, I discuss how transcultural environments (co-)create communicative repertoires and translingual playfulness.

Session 8: Microaggressions & Impoliteness Across Contexts

Microaggressions and their Sociopragmatic Impact: Implications for Second Language Pragmatics Instruction in Japanese Higher Education

Gregory Paul Glasgow, Kanda University of International Studies & Noriko Ishihara, Hosei University
glasgow-g@kanda.kuis.ac.jp

In an age where issues of social justice have gained more currency, language learners are increasingly expected to engage in communication that reflects cultural sensitivity and sociopragmatic awareness, which is essential for interactional competence in diverse settings. According to Ishihara and Cohen (2022) based on Thomas (1983), sociopragmatics reflects "interactants' assumptions of what constitutes socially preferred behavior" (p. 14). Developing learners' sociopragmatic competence in intercultural contexts, therefore, requires an understanding of how inclusion and respect can be maintained between interactants and how microaggressions can be avoided. Microaggressions in everyday human interaction range from verbal assaults to insensitive remarks that may demean, disparage, or disrespect the social identity of individuals from minoritized or marginalized groups. Recent scholarship has begun to reveal the impact of such microaggressions, examining how they can affect minoritized language educators (Glasgow, 2024).

This presentation reports on classroom-based research in a CLIL course on race, ethnicity, and identity at a private Japanese university. In a pedagogical unit on microaggressions, a general definition was provided to students to help them recognize sociopragmatic features of microaggressions in situated interactions. We contribute to the evolving literature on microaggressions by reframing them as potential instances of sociopragmatic failure—broadening their theoretical grounding into applied linguistics —and by exploring students' responses to awareness-raising and helping them brainstorm strategies to detect and to respond to microaggressions.

Findings reveal that students became more attuned to the sociopragmatic impact of microaggressions and the risk of offense they pose but often struggled to formulate contextually appropriate verbal responses. This highlights a key pedagogical challenge: raising pragmatic awareness may not be enough if learners lack the linguistic and sociocultural resources to act on it. We discuss the implications of these issues for pragmatic instruction in L2 learning contexts, and propose directions for teaching that add a critical, intercultural dimension to the development of L2 pragmatic competence.

Microaggressions in the Sky: Impoliteness in Aviation English as a Lingua Franca

Noriko Ishihara, Hosei University
ishi0029@gmail.com

As globalization expands, normalized racist views and expressions of impoliteness and aggression abound in intercultural communication today. Microaggressions, defined as "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages" (Su et al., 2007, p. 72) are largely sociopragmatic in nature, communicating hostility and slights to targeted individuals or communities. Although often unintentional or subtle, experience of repeated microaggressions can accumulate to cause distress, and thus the perlocutionary effect can be potentially more harmful than blatant insults (Su et al., 2007). Microaggressions can reinforce existing power structures, leading to further stereotyping and marginalization of the minoritized group (Williams, et al., 2021).

In the context of aviation English as lingua franca (LF), microaggressions used in radiotelephony (R/T) communications may have dire consequences. However, apart from a study on the impoliteness in aviation English as a LF (Ishihara & Lee, 2021) and brief mentions of impoliteness (Friginal, 2018; Monteiro, 2019), microaggressions in aeronautical contexts have rarely been researched. This case study investigates microaggressions experienced by aviation specialists during R/T communications. Approximately 40 pilots and air traffic controllers were recruited from the researcher's network in the U.S. and Japan, representing pilots possessing a range of professional experience speaking English as a LF, along with Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and Indonesian among others. Based on a background survey, a subset of 25 pilots were selected for an interview, where their interpretations of R/T excerpts and personal experiences of microaggressions were explored in depth. Preliminary findings of the thematic narrative analysis of the data showed that microaggressions may be expressed in relation to pilots' professional competence and performance in the immediate aeronautical context, as well as their accents and perceived linguistic competence. The presentation will discuss consequences of encountering or using microaggressions in R/T communications, as well as implications for awareness-raising training for pilots and air-traffic controllers.

Session 9: Kansai University Graduate Student Panel: Conflict, Politeness, and Intercultural Pragmatics in Japanese and Cross-Cultural Communication

Pragmatic Differences in Expressing Dissatisfaction: Politeness Strategies among Japanese and English Speakers

Lenon Umeto
k120578@kansai-u.ac.jp

Misunderstandings hinder the development of good interpersonal relationships with people from other cultural backgrounds. Therefore, acquiring knowledge about cultural differences and fostering intercultural understanding are essential in today's increasingly globalized society. For instance, Szatrowski's (1993) comparative analysis of invitations revealed that certain strategies commonly used in Japanese may be perceived as impolite or inappropriate by American English speakers. It also demonstrated that Japanese and English speakers employ distinct linguistic and pragmatic approaches when extending invitations. As this shows, cross-cultural differences in politeness strategies reveal significant gaps in communicative norms and expectations.

However, to date, much of the literature has focused on politeness within cultures rather than comparing politeness strategies employed in different cultures, and issues of (im)politeness specific to intercultural interactions have been overlooked (Haugh, 2017).

This study aims to empirically examine how social cognitive abilities manifest in cross-cultural interactions by taking a multi-theoretical approach to the analysis of politeness. Specifically, it focuses on intercultural aspects of politeness in the expression of dissatisfaction—a type of Face-Threatening Act (Brown & Levinson, 1987) — by conducting a comparative analysis of Japanese speakers and English-speaking residents of Los Angeles, California.

Two research tasks are undertaken: (1) Tendencies in strategies used in the expression of dissatisfaction within each culture are clarified; and (2) Answers to the question of whether strategies that consider interlocutors' face needs in one culture are also effective in interactions in other cultures are explored. Underlying factors that may influence the effectiveness of such strategies, such as social distance, power, and the degree to which FTAs are rated as an imposition in each culture will also be identified.

Based on the findings, the study aims to provide recommendations for applied research in cross-cultural understanding, as well as in Japanese and English language education, that take cultural characteristics into account.

Communication Strategies in Conflictive Interactional Events in Japanese from an Interactional Sociolinguistic Perspective

Zihao Wei
k726921@kansai-u.ac.jp

'Conflict' refers to argument, disagreement, friction, quarrelling, etc., while argument is initiated by disagreement to an asserted proposition (Eemeren & Groostendorst, 1984) and consists of "the conversational interactivity of making claims, disagreeing with claims, countering disagreements, and the processes by which such disagreements arise, are dealt with and resolved" (Turnbull, 1988).

In this study, conflict talk is viewed as a sequence of behaviors (both verbal and non-verbal) that starts with interactants making conflicting assertions concerning a single issue and ends with the resulting disagreement among them being dealt with/resolved. It adopts the three stages of conflict talk framework proposed by Leung (2002) (i.e. initiation, maintenance and escalation, and termination), and focuses on the termination stage in which communication strategies are employed to resolve/deal with the disagreement at hand.

Two types of data are drawn on in the analysis: (1) Conflictive interactional events sourced from Japanese dramas are analyzed and strategies used to resolve/deal with disagreements between interlocutors (e.g. one party submitting to the will of another, one party withdrawing from the argument) are identified and coded; (2) A survey is then carried out among Japanese native speakers (JNS) and Japanese language learners (JLL) in which they are shown the first two (initiation, and maintenance and escalation) stages of conflictive events identified in (1) and then asked to provide strategies they would use to resolve/deal with conflicts (third termination stage) if faced with such situations themselves.

The purpose of this research is to assist JLL in gaining a better understanding of Japanese conflictive situations and to provide guidance on how to deal with such conflicts; a topic that is often ignored in Japanese language education due to the prevalent ideology that Japanese avoid conflict in interactions with others.

Intercultural Communication in Japanese Language Education aimed at Russian Students

Aleksei Sagaidak
k196706@kansai-u.ac.jp

In an increasingly globalized world, the ability to navigate intercultural communication has become essential—particularly in foreign language education. This study investigates how intercultural communication can be effectively integrated into Japanese language education for Russian learners. Drawing on Hall's (1976) theory of high- and low-context cultures, the research highlights Japan as a high-context culture where indirect communication and implicit understanding dominate. In contrast, Russian culture displays both high-context and low-context traits, showing emotional expressiveness and directness in certain contexts. (Vezhbitskaya, 1997; Vilkova, 2019).

The research aims to conduct a contrastive analysis of Japanese and Russian cultures, and propose a method of Japanese language education that will ensure harmonious intercultural communication between Japan and Russia. In order to reach this goal, the research aims to identify: (1) similarities and differences between Japanese and Russian cultures; (2) the features of Russian and Japanese cultures that were interpreted as surprising Russian learners of Japanese and Japanese learners of Russian; and (3) aspects of Japanese classroom interactional culture that could be deemed valuable to be introduced when teaching Japanese to Russian students.

The methodology includes a review of the literature to date on the attempts that had been made to classify Japanese and Russian cultures, a one-year survey and recorded oral interviews targeting Japanese university students learning Russian at Kansai University and Russian exchange students in the Kansai region to identify culturally "shocking" experiences for each group. This triangulated approach is expected to provide both theoretical and empirical insights into the similarities and differences between Russian and Japanese cultures, based on which, the criteria for cultural element introduction into Japanese language education in Russia will be identified. By incorporating cultural education into language instruction, the study seeks to increase learner motivation, reduce cultural misunderstandings, and facilitate smoother adaptation and interaction for both Russian students learning Japanese and Japanese students learning Russian.

Session 10: Negotiating Meaning, Humour, and Stance

Tracking Rapport and Common Ground Dynamics: Sociopragmatic Insights from Bilingual Storytelling by Japanese EFL Learners

Lala Takeda
takeda176@toyo.jp

Interlanguage pragmatics has devised a method to facilitate rapport in learners' second language by minimizing the use of/reference to the first language. However, bilingual rapport management remains understudied in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. This study investigates how Japanese EFL learners co-construct meaning and manage rapport through bilingual storytelling. Grounded in a sociopragmatic perspective, we examine learners' communicative choices in English and Japanese, addressing the following research question: How do Japanese EFL learners negotiate rapport and establish emergent common ground through bilingual storytelling? Twenty-eight Japanese university students with lower-intermediate English proficiency (TOEIC 400–500) collaborated in pairs to create a narrative by sequencing six illustrated scenes in two minutes. They first completed the task in English, then retold the story in Japanese through reflective dialogue. Sessions were audio- and video-recorded, while transcripts underwent qualitative analysis for sociopragmatic behaviors, particularly turn- and stance-taking, as indicators of rapport orientation and pragmatic awareness. Analyses revealed that the English sessions featured parallel talk and limited responsiveness caused by hesitation in speaking English, suggesting fragile rapport and constrained mutual understanding. Japanese retelling sessions involved collaborative talk and humor facilitated by the relief of using the first language, indicating deeper relational engagement and dynamic meaning co-construction. These findings challenge static common ground models (Clark, 1996) and support the emergent perspective (Kecskes, 2014), demonstrating that mutual understanding is

interactively negotiated chiefly in the first language. Results illuminate learners' language-dependent rapport shifts (Spencer-Oatey, 2008), seeing that English sessions reflected cautious alignment, whereas Japanese dialogues demonstrated stronger relational orientation and interpersonal sensitivity. This aligns with sociopragmatic perspectives on context-dependent meaning creation and relational competence in second language communication. We advocate for pragmatic instruction to help learners manage rapport dynamics (Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018). Bilingual storytelling emerges as a novel tool for observing interpersonal strategies in multilingual settings.

Negotiating Moral Stakes in Conversational Humour in English as a Lingua Franca

Amir Sheikhan
amir.sheikhan@unisa.edu.au

Conversational humour, broadly defined as sequences of utterances designed to amuse or be treated as amusing by participants across different social actions (Bell 2015, Dynel 2009), is a complex interactional phenomenon that serves a range of social functions. In intercultural or lingua franca settings, however, its interactional delicacy becomes more pronounced, as interpretation and uptake can be less predictable and more interactionally sensitive (Haugh & Weinglass, 2018; Sheikhan & Haugh, 2023). This paper examines how affiliation, the display of affective or evaluative support towards another's stance (Stivers, 2008; Lindström & Sorjonen, 2013), is interactionally achieved, resisted, or repaired in instances of conversational humour in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). Drawing on video recordings of ELF interactions, the study analyses humour episodes as terrains for testing, negotiating, and co-constructing relational work. Using Interactional Pragmatics, an approach to the analysis of pragmatic phenomena informed by research and methods in ethnomethodological conversation analysis (Haugh 2012), the analysis focuses on how participants display orientations to humour as affiliative or non-affiliative, and how these orientations unfold sequentially, reflexively, and in relation to the emerging interactional context. This study highlights the nuanced dynamics of humour episodes such as delayed uptake, withholding of laughter, or self-initiated repair that index participants' orientations to relational stance and serve as a resource to negotiate the moral stakes of humour. I argue that in ELF settings, conversational humour is a morally consequential activity through which participants negotiate relational positioning and moral accountability.

Epistemic Status in Japanese Sentence-Final Particle

Yosuke Ogawa
ogawatravail@gmail.com

Studies in sociolinguistics and pragmatics discover that the structures and functions of language in any society are significantly influenced by the dynamics of usage imposed by its users. In this paper, we examine how sociological and pragmatic tendencies are reflected in sentence-final particles (SFPs) in Japanese, and conversely, how these expressions are embedded within their interactional framework and discourse structure. Japanese SFPs, generally used in casual oral communication, indicate emphasis, seek agreement, or soften a statement, while also implying crucial epistemic statements from the participants. SFP 'yo' functions to indicate that the speaker is providing new information that the listener might not know. On the other hand, 'ne' seeks agreement or confirmation from the listener, and 'yone' indicates agreement-seeking with the speaker's expectation that the listener has advantageous access to the information; in other words, the speaker expects that the listener possesses the information. This paper analyses how the Japanese conceptualise information ownership/territory and how L2 learners manipulate the discourse-pragmatic indications of epistemic status. The research focuses on video-recorded naturally occurring spoken interactions between native (NS) and non-native (NNS) speakers of Japanese, as well as interactions among non-native speakers. Furthermore, we analyse how SFPs are used in NS-NNS and NNS-NNS interactions and how the epistemic status is demonstrated in their speech. Moreover, other Japanese expressions indicating epistemic status will also be observed from the perspective of information territory (Kamio 1994). The findings reveal that NS still maintain the use of SFPs in their simplified talk directed at foreigners. Additionally, some NNSs have used 'yo' far more than other SFPs, demonstrating an imbalance in their manipulation. These findings have implications for how discourse structure and linguistic functions shape the territory of information in interaction, as well as how L2 learners struggle with the manipulation of information ownership.

FTA Balance-Seeking Behaviours in Japanese Variety Shows

Ami Sato
ami_sato@nucba.ac.jp

Previous studies have shown that impoliteness can entertain audiences, revealing "a link between impoliteness and entertainment" (Culpeper, 2015, p. 45). With a particular interest in this function of impoliteness, the present study investigates how participants in Japanese variety shows use impolite language in the interactional practice of *ijiri* (teasing). Specifically, the study examines how *ijiri* involves FTA (face-threatening act) balance-seeking behaviours, a concept introduced by Minaki (2008). FTA balance-seeking behaviour refers to a type of facework aimed at correcting imbalances in FTAs between participants in terms of both quantity and quality. This study focuses on 20 episodes from two popular Japanese variety shows hosted by Matsuko Deluxe, whose speech is often described as *dokuzetsu* (a malicious tongue). Through detailed discourse analysis, the study identifies a variety of FTA balance-seeking practices, including mutual face-threatening acts as noted by Minaki (2008) and Sekizaki (2023). These practices play a significant role in constructing entertaining interactions and offer insight into the social dynamics and co-construction of humour in Japanese televised talk.

SpS2025 Organizing Committee

Professor Andrew Barke, Kansai University

Professor Momoyo Shimazu, Kansai University

Dr Yoko Yonezawa, The University of Sydney

Dr Xiangdong Liu, Western Sydney University

Dr Todd J. Allen, Kansai University

We sincerely thank all the speakers and participants for their valuable contributions to SpS2025 and look forward to future gatherings in sociopragmatics. If you are interested in collaborating or helping to organize future events, we warmly welcome your involvement.