

The Function and Subsequent Development of “Iya” Used in Responses to Compliments: A Comparison between Native Japanese Speakers and Chinese Learners of Japanese

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Abstract

This paper examines the function of “iya” in responses to compliments and its subsequent development, using the “BTSJ 1000 Person Japanese Natural Conversation Corpus” and the “International Corpus of Japanese as a Second Language”. A comparative analysis was conducted at discourse and interaction levels between native Japanese speakers and Chinese learners of Japanese. The results showed that the function of “iya” in responses to compliments is to express resistance or distance from the compliment. The utterances following “iya” were found to lead to responses that are negative, evasive, positive, or a combination of these responses. Furthermore, the recipient-led subsequent developments after the compliment response were classified as “starting a telling”, “continuing the previous telling”, “requesting information”, “providing information”, and “changing the topic”. Native speakers developed subsequent topics in various ways, with a distinct preference for “starting a telling” related to prior responses. In contrast, learners tended to use “providing information” related to the content of the compliment discourse. Based on these findings, teaching approaches were proposed to address diverse response strategies using “iya” and the subsequent development strategies.

[Keywords] iya, compliment-response sequence, function, subsequent developments,
Chinese learners of Japanese