

Hello, everyone. My name is Jack Glenn, and I am majoring in Japanese Studies at Willamette University. I have had a passion for Japanese language and culture since I was a child, and I have studied Japanese since I was a freshman in high school. However, what is it that makes up the Japanese language? And when you speak Japanese, what kinds of things do you need to pay attention to? As you know, Japanese has polite expressions, normal expressions, and casual expressions. A small change can cause the level of respect shown towards the listener to increase greatly. Therefore, there is no doubt that distinguishing between expressions is more important in Japanese than in other languages. Today, through my personal experience that goes beyond Japanese textbooks, I will make clear how I became able to use all kinds of expressions in Japanese, and how I became able to distinguish between all of them, and I will also talk about a new way to study Japanese that is based on the “Line” smartphone application.

First, what kinds of expressions are used in the Japanese textbooks that foreigners use? I have used various Japanese textbooks since I was a freshman in high school, but there is one thing that especially surprised me: despite the fact that there are three kinds of expressions in Japanese, the one that is mainly used in textbooks for people studying Japanese is only normal expressions. Normal expressions are undoubtedly important to people who speak Japanese, but in order to be accepted in Japanese society, are the other kinds of expressions not of equal importance? When Japanese exchange students came to my high school, I heard casual expressions being used among the exchange students that I never heard before, and I thought that I also wanted to try talking that way. Also, when I heard the exchange students using

polite expressions towards their teachers I was moved, and I felt that I learned one of the amazing things about Japanese. Through the Japanese friends I made at this time, I was able to learn all of the kinds of Japanese expressions.

However, not just knowing all of the expressions, but separating their use based upon who you are speaking to is also important. I will give two examples of when I felt this way. The first one is when I was speaking to my friend of the same age. I was told by my friend, “Where’d you go?”, “Let’s study together!”, but since I didn’t yet know how to separate expressions, I gave a response such as “I went to school”, and “Let us study”, so my friend laughed at me and said, “We’re friends, so you don’t need to speak that politely!” From that point on, I made sure to use casual expressions towards my friends. The second example is when I was speaking to my Japanese teacher. Since I was finally able to use casual speech, when my teacher asked me, “What’d you eat today?”, I responded “I ate an apple.” Now that I currently know formal speech, when I look back on this moment, it feels truly embarrassing. From these experiences, I learned the importance of separating expressions according to who you are speaking to.

As a result, I discovered a certain method of studying. Now I would like to introduce this new way of studying, which is for not just expressions and separating their use, but to learn all aspects of Japanese. Everyone, do you know Line? Line is a smartphone application with features such as internet calling and text chat. I started using Line in order to keep in contact with the Japanese exchange students I was perviously talking about even if they go back to Japan. As a result of this, I was able to learn lots of kanji and grammar, but I was also able to learn how to distinguish between

different types of expressions, which can't be learned in a textbook. To give an example of this, one day, when I was talking to my exchange student friends in a Line group, one of their older counterparts suddenly joined the group. Then, the casual speech everyone was using up until just a moment ago suddenly became polite speech, and I was really surprised but in order not to stand out from the rest, I also started using polite speech towards that older student. In this way, in addition to becoming able to separate expressions, and I came to understand Japanese seniority-based hierarchy while being in America.

In other words, through Line I was able to learn Japanese expressions as well as distinguishing between the use of these expressions without opening a textbook at all. I felt this moment that using smartphone applications such as Line to study a foreign language is the way to study in the 21st century. So everyone, as the ways to study a foreign language changes greatly as a result of technological advancement, I think we should all make full use of the new kinds technology. So without fearing these technologies, let's all try using them.

I would now like to end my speech. Thank you for your attention.