

W1-1: Introduction

JAPN398D: The Sounds and Dialects of Japanese

8/28/2023

Welcome!

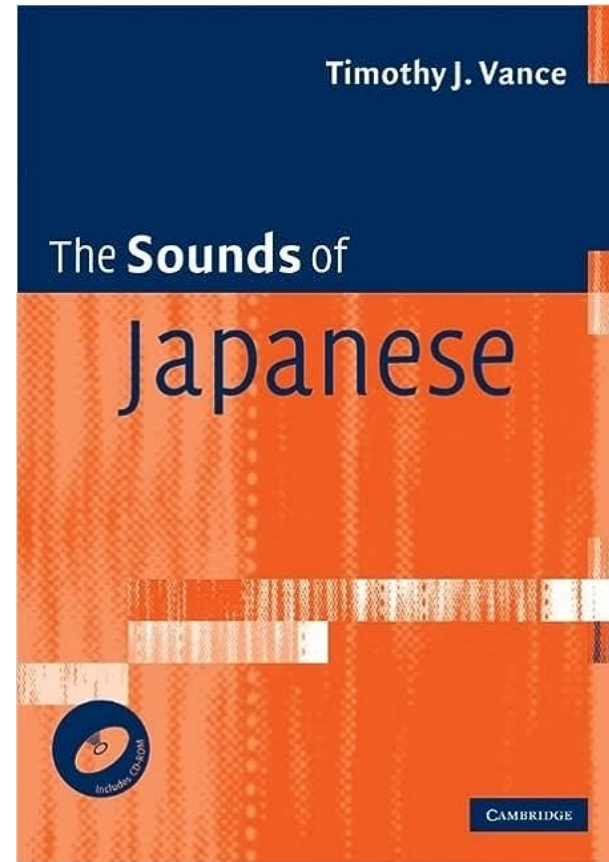
- Instructor: Dr. Minamida Hitomi (南田 仁美)

Today's class

- Self-introduction
- Syllabus
- What is linguistics?
- Language vs. Dialect

Syllabus

- Vance, Timothy J. 2008. *The sounds of Japanese*. Cambridge University Press.
- This book will be reserved at the library.



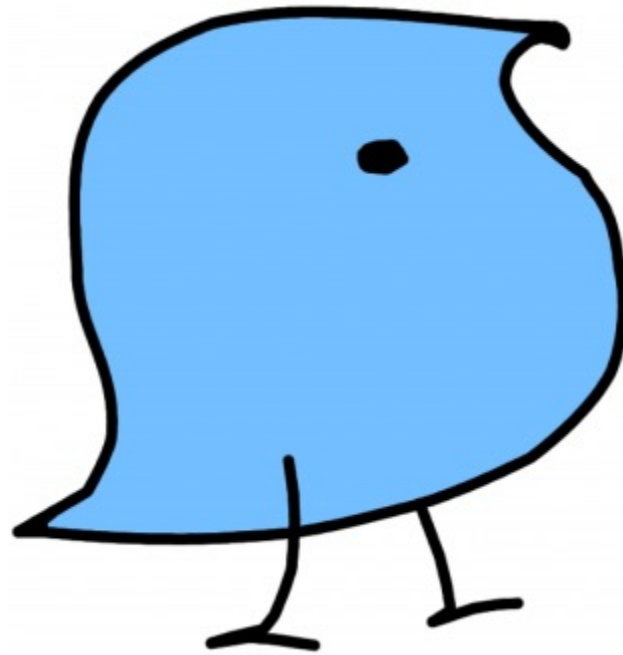
What is linguistics?

- What do you think “linguistics” is?

What is linguistics?

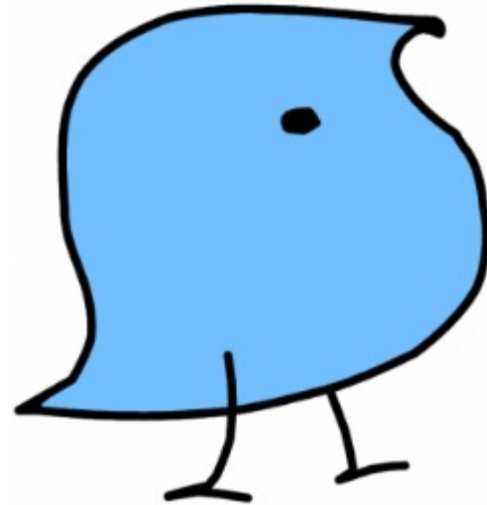
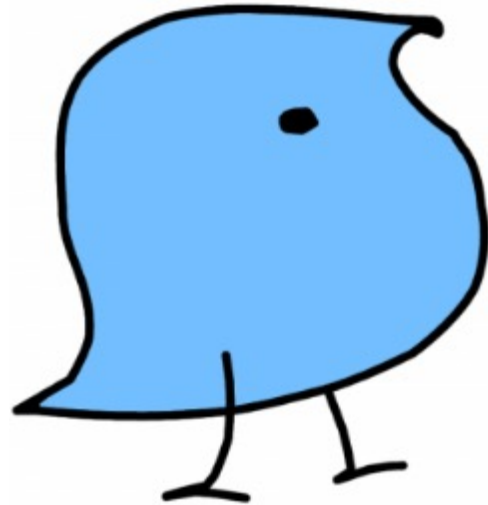
- Linguistics is a scientific study of language.
- Linguists are interested in “implicit knowledge” of language.
 - What knowledge do you have, but are not aware of having, about the language(s) you speak?

What is linguistics?



one wug

What is linguistics?



two wugs^s

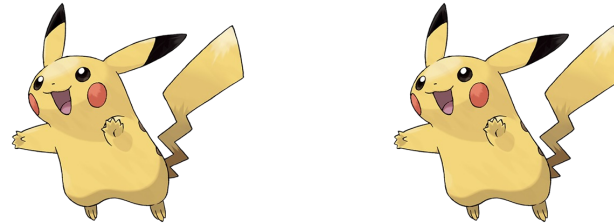
What is linguistics?

- This test is called the “wug test”.
- Your knowledge of language includes **rules**.
 - one wug → two wug**s**
 - In English, *-(e)s* is attached to plural nouns.
- Much of your knowledge of linguistic rules is **implicit**.
 - Native speakers of English do not have to learn how to form plural nouns.
 - Non-native speakers of English do have to learn how to form plurals.

What is linguistics?

- How would you pronounce the plural **-(e)s** below?

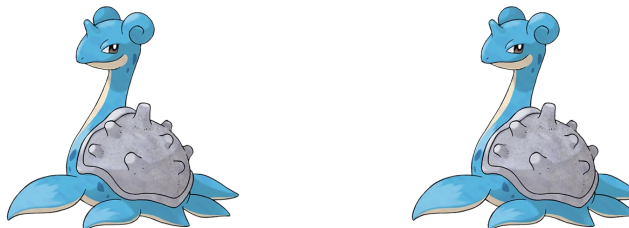
- 2 Pikachu-**s** (ピカチュウ)



- 2 Psyduck-**s** (コダック)



- 2 Lapras-**es** (ラブラス)



What is linguistics?

- Linguistic rules also include **sound (= phonological) rules**.
- The plural *-(e)s* is pronounced in three different ways depending on the environment.
 - [s] after /t/, /k/, /p/, /θ/, (/f/)
 - [əz] after /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /ʒ/
 - [z] elsewhere

What is linguistics?

- Non-native speakers of English have to learn the three phonological patterns, but native speakers of English do not.
- Pikachu-**s** [z], Psyduck-**s** [s], and Lapras-**es** [əz] also tell us that speech is not always the same as writing.

What is linguistics?

- What do you think about the Japanese sentences below?

1. 私は肉が好きなので、たくさん食べれます。
2. ワシントンDCで、ホワイトハウスが見れます。
3. 朝は自分で起きれます。

What is linguistics?

- These sentences are supposed to be bad, according to the **prescriptive grammar** of Japanese (ら抜き言葉).
 1. 私は肉が好きなので、たくさん**食べれます**。
 - a. 私は肉が好きなので、たくさん**食べられます**。
 2. ワシントンDCで、ホワイトハウスが**見れます**。
 - b. ワシントンDCで、ホワイトハウスが**見られます**。
 3. 朝は自分で**起きれます**。
 - c. 朝は自分で**起きられます**。

What is linguistics?

- **Prescriptive grammar**

- A set of rules designed to give instructions regarding the socially embedded notion of the “correct” or “proper” way or speak or write (*Language Files* p. 707).
- = ら抜き言葉 is BAD because it is not “correct”!

- **Descriptive grammar**

- Objective description of a speaker’s or a group of speakers’ knowledge of a language based on their use of the language. (*Language Files* p. 695)
- = ら抜き言葉 is fine because native speakers of Japanese actually use it.

What is linguistics?

- In linguistics, descriptive grammar is more valued than prescriptive grammar.
- Prescriptive vs. Descriptive
 - Prescriptive grammar includes **explicit** knowledge of language.
 - Descriptive grammar includes **implicit** knowledge of language.

What is linguistics?

- Summary
- Linguists are interested in **implicit knowledge** of language.
- Therefore, linguists look at **descriptive grammar**.
- In this class, we study **phonetics** and **phonology**.
 - Phonetics: The study of the sounds of spoken language.
 - Phonology: The study of the sound system of a language.

Language vs. Dialect

- How do they differ?
- Is “Standard X” a dialect of the language?

Language vs. Dialect

- **Mutual intelligibility**

- A and B are mutually **unintelligible**. → A and B are **languages**.
- A and B are mutually **intelligible**. → A and B are **dialects**.

- English and Japanese are two different languages.

- American English and British English are dialects of the same language.

Language vs. Dialect

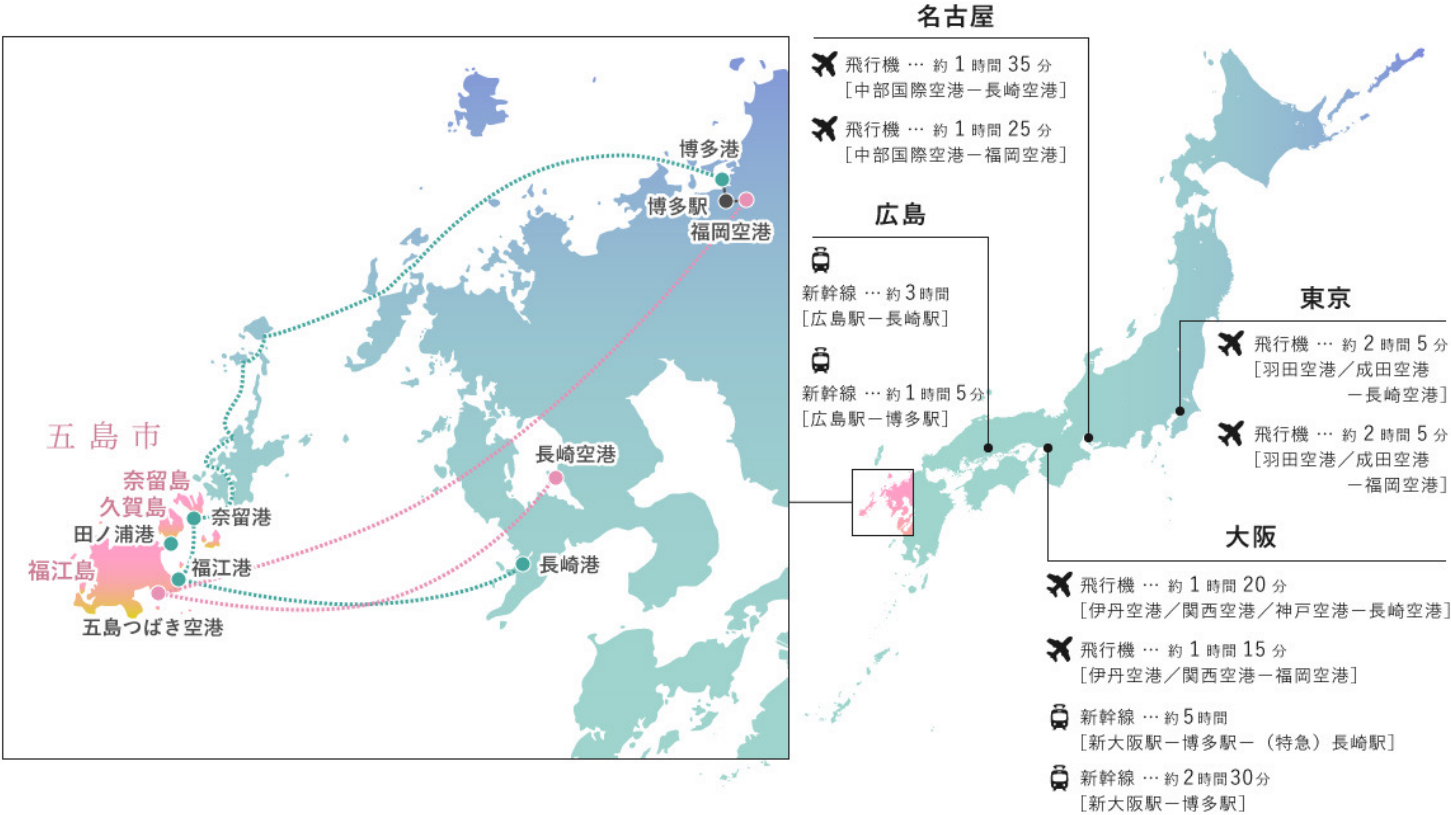
- However, the distinction is not clear-cut!
- Examples:
 - Mandarin vs. Cantonese → Are they dialects?
 - Thai vs. Lao → Are they languages?
 - Various dialects of English → Are they all mutually intelligible?

Language vs. Dialect

- *Maiagare!* (舞いあがれ！)
 - NHK 朝ドラ (morning drama) broadcast in 2022-2023
 - The drama's protagonist Iwakura Mai (岩倉舞) from Osaka transfers to an elementary school in the Goto Islands (五島列島), Nagasaki Prefecture, in her childhood.
 - In the video clip, Mai plays *karuta* (かるた) with her classmates in the Goto dialect.



Language vs. Dialect



Language vs. Dialect



NHK (2022) *Maiagare!*

Language vs. Dialect

みんのみんに みんのひやって みんのみんの いたか
右の耳に 水が入って 右の耳が 痛い

- Osaka Japanese and Goto Japanese are mutually unintelligible.
- One possible interpretation
 - Goto Japanese looks mutually unintelligible with (Osaka) Japanese just because み○ (e.g. 右, 耳, 水) becomes みんな.

Language vs. Dialect

- Languages of Japan
 - Japanese
 - Ryukyuan (spoken in Okinawa)
 - Ainu (spoken in Hokkaido)
- Japanese and Ryukyuan → Japonic
- Ainu → Isolate
- In this class, I treat the varieties spoken in mainland Japan as Japanese.

Language vs. Dialect

- Standard X is a dialect.
 - The degree of prestige is different.
- Some linguists avoid using the word “**dialect**” (方言) because it has a negative connotation.
- These people instead use the word “**variety**” (ことば).
 - X Japanese (e.g. Tokyo Japanese, Osaka Japanese, etc.)
 - X English (e.g. Boston English, New York City English, etc.)

Language vs. Dialect

- There is a common misunderstanding that non-standard varieties are unsystematic.
- Every variety is systematic.
 - e.g. み〇 (e.g. 右, 耳, 水) → みんな in Goto Japanese
- You are encouraged to look at non-standard varieties in linguistics.
 - Why?

References

- Department of Linguistics, The Ohio State University. 2016. *Language Files (12th edition)*. Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press.
- NHK. 2022-2023. 連続テレビ小説『舞いあがれ！』
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