

LESSON TRANSCRIPT

Absolute Beginner S1 #16

These Japanese Interjections Aren't Impolite!

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INTRODUCTION

Jessi: Hi everyone. Welcome to Absolute Beginner Season 1, Lesson 16! These Japanese Interjections Aren't Impolite! Jessiです。Jessi here!

Naomi: こんにちは！なおみです！Hi everyone, Naomi here!

Jessi: Thanks for joining us for our Absolute Beginner series! In the last lesson, we learned how to describe what something is like. For example?

Naomi: すしはおいしいです。

Jessi: Sushi is delicious. And in this lesson, we're going to learn how to respond in a conversation and sound natural doing it!

Naomi: What a great topic.

Jessi: Yes, I think it's really helpful knowing how to respond to something, especially in Japanese! And you'll learn why.

Naomi: Jessi, what's going on in this conversation?

Jessi: In this conversation, Taylor is showing Kaori a photo album with pictures of his family. Okay, let's listen to the conversation.

LESSON CONVERSATION

テイラー：これは、ぼくのかぞくのアルバムです。

かおり：へー (turning pages)。

：これは、だれですか？

テイラー：ぼくのもうとです。

かおり：へー。かわいいー。

：これは？

テイラー：あ、えっと...ぼくです。

かおり：え！わかい！！

English Host: Let's listen to the entire conversation again, slowly.

テイラー：これは、ぼくのかぞくのアルバムです。

かおり：へー (turning pages)。

：これは、だれですか？

テイラー：ぼくのもうとです。

かおり：へー。かわいいー。

：これは？

テイラー：あ、えっと...ぼくです。

かおり：え！わかい！！

English Host: Now let's hear it with the English

translation.

テイラー：これは、ぼくのかぞくのアルバムです。

Jessi: This is my family's photo album.

かおり：へー (turning pages)。

Jessi: Neat~ (turns pages)

：これは、だれですか？

Jessi: Who's this?

テイラー：ぼくのいもうとです。

Jessi: This is my younger sister.

かおり：へー。かわいいー。

Jessi: Hmm, she's cute!

：これは？

Jessi: Who's this?

テイラー：あ、えっと...ぼくです。

Jessi: Oh, uhh...that's me.

かおり：え！わかい！！

Jessi: What! You're so young!

KEY VOCABULARY AND PHRASES

Jessi: So Naomi, this dialogue might have sounded a little strange to our listeners actually.

Naomi: Oh really? Why is that?

Jessi: Well, Kaori's reactions are typical in Japanese, but they might sound a little funny to those who haven't heard them before, exclamations like へえ～ and え！

Naomi: Ahh, I know what you mean now.

Jessi: It's really not much different from saying "really?" or "oh wow!" in English, but they sound quite different!

Naomi: Anyway, we'll explain more about those later on.

Jessi: Yes. Let's take a look at the vocabulary for this lesson first.

Naomi: The first one is 家族

Jessi: 家族 family. In the dialogue, Taylor said....

Naomi: これは、僕の家族のアルバムです。

Jessi: This is my family's photo album! Wow, that was quite a mouthful.

Naomi: Yeah (笑) But the important part is 僕の家族

Jessi: "My family". And speaking of family, the next word...?

Naomi: 妹

Jessi: 妹, or little sister. Now, in Japanese there aren't words that JUST mean brother or sister, right? What I mean by that is you need to specify "younger" or

"older".

Naomi: That's right. We DO have a word that means siblings - 兄弟. But if you want to say brother, you need to say older brother or younger brother.

Jessi: And for sister, you would need to say older sister or younger sister.

Naomi: Exactly.

Jessi: So this word...

Naomi: 妹

Jessi: ...means younger sister.

Naomi: Be careful, it's not いもと, but it's いもーと。

Jessi: Right, you have to prolong the も sound.いもーと。

Naomi: Right いもと

Jessi: There's a chart with more words for family members in the PDF, so please check that out!

LESSON FOCUS

Jessi: Okay, let's move onto the lesson focus. In this lesson, you'll learn some different phrases and expressions that are used in Japanese to respond to what someone says. These responses have different purposes. Some are for when you are hesitating or thinking about something, some are for when you are just confirming that you're listening and others are for when you want to show your feelings of surprise, etc. Anyway, there are a lot of them!

Naomi: Yes. So let's look at some examples first we found in the dialogue first.

Jessi: First, Taylor shows Kaori his photo album and says...

Naomi: 僕の家族のアルバムです。

Jessi: "This is my family's photo album." And Kaori, who is really, really interested in it, says

Naomi: へ～

Jessi: へ～ it's just kind of like, neat! Or wow!

Naomi: If you find something interesting, you can use this.

Jessi: Right. If you find something interesting, or if somebody tells you something you didn't know, and you're impressed...

Naomi: You can use へ～.

Jessi: So this generally has a good meaning, right?

Naomi: Well, to be honest it depends on the intonation (笑) But if it goes up like this, へ～, then it has a good meaning.

Jessi: So again, this is used when you find something interesting, or are impressed by something. If someone is surprised by something, you'll hear something a bit different.

Naomi: Later in the conversation, Kaori pointed to someone in the picture and asked who it

was.

Jessi: Right and Taylor said "Oh, uhhh... that's me". To which Kaori said...

Naomi: え！若い！！

Jessi: What?! You look so young!!

Naomi: She was surprised, so she used え！

Jessi: Yeah, it's just kind of like saying "what"?! This one happened to be short, just a single, え！ But, Naomi, if someone is really surprised, what might they say?

Naomi: They might prolong it and go えええー！？ (笑)

Jessi: Talk with enough Japanese people or watch enough Japanese TV, and you will come across this reaction at some point! I guarantee it.

Naomi: This is for when something really surprises you.

Jessi: Right, like, you almost can't believe it. Naomi, when have you given a reaction like this?!

Naomi: Hmm, well the other day when I forgot to save my document and deleted it, I went え————。

Jessi: Ahhh I can see that happening! Like you can't believe what just happened...

Okay, so those are some ways that we respond to someone or something in Japanese. Let's switch gears a little, and talk about some filler words. These filler words can be used to buy some time in a conversation.

Naomi: Yes, like when you are thinking about something, or hesitating a little.

Jessi: In English, these would be words like "umm" and "uhh." In everyday conversation, you probably use them more than you realize!

Naomi: In Japanese, there are two words that are used a lot like this. They are あのー and えっとー

Jessi: Listeners, do you remember all the way back in Lesson 4 when we had あのー すみません。

Naomi: すみません is excuse me, and we had あの in front of it to get the person's attention.

Jessi: Right. It's just a filler word, but it serves a purpose! And the other one, えっとー.. we saw this one in the conversation.

Naomi: Kaori asks Taylor who the man in the picture is, and Taylor says えっとー。。ぼくです。

Jessi: "Umm... that's me." So he's just kind of hesitating here.

Naomi: Right.

Jessi: I think words like these are helpful for language learners in the beginning stages. If you're trying to think of a word, or trying to think of how to say something, these あのー and えっとー can buy you some time. And you're still speaking Japanese!

Naomi: Right, instead of saying umm or uhh in English (笑)

Jessi: Just another way to make your Japanese sound natural. Okay, and there's one more important phrase I'd like to go

over.

Naomi: What's that?

Jessi: Well, it wasn't in our dialogue this time, but it's oh so important! The one and only そうですね～

Naomi: Ahh, そうですね～w

Jessi: Now, we've learned そうです, which basically means "yes, that's right" if someone asks you a question. You're just affirming something. But with そうですね, you're agreeing with someone.

Naomi: We briefly touched on this particle ね in the last lesson.

Jessi: Right, we explain that it's used to ask for agreement. So for example, if someone says "What nice weather we have today", in Japanese you could respond with...

Naomi: そうですね

Jessi: ...to show that you agree. It's a really easy way to agree with something someone says. And it's VERY common.

Naomi: そうですね definitely. It really helps to know this one.

Jessi: Okay, well that's going to do it for this lesson! There are a couple more expressions and example conversations in the PDF, so make sure to review those as well. I'd say it's helpful, what do you say?

Naomi: そうですね!

Jessi: Make sure to leave us any questions you may have. That's going to do it for now.

Naomi: Thanks for listening everyone!

Jessi: See you all next time.