

LESSON TRANSCRIPT

Lower Beginner #10

Is Being Allergic to Animals Weird in Japan?

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INTRODUCTION

Natsuko: みなさん、こんにちは！ ナツコです。

Jessi: Hi everyone, I'm Jessi! Welcome to Lower Beginner series 1 lesson 10 - Is Being Allergic to Animals Weird in Japan?

Natsuko: Jessi, what are we going to learn in this lesson?

Jessi: In this lesson we're going to continue talking about negative adjectives, this time focusing on the category of na-adjectives.

Natsuko: And where does this lesson's dialogue take place?

Jessi: Emily's in the park talking to the boy with the dog from the last lesson. OK, let's listen to the dialogue.

POST CONVERSATION BANTER

Jessi: Natsuko, are you allergic to anything?

Natsuko: Hai, neko arerugii desu.

Jessi: Neko is cat, so... you're allergic to cats?

Natsuko: Unfortunately, yes.

Jessi: Maybe because Japan is a very health-conscious country, allergies are quite common. One of the most common is hayfever, which in Japanese is...

Natsuko: 花粉症、 or literally 'pollen illness'. Apparently 30% of Japanese people have hayfever to some degree.

Jessi: You often see people wearing surgical masks in Japan, especially on public transportation. People with hayfever use masks to try to reduce their pollen intake. They also sometimes wear glasses with clear lenses to protect their eyes.

Natsuko: The government also recommends gargling to reduce the effect of pollen, as well as wearing smooth-textured clothes to avoid bringing pollen home with you!

Jessi: Now let's move on to the vocabulary for this lesson.

KEY VOCAB AND PHRASES

Jessi: Let's have a closer look at the usage for some of the words and phrases from this lesson.

Jessi: What's the first thing we're looking at today?

Natsuko: The word アレルギー, allergy.

Jessi: Be careful with the pronunciation of this word - it comes from a German root, so the 'g' sound is hard. It's アレルギー, not アレルジー. So Natsuko, we heard it in the dialogue, but how would we say 'I'm allergic to whatever' in Japanese?

Natsuko: アレルギー is a noun in Japanese. So we have to say 'I have an allergy to

whatever'. And the order of the sentence is opposite to English. 'I'm allergic to dogs', which we heard in the dialogue, for example, would be 犬アレルギーがあります s sβ. Jessi: So you say the thing you're allergic to, then アレルギー, then add があります. So what are some other things people are often allergic to? Let's hear some example sentences.

Natsuko: 猫アレルギーがあります

Jessi: "I'm allergic to cats"

Natsuko: たまごアレルギーがあります

Jessi: "I'm allergic to eggs"

Natsuko: 小麦アレルギーがあります

Jessi: "I'm allergic to wheat"

Natsuko: 牛乳アレルギーがあります

Jessi: "I'm allergic to milk". OK, so what's the next phrase?

Natsuko: しょうがない.

Jessi: 'It can't be helped'. This is a very Japanese phrase, and you will hear it a lot if you come to Japan! It's used when things are seen as being beyond your control. A good translation into casual English might be "That's life" or "What can you do?"

Natsuko: It can also mean "You're hopeless", as in しょうがないやつだな～ (笑)

Jessi: Literally 'there's nothing to be done about a guy like you!' And finally, what are we looking at today?

Natsuko: The particle も

Jessi: 'also' or 'too'. This replaces particles such as は が and を. For example...

Natsuko: 彼は若いです。彼女も若いです。

Jessi: "He's young. She's also young."

Natsuko: Now let's move on to today's lesson focus.

LESSON FOCUS

Jessi: The focus of this lesson is how to make negative sentences using na-adjectives to say things like 'The room isn't clean' or 'I don't like that'. OK, Natsuko, so first of all, how do we make negative -na adjectives?

Natsuko: It's very similar to last week's pattern with i-adjectives. For example let's take the -na adjective 綺麗na, clean or beautiful.

Jessi: Remember that even though it ends in an "i", it's a na-adjective.

Natsuko: Right. To make it negative, all you have to do is take away the na, and add じゃない to the end.

Jessi: Note that this is the same pattern that we use in negative sentences with nouns, minus the na.

Natsuko: Yes, that's right. Here's an example. The word 簡単na, easy, would become

簡単じゃない not easy.

Jessi: That sounds simple enough! Can we have some other examples?

Natsuko: Sure! How about "quiet"? This is しずかna. So "not quiet" would become しずかじゃない.

Jessi: There are a few words which are verbs in English but adjectives in Japanese. For example, "to be good at something", which is a verb phrase in English, is a na-adjective in Japanese...

Natsuko: 上手na

Jessi: So to say "I'm not good at sports" would be...

Natsuko: (私は)スポーツが上手じゃない

Jessi: Another example are the words for "like" and "dislike". These are verbs in English but in Japanese again they are na adjectives. First "like" is

Natsuko: 好きna

Jessi: So for example "I don't like melon" would be....

Natsuko: メロンが好きじゃない。

Jessi: Just as a side note, in the dialogue the boy asked Emily

Natsuko: 犬嫌い？

Jessi: "Do you hate dogs?" He missed out the particle が. You can do this in casual Japanese. So to say "I don't like melon" in very casual Japanese you could say...

Natsuko: メロン、好きじゃない。

Jessi: OK, so now how about the word for "dislike"?

Natsuko: 嫌いna

Jessi: I should mention that depending on tone of voice, the strength of this word can vary - it can range from "dislike" to "hate". "Hate" can also be expressed by the word

Natsuko: 大嫌いna

Jessi: This adds the character for "big", dai, to express "big dislike" or "hate". You can do the same thing with 好き to express "love"

Natsuko: 大好きna

Jessi: Literally "big like", or "love". Now Natsuko can you give us an example sentence with the negative form of "dislike", 嫌い?

Natsuko: Hmm... let's use the word メロン again. メロンが嫌いじゃないです。

Jessi: I see! So you don't hate melon... but you don't particularly like it either. That's the kind of nuance we get from saying 嫌いじゃない, right?

Natsuko: Yes, that's right!

Jessi: Natsuko, we had the adjective meaning "clean" or "beautiful" earlier, right?

Natsuko: Yes... 綺麗na.

Jessi: Can we have an example sentence that uses that word?

Natsuko: この部屋はきれいじゃない。

Jessi: "This room isn't clean". Because 綺麗na can mean both "clean" and "beautiful", you have to work out from context which meaning is more appropriate. OK listeners,

now let's practice. Can you turn the following sentence negative?

Natsuko: 漢字は簡単です。

Jessi: "Kanji are easy". Now try saying "Kanji aren't easy", in Japanese, following the pattern we just learned for な adjectives.

Natsuko: [wait 5 seconds] 漢字は簡単じゃないです

Jessi: Did you get it? Remember with na adjectives all you have to do is add じゃない to the end. Let's try another.

Natsuko: サッカーが嫌いです。

Jessi: "I hate soccer". Now try saying "I don't hate soccer", in Japanese.

Natsuko: [wait 5 secs] サッカーが嫌いじゃないです。

Jessi: Did you get it? That's about all we have time for today.

OUTRO

Natsuko: For more detailed explanations of this grammar point and lots more example sentences, please check out the lesson notes.

Jessi: Yes, please do. Please also feel free to ask us any questions or leave us any comments you may have in the lesson comments section on the site! See you next time!

Natsuko: じゃ、また!