

LESSON TRANSCRIPT

Lower Beginner #7

Playing by 'The Rules' in Japan

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INTRODUCTION

Jessi: Hi everyone! ジェシー です。 Jessi here!

Natsuko: こんにちは！ なつこです！ Hi everyone, I'm Natsuko.

Jessi: Welcome to Lower Beginner series 1 lesson 7. So Natsuko, what are we going to learn in this lesson?

Natsuko: In this lesson we're going to learn how to say "A is NOT B", using the negative construction AはBじゃない。

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

Natsuko: On the morning commuter train, or 通勤電車.

Jessi: OK, let's listen to the dialogue.

POST CONVERSATION BANTER

Jessi: Okay Natsuko, since they're on the train, I want to talk about that a bit, but before that... I think we should mention the book that was in the dialogue.

Natsuko: "The Rules?"

Jessi: Yes. This is a book on dating, actually, which is why Ken is kind of laughing at it.

Natsuko: I think Ms. Mori seemed a bit embarrassed...

Jessi: Yeah, she did. Okay, so now a bit about the setting - the infamous Japanese commuter train!

Natsuko: Yes, the 通勤電車 or 通勤列車. I think most people who live in a big city in Japan have experience with this.

Jessi: Because bringing a car in is almost impossible due to the huge traffic jams, most people who live in the suburbs of big cities like Tokyo and Osaka commute from the surrounding suburbs by train.

Natsuko: In Japan trains run very punctually, so even if they're a couple minutes late, there is an announcement apologizing for the delay.

Jessi: That's right. So you have the morning rush that lasts from around 6:30 until 9:30am, then the evening rush when all the people who study and work in the city go back home, from around 5:30 until around 8:30pm or later.

Natsuko: Being on a packed commuter train is quite an experience (笑) . We call a fully-packed train 満員電車.

Jessi: If you haven't experienced 満員電車, I recommend you come to Tokyo and do so just for the experience... your commute at home will seem like heaven by comparison! (笑) Now let's move on to look at the vocabulary and phrases for this lesson.

KEY VOCAB AND PHRASES

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

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

Natsuko: 英語

Jessi: "the English language". 英 means England or Britain, and 語 means language. You can use this suffix 語 to say almost any language. Let's look at some other examples that use countries with kanji. For example, "Japanese" would be...

Natsuko: 日本語

Jessi: "Chinese" is...

Natsuko: 中国語

Jessi: How about "Korean"?

Natsuko: 韓国語

Jessi: Now how about some katakana countries? "French" is?

Natsuko: フランス語

Jessi: And what about Spanish?

Natsuko: スペイン語

Jessi: Great. Now in the dialogue just now, we heard Ken Wood say something when Mori-san told him it was her friend's book she was reading. What did he say?

Natsuko: He said, へー。

Jessi: This sound へー is the Japanese equivalent of "oh really?" or "wow" or "neat", depending on the situation. You would use it when you hear something you didn't know before, or that's interesting to you; it's useful if you can't think of anything in particular to say in reply. By the way, Natsuko, did you know I like giraffes?

Natsuko: へー。

Jessi: Like that (笑). Okay, what's the next word we're looking at?

Natsuko: でも。

Jessi: "But". There are a number of ways to say "but" in Japanese, but this is one of the stronger ones. It usually comes at the beginning of a sentence rather than in the middle, so you can use it just like the English word "But..." in order to bring in a contrasting opinion or statement. OK, what's our next word?

Natsuko: どくしん

Jessi: "single, unmarried". This word is used in the sense of "not yet married", so even if you have a longterm partner, on official forms in Japan you will still have to check the どくしん box.

Natsuko: The opposite of this word is a phrase - けっこんしています

Jessi: "I'm married".

Jessi: OK, now let's move on to this week's Lesson Focus.

LESSON FOCUS

Jessi: In this lesson we're going to learn how to make negative sentences in order to say "A is not B", as well as "It's not mine". OK, [name], so how do we begin?

Natsuko: Remember how to say "A is B"? AはBです。Then all you do is change です into a negative form.

Jessi: There are four commonly used versions of "is not" in Japanese. Let's hear them one at a time. [name], what's the first one?

Natsuko: AはBではありません。

Jessi: This is the most formal version. Listeners, listen and repeat. "A is not B", most formal version.

Natsuko: AはBではありません。

Jessi: (wait 5 secs) Now listeners, try saying "A is not B", the most formal version, in Japanese.

Natsuko: (wait 5 secs) AはBではありません。

Jessi: OK, now what's the next most formal version?

Natsuko: AはBじゃありません。

Jessi: じゃ is the contracted form of では, as in じゃまた instead of ではまた, so this is the next most formal version of the sentence. Listeners, listen and repeat.

Natsuko: AはBじゃありません。

Jessi: (wait 5 secs) Now listeners, try saying "A is not B", the second most formal version, in Japanese.

Natsuko: (wait 5 secs) AはBじゃありません。

Jessi: OK, now what's the third most formal version?

Natsuko: AはBじゃないです。

Jessi: This is just changing じゃありません to じゃないです。Now listeners, listen and repeat.

Natsuko: AはBじゃないです。

Jessi: (wait 5 secs) Now listeners, try saying "A is not B", the third most formal version, in Japanese.

Natsuko: (wait 5 secs) AはBじゃないです。

Jessi: And finally, we have the casual version.

Natsuko: AはBじゃない。

Jessi: This just involves dropping the final copula. We'll cover plain form in later lessons, but for now let's try an example sentence using this A is not B structure. You can replace A and B with almost any noun. For example, how would we say 'I am not American'?

Natsuko: 私はアメリカ人ではありません。or 私はアメリカ人じゃありません。or 私はアメリカ人じゃないです。These are formal versions. The casual version would be... 私はアメリカ人じゃない。

Jessi: OK listeners, try saying "I am not American" using any one of the four patterns.

Natsuko: (wait 5 seconds) Did you get

it?

Jessi: Great. Before we move on, let's see how this was used in the dialogue.

Natsuko: Ms. Mori said, わたしはどくしんじゃないです。

Jessi: I'm not single.

Okay, now let's move on to the next point.

Natsuko: It's how to say "it's not mine" using the particle の.

Jessi: Remember in Absolute Beginner season 1 lesson 10, we learned how to use の to express possession and say "that is mine". For example, "this is my house".

Natsuko: これは私の家です。

Jessi: There's something we want to show you here. This sentence means, this is my house. But what if we just want to say... this is MINE?

Natsuko: It's easy, you just remove the noun.

Jessi: Right! So this is mine would be...

Natsuko: これは私のです。

Jessi: See how the noun is just left out? So now, let's go through the negative versions of these. So to say "this isn't my house", using the most formal version, all you do is replace です with any of the negative versions of the copula we learned in this lesson.

An example, Natsuko?

Natsuko: これは私の家ではありません。

Jessi: In the dialogue though we heard Mori-san say "it's not mine", with no noun. How would we say that?

Natsuko: Just take out the noun and say, 私ではありません。

Jessi: OK, Listeners, listen and repeat. "It's not mine", most formal version.

Natsuko: 私ではありません。

Jessi: (wait 5 secs) Now listeners, try saying "it's not mine", the most formal version, in Japanese.

Natsuko: (wait 5 secs) 私ではありません。

Jessi: As you may have guessed, this usage is normally used to answer questions. So for example if I asked [name], is that your wallet? [name]さん、それは[name]さんのお財布ですか？

Natsuko: いいえ、私のじゃないです。マーヴィンさんのです。

Jessi: She answered 'No, it's not mine. It's Marvin's.'

Natsuko: Now listeners I'll ask you a question, and I want you to reply with "no, it's not mine, it's Emily's." Emily in Japanese is エミリー。Okay, here it is. リスナーさん、それはリスナーさんのペンですか？

Natsuko: [wait 10 secs] Did you get the answer? You should have said いいえ、私のじゃないです。エミリーさんのです。

OUTRO

Jessi: Did you get it right? Okay, well that's going to do it for today!

Natsuko: If you have any questions about today's material, please leave us a comment on the site.

Jessi: OK, see you next time!

Natsuko: じゃ、また！