

## Final project (& article summary) information

### I. Overview of project phases

Undergraduates may choose “graduate” option. Deadlines are **12:30pm** in **Canvas** unless otherwise stated. Projects may optionally be carried out in **groups** of up to four students.

Assignment	Undergraduates	Graduates	Deadline
Article summary	10% <i>course</i> grade	10% <i>course</i> grade	<b>Th Nov 2</b>
Final project	30% <i>course</i> grade	30% <i>course</i> grade	
• Topic proposal	20% <i>project</i> grade	20% <i>project</i> grade	<b>M Nov 13</b>
• Methodology plan	30% <i>project</i> grade	30% <i>project</i> grade	<b>M Nov 20</b>
• Presentation (incl. 1st draft slides)	50% <i>project</i> grade	20% <i>project</i> grade	<b>Nov 30 &amp; Dec 5</b> (grad) <b>F Dec 8, 12-3pm</b> (UG)
• Revised slides or conference abstract	N/A	30% <i>project</i> grade	<b>M Dec 11, 5pm</b>

In general, there will be no extensions for any of the sub-parts of the project. If there are special circumstances, please talk to me as early as possible, *before* the deadline in question.

### II. Structure of the project

The projects for this course will fall into one of two general types. Both types will involve *both Japanese language data* and *linguistic theory*, but the relative emphasis differs. See also the separate handout “Choosing a structure for your project” for concrete tips.

- Most students will carry out a **data-focused project**, where you collect data yourself (from recording or interviewing native speakers; from web sites or corpora; from Japanese-language books, magazines, audio, or video; etc.) and present a linguistic analysis of that data.
  - You could collect data in order to more fully test a linguistic claim or proposal that has been discussed in class, in a reading, or in a source that you find.
  - You could collect data to examine in the context of a linguistic area that has not been covered in class.
  - In either case, your project will have at least one **linguistics reference source** as a starting point, to provide a framework for your analysis of the data. Also, the data that you collect will be **quantitative**: you will start with a hypothesis about how often some particular pattern or patterns will occur, and you will test that hypothesis by collecting, categorizing, and quantifying data.
- The second option is to carry out a **theory-focused project**, where you summarize two (or more) competing linguistic models or proposals and show how successfully each deals with some phenomenon in Japanese.
  - This project type may also involve original data collection, but if your paper has a significant linguistic-theory component, you may use examples or data sets compiled by linguists in prior work.
  - This option is most likely to work well for you if you already have significant background in the area of linguistic theory that you plan to work in (and may be particularly appealing if you do not also have Japanese language background).

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### III. Choosing a topic

If you don't already have a topic in mind, here are some suggestions for how to find one. I will be happy to talk with you about topic ideas and help you brainstorm (*before* the proposal deadline!)

- Look at the **reserve readings** and the **optional advanced readings** to see if any topics spark your interest.
- If you are **studying Japanese**, think about some aspect of the language that particularly puzzles or interests you and use that as a starting point to look for topics.
- If you are **studying linguistics** outside this class, think about what area of linguistics interests you most, and look for phenomena in Japanese that fall within that area.
- Take a claim that has been made in class about some aspect of Japanese structure and think about how you would collect data to **test that claim** for current native speakers.

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### IV. Step 1: The article summary

- **Choosing an article**

Once you have a (potential) topic in mind for your final project, your next step is to find a *published* linguistics article that is related to your topic. There are several ways that an article might be “related to your topic”; here are some examples:

- An article about Japanese linguistics that is necessary background for your project
- An article about a linguistic analysis of another language, or about a more general linguistic topic, that you plan to use for analyzing Japanese as part of your final project
- An article about Japanese linguistics or general linguistic theory that presents a viewpoint that you plan to argue for or against in your final project

The “Suggested Readings” sections at the end of each chapter of Tsujimura (2007), *Introduction to Japanese Linguistics* (on hard-copy reserve for the course), are a good place to start looking for relevant articles. You can also look at the bibliography in other reserve readings. For tips on additional ways to search for linguistics articles, see:

<http://users.castle.unc.edu/~jlsmith/refsearch.html>

There is no official **length requirement** for the article, but it needs to be one where the main point (or one of the main points) can be discussed and the supporting evidence explained in about 4–6 double-spaced pages. As a rough estimate, an article shorter than 10 pages may not give you enough information to work with, but it depends on the article.

I am happy to consult with you about your article choice. You are **strongly recommended** to confirm your article choice with me, perhaps by e-mail, *before* you begin writing your article summary. Note that the article must be **published**; finding it online is fine, but it must have a bibliographic citation (although this may be a citation to an online publication or repository).

- **Writing the article summary**

The **goal** of the article summary is for you to demonstrate to me that you understand and can clearly explain what the author's (main) point is and what evidence or argumentation the author uses to make that point. You may not have space to summarize everything discussed in the article; decide what is most important in the context of your final-project topic.

The article summary should be approximately **4–6 pages long, double-spaced**. It should be in your **own words**, except for short quotations if necessary (which should be indicated with quote marks or block-quote indentations). Don't just put together five pages of excerpts from the article—instead, **convince me that you understood it**. At the end of your article

summary, include about one paragraph where you state a **preliminary topic** for your project and explain how the article is **relevant** for that topic. Also include the **full bibliographic citation** (using this [citation format](#)), as well as a **link** to your article (use the DOI if possible).

- **Grading criteria** for the article summary are provided separately on the course web site.
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## V. Step 2: The project proposal

Your proposal should describe the **research question** that will be addressed in the project and explain what **procedure** will be followed to try to answer that question. When I read your proposal, I will check to see whether the proposed project is of an appropriate scope, and if not, I will make suggestions for ways to adjust it. I may ask you meet with me as part of this process.

The proposal should include:

- One or two paragraphs explaining what **research question** your project will ask and what information it will use to try to answer the question.
    - You must **back up your research question or hypothesis with a citation** from the linguistics literature. Interested in examining the vowel devoicing rule? Find a journal article that examines vowel devoicing and **use its results or claims** as a starting point for your own research question or hypothesis. (If possible, find this background reference early and **use it for your article summary assignment**—see above.)
    - State whether you plan to do a **data-focused** or a **theory-focused** project. (See the separate handout “Choosing a structure for your project”.) Then, also:
      - For a data-focused project, **what kind** of data will you examine? How will you **collect** or otherwise obtain your data? What will you do with your data—how are you going to turn whatever you have collected into **numbers**, and what **comparisons** will you make with those numbers in order to answer your research question?
      - For a theory-focused project, what **area** of linguistic theory will you be working in? What are the different **theoretical approaches or proposals** you will be comparing? What is the point of **disagreement or controversy** that you will be addressing? If you plan to collect your own language data, how will you do this?
    - Remember to include **linguistics concepts and terminology** from class in your discussion whenever possible. Show me what you have learned this semester.
  - A list of at least **three references** that seem relevant (not including required course readings, but optional advanced course readings are allowed). With each reference, give a brief **explanation** of why it is or seems to be important for your project.
    - One of these references may, and ideally will, be the article you use for your article summary (see above).
    - Not all of these references have to appear in the bibliography of the final version of your project, since your focus may shift as your work progresses. However, the final version must cite at least *one* linguistically relevant source; at least *two* for a theory-based project.
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## VI. Step 3: The methodology plan

This stage of the project expands on the initial methodology plan you included in your project proposal, incorporating feedback from me about the scope and focus of the project. The methodology plan will lay out everything you need to do in order to collect, analyze, and interpret your data. Additional details and grading criteria will be provided separately.

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## **V. Step 4: Presentation + project documents**

You will carry out your methodology plan and prepare a presentation to report on your results to the class. Presentations will be approximately 10-15 minutes long, depending on the number of project groups. Details about expectations and grading for the presentation and project documents (slides, data report, optional conference abstract) will be provided separately.