

Today's topics:

- **Writing versus language**
- **Phonetics**
- **Vowels of Japanese**

Background preparation:

- *Kubozono (2015), Ch 1, sec 2*

0. Today's objectives

After today's class, you should be able to:

- Identify **differences** between *writing* and *language*
- Use **phonetic symbols** (IPA) to transcribe the vowels of Japanese
- Use **phonetics terminology** to describe and classify the vowels of Japanese

0. Course information

- Checking in on course structure and technology
 - Any questions or problems accessing readings or sound files on Canvas?
 - Any other issues with course materials?
- Any other questions about this course so far?
 - Structure/requirements?
 - Content?

1. Warm-up: Japanese and linguistics

- *Language students:*
 - What are some things about Japanese that second-language learners tend to think are **surprising** or **difficult**?
 - What are some **differences** between Japanese and English?
- *Linguistics students:* What **subfields** of linguistics are relevant for these examples?

1. Warm-up: Japanese and linguistics

Some major subfields of linguistics

- *Phonetics and phonology* — Physical and mental structure of sounds
- *Morphology* — Structure of words
- *Syntax* — Structure of sentences
- *Semantics* — Structure of language meaning
- *Pragmatics, discourse* — Structure and meaning of language in context
- *Sociolinguistics* — Social aspects of how language is used

2. Writing and language

- *Linguistics students:* What are some differences between **language** and **writing**?

2. Writing and language

- **Language**
 - Developed via evolution; has a biological aspect
 - Is acquired by children naturalistically, from the language environment
- **Writing** (and reading)
 - Records language — but not all details!
 - Is cultural / a technology — invented by humans
 - Must be taught explicitly, at least for many
- **Be careful** not to equate writing with language

2. Writing and language

- *Japanese language students:* What is the Japanese writing system like? (Explain it to the students who don't know Japanese.)

Handout - "[Writing Japanese: Kanji, kana and transliteration](#)"

2. Writing and language

We need ways of **writing down** Japanese language data for linguistic analysis

- Some options
 - Japanese orthography (writing system)
 - Phonetic transcription
 - *Linguistics students*: What is this?
 - Transliteration (“romanization”)
- When is each system useful?

2. Writing and language

Handout - “[Writing Japanese: Kanji, kana and transliteration](#)”

- To communicate with other linguists:
 - **Phonetic transcription** represents details about pronunciation and/or mental sound categories
 - **Transliteration** is a kind of spelling system that is accessible to those who read the Roman alphabet — simpler than phonetic transcription, but less informative about pronunciation

We will use both of these systems, depending on the goal or context

3. Phonetics of Japanese

- Handout - “[Context: Phonetics and phonology](#)”
 - This week’s focus is **phonetics**
- Questions we will consider:
 - What **vowels** occur in Japanese?
 - What **consonants** occur in Japanese?
 - How can we **describe** these speech sounds and represent them using **IPA symbols**?
 - How are they **different** from sounds in English?

4. Vowels of Japanese

- Phonetic properties that are useful for **classifying vowels** in all languages:
 - height
 - backness
 - rounding
- **Height** and **backness**: See this [X-ray video](#)
From Peter Ladefoged's *Vowels & Consonants* web site, via YouTube
- **Rounding**: See this [comparison](#) of French and Japanese high back vowels
From Vance (2008), *The sounds of Japanese*, figures 3.2 and 3.3

4. Vowels of Japanese

Handout - "[Phonetics: Vowels of Japanese](#)"

Audio - "[Example sound files for vowels](#)" (Canvas)

- What do the vowels of Japanese **sound like**?
 - What IPA **symbols** are used for these vowels?
 - How can we describe these vowels in terms of **height, backness, and rounding**?
- What **additional properties** are important for describing the phonetics of Japanese vowels?
- How are Japanese vowels **different** from similar vowels in English?

5. Preview: Consonant phonetics

- Phonetic properties that are useful for **classifying consonants** in all languages:
 - voicing (*voiced or voiceless?*)
 - place of articulation (*constriction location*)
 - nasality (*oral or nasal?*)
 - manner of articulation (*constriction type*)
- Interactive [vocal-tract diagram](#)

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6. For next time

- **Prep questions 08.21** are due **F Aug 21** at **10:30am** (in Canvas)
 - Review concepts in vowel phonetics
 - Practice with transliteration / [kana charts](#)
 - Start analyzing consonant phonetics to prepare for class discussion next time