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The speech style shift in the initial encounter between advanced Taiwanese learners of Japanese and native Japanese speakers : A comparison with conversations by native Japanese speakers

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**The speech style shift in the initial encounter between advanced Taiwanese learners of Japanese and native Japanese speakers:  
A comparison with conversations by native Japanese speakers**

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This paper studies the speech style shift in conversations involving advanced Taiwanese learners of Japanese, compared with the conversations by native Japanese speakers. The data used are 16 conversations lasting approximately 500 minutes between advanced Taiwanese learners of Japanese and native Japanese speakers in their initial encounter. In conclusion, it is indicated that even advanced Japanese learners do not have appropriate interpersonal control, as observed in speech style shift. This conclusion was drawn from the following four points:

- (1) The ratio of the utterances kept as plain-style in Japanese learners was higher than that of native Japanese speakers.
- (2) Two out of eight situations where the shift to plain-style tended to occur in the conversations by native Japanese speakers, “self-editing of information” and “express admiration to interlocutor”, were not observed in Japanese learners.
- (3) The shift to plain-style in Japanese learners was also affected by their competence in Japanese.
- (4) Although the shift to plain-style occurred in the same situation, the shift made by Japanese learners did not necessarily have the communicative effect of closing the psychological distance with the interlocutor that native Japanese speakers achieved.

**Key-word:** advanced Taiwanese learners of Japanese, initial encounter, the selection of speech style, the shift to plain-style