

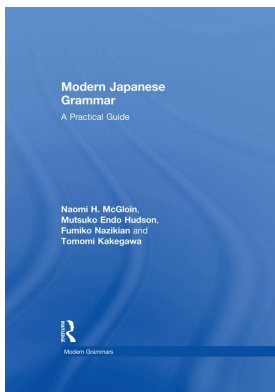
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Naomi H. McGloin, Mutsuko Endo Hudson, Fumiko Nazikian, Tomomi Kakegawa, Sarah Butler

Compliments

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Naomi H. McGloin, Mutsuko Endo Hudson, Fumiko Nazikian, Tomomi Kakegawa

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82

Compliments

82.1 Complimenting one's equal or social subordinate

In Japanese, the way a compliment is phrased can vary greatly depending on the relationship between the speaker and the addressee as well as what the compliment is about. Unlike English, **ii** 'good' does not always work as a compliment. You may use either the formal or informal styles of speech with your equal or subordinate, depending on the situation and your relationship with them.

82.1.1 Complimenting one's equal or social subordinate about what he/she did

すごくよかったですよ。(F)

Sugoku yokatta desu yo.

It was very good!

すばらしかったですよ。(F)

Subarashikatta desu yo.

It was excellent!

すごく面白かったですよ。(F)

Sugoku omoshirokatta desu yo.

It was very interesting!

よくやったね。(I)

Yoku yatta ne.

You did well, didn't you?

よくがんばったね。(I)

Yoku ganbatta ne.

You worked hard, didn't you?

すごくうまいね。(I)

Sugoku umai ne.

You are very skillful, aren't you?

さすがだね。(I)

Sasuga da ne.

Just what we expect from you, isn't it?

To point out a specific part to praise, the **te**-form is often used.

プロジェクトの進め方がすごくスムーズで、よかったよ。(I)

Purojekuto no susumekata ga sugoku sumuuzu de, yokatta yo.

Really, the way you carried out the project was very smooth and that was good.

要点が分かりやすく、うまく書けていましたよ。(F)

Yooten ga wakariyasukute, umaku kakete imashita yo.

The main points were easy to understand and so it was well written, you know.

When complimenting someone on food/cooking, expressions other than **ii** 'good' are used.

おいしい！

Oishii!

Delicious!

美味い！

Umai! (male/rough)

Tasty!

盛りつけもきれいですね。(F)

Moritsuke mo kiree desu ne.

The presentation is also beautiful.

作るの、難しそうですね。(F)

Tsukuru no, muzukashi soo desu ne.

It looks hard to make.

これってどうやって作るの？(I)

Kore tte doo yatte tsukuru no?

How do you make this?

作り方、教えてくれる？(I)

Tsukuri kata, oshiete kureru?

Will you tell me how to make it?

82.1.2

Complimenting one's equal or social subordinate about his/her personality or ability

やさしいですね。(F)

Yasashii desu ne.

You are kind, aren't you?

たよりになるね。(I)

Tayori ni naru ne.

You are dependable, aren't you?

頭いいね。(I)

Atama ii ne.

You are smart, aren't you?

これ、よく書けていますね。(F)

Kore, yoku kakete imasu ne.

This is well written, isn't it?

To compliment someone's ability, X **ga joozu** or **umai** 'skillful' are commonly used.

字が上手ですね。(F)

Ji ga joozu desu ne.

Your handwriting is good, isn't it?

説明の仕方がうまいね。(I)

Setsumee no shikata ga umai ne.

You are skilled at explaining things?

82.1.3

Complimenting one's equal or social subordinate on possessions

かっこいいですね。/ かっこいいXですね。(F)

Kakkoi desu ne. / Kakkoi X desu ne.

That's cool. / That's a cool X.

きれいだね。/きれいなXだね。(I)

Kiree da ne. / Kiree na X da ne.

That's pretty. / That's a pretty X.

すてきだね。/すてきなXだね。(I)

Suteki da ne. / Suteki na X da ne.

That's fabulous. / That's a fabulous X.

82.2 Complimenting one's social superior

Much caution needs to be taken when one decides to compliment one's social superior in Japanese. Japanese people tend to be very conscious about hierarchical relations, and a 'compliment' is generally viewed as something a superior gives to a subordinate based on his/her evaluation of the subordinate. A subordinate is not considered to be in a position to evaluate a superior, and hence complimenting his/her superior is usually not appropriate. Therefore, a direct translation of compliments used in English does not work when one wants to compliment one's superior in Japanese.

82.2.1 Complimenting one's social superior about what he/she did

When complimenting what one's social superior did, it is inappropriate to use words that sound evaluative such as **yokatta desu** 'it was good.' Instead, it is common to express your thanks for the benefits you gained because of what the superior did.

とても勉強になりました。ありがとうございました。

Totemo benkyoo ni narimashita. Arigatoo gozaimashita.

I learned a lot from you. Thank you.

とても興味深いお話を聞かせていただいて、ありがとうございました。

Totemo kyoomi bukai o-hanashi o kikasete itadaite, arigatoo gozaimashita.

Thank you for letting me hear a very interesting talk.

感動しました。ありがとうございます。

Kandoo shimashita. Arigatoo gozaimasu.

I was moved. Thank you.

とても感銘を受けました。ありがとうございます。

Totemo kanmee o ukemashita. Arigatoo gozaimasu.

It made a great impression on me. / I was deeply impressed. Thank you.

とても参考になるご意見をうかがい、ありがとうございました。

Totemo sankoo ni naru go-iken o ukagai, arigatoo gozaimashita.

Thank you for letting me listen to your very useful opinions.

82.2.2 Complimenting one's social superior about his/her personality or ability

To compliment one's superior's personality or ability, the compliment is embedded in an expression of gratitude. It is not appropriate to use expressions that sound evaluative such as **shinsetsu desu ne** 'you are kind' or **ii hito desu ne** 'you are a nice person.'

いつも親切にさせていただいて、感謝しております。

Itsumo shinsetsu ni shite itadaite, kansha shite orimasu.

I'm thankful for your continuous kindness.

(Instead of 'You are so kind.')

いつも助けていただいていたばかりで、申し訳ありません。

Itsumo tasukete itadaite bakari de, mooshiwake arimasen.

Thank you for always helping me.

(Instead of 'You are so helpful.')

82.2.3

Complimenting one's social superior's possessions

Although you are not directly commenting on your superior when you compliment your superior's possessions, it is best to avoid using words like **ii** 'good,' which may sound judgmental. More emotive expressions like **suteki** 'fantastic' and **subarashii** 'wonderful' are commonly used. In the examples below, replace X with the item you are praising.

素敵ですね。 / 素敵なXですね。

Suteki desu ne. / Suteki na X desu ne.

That's fantastic. / That's a fantastic X.

素晴らしいですね。 / 素晴らしいXですね。

Subarashii desu ne. / Subarashii X desu ne.

That's splendid. / That is a splendid X.

82.3

Responding to compliments directed at oneself

How you respond to compliments may depend on various factors such as what the compliment was about, who complimented you, and what impression you wish to make. You may say **arigatoo** 'thank you (informal)' or **arigatoo gozaimasu** 'thank you (formal)' when someone compliments you. However, it is common to say something else in addition to or instead of 'thank you.' Various cases and examples are given below.

82.3.1

Responding to compliments received from one's equal or social subordinate

(a) Responding to compliments about one's work

Compliment from one's subordinate

今回のプロジェクト、大成功でしたね。(F)

Konkai no purojekuto, daiseekoo deshita ne.

This project was a huge success.

Response examples

皆が協力してくれたおかげですよ。(F)

Minna ga kyooryoku shite kureta okage desu yo.

Really, it's thanks to everyone's cooperation.

頑張った甲斐があったよ。(I)

Ganbatta kai ga atta yo.

I'm glad that I did my best.

Xさんのおかげだよ。(I)

X-san no okage da yo.

I owe it to Mr/Ms X.

そんなふうにほめられると恥ずかしいけど、うれしいよ。(I)

Sonna fuu ni homerareru to hazukashii kedo, ureshii yo.

I feel embarrassed to be praised like that, but I feel pleased.

(b) Responding to compliments about one's physical appearance.

Compliment from one's equal

田中さんの髪の毛、すごくきれい。(I)

Tanaka-san no kaminoke, sugoku kiree.

Your hair is so beautiful.

Response examples

そんなこと言われたのはじめてだよ。(I)

Sonna koto iwareta no hajimete da yo.

This is the first time anyone has said such a thing.

そうかな。ありがとう。(I)

Soo ka na. Arigatoo.

You think? Thanks.

そんなこといわれると、はずかしいよ。(I)

Sonna koto iwareru to, hazukashii yo.

I'm embarrassed to be told such a thing.

(c) Responding to compliments about one's personality or ability.

Compliment from one's subordinate

田中さんは優しいんですね。(F)

Tanaka-san wa yasashii n desu ne.

Mr/Ms Tanaka, you are kind.

Response examples

優しいんじゃないくて、おせっかいなだけだよ。(I)

Yasashii n ja nakute, osekkai na dake da yo.

I'm not kind, I'm just meddlesome.

そんなことないよ。(I)

Sonna koto nai yo.

Not really.

Compliment from one's equal

料理、上手だねえ。(I)

Ryoori, joozu da nee.

You are good at cooking.

Response examples

ほんと？ありがとう。(I)

Honto? Arigatoo.

Really? Thank you.

いや、そんな、ほめられるほどじゃないけど。(I)

Iya, sonna, homerareru hodo ja nai kedo.

No, it's nothing to be praised for, though.

(d) Responding to compliments about one's possessions.

One may respond to a compliment about one's possessions by:

(i) Providing information about the object in question:

Compliment from one's subordinate

その時計かっこいいですね。(F)

Sono tokee kakkoi desu ne.

That watch is cool.

Response examples

えー、そうかなあ？去年の誕生日にもらったんだけどね。(I)

Ee, soo ka naa? Kyonen no tanjoo ni moratta n da kedo ne.

You think so? I got it for my birthday last year.

たいした物じゃないけどね。ありがとう。(I)

Taishita mono ja nai kedo ne. Arigatoo.

It's nothing special, but thanks.

(ii) Pointing out something negative about the object in question:

Compliment from one's equal

その鞆、かわいい！(I)

Sono kaban, kawaii!

That bag is cute!

Response examples

そうかな？ありがとう。けっこう安かったんだけどね。(I)

Soo ka na? Arigatoo. Kekkoo yasukatta n dakedo ne.

Really? Thank you. It was pretty cheap though.

そう？もっと小さいのがよかったんだけど。(I)

Soo? Motto chiisai no ga yokatta n dakedo.

Really? I wanted a smaller one though.

(iii) Returning a compliment:

Compliment from one's subordinate

すごく素敵なスカートですね。(F)

Sugoku suteki na sukaato desu ne.

It's such a nice skirt.

Response examples

そうですか。Xさんの靴もかわいいですよ。(F)

Soo desu ka. X-san no kutsu mo kawaii desu yo ne.

You think so? Your shoes are cute too, aren't they?

そう？ Xさんのジャケットも素敵だね。(I)

Soo? X-san no jaketto mo suteki da ne.

You think so? Your jacket is fabulous too.

82.3.2

Responding to compliments received from one's superior

(a) Responding to compliments about one's work

Compliment from one's superior

今日の発表、とてもよくできていましたよ。

Kyoo no happyoo, totemo yoku dekite imashita yo.

Your presentation today was really well done.

Response examples

皆さんが協力してくれたおかげなんです。

Minasan ga kyooryoku shite kureta okage na n desu.

That's because everyone gave me their cooperation.

Xさんのおかげです。ありがとうございます。

X-san no okage desu. Arigatoo gozaimashita.

I owe it to you. Thank you.

まだまだ力不足ですが、ご親切なお言葉、ありがとうございます。

Mada mada chikara busoku desu ga, go-shinsetsu na o-kotoba, arigatoo gozaimasu.

I still have a lot to improve, but thank you for your kind words.

(b) Responding to compliments about one's physical appearance

Compliment from one's superior

背が高くてかっこいいね。

Se ga takakute kakkoi ne.

You are tall and good looking.

Response examples

そんなふうに言うてくださるのはXさんだけです。

Sonna fuu ni itte kudasaru no wa X-san dake desu.

You are the only person to say such a thing.

僕なんかよりYさんの方がずっとかっこいいです。

Boku nanka yori Y-san no hoo ga zutto kakkoi desu.

Mr Y is much better-looking than me.

(c) Responding to compliments about one's personality or ability

Compliment from one's superior

君は本当に努力家だねえ。

Kimi wa hontoo ni doryokuka da nee.

You are really diligent.

Response examples

努力家というよりしつこいだけなんです。

Doryokuka to yuu yori shitsukoi dake na n desu.

Rather than diligent, I'm persistent.

私なんかより優秀な方がたくさんいるおかげで、いつも助かっているんです。

Watashi nanka yori yuushuu na kata ga takusan iru okage de, itsumo tasukatte iru n desu.

Thanks to people who have a lot more talent than I do, I'm always supported.

Compliment from one's superior

いつも仕事がはやいね。

Itsumo shigoto ga hayai ne.

You always get your work done promptly.

Response example

いいえ、これからもがんばります。

Iie, korekara mo ganbarimasu.

No, I will continue to do my best.

(d) Responding to compliments about one's possessions.

One may respond to a compliment about one's possessions by:

(i) Pointing out something negative about the object in question:

Compliment from one's superior

きれいなスカーフですね。

Kiree na sukaafu desu ne.

It's a beautiful scarf, isn't it.

Response example

え、そうですか。ありがとうございます。ほんの安物なんですけど。

E, soo desu ka. Arigatoo gozaimasu. Honno yasumono na n desu kedo.

Oh, you think so? Thank you. It's only a cheap one.

(ii) Providing information about the object in question:

Compliment from one's superior

いいスーツだね。

Ii suutsu da ne.

It's a nice suit.

Response examples

え、ほんとですか。入社式のために思い切って買ったんです。

E, honto desu ka. Nyuushashiki no tame ni omoikitte katta n desu.

Oh, really? I bought it for the new employee welcome ceremony.

ありがとうございます。母が卒業祝いに買ってくれたものなんです。

Arigatoo gozaimasu. Haha ga sotsugyoo iwai ni katte kureta mono na n desu.

My mother bought it for me as a graduation gift.

▶ 18.2.2; 29; 59