

日本語流 9

The Nihongo Way 9

< Today's dialogue >

You (U) have been eating together with your office colleagues at a new izakaya after work. J1 is your immediate boss and the others are colleagues of a similar age. You are almost done.



[Scene 1]	[Scene 2]
<p>J1: ああ、食べた、食べた！今日はみんなよく食べたね！ <i>Á, tabeta, tabeta! Kyô wa minna yoku tabeta ne!</i></p>	<p>U: 量もたっぷりあったし、サービスもなかなかよかったし…。 <i>Ryô mo tappuri atta shi, sâbisu mo nakanaka yokatta shi…</i></p>
<p>U: それに、よく飲みましたね！ <i>Soreni, yoku nomimashita ne!</i></p>	<p>J2: 私は飲まなかったけど、升酒はおいしかった？ <i>Watashi wa nomanakatta kara wakaranai kedo, masuzake wa oishikatta?</i></p>
<p>J1: ここ初めてだったけど、なかなかうまかったねえ。 <i>Koko hajimete datta kedo, nakanaka umakatta né.</i></p>	<p>U: うん、初めて飲んだけど、すごくうまかった。 <i>Un, hajimete nonda kedo, sugoku umakatta.</i> どう？ちょっと飲まない？ <i>Dô? Chotto nomanai?</i></p>
<p>U: ええ、とってもおいしかったですねえ。 <i>Ê, totemo oishikatta desu né.</i></p>	<p>J2: ううん、残念だけど、私は全然だめ。下戸だから。 <i>Uun, zannen da kedo, watashi wa zenzen dame. Geko da kara.</i></p>

Today we'll see how verbs, adjectives and noun sentences behave in direct-style speech in the perfective tense.

Notice that in today's dialog U uses distal-style with his elderly boss but switches to the direct-style form with his peers.

Note that the negative question "Nomanai?" is not merely a question but it is an invitation in the direct-style as well, just as it is so in the distal-style ("Nomimasen ka?").

DIALOGUE OVERVIEW

[Scene 1: You are talking with your boss.]

J1: Wow, we have eaten a lot! How much everybody has eaten!

U: And we have drunk a lot, too!

J1: This was our first time here, but it was pretty good, wasn't it!

U: Yes, things were very tasty indeed.

[Scene 2: You are now talking with one of your colleagues.]

U: There was a pretty good volume [of food], and moreover we got pretty good service, too.

J2: Although I can't tell because I didn't drink, did you find the *masuzake* good, too?

U: Yeah, this was my first time to have it, but it was really good.

Well, would you like to have a little bit?

J2: It's a pity, but I'm no good at all. I'm no drinker, so...

VOCABULARY FOCUS

Nouns

<i>chotto</i>	a little, a bit [Adverbial]
<i>geko</i>	no drinker [someone who can't drink]
<i>hajimete</i>	the first time, for the first time [Adverbial]
<i>koko</i>	this place, here
<i>masuzake</i>	sake served in square measurement boxes called <i>masu</i>
<i>minna</i>	everyone, all [Adverbial]
<i>nakanaka</i>	quite, pretty [Adverbial, used only with positive qualities, e.g., <i>ii</i> , <i>oishii</i> , <i>jôzu</i> , etc.]
<i>ryô</i>	quantity, volume
<i>sâbisu</i>	service [loanword from English]
<i>tappuri</i>	plenty [Adverbial]
<i>zannen</i>	a pity, a shame, predicament
<i>zenzen</i>	(not) at all [Adverbial, used always in negative]

* As you can see above, many nouns may be used as adverbs. This is common in English, too. The word "all" is an example. When you say "All's well that ends well," it is a noun, but when you say "They are all well," it is an adverb meaning "to the extent of all." In fact, it is often meaningless to distinguish between nouns and adverbs.

Adjectives

<i>umai</i>	tastes good, yummy [colloquial]
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Others

<i>soreni</i>	in addition, furthermore, on top of that
<i>un</i>	yeah [predominantly used in direct-style speech in place of <i>hai</i>]
<i>uun</i>	no [predominantly used in direct-style speech in place of <i>ie</i>]

GRAMMAR FOCUS

Distal-style and direct-style – Part 2

1. Verbs:

Here I use the same verbs as in previous columns, to simplify comparison of style differences.

Distal-style	Direct-style	Meaning
<i>Nomimashita. Nonda.*1</i>		(I drank it.)
<i>Nomimasen deshita..</i>	<i>Nomanakatta.*2</i>	(I didn't drink it.)
<i>Tabemashita.</i>	<i>Tabeta.</i>	(I ate it.)
<i>Tabemasen deshita.</i>	<i>Tabenakatta.*2</i>	(I didn't eat it.)

*1 In theory, this should be *Nomita*, which indeed used to be the case, but by frequent use it has weathered into *Nonda*. To prove this to yourself, repeat *Nomita* out-loud over and over again, and you'll see.

*2 If you recall their imperfective form, i.e., *Nomanai* and *Tabenai*, these perfective forms should be fairly obvious. They follow the adjective pattern because *nomanai*, *tabenai*, etc., are all adjectives in effect (the suffix *nai* is an adjective, which means non-existent or absent).

2. Adjectives

Again, since it is *desu* that effects psychological distance, take it out to get the direct-style form.

<i>Oishikatta desu.</i>	<i>Oishikatta.</i>	(It was tasty.)
<i>Oishikunakatta desu.</i>	<i>Oishikunakatta.</i>	(It was not tasty.)

3. Nouns

For noun sentences, *deshita* is replaced by *datta*, or rather, *ta* is added to *da* for the affirmative (although there is a slight sound distortion). For the negative, simply delete *desu*.

<i>Zannen deshita.</i>	<i>Zannen datta.</i>	(It was a pity.)
<i>Zannen janakatta desu.</i>	<i>Zannen janakatta.</i>	(It was not a pity.)

CULTURE FOCUS

Izakaya

A *sake* (liquor) shop is called *sakaya* (a phonological transformation of *sakeya*). If drinking is allowed on the premises it is called *i(=stay)sakaya*, which changed to *izakaya* for phonological reasons. *Izakaya* have evolved into a type of Japanese pub, with a wide variety of food served in addition to drinks.

Nomunication

This is jargon – a combination of *nomu* (drink) and *communication*. The Japanese are very formal in the office, so places like *izakaya* play an important role by allowing a place for the airing of real feelings. Direct comments are often tolerated, if over a drink. Japanese are generally generous about drinking, and its associated behaviors, since *sake* is considered a lubricant for human relationships.