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The British Association  
for Teaching Japanese  
as a foreign language

The 20th Japanese Speech Contest  
for University Students

  
JAPAN FOUNDATION

In collaboration with:

  
KING'S  
College  
LONDON

第20回 大学生のための日本語スピーチコンテスト

**Finals Day** 決勝大会

Saturday 1st March 2025 3月1日(土)

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# Michelle Aiko Boddey

## SOAS University of London

### 現代日本における「有害な男らしさ」

西洋諸国では、今でも「男はタフで振る舞うべき」という理想的な行動が強く求められている。このようなアメリカ発の概念は「有害な男らしさ」(トキシック・マスキュリニティ)と言われる。この言葉は近年、SNS で広まり、日本も例外ではないだろう。例えば、仕事や家庭の場面において、男性の役割は自分の感情を抑え(泣いたらダメ)、助けを求めることを妨げ、自己犠牲を払って、「男らしさ」を示すべきという考え方が顕著である。学校環境やスポーツの場でも、男子が「積極的」「競争的」であることが期待され、感情を表現することを「弱い」と見なす風潮がある。日本の性役割である「男性は外で働き、女性は家庭を守る」という昔ながらの性役割の考えにも繋がる。

だが、この「男らしさ」への過剰なこだわりは男性にプレッシャーをかけ、精神的な問題の原因になりかねない。人間関係に悪影響を及ぼす可能性もある。現代社会では、多様な生き方が認められつつあるが、関西大学文学部の多賀太教授によると、多くの男性が未だにこの保守的な「期待」に苦しんでいるという。男性は言葉でコミュニケーションをとらず、周りに相談することができないという圧力を感じる。

これらの「有害な」価値観を再考し、男女問わず自分らしくいられる環境を作ることが重要だと強く思う。自分らしく生きることにより個人だけでなく、社会全体がより幸せになれるのではないか。私はこのスピーチで自分なりの充実した生き方を模索し、提案したい。

### Redefining Masculinity in Modern Japan

In Western countries, the concept of 'toxic masculinity' (originating in USA) is often defined by the notion that "men must act tough". Similarly, Japan is no exception with the phrase propagated on social media platforms. For example, men are expected to suppress their emotions, avoid seeking help and demonstrate "manliness" through self-sacrifice in work and family settings. They are also often pressured to be "assertive" and "competitive" and regarded as "weak" if showing emotions at school and in sports. This reflects the traditional gender roles in Japan with the saying "men work outside, women take care of the household".

However, excessive emphasis on what it means to be "masculine" places undue pressure on men and can lead to their mental health deteriorating. The pressure could also put a strain to human relationships. Whilst diverse lifestyles are gradually being accepted in contemporary Japanese society, Professor Taga Futoshi of Kansai University's Faculty of Literature states that many men still struggle under these conservative expectations. Men feel pressured to avoid verbal communication and refrain from seeking advice from others.

I believe it is essential to reconsider these "toxic" values and create an environment where regardless of gender, people can live authentically. With this pressure-free approach, it can lead to greater happiness for not only individuals, but also everyone living in this modern society. Through this speech, I seek to explore and propose a fulfilling way of life.

# Jiachen Zhang

## The University of Leeds

### 人工知能の普及とともに、外国語を学ぶ価値は下がったのか？

人工知能が急速に普及して以来、外国語を学ぶ価値が下がったと思われがちだ。現在の人工知能は話している瞬間に言いたいことをすぐに翻訳できるし、人間の脳よりも情報を速く処理できながら、高い精度で翻訳できる。また、外国語の勉強は時間も結構かかるので、「他のスキルを勉強した方が効率的ではないか？」と考えていることも多いだろう。

しかし、異文化の人と深く関係を築きたい際、単に自分の言語を相手の言語に翻訳するのは十分と言うべきではない。自分のユニークさを伝えることをはじめ、文化のニュアンスを理解すること、そして自分と相手の感情をお互いにわかることは、深く人間関係を築くために、欠かせないスキルだ。これらの社会的なスキルは人工知能が模倣できないと思う。

さらに、外国語を学ぶ価値は実用的な用途を超え、本当の価値はその過程だと思う。なぜなら、外国語を学ぶことは単に単語や文法を覚えることだけではなく、自分のコンフォートゾーンから積極的に飛び出し、新しい文化を受け入れ、ネイティブと話す際、間違う恐れを克服し、固定観念を挑戦することだ。その上、世界観を広げ、精神を豊かにすることも可能だ。これらの人生にわたるメリットはAIツールにだけ頼ると得られないだろう。

グローバル化が進む時代で、異文化コミュニケーションの重要性が高くなり、外国語を学ぶ価値がますます上昇している。人工知能はコミュニケーションを助けることができても、信頼を築くために、やはり正真正銘の自身を表現した方がいいのではないだろうか。

### **With the popularisation of artificial intelligence, has the value of learning a foreign language fallen?**

With the rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence, the value of language learning seems to have fallen drastically. AI can translate speech in real-time and process information faster than the human brain while maintaining a remarkable degree of accuracy surpassing that of humans. After all, learning a language can be time-consuming; one might wonder, wouldn't it be better to learn other skills instead?

However, building meaningful relationships with people from different cultures requires more than just translating words. It depends on how you express yourself, what makes you unique, understanding cultural nuances, and having a mutual understanding of feelings - aspects of social interaction that cannot be replicated by AI.

Moreover, the value of language learning extends far beyond its practical purpose. The true value of language learning lies within the process. Learning a language is not just about memorising vocabulary and grammar structures. It is about actively stepping out of your comfort zone, embracing a new culture, conquering the fear of making mistakes when speaking to a group of natives and challenging the conventional way of thinking. Language learning broadens your worldview and fosters mental growth. These lifelong benefits cannot be achieved by merely relying on AI to translate what you want to say.

Language learning has become increasingly valuable in today's globalised world as the need for cross-cultural communication is more important than ever. AI may be able to assist with communication but to build trust, showing your true self will always be best.

# Leona Smith

## The University of Central Lancashire

### 日本の捕鯨に対する厳しい批判は正当なのか。

このスピーチでは日本が行う捕鯨に対して賛否を述べるものではありません。世界の商業漁業の方が鯨の個体数の減少に大きな影響があり、問題視されるべきことがわかります。

商業漁業で間違って捕まえて殺すことを「混獲(こんかく)」といいます。国際捕鯨委員会によると、世界の商業漁業によって誤って殺された海洋哺乳類数は毎年約 30 万頭にのぼり、日本の 298 頭を大きく上回っている。更に、日本は捕獲した鯨の全部位を使いますが、混獲によって殺されている鯨はただ海に捨てられています。この数値を見ると「何故日本が行う捕鯨が国際社会で大きな批判を受けているのか」という質問が浮かびます。

このスピーチでは、日本が行う捕鯨の歴史的背景、国際捕鯨委員会 (IWC) の影響、そして国際社会が日本の捕鯨をどのように批判しているのかについて考察します。また、感情的な議論 (動物虐待など)、政治的背景 (捕鯨を続ける理由)、そして経済的要因 (商業漁業と商業捕鯨の利益) についても言及します。例えば、英国の商業漁業の利益と日本の捕鯨の利益の違いや、ヒューメイン・ソサエティ・インターナショナル代表であるキティ・ブロック氏がなぜ捕鯨に反対しているのかについても触れます。

### Is the international community's criticism towards Japan's whaling justified?

Despite what my title suggests it is not my goal to discuss the arguments for or against whaling but to analyse why Japan is harshly criticised by the international community for whaling when commercial fishing has the biggest impact on Whale populations. The term "bycatch" can be defined as unwanted fish and marine mammals that are trapped in commercial fishing nets. According to the International Whaling Commission (IWC), approximately 300,000 marine mammals are killed annually as a result of commercial fishing bycatch, this number far exceeds Japan's 2023 capture of 298 whales through commercial whaling. Moreover, in terms of commercial whaling, Norway had the highest capture rate (507) in 2023. This leads to the question "Why does Japan receive such harsh criticisms for whaling by the international society?"

So, in this speech I will cover; the historical background of Japanese whaling, America, and the International Whaling Committee's influence, and finally discuss what criticism Japan is receiving. Within the criticism, I will discuss emotional arguments (such as animal cruelty), Political factors (the reason behind wanting to continue whaling), and finally economic motivations behind the criticism (such as a comparison of profits between commercial fishing and commercial whaling).

# Theodore Nze

## The University of Oxford

### 国際英語：共通言語としての英語教育の課題と未来

「英語は国際共通語だ」と聞いたことはありませんか？数十、いや数百の方言が存在するイギリスの人間として、その概念は、私にとってはいまいちピンと来ないのです。米国の方言についても言うまでもありません。そして、英語を公用語としている55か国の多様な方言はどうでしょうか？

5年以上英語教師として働いてきた私にとって、生徒たちから「国際的な英語を教えてください」と頼まれるたびに、とても不思議に思います。国際的な英語とはいったい何を指すのでしょうか？イギリス英語、またはアメリカ英語、もしくはナイジェリア英語？もしかして、日本独特の英語、いわゆるジャパンイングリッシュのことでしょうか？この問題の根本には、英語が一つの標準語を持たないという事実があります。現在ネイティブスピーカーよりも非ネイティブスピーカーのほうが多い英語において、どの方言が「国際的」と見なされるべきなのか、そしてそれを誰がどのように決めるのかという疑問が私にはあります。

今までの経験を通じて、英語の現状が帝国主義や差別の歴史を反映していることが分かりました。そのような状況下で、英語を果たして「国際的な言語」と呼べるのでしょうか？

これに対して私は、ジャン＝ポール・ネリエールが2004年に著した『グロービッシュ』でも提唱されていたように、英語の標準化を提唱します。ただし、私はそれを一人の人物が作り上げるのではなく、英語を使うすべての人々の意見を反映した形で統一し、標準化された英語を築くべきだと考えます。それこそが、真に「国際的な英語」を生み出す鍵ではないでしょうか。

### International English: The Challenges and Future of Teaching English as a Lingua Franca

Have you ever heard the phrase "English as a global language?" As a Brit, you can't help but wonder what on earth is that, especially with our own island populated with tens if not hundreds of dialects. Not to mention those across the pond. Least of all the accents of the 55 other countries which have English as their official language. Having worked as an English teacher for over five years, when I'm told by students to teach them "international English", I can't help but wonder if they mean British English, American English, Nigerian English or perhaps even Japanese English. With its lack of a singular standard, and now having become more widely spoken by non-native speakers than native speakers, how do we decide what counts as global English, and who should be doing the deciding?

In my speech, I talk about my own experiences with ELF (English as a lingua franca). Through these experiences, I learnt that the current situation of the English language reflects a history of imperialism and discrimination, unsuited for its supposed "international character".

How then can we bring the English language into the 21st century? I propose to standardise the English language, as suggested by Jean-Paul Nerrière in his 2004 book, *Globish*. However, I believe rather than being the creation of one man, the future of a unified, standardised English should be the creation of all of its users, becoming a truly global language.

# Ailian Pei

## SOAS University of London

### 外国人留学生から見た日本の新卒採用制度問題

厚生労働省によると、「新卒」とは高校・高専・短大・大学を卒業、または大学院を修了する学生を指す。この「新卒採用制度」は1985年に始まり、現在の日本における主要な採用制度である。

しかし、2011年以降の人口減少により、企業の採用充足率は年々低下し、人手不足が深刻化している。その結果、企業間での人材確保競争が激化している。一方で、外国人や留学生の採用は増加傾向にあるものの、十分とはいえない。マイナビの2023年調査によれば、調査対象となった1859社のうち、外国人留学生を採用した、または採用予定の企業はわずか10%に過ぎない。一方で、文部科学省によると、日本での就職を希望している外国人留学生は全体の58%に達している。よって、私は日本企業がより積極的に外国人人材を採用することで、人手不足問題の一助になると考える。

大学3年生の時、大阪での交換留学を経験し、日本文化や住み心地のよさに魅了され、日本での就職を希望するようになった。2024年夏に朝日新聞ビジネス部門でインターンシップに参加し、現在は就職活動をしている。周囲の留学生たちと共に就職活動に取り組む中で、外国人が日本で直面する就職活動の壁を実感している。

このスピーチコンテストでは、自身の体験を基に、外国人新卒採用における課題と、日本企業がより多くの外国人人材を活用するための具体的な方策について提案する。

### Challenges of Japan's "Recruitment System for the Newly Graduated" from the Perspective of International Students

The term "newly graduated," as defined by the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare, refers to students who have completed secondary school, technical college, or their bachelor's or master's degree at university.

The "recruitment system for the newly graduated," which started in 1985, has become Japan's most prevalent recruitment strategy today. However, Japan's recruitment yield ratio has steadily decreased due to its shrinking population since 2011, creating a workforce shortage. Consequently, the competition for the newly graduated among companies has become more intense. Meanwhile, the hiring of international students and foreign nationals has been on the rise; however, it is still insufficient.

According to a 2023 survey by "Mynavi," only 10% of the 1,859 companies surveyed have hired or plan to hire international students, even though 58% of international students in Japan have expressed a desire to work in Japan, according to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology. I believe Japanese companies can resolve their labour shortages by actively recruiting additional foreign talent, especially international students.

My exchange program experience in Japan during the third year of my university course captivated me with the feeling of homeliness that Japanese life and culture provides, motivating me to pursue a career and a life in Japan. I am currently seeking job opportunities in Japan after participating in an internship at the Asahi Shimbun Business Department during the summer in 2024. Through this process and working alongside other international students, I have been aware of the numerous obstacles that foreign nationals encounter when seeking a job in Japan.

In this speech contest, I will propose strategies to address the challenges associated with employing new foreign graduates based on my personal experiences and shall suggest strategies for Japanese companies to incorporate a broader range of foreign talent into their workforce.

# Abstracts

## Individual Presentation Category

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**1) YuThong Low**

King's College London

ジェネレーションギャップは問題か

*Is Generation Gap a problem?*

**2) Zhengxi (Kevin) Cheng**

Imperial College London

AIとより良い社会

*AI and A Better Society*

**3) Xuanlin (Elsa) Huang**

Durham University

不完全な世界と自分を受け入れ、偏見を乗り越える

*Embrace Imperfection in the World and Yourself, Overcome Prejudices*

**4) Jinyoung Tak**

King's College London

韓国と日本のハーフとして生きるということ < アイデンティティ形成に関する個人的な見解 >

*What is it like Being Half Korean and Half Japanese < A Personal Look at Identity >*

**5) Jessica Polito**

The University of Edinburgh

日本語学習が私を変えた!

*Learning Japanese changed me!*

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**YuThong Low**

King's College London

ジェネレーションギャップは問題か

*Is Generation Gap a problem?*

*Presentation Abstract:*

Is the generation gap a real problem, or is the lack of communication and understanding the true issue? In this presentation, I will explore this question through a mix of humor and insight, sharing relatable stories and surprising perspectives. The generation gap isn't just about age—it's about mindset, shaped by our experiences and the world we grew up in. Let's discover how small steps like empathy, dialogue, and a bit of patience can turn generational differences into opportunities for deeper connection and collaboration. It's time to rethink the gap and embrace the diversity it brings.

**Zhengxi (Kevin) Cheng**

Imperial College London

AIとより良い社会

*AI and A Better Society*

*Presentation Abstract:*

This presentation explores the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on modern society, highlighting both its benefits and potential risks. It begins by defining AI and showcasing everyday AI-powered products, such as self-driving cars and ChatGPT. While AI significantly improves convenience, concerns about its rapid development and effects on employment and social structures persist. The discussion includes OpenAI's research on job displacement and the importance of critical and scientific thinking as human strengths.



Ultimately, the presentation argues that AI will remain a tool rather than surpass humanity, and individuals must adapt by leveraging their unique intellectual abilities.

**Xuanlin (Elsa) Huang**  
Durham University

不完全な世界と自分を受け入れ、偏見を乗り越える

*Embrace Imperfection in the World and Yourself, Overcome Prejudices*

*Presentation Abstract:*

As international exchange becomes increasingly valued, prejudice and stereotypes have become one of the main barriers to communication. Prejudices are shaped by subjective factors such as upbringing, lack of information, and media influence, making them unavoidable for individuals. This speech aims to share the speaker's experience of cross-cultural learning and provide methods to reduce the impact of prejudice on oneself and others, ultimately minimizing obstacles in international communication.

**Jinyoung Tak**  
King's College London

韓国と日本のハーフとして生きるということ < アイデンティティ形成に関する個人的な見解 >

*What is it like Being Half Korean and Half Japanese < A Personal Look at Identity >*

*Presentation Abstract:*

The theme of this presentation, "What is it like to live as half Korean and half Japanese?" reflects my personal perspective on identity formation, based on the experiences of my cousin, who was raised in Japan with a Korean father and a Japanese mother. Growing up in a multicultural environment, I have encountered many people grappling with questions of identity, which led me to reflect on what it means to understand one's own culture. This presentation explores the unique challenges faced by mixed-race individuals, offering insight into the personal and cultural complexities of navigating dual identities and how these individuals bridge two cultures.

**Jessica Polito**  
The University of Edinburgh

日本語学習が私を変えた!

*Learning Japanese changed me!*

*Presentation Abstract:*

I started studying Japanese when I was 16, and it completely changed my life. Learning Japanese became my passion and brought me so much joy. However, learning Japanese hasn't always been easy - I've made countless mistakes and experienced several pitfalls. Nonetheless, it is the mistakes for which I am most grateful; they helped me change my attitude to learning and accept that language learning and making errors come hand-in-hand. My speech focuses on my trials and tribulations within learning Japanese and aims for others to relate to my experiences and continue to look forward to learning Japanese in the future!

# Abstracts

## Group Presentation Category

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- 1) ドップラー効果 Doppler Effect** SOAS University of London  
(Mitchell-Joseph Clark, Henry Pan, Jazz Hayes)  
英国の音楽 フリートウッド・マック  
*Music of England – Fleetwood Mac*
- 2) ふわふわ Fluffy Fluffy** The University of Bristol  
(Tesni Gardiner, Charlie Rogers, Ka Yu Ip)  
私たちが好きな 物語の主人公  
*Our Favourite Story Protagonists*
- 3) シャンハイスクリーム Shanghai-ce cream** King's College London  
(Yongxin Zhang, Linkun Qian)  
シャンハイへようこそ  
*Welcome to Shanghai*
- 4) キールのリケ女・リケメン Keele's Science Girls and Guys** Keele University  
(Adrian Cercel, Jadesola Obasa)  
もっとリケ女を!もっとリケ女に!  
*Women in STEM: Education vs Opportunity*
- 5) 自由推し(じゆうおし) Fans of Freedom** Imperial College London  
(Xinlin Li, Olivia Guo, Justin Guo, Yuchen Sun)  
麻雀(マージャン)  
*Mahjong*
- 

### ドップラー効果 Doppler Effect

SOAS University of London

英国の音楽 フリートウッド・マック  
*Music of England – Fleetwood Mac*

#### Presentation Abstract:

The group will discuss English music, specifically the band Fleetwood Mac. Within the canon of rock music, Fleetwood Mac stands as one of the most successful bands in history. The group will discuss a brief history of rock music along with the great popularity of the band at the height of their fame, their most famous album "Rumours" and its troubled history, as well as the present state of the band and its members, along with, finally, the lasting influence of the group.

### ふわふわ Fluffy Fluffy

The University of Bristol

私たちが好きな 物語の主人公  
*Our Favourite Story Protagonists*

#### Presentation Abstract:

Today we would like to share with you our favourite protagonists from our favourite stories. We will focus on three stories which all take place in the UK and Ireland. The first is that of Roald Dahl's 'Matilda'. Next, we will

talk about the character of Ben in the Irish film 'Song of the Sea'. Finally, we will discuss the British classic 'Harry Potter'. All three stories present young protagonists who have to overcome their respective challenges. We believe these are not only excellent stories, but that there is also much we can learn from their key protagonists.

**シャンハイスクリーム Shanghai-ce cream**  
King's College London

シャンハイへようこそ  
*Welcome to Shanghai*

*Presentation Abstract:*

This presentation offers an in-depth look at the vibrant city of Shanghai, highlighting its modern skyline, rich culinary heritage, distinctive dialect, and renowned travel destinations. Frequently compared to Tokyo, Shanghai's soaring skyscrapers and dynamic urban landscape exemplify its rapid modernization, with iconic landmarks such as the Oriental Pearl Tower serving as symbols of its progress. The city's culinary scene is defined by Běnbāng cài, a traditional local cuisine celebrated for its signature sweet flavors and time-honored dishes. Additionally, the presentation explores the Shanghai dialect, which shares intriguing phonetic similarities with Japanese. Finally, it showcases notable historical landmarks such as Yuyuan Garden and Tianzifang, while also introducing Shanghai's highly efficient subway system, which ensures seamless urban transportation.

**キールのリケ女・リケメン Keele's Science Girls and Guys**  
Keele University

もっとリケ女を!もっとリケ女に!  
*Women in STEM: Education vs Opportunity*

*Presentation Abstract:*

This presentation explores gender disparities in STEM, touching on several topics including chemistry and pharmacy. One of the topics explored is known as the "leaky pipeline", where women leave the STEM field before securing careers in STEM due to a variety of reasons. The presentation will also touch on some initiatives to help get more women into leadership roles, specifically in the pharmacy industry. It will also cover why each presenter chose a pathway into STEM. By sharing personal experiences, key barriers and opportunities for women in STEM will be explored. The aim of this presentation is to address the issue that has continued to shape society's perception of women in STEM.

**自由推し(じゆうおし) Fans of Freedom**  
Imperial College London

麻雀(マーじゃん)  
*Mahjong*

*Presentation Abstract:*

Our presentation introduces the game Mahjong, a game deeply rooted in Chinese traditions. We first focus on the prolonged, yet interesting history of the development of the game in the past, mentioning how the game was spread across the world and became popular worldwide. We then explain the rules of mahjong, while also mentioning some interesting regional adaptations of Mahjong, such as the more defensive Japanese Riichi Mahjong, and the more aggressive Sichuan-style Mahjong. Finally, we wrap up by discussing the reasons behind the game being popular among teenagers recently while being unwelcomed in earlier years. We aim to make Mahjong more accessible and enjoyable for audiences of all cultural backgrounds.