

■ Interjections

A broad definition of interjections is a form of words that are used independently in discourse.

Exclamations such as *aa*, *waa*, as well as expressions of greeting, response, hailing, and hesitation, are also classified into interjections as far as the part of speech is concerned.

Exclamations express the speaker's undifferentiated response. For example, *oya*, and *waa* express the speaker's surprise upon encountering something unexpected; *aa* is uttered when one understands what is going on; *aaa* is an expression that comes out when some emotion slowly wells up. There are many others. Some expressions are gender-specific.

Response expressions include *hai*, *un*, *iee*, among others, and the usage varies widely. For instance, *hai*, often understood to mean 'yes,' also possesses the function of signaling the timing of someone handing something to someone else: 'here you go.' *Iya* doesn't limit its use to a negative response; it can signal change of subject, for instance. *Hee*, which is primarily an expression of surprise, can introduce new information, and is used in succession with an exclamation.

There are a wide variety of fixed expressions of greeting, and they correspond to protocols of various sorts. Everyday expressions can be divided into two major categories: ones used in meeting and parting (e.g., *konnichiwa*, *sayōnara*) and ones for expressing gratitude and apology (*arigatō*, *gomen*). *Dōmo* has a wide range of application, and *sumimasen* is widely used to express gratitude by way of apologizing for making the listener go to trouble for the speaker.

Time-specific expressions such as *ohayō* and *kombanwa* are often discussed as a problem in learning Japanese. (*Ohayō* is traditionally limited to be used from pre-dawn through the morning, but the time range for its usage is expanding.) Cultural differences contribute greatly to deciding, to whom and on which occasion, and with which expression, one should greet someone.

Expressions of hailing typically are ones that evoke the attention of the listener, such as *nee*, *oi*, *mosimoshi*, and are used in succession with *anō* (hesitation), *yaa* (greeting) and so on.

Hesitation is used to express the speaker's intent for an utterance (or continuation thereof).

Sometimes they are used to monitor the thought process, and are used in succession with exclamations and expressions of response.

→ハイ・イイエ・エエー 応答 Hai, Iie, Ee –Response (2-K), アラ・マアー 感動詞 Ara, Maa – Exclamations (2-K)

● References

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