

2022-2023 COLLOQUIUM SERIES

Research Center for Language, Brain and Cognition
Graduate School of International Cultural Studies, Tohoku University

Dr. Timothy J. Vance
Professor Emeritus, NINJAL

Date: February 14 (Tue), 2023, 16:00-17:30 JST
Venue: Multimedia Research Center, 6F Hall
(Online participation is also welcome)



Lyman's Law and /p/: An Experimental Study

Japanese *rendaku* 連濁 appears in the second elements (E2s) of compounds, “replacing” a voiceless obstruent with a voiced obstruent (e.g., /tama/ 玉 ‘ball’, /me+dama/ 目玉 ‘eyeball’). **Lyman’s Law** is ordinarily stated as a phonological constraint preventing *rendaku* when E2 already contains a voiced obstruent. An alternative proposal is that the constraint is orthographic, preventing a second diacritic in the *kana* representation of an E2 that already contains one. The crucial cases involve E2s with a medial /p/ – a voiceless obstruent written with a diacritic. We report two versions of an experiment involving compounds with made-up **Sino-Japanese binoms** 漢語二字熟語 as E2s. Speakers chose between forms with and without *rendaku*. In the audio version of the experiment, E2s with medial /p/ patterned with E2s with medial voiceless obstruents, but in the written version of the experiment, E2s with medial /p/ patterned between those with medial voiceless obstruents and those with medial voiced obstruents. These results lend some credence to the orthographic version Lyman’s Law, but only when orthographic information is visually present.

Bio: Timothy J. Vance is professor emeritus at the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics 国立国語研究所 (NINJAL), where he worked from 2010 until 2017. He also held faculty positions at the University of Florida (1981–1986), the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (1986–1993), Connecticut College (1993–2000), the University of Arizona (2000–2009), and Komatsu University 公立小松大学 (2018–2021). Since his retirement in 2021, he has been living in Honolulu. His publications include *An Introduction to Japanese Phonology* (SUNY Press, 1987), *The Sounds of Japanese* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), and *Irregular Phonological Marking of Japanese Compounds: Benjamin Smith Lyman’s Pioneering Research on Rendaku* (Walter de Gruyter, 2022). He was coordinating editor of *Japanese Language and Literature* (the journal of the American Association of Teachers of Japanese) from 2000 until 2009.

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Contact: Matthew Zisk (matthew.zisk.a6@tohoku.ac.jp)

