

## Halftime Chats Video:

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## Halftime Chats Transcript

### Halftime Chats

#### Mia Skaggs

Okay, this is my first Halftime Chat, it's a work in progress title. My name is Mia Skaggs, my Japanese name is 岡本美彩 (*Okamoto Mia*), and I am very excited to start this off.

### A chat about...

#### Is Language More Intentional When You're Not a Fluent Speaker?

今週私の (*This week my*) Tell the Story professor, he was saying how people who speak English as a second language, he finds that their English can be more beautiful because it's so thoughtfully spoken, and it's a very—it's—you—they utilize very thoughtfully chosen language. I found this very interesting because when I speak English I don't have to think about what I'm saying very often, especially when I'm speaking casually. でも日本語使ってる時は結構どうやって私の考えを伝えればいいと結構考えないといけないんです。しゃべるのがもっと難しいかもしれないけど (*But when I when I use Japanese I have to think a good bit about how convey my thoughts. It might be more difficult to talk, but*) it is kind of more thoughtfully chosen in a way. It is very carefully chosen. My language. 日本語しゃべってる時。 (*When I am speaking Japanese.*)

### A chat about...

#### Voices Sounding Different in Different Languages

I noticed that my voice sounds different depending on which language I'm speaking. And I was talking about this with other people, and they also noticed that, not just with me but with themselves. I learned English by talking to all kinds of people because I learned it when I came to the U.S. I talked to my parents, I talked to teachers at school, I talked to peers, I talked to friends' parents – all kinds of people. And I learned the nuances of the language and how to talk to certain people.

日本語では (*In Japanese*) there's these 敬語。敬語多いんで家族とか友達との会話は普通にできるけど (*honorifics. There's a lot of honorifics so I can speak to family or friends fairly easily, but*) elders, or people in a boss role, or teachers, anyone I should be speaking in an honorific way to, it's very difficult for me. I didn't grow up in Japan where I would learn it by absorbing it. I would have to learn it by actually sitting down and learning it, or spending time in Japan I guess, but I haven't been able to do that. I think that I speak English with more confidence. Part of that is I am more confident in my speaking abilities, and I think that shows in how I talk. I don't have to think about it as much. Whereas in Japanese, 私の喋り方はま

あ、子供っぽい（？）喋り方かな？敬語の使い方も難しいし使う単語も子供っぽい単語を使ってるかな。例えば、お手洗いじゃなくてトイレとか使う場合も多いで、間違えて家族じゃない人にトイレといっちゃう時も多いです。*(My speaking style is like childlike? I guess? Using honorifics is difficult, and the type of phrases I use are also pretty childlike. For example, instead of restroom (more formal language) I'll use toilet a lot (without thinking), and I'll mistakenly use it with people who aren't my family pretty often.)*

In just tone of language also I feel like my voice gets a lot like, not meeker, but it gets more gentle, I think, in Japanese. And also maybe like sheepish. Like I feel like the way I talk I'm like smiling while I'm talking. I'm just going to do a little bit of talking in Japanese so maybe you can see what I've been noticing this past week.

こんにちは。私の名前は岡本美彩です。私は二十二歳です。日本に住んでいる家族は鳥取に住んでいます。私の好きな食べ物はラーメンかな。一番好きな食べ物はラーメンです。*(Hello. My name is Mia Okamoto. I am 22 years old. My family in Japan lives in Tottori. My favorite food is... ramen I guess. My favorite food is ramen.)*

Hopefully you can see how I sound different. At least, I think I do.

### **A chat about...**

#### **Place + Culture + How Quickly These Things Change**

So this week I was talking with my friend Lulu. And Lulu actually lived in Japan until she was 11. She moved to Los Angeles when she was 11 and has been there since then. I lived in Japan until I was 2, and she lived in Japan until she was 11. So she knows more of the language, she live there for much longer. But I have been going back every year or two when I can, and she has not been back since she left. There's different parts of the culture that we know, I guess. It's kinda interesting how we can both be connected in a way that's like we both lived there for a bit, we both moved to the U.S., and we still have such different ideas of what Japan is just based on when we are there. And it kinda shows how fast a place can change.

### **A chat about...**

#### **Maintaining Connections While Having Family Far Away**

I today want to talk about what it's like having family in a different country or far away and how that's affected me and my life. I get to visit Japan this summer and I get to see some family and friends that I haven't seen in a while. It's really nice to have this opportunity. Tickets to Japan can be really expensive and I am very grateful to be able to go. It's hard because one half of my family (my dad's side) I see pretty often, not super often because we're not in the same state, most of them. But my family in Japan I don't see as much.

Because of the language barrier and where we are geographically, it's hard to stay in touch. So I know when my cousin graduated college, I know my other cousin got married recently. And they know that I'm graduating soon and my little brother's graduating high school soon, they know of big moves. They just don't know all of the little things that my other family knows over

here. And it makes it so it feels like there's a disconnect, not emotionally, but in closeness. I love my family in Japan. I know they love us too. But it's just hard to keep in touch.

My little brother doesn't speak very much Japanese but is still really able to connect with my grandmother. They LOVE each other. And the only phrases she knows are "Hi Ty-kun (Ty)," and "I love you!" But they'll talk for a long time not really understanding each other but each getting to say what they want to say. My grandma tells a lot of funny stories and my little brother understands them to an extent, just can't speak back very much in Japanese, and so it's a lot of "mmhmm, mmhmm, yeah." And it's really cool that they have that connection. They love each other so much and their love shines through in their language even if they don't always know what the other one's saying.

I have been able to connect to my younger cousin. We don't talk much when we are not together, but we always make sure to meet up with each other in Japan, and it's super fun to talk to her and get to know her. It's wild because we're so similar even though we missed a big part of each other's lives. I remember one time she said something about women's rights then she said, "Oh but maybe I'm just saying that because I'm a feminist." She said it pretty sheepishly, and I was like "Me too! I am too!" And she seemed kinda surprised by that, we haven't really talked about deep concepts like that. It was cool to have that connection and to be able to connect in a deeper way, especially now that I'm older and I understand more Japanese and more of the culture, and we're able to connect in that way. So even though there's distance between us and there's a bit of a language barrier between our family over here and my family in Japan, it's really cool to still be able to have those connections.