

Tamara Rathcke, University of Kent

18/03/2020

JSPS Invitational Fellowships (Short-Term)

I held a short-term invitational fellowship from JSPS which enabled me to stay at the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics (NINJAL) for two months. My plan was to collect experimental data from native speakers of Japanese and to discuss my research with linguists working on Japanese language typologically. I was (more or less) able to achieve my originally set-out goals, though some of the talks scheduled toward the end of my stay had to be cancelled because of the corona virus outbreak. I was extremely lucky to have finished my data collection just before the situation got much worse, which was only possible because I hired local research assistants to help with recruitment. Two research assistants (one based at NINJAL and one at the International Christian University) managed to recruit a total of 40 people for my experiment. They also helped out with preparatory data annotation for which native command of Japanese was key. I had a lot of support from NINJAL – scientific, administrative, personal. It is extremely important to choose your host institution and the host researcher wisely. NINJAL efficiently administered the grant and I knew how much and when I could spend on travel for presentations and on assistance for research. Professor Haruo Kubozono at NINJAL was extremely experienced with hosting international researchers and I am beyond grateful for his help with making my stay such a success. My comparative cross-linguistic research benefitted a lot from the inclusion of the Japanese perspective, and I am now working on two publications which will be co-authored with my host. I am also planning to return to NINJAL to discuss the results of the data I collected and hopefully run an additional experiment to round things up. The short-term programme is fantastic at allowing you to build a new research link that can lead to a long-term collaboration. I also made new links to other international researchers who were visiting NINJAL and sharing the office with me. We bonded over amazing Japanese food, the rate the corona virus was spreading and being lost in translation. There is also a lot to be said for companionship and emotional support in times of great uncertainty, with public places closing and flights being cancelled. I was lucky to have enjoyed companionship of my two office mates – a PhD student from Russia and a linguistics professor from North England. We are now friends on

Facebook and are planning a reunion at a conference. Overall, I feel enriched and inspired from my two-month stay, overshadowed by the corona virus outbreak and yet such a great success beyond the originally planned aims and goals of the fellowship.



With host Professor Haruo Kubozono at NINJAL