

Lund University  
Spring 2020  
BA Thesis  
Supervisor: Axel Svahn



**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY

**Japanese women's language as spoken by foreign women**  
**in *Elle Japon***

Sara Kopelman

## **Abstract**

An interesting phenomenon seen in Japanese translations of foreign women's speech is the tendency to make them speak using women's language. Women's language in Japanese refers to a set of characteristics, consisting mainly of sentence final forms such as *wa* or *kashira*, that form a speech norm for women. Japanese women generally do not use this type of language, yet foreign women commonly speak it in translations. The present thesis aims to explore the factors behind this usage of women's language in Japanese translations. A quantitative study was conducted by using statements from the January-May 2020 issues of the Japanese edition of the women's magazine *Elle* as a corpus. The results of the study showed that foreign women used women's language at a notably higher frequency than Japanese women, whose usage was almost inexistent. The results also showed that there was a strong correlation between the use of women's language and the speaker's occupation among the foreign women. Foreign women classified as 'entertainers' (actresses etc.) used women's language more frequently than those classified as 'creatives' (designers etc.) and as belonging to 'other occupations', in their translated speech. The results of this thesis combined with observations of previous literature suggest that there might be an ideal user of women's language, and that a given speaker's closeness to this ideal is what determines whether she is translated as using women's language or not.

**Keywords:** Japanese language, gender, sociolinguistics, translation, foreigners, final particles

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my supervisor Axel Svahn, without whose guidance and input this thesis would never have been completed. Thanks are also due to Rika Hayashi, Yuko Nowak, and Sawako Murao for helping me greatly improve my language ability during the last two years. Finally, I want to thank Erik Larsson for being a constant source of support during the writing process of this thesis.

## **Conventions and abbreviations**

### **Typographical conventions**

Italics are used for Japanese words and sentences in the running text and in tables. Example sentences are my own unless noted otherwise.

### **Romanization**

The modified Hepburn system was used to transcribe the Japanese sentences in this thesis. However, long vowels are indicated by duplicate letters rather than by macrons. Also, place names, company names, and words that have become part of the English lexicon use their established English spellings. Names in the reference list were romanized in accordance with official sources and may therefore not agree with the Hepburn system.

### **Glossing**

The Japanese sentences in the thesis have been glossed in accordance with the Leipzig glossing rules. A full list of abbreviations is given below.

∅	null
ADN	adnominal
AUX	auxiliary
COP	copula
DESID	desiderative
FP	final particle
INF	infinitive
LOC	locative
NEG	negative
NPST	nonpast
TOP	topic

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	2
Acknowledgements .....	3
Conventions and abbreviations .....	4
1. Introduction .....	6
2. Background .....	7
2.1. Women’s language or “women’s language”? .....	7
2.2. Defining women’s language .....	8
2.3. The development of women’s language .....	9
2.3.1. Pre-modern forms of women’s language .....	9
2.3.2. The origins of <i>teyo dawa</i> language .....	11
2.3.3. The spread of <i>teyo dawa</i> language .....	12
2.4. Women’s language in media today .....	13
2.5. Previous Studies .....	16
3. Study.....	18
3.1. Purpose .....	18
3.2. Data.....	18
3.3. Methodology.....	19
3.4. Results .....	23
3.4.1. Feminine sentence final forms – Japanese vs. foreign women .....	23
3.4.2. Feminine sentence final forms – in relation to occupation .....	24
3.4.3. The polite form – Japanese vs. foreign women.....	28
3.4.4. The polite form – in relation to occupation.....	29
3.4.5. Translation interpretation .....	31
3.4.6. Other factors .....	32
4. Discussion .....	34
5. Conclusion.....	37
Bibliography.....	38
Appendix .....	41

## 1. Introduction

Japanese women's language refers to a set of characteristics that form a broad idea of how Japanese women speak or at least how they are supposed to. Japanese women's language, henceforth referred to as simply women's language, is interesting in that it is, as put by Inoue (2006:4) a "vicarious language". Japanese women today do not use women's language, yet everyone knows what it sounds like. Women's language, rather than being heard in the speech of real existing Japanese women, is experienced through media; it is heard from the mouths of characters in cartoons and TV dramas and in the translated utterances of foreign characters, including little girls and action heroes who one would not expect to speak in such a way, were they Japanese. Curiously enough, women's language can also be found in the translated or 'imagined' Japanese of very much non-fictional foreign women. This means that paradoxically the only real women who 'speak' Japanese women's language are women who in actuality are not speaking Japanese at all.

The aim of this bachelor's thesis is to examine the aforementioned 'imagined' Japanese of foreign women in the women's magazine *Elle Japon*. A quantitative study will be conducted, wherein the translated speech of foreign women and Japanese women in said magazine are compared, thereby ascertaining the level of 'feminization' occurring in the translated statements of foreign women.

While there have been some studies conducted regarding the gendered nature of the translated speech of foreigners, they have generally focused on athletes. By comparing the results from those studies with those of an entirely different group it will hopefully be possible to contribute to the field regarding the factor of when and why women's language is utilized in the translations of foreign women's speech.

The organization of this thesis is as follows: after the introduction, a background chapter will follow wherein a description of women's language, its historical origins as well as its role in Japanese media today will be given. Previous studies of the use of gendered language by foreigners in translation will also be discussed. After the background chapter, a chapter detailing the present study itself and its results will follow. The chapter after it will further discuss the results and the potential reasons behind them. The concluding chapter will summarize the results and conclusions of the present thesis, as well as give some suggestions for potential avenues for future research.

## 2. Background

The aim of this chapter is to give an outline of women's language, its historical development, and its role in Japanese media today. According to Nakamura (2014:2, 16) many Japanese people seem to believe that Japanese women speak using women's language or at least that they did at some unspecified point in the past. The fact that female characters in Japanese media, too, often speak using women's language further cements this image of women's language as a quintessential component of Japanese (2014:13). However, studies show that Japanese women today generally do not use women's language (See Okamoto 1995 for one such study). As for the question of whether women as a group used women's language in the past, researchers such as Nakamura (2004) and Inoue (2002) hold the view that the modern notion of women's language was constructed in the Meiji period when the *teyo dawa* language used by some female students at the time set the basis for the language that would eventually become today's women's language.

### 2.1. Women's language or "women's language"?

As stated in the previous section, it is generally accepted among the Japanese population that women's language is the language actually spoken by Japanese women, or at least that they used to speak it at some point in the past. It is also generally believed that women's language came into being due to the fact that women have historically spoken differently from men and that such differences stem from women's natural femininity (Nakamura 2014:4). Researchers within Japanese language studies and sociolinguistics have also generally held this view (2014:4-6). However, according to recent studies "the conceptualization of women's language as women's actual speech is problematic" as women use a variety of language in accordance with the situation (2014:6). Studies such as Okamoto (1995) show that women today do not only in general not use women's language but also that the usage of language that is considered "masculine" is more common in comparison (1995:303).

## 2.2. Defining women's language

Okamoto & Shibamoto Smith (2008:92) divide women's language into first- and second-order norms. The first-order norms consist of general stylistic features such as politeness and gentleness while the second-order norms consist of specific linguistic forms "including phonological, morphological and lexical features" (2008:92). The linguistic features that distinguish women's language are many and disparate but the most commonly noted forms are: choice of specific first- and second-person pronouns, a comparatively high usage of honorifics, and the usage of certain sentence final particles (SFP) (2008:91-92). For the purpose of this thesis, however, the term 'women's language' will mostly refer to the usage of certain SFPs, as they are the target of the study. Examples of SFPs associated with women's language include *wa*, *no*, and *kashira* (see Okamoto 1995 for a more exhaustive list). Consider the phrase 'I am a student'. In gender-neutral Japanese it might be written as:

- (1)    *watashi wa gakusei da*  
      I            TOP student COP.NPST

In women's language the same phrase might instead be construed as follows:

- (2)    *atashi wa gakusei da            wa*  
      I            TOP student COP.NPST FP

The use of the first-person pronoun *atashi* and the SFP *wa*, serves to mark (2) as women's language. According to Inoue (2003:319) "[f]inal particles are one of the formal linguistic units most systematically linked to and normalized by the prevailing Japanese gender ideology". She (2002:394) states that while these SFPs are not inherently gendered, they serve to convey softness and gentleness. As these features are associated with women and femininity these SFPs "indirectly [index] the speaker's gender" (Inoue 2002:394). SFPs that are generally considered gender neutral can also gain a feminine association through the use of the zero copula. Narahara (2002:152) explains that the insistence particle *yo* and the confirmation seeking particle *ne* are regularly used by men and women, in both formal and informal situations. When following a noun or a *na*-adjective these particles normally require the presence of the copula. However, in informal situations these particles might occur without the copula (Narahara 2002:153). Consider (3a) and (3b) on the next page:



- (3) a. kirei da yo  
 beautiful COP.NPST FP  
 ‘It’s beautiful’
- b. kirei Ø yo  
 beautiful Ø FP  
 ‘It’s beautiful’

While a phrase like (3a) would generally be considered neutral or masculine, phrases like (3b) are generally only used by women (Narahara 2002:153).

Some of the sentence final forms that are classified as women’s language are not actually SFPs<sup>1</sup>. However, as they are commonly referred to as such in the literature regarding women’s language, they will be referred to as such in the background part of the present thesis for consistency. It is thus important to keep in mind that when the term SFP is used in this chapter it may include forms that would more appropriately be classified as other grammatical categories.

### 2.3. The development of women’s language

As previously mentioned, the origin of the modern notion of women’s language emerged in the Meiji period (Inoue 2002). However, women’s language has generally been studied under the assumption that its origins lie in pre-modern forms of women’s speech, thereby retroactively constructing women’s language as a tradition since ancient times (Inoue 2002:393). This section will give an outline of the origins of the women’s language of today.

#### 2.3.1. Pre-modern forms of women’s language

According to Endo (2008:11) it is believed that Japanese originally did not contain gender differences, with no such differences at all being found in “the oldest work of Japanese literature”, *Kojiki*. However, in the tenth century *Genji Monogatari* some differences start to appear. In Nakamura (2014) a scene where a woman is criticized for using many *kango*<sup>2</sup> in

---

<sup>1</sup> To give one example, *teyo*, one of characteristic forms of the *teyo dawa* language used by some female students during the Meiji period, is sometimes referred to as an SFP but is actually a compound of the gerund form *-te* and the final particle *yo*.

<sup>2</sup> Japanese words of Chinese origin, written using *kanji*.

her speech is discussed. Nakamura (2014:16-17) argues that the existence of such scenes is proof that some women did in fact use *kango*. Furthermore, from the Kamakura period onwards many conduct books<sup>3</sup> were published regulating women's speech. The prevailing norm, stemming from Confucianist teachings, prescribed that women should preferably not speak at all (2014:40). Nakamura (2014:41), using an example from the 14th century conduct book *Menoto no Sooshi* (The Book of the Nursemaid) instructing women not to laugh with their mouths wide open, points out that the existence of such lessons shows that there were many women who did not follow the prescribed norms of feminine speech. According to Nakamura (2014:90) these norms urging women to refrain from speaking too much are reproduced in the conduct books of the modern period.

Similarly, Endo (2008:17) argues that the norms governing women's language originate in *nyooboo kotoba* (court lady's language), a speech style used by court women of the imperial court from the 14th century onwards. One characteristic of *nyooboo kotoba* is the use of special vocabulary for items such as food, clothes etc. (2008:11). Endo (2008:14) states that "it was considered vulgar for women in high society to talk about food and other things straightforwardly and in plain terms", thus necessitating the creation of alternate terms. In the Edo period *nyooboo kotoba* was disseminated to women of high society outside of the imperial court (2008:15). One of the most popular conduct books from this period, the 17<sup>th</sup> century *Onna Choohooki* (Women's Encyclopedia), includes stipulations that women should talk using some components associated with *nyooboo kotoba*, as well as the earlier mentioned prohibitions against talking too much and using *kango* (Endo 2008:15, Nakamura 2014:44-45). However, Endo (2008:15-16) as well as Nakamura (2014:59-60) note that *nyooboo kotoba* was not seen as the speech norm for women in general, as common women in texts such as Shikitei Sanba's 19<sup>th</sup> century novel *Ukiyoburo* use many forms that would be considered masculine today. It was not until the Meiji period that these norms began to be imposed upon women as a group (Endo 2008:16-17). Consequently, Endo (2008:17) argues that while the usage of specific SFPs as part of women's language originates in the Meiji period, the prescriptive norms governing women's speech can be traced to *nyooboo kotoba*.

---

<sup>3</sup> Etiquette manuals. See Nakamura (2014:39-72) for a more detailed explanation.

### 2.3.2. The origins of *teyo dawa* language

As discussed in the previous section, the origin of the norms governing women's speech can be traced back to the pre-modern period. The usage of specific SFPs as a part of women's language is, however, of a much later origin.

According to Nakamura (2004) the sex-differentiation of SFPs, one of the most essential components of current day women's language, came into existence in the Meiji period (1868-1912). This sex-differentiation was accomplished by several factors including: language use in Edo prostitute quarters, the development of "national language", and the emergence of languages associated with male students (*shosei*) and female students (*jogakusei*) respectively (2004:44). Inoue (2002:395) lists translations of western novels and the development of the *genbun'itchi*<sup>4</sup> literary movement as another important factor in the spread of women's language.

One of the key factors in the creation of women's language was the emergence of the category of "female student" (*jogakusei*) in the early Meiji period (Nakamura 2014:105). In 1872 the Japanese government declared that women, too, ought to receive an education (Nakamura 2014:104). However, at this time there were not many parents who sent their daughters to school (Nakamura 2004:45). Nakamura (2004:45) states that some of the women who *did* attend school did so together with male students, wore male *hakama* and crucially, were known to speak like the male students. The language of the male students was distinguished by the use of the first-person pronoun *boku*, and the second-person pronoun *kimi*, as well as by the amount of *kango* and foreign words, and the imperative form *-tamae* (see Kinsui 2017:63-77 for a more detailed explanation of male student language).

In 1879 the government prohibited coeducation and declared that education was to be based on Confucianism (Nakamura 2014:96). Around the same time "some female students started using new sentence-final forms, such as *teyo*, *dawa*, and *noyo*" (2014:114). Nakamura (2004:49) assumes that this was a way for the female students to resist the Confucianist good-wife-wise-mother (*ryoosai kenbo*) identity forced upon them. Both the female students' usage of male student language, *teyo dawa* language, and impolite language were harshly criticized by the media. Nakamura (2014:117) notes that while "no data of Meiji-period speech is available", the existence of documents criticizing the female students for using any language

---

<sup>4</sup> *Genbun'itchi* (unification of spoken and written language) was a movement and literary style that emerged during the Meiji period. The proponents of *genbun'itchi* argued for replacing the difficult and disparate written language with a more colloquial style closer to the spoken language.

other than polite language reveals that they used a variety of language, not just the *teyo dawa* language that would later on be the language associated with them.

### 2.3.3. The spread of *teyo dawa* language

As explained in the previous section, the female students of the Meiji period were known for (and criticized) for using a variety of language. So why did the *teyo dawa* language in particular come to be so strongly associated with female students? Inoue (2002) and Nakamura (2004, 2014) attribute the creation of this association to the *genbun 'itchi* literary movement, as well as translations of western novels.

According to Inoue (2002:397), in the late 19th and early 20th century Japan, language reform was an issue of the highest importance to the Meiji elite. The reasons for this were several. There was a great difference between the spoken and written language, with many writing systems and literary styles, each utilized by different groups, and the spoken language consisted of a multitude of dialects that were not mutually intelligible (2002:397). The Meiji elite believed that these were obstacles that needed to be overcome in order to achieve national unity (2002:397). The *genbun 'itchi* literary movement, too, grew out of the perceived need for language reform (2002:398). The writers of this movement aimed to create novels in the same vein as the western realist novel, featuring realistic *modern* human beings (2002:398).

In discussing the *genbun 'itchi* literary movement, Nakamura (2004:51) states that its writers sought to differentiate characters by the way they spoke. However, they had difficulty in characterizing young women, particularly in translations of western novels (Nakamura 2004:52). These writers turned to the *teyo dawa* language used by female students (2004:52). Nakamura (2004:52) notes that “by letting women speak [*teyo dawa* language] in fiction, they turned [it] into a linguistic resource to describe young women”. The young women (female students) who read these novels in turn began to speak like the characters appearing in them which served to further promulgate *teyo dawa* language among them (2004:53). By the late Meiji period *teyo dawa* language, through widespread use in novels, came to be associated with female students, but it had also gained an association with frivolity (2004:59).

Nakamura (2014:123-124) notes that the Women’s Secondary School Act of 1899, which vastly increased the number of female students, resulted in some changes in the depiction of female students in novels. The first change was that women other than female students began to use *teyo dawa* language (2014:124). “Novelists began using ‘*teyo dawa* speech’ for young

women of high social class in novels, irrespective of whether they were frivolous or not” (2014:124). The other change was the “sexualization of female student characters” (2014:125). Due to the influence of Christianity on Japan the previous target of men’s sexuality, *geisha* and *yuujo*<sup>5</sup>, were no longer considered appropriate (2014:125). The modern relationship for an intellectual man was to be based on spiritual love with an intelligent partner. The female student therefore was a much more suitable target (2014:125-126). In addition, Nakamura (2014:125), referencing a 2001 book by Satoko Kan, suggests that the concept of daughters of wealthy families becoming sexually corrupted was appealing to many readers. Novelists also started to use *teyo dawa* language when expressing the sexuality of older upper class women, although it tended to come with a comment from the author, as *teyo dawa* language “had not yet gained sociolinguistic legitimacy as the speech of upper-class women” (2014:129).

Inoue (2002) states the spread of the *genbun’itchi* literature, along with magazines aimed at young women, served to disseminate an image of *teyo dawa* language as the language of choice for the “modern Japanese woman” even to rural communities. Young women and girls from all over Japan wrote letters to the magazines using *teyo dawa* language (2002:408-409). Inoue (2002:409) notes that these magazines served as a form of “virtual speech community” as many of these young women and girls did not speak using *teyo dawa* language in their daily lives. For people living outside the major metropolitan areas, print media was their only connection to women’s language (2002:409).

#### **2.4. Women’s language in media today**

In the previous section it was established that print media played a key part in disseminating knowledge of women’s language. This section will provide an overview of the role of media in spreading women’s language within the Japanese population today, with a particular focus on the role of translated media.

Furukawa (2010) notes that there is a tendency of over-feminization of women in literature (both originally Japanese and translated) as well as in media in general. In discussing newspaper headlines, Inoue (2003:320-321) shows how SFPs are used to communicate that “the story is about a woman or women”. Furukawa (2010:113) suggests that women’s language in Japanese media is used as a form of role language (*yakuwarigo*), a

---

<sup>5</sup> A type of Edo period courtesan.

form of stereotypical language used to characterize characters in fiction according to their ‘role’ (see Kinsui 2017).

As discussed in section 2.3.3., translations of western novels had a profound role in shaping and disseminating women’s language historically. According to Inoue (2003), even today, translated media are of particular importance in disseminating the knowledge of women’s language to the Japanese population. Inoue observes that “Paradoxically and counterintuitively, it is from the most foreign characters—Scarlett O’Hara, Dana Scully, Queen Elizabeth II, Barbie, and Minnie Mouse—that one hears the most ‘authentic’ Japanese women’s language in everyday life.” (2003:315). Nakamura (2011) notes that the use of women’s language is prevalent among female characters in both older translations such as Scarlett O’Hara in the Japanese translations of *Gone with the Wind* and in more recent works such as Hermione Granger in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, with the latter using feminine language extremely unnatural for young girls (2011:29). In the case of *Gone with the Wind*, while the Southern American English-speaking white characters’ speech is translated using standard Japanese and women’s language, the black and poor white characters’ speech is translated into a pseudo dialect based on the Tohoku dialect (Hiramoto 2009). Nakamura (2011:38) notes that by connecting the use of standard Japanese with “whiteness”, the normativity of standard Japanese is reinforced. However, she points out these types of translations are no longer considered appropriate today (2011:42).

Furukawa (2010:203) remarks that even foul-mouthed characters, giving the character of Bridget Jones from the novel *Bridget Jones’s Diary* as an example, speak women’s language in Japanese translations. When discussing the film version of *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, Furukawa notes that although Bridget regularly swears in the movie, there is only one instance of Bridget using swears in the Japanese subtitles.

The use of women’s language in translation is not limited to fiction. Nakamura (2011:29), using an interview with Angelina Jolie as an example, remarks that real women *too* are translated using women’s language. The tendency seems to be that feminine topics such as fashion are translated into women’s language while topics like politics are translated into standard Japanese (2011:42-46). This is however not a constant, with the language sometimes shifting between standard Japanese and women’s language in the same article irrespective of whether the topics discussed are feminine or not (2011:45-46).

Nakamura (2011:33) further states that it is also common for non-Japanese female characters in Japanese literature to use women’s language, giving Natsuki Ikezawa’s novel *Kadena* as an example. The protagonist of *Kadena* “is an independent woman who thinks and

acts based on her own will” yet she speaks using typical women’s language. Even though the usage of women’s language by such a character might be considered unnatural it is not seen as such since she is supposed to be speaking in English (2011:34-35).

Furukawa (2010:32) claims that the tendency of over-feminization in Japanese literary translations can hinder readers from correctly understanding the themes of the work. In a discussion of the novel *The Edible Woman* by Margaret Atwood, she argues that the usage of stereotypical women’s language by its female protagonist in the Japanese translation gives the wrong image of her character, thereby failing to convey the political and feminist themes of the novel to Japanese readers (2010:32). To counter this, she proposes a new translation strategy of ‘de-feminization’ (2010:45).

As established, there is a tendency for the speech of foreign women, real and fictional alike, to be translated using women’s language. Moreover, as in the example of *Kadena*, the association of women’s language with the ‘imagined’ Japanese spoken by foreign women in translations is strong enough to be effectively utilized when characterizing English speaking women in Japanese original fiction. This usage of women’s language can in a sense be viewed as another form of role language, albeit one that is not limited to fictional characters in its utilization. Nakamura (2013:18), recalling a newspaper interview with the American jazz singer Halie Loren, notes that as soon as she saw the picture of said singer, a beautiful white woman clad in a red dress, she instinctively felt that “this person will be translated using women’s language”, an expectation that proved to be true. However, as previously noted, when it comes to fictional characters, relatively ‘unfeminine’ characters are also sometimes translated using women’s language. The same phenomenon can be observed in translations of real women, with foreign women who do not fit the mold of the typical user of women’s language nonetheless being translated using it (Nakamura 2013:21-24).

Incidentally, the tendency of translating foreigners into highly gendered language is not limited to women. Stereotypically male language, too, is frequently employed in the translations of foreign men, both real and fictional. Like women’s language, men’s language is characterized by a use of specific first- and second-person pronouns (*boku* and *ore*) and SFPs. Examples of SFPs associated with men’s language include *zo* and *ze* (Kinsui 2017:82). According to Nakamura (2013:26-40) the SFP *sa* is employed in translations of foreign men to give them a carefree and friendly image. She also notes that there is a tendency to make black men speak using more rough and masculine language (2013:174-175).

## 2.5. Previous Studies

Although the highly gendered nature of Japanese translations of foreigners' statements has been noted by many, there have been few studies attempting to quantify the phenomenon, particularly in the case of real people. In this section the most relevant studies for the purpose of the present thesis, all focusing on the gendered nature of the translated speech of foreigners, will be discussed. All the studies are focused on Olympic athletes.

A distinction that needs to be made before the relevant studies can be discussed is that between the polite form<sup>6</sup> and the plain form<sup>7</sup> of the predicate. While the plain form is used in conversations with family and friends, in situations such as “when talking with one’s superior, the use of a polite form is the norm” (Hasegawa 2014:256). Examples of the polite form with verbs (including the copula) and with *i*-adjectives are provided in Table 1 and Table 2 below.

**Table 1:** Plain vs. polite forms of verbs (Hasegawa 2014:257)

Non-past		Past		Gloss
Plain	Polite	Plain	Polite	
<i>da</i> (copula)	<i>desu</i>	<i>datta</i>	<i>deshita</i>	be
<i>iku</i> ( <i>u</i> -verb)	<i>ikimasu</i>	<i>itta</i>	<i>ikimashita</i>	go
<i>kaeru</i> ( <i>u</i> -verb)	<i>kaerimasu</i>	<i>kaetta</i>	<i>kaerimashita</i>	return
<i>taberu</i> ( <i>ru</i> -verb)	<i>tabemasu</i>	<i>tabeta</i>	<i>tabemashita</i>	eat
<i>kariru</i> ( <i>ru</i> -verb)	<i>karimasu</i>	<i>karita</i>	<i>karimashita</i>	borrow
<i>kuru</i> (irregular)	<i>kimasu</i>	<i>kita</i>	<i>kimashita</i>	come
<i>suru</i> (irregular)	<i>shimasu</i>	<i>shita</i>	<i>shimashita</i>	do

**Table 2:** Plain vs. polite forms of *i*-adjectives (Hasegawa 2014:258)

Non-past		Past		Gloss
Plain	Polite	Plain	Polite	
<i>kuyashii</i>	<i>kuyashii desu</i>	<i>kuyashikatta</i>	<i>kuyashikatta desu</i>	vexing
<i>oishii</i>	<i>oishii desu</i>	<i>oishikatta</i>	<i>oishikatta desu</i>	delicious
<i>takai</i>	<i>takai desu</i>	<i>takakatta</i>	<i>takakatta desu</i>	expensive

In her study of how non-Japanese athletes in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics were translated in Japanese newspapers, Yabe (1996:68) found that in Asahi Shimbun 19.1% of the non-Japanese athletes' statements included SFPs, compared to 3.7% of the Japanese athletes. Additionally, while 21.8% of the Japanese athletes' statements used the polite form, it was

<sup>6</sup> Also known as the *desu-masu*-form or the long form.

<sup>7</sup> Also known as the *da*-form or the short form.



only used in 3.5% of the non-Japanese athletes' statements. The difference in rate of utilization of SFPs between men and women was mostly the same between both non-Japanese male and female athletes (19.4% for women, 18.9% for men) and those of Japanese origin (3.3% for women, 4.3% for men). However, there were larger differences in the usage frequency of the long form. Among the non-Japanese female athletes 7.5% of the statements were recorded using the long form compared to 1.2% of the statements of the male athletes. For Japanese athletes, the figure was 20.1% for the women and 24.4% for the men. Takatori (2015:479) notes that Yabe's findings "show that, incongruously foreigners 'speak' like men and women are traditionally supposed or assumed to do in Japan five times more often than native Japanese actually do."

Ota (2009) performed a similar study to that of Yabe, focusing on the usage of role language in the Japanese subtitles of 166 interviews with foreign athletes in the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Ota (2009:59) looked at the frequency of gendered SFPs and personal pronouns and found that such language appeared in 50% of the interviews. The figure was 58% for male athletes and 35% for female athletes, respectively. Additionally, looking at the subtitles in 58 interviews broadcasted by NHK, Ota found that 66% of the interviews consisted of the plain form, 24% of the polite form and 10% of a mixture of the two. Ota's view is that role language is used by the translators to convey the athletes' 'character', particularly in post-podium states of elation and excitement (2009:57, 68-69). Ota divides the various usages of role language in the interviews into seven different patterns (or characters), such as the male 'superstar' or the female 'queen'.

Based on the results of Yabe (1996) and Ota (2009), Takatori (2015) conducted her own study, focusing on the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Looking at statements by foreign athletes in 35 articles from Asahi Shimbun, Takatori (2015:478) found that "28.4% and 25% of female and male speakers' utterances, respectively were accompanied by gender-specific sentence particles". Takatori compares her findings with statements from foreigners in articles from the early 1900s and the war and post-war era, noting that the differentiation between Japanese and non-Japanese speakers' statements seems to have started sometime around the Olympics (2015:479).

### **3. Study**

#### **3.1. Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors which underlie the use of Japanese women's language in the translated speech of foreign women. This will be done by analyzing statements of Japanese and non-Japanese women in the Japanese edition of the women's magazine *Elle*. The research questions are as follows:

1. How frequently is women's language employed in the translated speech of foreign women?
2. How does this frequency of usage compare to that of Japanese women?
3. Is there any connection between the speaker's use of women's language and her occupation?
4. What is the relationship between women's language and the usage of the polite form? Are they mutually exclusive?
5. Are there other factors, such as age and ethnicity, that affect whether women's language is utilized?

#### **3.2. Data**

The source material of this study is the January-May 2020 issues of the Japanese edition of the women's magazine *Elle*. The Japanese edition of *Elle* features ample content relating to foreign (mostly western) women, but also contains some content featuring Japanese women, making it a fitting source of material for this study. The data collected consisted of quotes from 167 women in total, 60 Japanese and 107 foreign. Note that if a woman appeared in several articles, each appearance was counted separately. There are therefore women who are listed multiple times in the data. The data collected consisted of 1 449 sentences in total. Out of those 655 were Japanese and 794 foreign. The Japanese material consisted of 26 187 characters and the non-Japanese of 25 985 characters.

### 3.3. Methodology

As previously stated, the source material of this study is the January-May 2020 issues of the Japanese edition of the women's magazine *Elle*. The magazines were examined for statements uttered by women, which were then analyzed in terms of politeness level and the presence or absence of feminine sentence final forms. Then, a comparison was made of the frequency of feminine sentence final forms and the politeness level in the statements of the Japanese and non-Japanese women. The occupations of the interviewed women were also noted in order to examine whether there are potential patterns to be found regarding occupation and the usage of feminine sentence final forms. In the background part of the thesis, the term SFP was used for all sentence final forms that are classified as women's language for consistency with the referenced literature. However, as previously explained, not all parts of women's language that occur at the end of sentences should be categorized as SFPs. As such, henceforth, the term 'sentence final form' (SFF) will be used instead.

The sentence final forms that will be considered women's language for the purpose of this study are based on Okamoto's (1995:301) gender classification of sentence final forms. Her classification of feminine sentence final forms, with some alterations and additions, is shown below and on the next page:

- The particle *wa* (with rising intonation<sup>8</sup>) for mild emphasis or its variants (*wane*, *wayo*, *wayone*)

(4) ik-u        wa  
      go-NPST FP  
      'I am going'

- The particle *no* after a noun or *na*-adjective in a statement

(5) ashita    na            no  
      tomorrow COP.ADN    FP  
      'It is that it is tomorrow'

- The particle *no* after a plain form of a verb or *i*-adjective for emphasis or explanation in a statement

(6) ik-u        no  
      go-NPST FP  
      'It's that I'm going'

---

<sup>8</sup> As this study is based on magazine articles, intonation cannot be considered. All instances of *wa* will thus be treated as if uttered with rising intonation.

- The particle *no* followed by *ne* or *yone* for seeking confirmation or agreement; the particle *no* followed by *yo* for assertion

(7) ashita na none  
tomorrow COP.ADN FP  
'It's that it's tomorrow, isn't it?'

- The auxiliary *desho(o)*, by itself or when followed by *ne*, for expressing probability or for seeking agreement or confirmation

(8) ik-u deshoo  
go-NPST AUX  
'You are going, aren't you?'

- The particle *kashira* 'I wonder'

(9) ku-ru kashira  
come-NPST FP  
'I wonder if he is coming'

- The particles *yo* and *ne* when following directly after a noun or *na*-adjective with the absence of a copula.

(10) kirei ∅ yo  
beautiful ∅ FP  
'It's beautiful'

- The final particle *mono(o)*<sup>9</sup> for justification

(11) isogashi-i mono  
busy-NPST FP  
'Because I'm busy'

Note that there is no complete consensus on which sentence final forms are considered women's language. To give an example, while Philips (2001:74) classifies *mono* as neither masculine nor feminine, Morita & Matsuki (1989, cited in Murata 1999:55) state that *mono* is "mainly used by women". The present author also disagrees with the notion that *deshoo* should be considered women's language. However, *deshoo* and its variations were included in order to cast as wide a net as possible. It also needs to be reasserted that a form being classified as women's language has no bearing on whether it actually is used by women in real life.

---

<sup>9</sup> While *mono* is in itself not a final particle (or a particle at all) it can, in an utterance final position, function as such. While the literature is inconsistent in how to classify *mono* when in an utterance final position, it will be referred to as an SFP in the present thesis for clarity. See Murata (1999) and Yoshida (2008) for a more detailed explanation of the functions of *mono*.

Only statements that were indicated to be direct quotes were considered for this study. For a given quote to be considered as a ‘direct’ quote, it needed to be surrounded by some kind of contextual clue indicating it as such; e.g. being surrounded by square brackets (*kakko*), the usual method of distinguishing quotes in Japanese, or being preceded by the speaker’s name (or initial) with a colon. Furthermore, due to the difficulty in differentiating ‘real’ embedded quotes from those ‘constructed’ by the speaker, embedded quotes were not considered for this study (see Svahn 2016:99-102 for further clarification of the ambiguities of direct quotes in Japanese). Additionally, although the term ‘direct quote’ is used when discussing the statements used in this study, it needs to be asserted that such quotes might not necessarily be verbatim statements of the speaker (see Liberman 2005). That the material for this study consists of translated material adds a further layer of uncertainty in regard to its authenticity, as there is reason to believe that there might be significant adaptation going on in some of the translated statements. The ramifications of this will be further discussed in section 3.4.5. Due to the lack of translation credits, statements where there was reason to suspect that a presumably non-Japanese woman was speaking Japanese or vice-versa were excluded from this study. There were also statements from Japanese women that, although surrounded by quotation marks, had other indications that they were not quotes but rather texts presented as such. As the vast majority of the data in this study would have consisted of these ‘false’ quotes, if included, they were also excluded from the study.

The women were divided into four groups based on their occupations. These groups are as follows:

1. Entertainers (such as actresses, singers, and models)
2. Creatives (such as authors, directors, and designers)
3. Elle staff (all but one collected from a single article where *Elle* editors from around the world were asked to comment on various make-up products)
4. Other occupations

The frequency of feminine sentence final forms was calculated as follows: Each feminine SFF used by a given woman counted were noted. The total amount of feminine SFFs was then divided by the total amount of characters in her speech in order to calculate a frequency. All the frequencies calculated this way have been normalized by a factor of 10 000. Normalization is used in corpus linguistics to compare corpora with differing word counts. Imagine we want to compare the frequency of a word between two corpora, one consisting of

5 million words and one consisting of 10 million words. In order to correctly compare the frequencies, we need to normalize them. To do this we need to divide the occurrences of the word we are looking at by the total amount of words in the corpus and multiply the result with our normalization factor. When working with corpora of the size described above, one typically uses a normalization factor of 1 000 000. However, as the corpus used in the present study is much smaller in comparison, a normalization factor of 10 000 is used instead. Also, as Japanese does not use spaces to separate words, it is not possible to utilize word count without manually counting all the words in the corpus. As this would have taken far too much time to be feasible, character count has been used instead. The final formula is therefore as follows:

$$frequency = \frac{\text{amount of feminine SFFs}}{\text{amount of characters}} * 10000$$

A woman whose speech consist of 500 characters who used feminine SFFs 5 times in total would thus be using them at a frequency of 100 per 10 000 characters ( $\frac{5}{500} * 10000$ ). The same method is used to calculate the frequency of the polite form. Frequencies calculated this way will be referred to as the intensity of feminine SFFs, and the intensity of the polite form, for the purpose of this thesis.

Calculating the frequency with this method comes with both advantages and disadvantages. When dividing the quotes into individual sentences there will always be a certain amount of arbitrariness. By using the total amount of characters as a baseline, this arbitrariness can be removed from the equation. On the other hand, sentence final forms can typically only occur at the end of sentences. This means that, for example if we calculate the intensity of feminine SFFs of two women who each speak two sentences in total, with all of their sentences ending with feminine SFFs, using this method, the woman with shorter sentences will have a higher intensity, even though both women in actuality utilized feminine SFFs in the same way. To illustrate, consider (12) below, and (13) on the next page:

(12) 京都に行きたいわ。

kyoto ni ik-i-ta-i wa

Kyoto LOC go-INF-DESID-NPST FP

‘I would like to go to Kyoto.’

- (13) そんなものはいらないわ。  
 sonna mono wa ira-na-i wa  
 such thing TOP need-NEG-NPST FP  
 ‘I don’t need those kinds of things.’

Both (12) and (13) include the feminine SFP *wa*. (12) contains 9 characters (including the period), giving it a feminine intensity of 1111 ( $\frac{1}{9} * 10000$ ) when calculated using the method described on the previous page. (13), however, contains 12 characters, giving it a feminine intensity of 833 ( $\frac{1}{12} * 10000$ ). Consequently, despite both sentences including the same amount of SFFs, (12) is given a higher intensity as it contains less characters. Due to this fact, other methods for calculating frequency, such as SFFs per number of sentences, will be used in addition when relevant.

### 3.4. Results

This section will explain and summarize the results of the study in detail. First, the frequency of use of feminine SFFs among the foreign and Japanese women will be compared. Then, the frequency of feminine SFFs in relation to the speaker’s occupation will be examined, detailing the results for each occupational group described in section 3.3. Afterwards, the frequency of the polite form will be examined. Finally, the influences of the translation itself on the material and other potential factors such as ethnicity and age will be discussed. Decimals have been rounded to the nearest whole number. When percentages are used, raw numbers will generally follow in parenthesis afterwards. Note that all the raw numbers for the results can also be found in Table 4 in the appendix.

#### 3.4.1. Feminine sentence final forms – Japanese vs. foreign women

As could be anticipated based on previous studies outlined in 2.5, there were large differences in the rate of utilization of feminine sentence final forms between Japanese and foreign women. While 36% (287) of the foreign women’s sentences contained feminine SFFs, just 1% (4) of the Japanese women’s sentences contained feminine SFFs, in comparison. A more detailed look into the frequency of use of feminine SFFs among foreign women will be given in the next section.

As seen in Table 3 below, the foreign women used a wide variety of feminine SFFs, with *no* and *wa* being the most common. On the other hand, the Japanese women only used variations of *deshoo* which in the present writer's opinion should not be considered as women's language.

**Table 3:** Number of usages of feminine sentence final forms

Sentence final forms	Number of usages - foreign women	Number of usages - Japanese women
<i>desho(o)</i>	0	2
<i>deshoone</i>	1	2
<i>kashira</i>	0	0
<i>mon(o)</i>	7	0
<i>ne</i>	9	0
<i>no</i>	111	0
<i>none</i>	3	0
<i>noyo</i>	16	0
<i>wa</i>	101	0
<i>wane</i>	10	0
<i>wayo</i>	2	0
<i>wayone</i>	0	0
<i>yo</i>	25	0
<i>yone</i>	2	0
Total	287	4

61% (65) of the foreign women used at least one feminine SFF in their speech compared to 7% (4) of the Japanese women. The average intensity of feminine SFFs among the foreign women was 120, while it was just 1 among the Japanese women. The data presented in this section can be said to answer research question 1 (How frequently is women's language employed in the translated speech of foreign women?) and 2 (How does this frequency of usage compare to that of Japanese women?).

### 3.4.2. Feminine sentence final forms – in relation to occupation

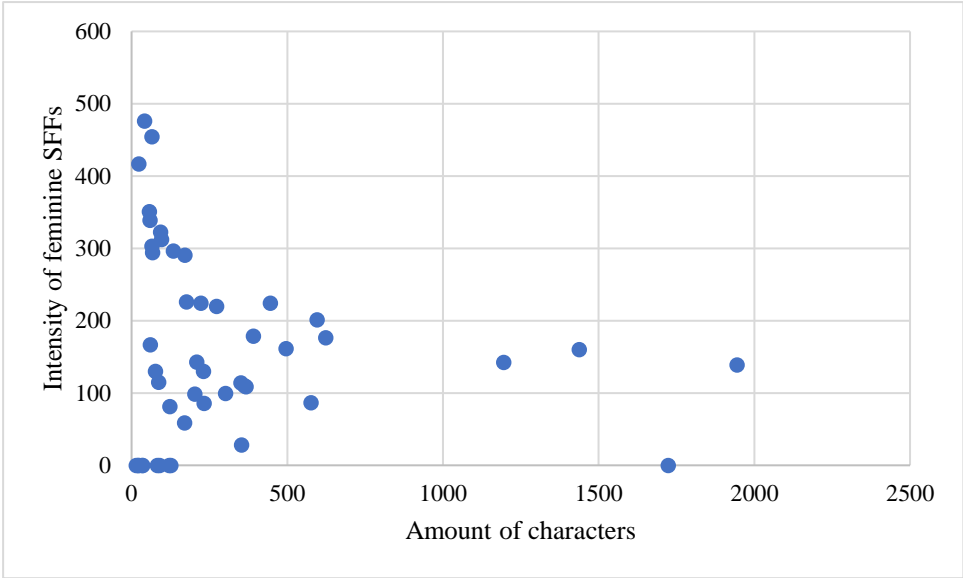
This section will discuss the frequency of feminine SFFs in relation to occupation. As explained in 3.3., all occupations were classified as one of four different categories: Entertainers, creatives, Elle staff, and other occupations. Among the foreign women entertainers was the most numerous with 44% of the foreign women belonging to said category. The second largest group was Elle staff followed by creatives and other occupations.





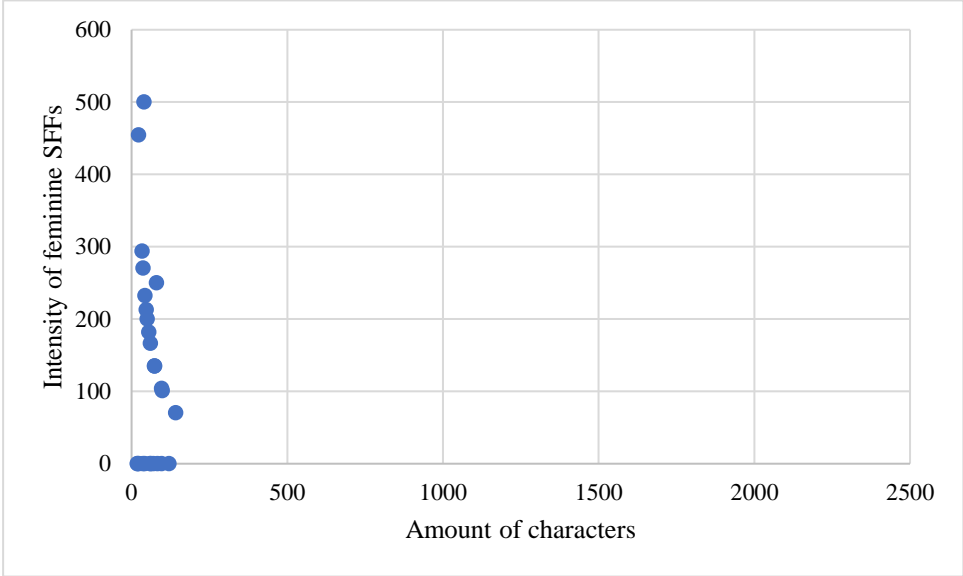
SFF. Of those that used zero feminine SFFs, all but one spoke less than 130 characters in total. A scatterplot of the intensity of feminine SFFs for this group is provided in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2:** Intensity of feminine SFFs – foreign women – entertainers



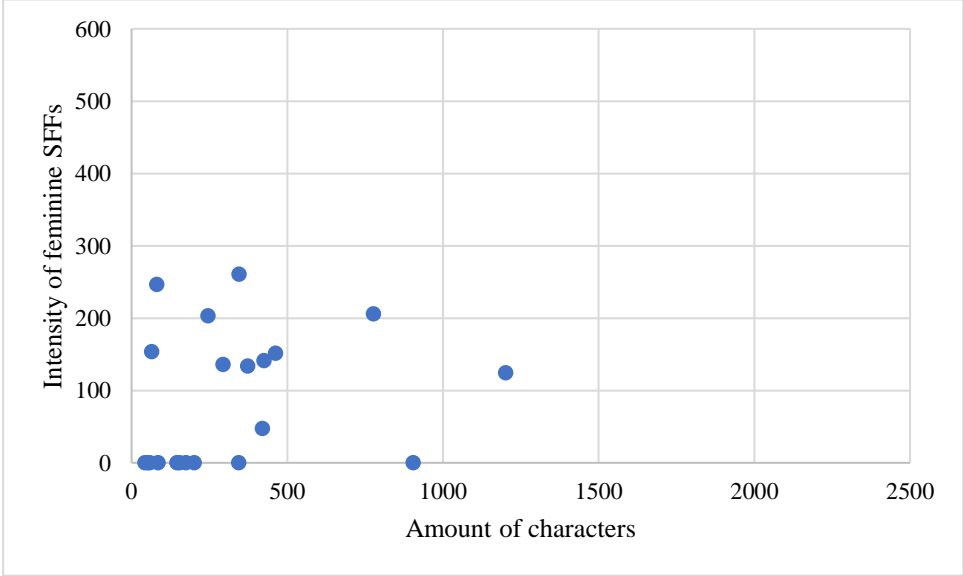
The Elle staff group consisted of 26 women, all editors in charge of the beauty section at various international editions of *Elle*. The average intensity of feminine SFFs of this group was 127. Due to all of the data of this group stemming from a single article, it is highly questionable if there is anything to be gained from a comparison with this group. A scatterplot for this group is provided in Figure 3 on the next page.

**Figure 3:** Intensity of feminine SFFs – foreign women – Elle staff



The creatives consisted of 21 people. The women in this group had a variety of occupations, such as designers, artists, and directors. The average intensity of feminine SFFs of this group was 86. 53% (11) of the creatives utilized at least one feminine SFF. As with the previous groups, a scatterplot is provided in Figure 4 below.

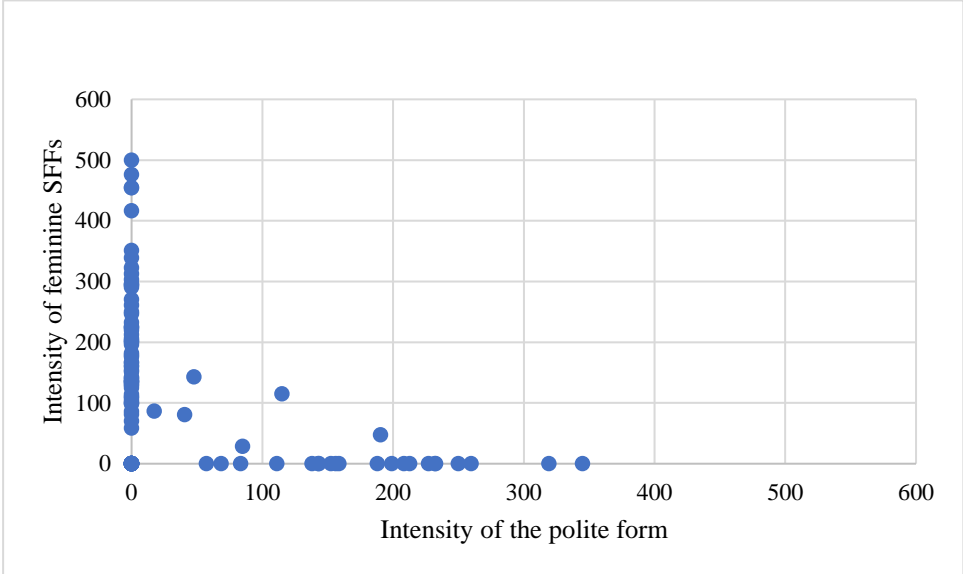
**Figure 4:** Intensity of feminine SFFs – foreign women – creatives



The category of other occupations was the smallest at just 13 people. The women included in this category had a wide variety of occupations, with politicians, company officials, NGO founders and researchers being some of the examples. At 21 they had the



**Figure 6:** Intensity of feminine SFFs in relation to the intensity of the polite form – foreign women



**3.4.4. The polite form – in relation to occupation**

As discussed in the previous section, the foreign women who used the polite form did generally not use feminine SFFs and vice-versa. Unsurprisingly, the foreign women belonging to the category of other occupations were therefore the most frequent users of the polite form, with an average intensity of 137. The Elle staff and the entertainers had the lowest average intensity at 11 and 20, respectively. Curiously, the creatives had an average intensity of 76, only 10 points away from their average intensity of feminine SFFs. A scatterplot of the intensity of the polite form among the foreign women is provided in Figure 7 on the next page.



Among the foreign entertainers, there is one person who uses the polite form in a remarkably different way from the others. Taking once again a look at Figure 7, the entertainers who had a high intensity for the polite form tended to have a very low character count, which as previously explained, correlates with more extreme values. However, there is one entertainer who uses the polite form at a comparatively high frequency despite having a high character count. The woman in question is Korean actress Park So-Dam, interviewed in the May issue of *Elle Japon* (2020e:76-78). Park, despite being an actress, uses the polite form with an intensity of 243, not far from the highest rates among the Japanese women. The interview with Park is described as an exclusive with the Korean edition of *Elle*, making it most probable that the interview was originally conducted in Korean. Korean has a politeness system with many similarities to Japanese<sup>10</sup>, and forms that are not dissimilar to the Japanese polite form. Presumably, the polite form was deployed at such a high frequency due to the fact that Park used comparable forms in the original Korean edition of the interview.

### 3.4.5. Translation interpretation

Due to several factors it was not possible to do a thorough comparison between the translated articles and their originals. There was a general lack of credits for writer and translator, making it difficult to locate the original articles, which might not even exist in the first place. However, through searching the website of the American edition of *Elle*, an equivalent to two interviews with the actress Scarlett Johansson in the January and April issues of *Elle Japon* (2020a:74-75, 2020d:66-69) was found in an article of October 2019<sup>11</sup> on the *Elle* website). The original article appears to have been split into two parts for the Japanese edition, with quotes from the earlier parts appearing in the January issue, and latter parts in the April issue. In the original English article, Johansson discusses her reaction upon being given a very long monologue for her role in the 2019 movie *Marriage Story*, recalling that she “was like, ‘Well, shit, come on.’”. However, in the Japanese translation in the January issue (2020a:75) she describes her reaction with the phrase ‘*Yada! Chotto!*’, which might be loosely translated as “Hey, no way!”. Later on, Johansson discusses the contents of a speech from a divorce lawyer played by Laura Dern from the same movie “where the mother is the Virgin Mary, and God’s up there and didn’t even do the fucking”. In the Japanese translation of this quote in the April

---

<sup>10</sup> See Brown (2008) for a comparison of the Japanese and Korean honorific systems.

<sup>11</sup> Gianinni, Melissa. 2019. ‘Scarlett Johansson Is a Happy Woman Who Can’t Stop Playing Sad Women’, *Elle*, 9 October.

issue (2020d:68) the word ‘fucking’ is translated as *majiwaru*, a verb that can also mean ‘to associate with’ and is much more euphemistic in comparison. This brings to mind Furukawa’s (2010:203) example of the character of Bridget Jones and her lack of swearing in Japanese translations, discussed in section 2.4. of the present thesis. However, in difference to Bridget Jones, Johansson is a real existing human being. Throughout both Japanese articles, Johansson makes frequent use of feminine SFFs, using them 7 times in the January article (consisting of 392 characters in total) and 11 times in the April article (consisting of 624 characters in total), giving her an intensity of 179 and 176 in respective article.

### 3.4.6. Other factors

In addition to occupation, other potential factors, such as age and ethnicity, were also examined, in order to answer research question 5 (Are there other factors, such as age and ethnicity, that affect whether women’s language is utilized?). However, it was difficult to make any assertions based on the data available. At first glance there seemed to be a slight tendency for older women to not be translated using feminine SFFs. However, due to a lack of data regarding the age of the quoted women, particularly for those not belonging to the category of entertainers, it was ultimately not possible to draw any conclusions regarding age as a potential factor.

Regarding ethnicity, it was also difficult to draw any conclusions as the vast majority of the foreign women quoted were white. For example, none of the Asian actresses used feminine SFF in their statements. However, there were only two Asian actresses interviewed overall, one of them being the Korean actress Park So-dam whose lack of feminine SFF could, as discussed in section 3.3.4., be explained by her being interviewed in Korean. The other actress, the Asian-American actress-cum-rapper-cum-comedian Awkwafina, interviewed in the April issue (*Elle Japon* 2020d:90) does indeed not use feminine SFFs despite, presumably, being interviewed in English. A brief search on Elle Japan’s website yielded an article<sup>12</sup>, where Awkwafina’s speech upon receiving her 2020 Golden Globe Award is quoted. In the provided quotes Awkwafina only uses feminine SFFs once. Her quotes consisted of 214 characters in total, giving her an intensity of 47, much lower than the

---

<sup>12</sup> Elle Japan. 2020. ‘Ajia Kei Joyuu de Hatsu! Gooruden Guroobu Shoo, Ookuwafaina ga Shuen Joyuu Shoo o Jushoo’ [A first for Asian Actresses! Awkwafina Receives Golden Globe Award for Best Actress], Elle Japan, 6 January.



average intensity of foreign entertainers at 159. However, in another article<sup>13</sup> from the same website, the Asian American actress Constance Wu, discussing her secret work at a strip club in preparation for the 2019 movie *Hustlers*, uses feminine SFFs 5 times, which at 114 characters in total gives her an intensity of 439, almost 10 times that of Awkwafina.

---

<sup>13</sup> Nagasaka, Yoko. 2020. ‘‘Hasuraazu’’ no Konsutansu Uu, Sutorippaa no Fukumen Baito o Yatteita’ [‘Hustlers’ Star Constance Wu Worked Undercover as a Stripper], Elle Japan, 18 February.

## 4. Discussion

As shown in the previous chapter there were notable differences in the utilization of both women's language and the polite form between Japanese and non-Japanese women. In this chapter the potential factors behind this difference in utilization will be discussed. The findings will also be compared with the results of the previous studies discussed in section 2.5.

The current study found a large difference in the frequency of usage of feminine SFFs between Japanese and non-Japanese women. While around 60% of the foreign women utilized feminine SFFs at least once, they were almost non-existent in the speech of the Japanese women. This finding is consistent with those of Okamoto (1995), who showed that women's language is essentially a dead language, at least in relation to its usage by real Japanese women. The most interesting finding was that there seemed to be a relation between the usage of women's language and the speaker's occupation. Non-Japanese women belonging to the entertainer group used feminine SFFs at a ratio of almost 2:1 of the creatives and nearly 8:1 of those belonging to other occupations.

So why exactly are feminine SFFs being utilized at a so much higher ratio by the entertainers? In section 2.5. the possibility was raised that role language is utilized by translators to 'characterize' foreign Olympic athletes for a Japanese audience. However, as stated by Nakamura (2011:21-24), there is a tendency to make even women who are not particularly feminine use women's language in Japanese translations. Furthermore, women's language was utilized in the interviews with actress Scarlett Johansson, despite her usage of coarse language, as discussed in section 3.4.5. This suggests that the translator(s) might not necessarily be considering the actual personalities of the women involved when deciding whether to use women's language. On the contrary, rather than utilizing women's language to convey Johansson's speech, the translator(s) seems to have altered Johansson's speech to make it fit within the bounds of an ideal user of women's language. The present author speculates that this 'ideal user' of women's language might be the key to when women's language is utilized or not. Based on previous research and the data from the present study, the ideal user of women's language is surmised to be a conventionally attractive woman with a 'feminine' occupation. Due to the history of women's language being utilized as a way to characterize young western white women, one might also surmise that she is white and at least not particularly old. However, as explained in the results it was not possible to directly draw any conclusions in regards to age and ethnicity from the data at hand. The women who

utilized feminine SFFs the most, actresses, singers, and models, certainly seems to most closely fit this definition. Nakamura's (2011:42-46) observations of the femininity of the topic affecting whether women's language is utilized or not might be another possible reason for its high frequency of use by foreigners in *Elle Japon*. It may be the case that the medium of the women's magazine itself adds a certain 'layer of femininity' to the situation.

Moving on to the polite form, there was an opposite relationship to the rate of usage of women's language with Japanese women utilizing it at a much higher average frequency than the non-Japanese women. Utilization of women's language by foreign women tended to be mutually exclusive to that of the polite form as previously shown in Figure 6 in section 3.4.3. This can partly be explained by how women's language is defined, with certain feminine SFPs such as *yo* and *ne*, only being defined as such when coupled with the zero copula. As this precludes the usage of the polite form, polite sentences with these particles cannot be classified as women's language, according to the definitions given in section 3.3. This however does not fully explain the mutual exclusivity of the polite form and feminine SFFs. There is a type of role language, *ojoosama kotoba* (Young Lady from a Good Family Language) that is used to characterize well-bred upper-class young ladies in fiction. One characteristic of *ojoosama kotoba* is to use the feminine SFPs *wa* and *no* together with the polite form of the copula, e.g. *desuwa* or *desuno* (Kinsui 2017:79). As these SFPs were not used even once with the polite form of the copula it seems that *ojoosama kotoba* is not considered an appropriate way to characterise real foreign women.

It need not be stated that real Japanese women, no matter how rich or upper-class they are, do not speak using *ojoosama kotoba*, but neither do they speak using women's language. So why is one considered as an appropriate way to characterize real foreign women while the other is not considered as such? The foreign actresses in *Elle Japon* frequently discussed topics such as gender equality, sexual harassment, and women's rights. A constant returning topic in their discussions was a perceived improvement in female characters as of recent times. Many of the actresses strongly expressed that they did not want to play the stereotypical female characters of the past. It seems paradoxical that actresses talking about a new era for women and an aversion towards stereotypical female characters should be translated as using stereotypical women's language. It would appear that if a woman fits the basic idea of the 'ideal user' of women's language, the content of her speech is of lesser importance. Her actual words play no role because everyone already knows what her imagined Japanese voice is supposed to 'sound' like.

While it is not possible to do a one-to-one comparison with the previous studies discussed in section 2.5. due to a difference in methodology, a rough comparison can still be worthwhile. The results from the present thesis showed that feminine SFFs were utilized by 61% of the foreign women. This finding is higher than the figure of 35% given in Ota (2009). Considering that Ota focused on one sole group of occupations (athletes), it seems pertinent to do a comparison between the different occupational groups examined in the current study. All of the occupational groups in the present thesis, except other occupations, had a higher percentage than the athletes in Ota (2009) with the group entertainers in particular being notably higher at 80%. The figure of 36% for the percentage of sentences that included feminine SFFs is higher than the 19.4% of Yabe (1996) and 28.4% of Takatori (2015) with the differences becoming even more stark when compared with the different occupational groups instead of overall. Regrettably, there were no athletes in the data of the present study, making it hard to speculate about what significance the source being a women's magazine, as opposed to major newspapers or the NHK, had on the frequency. According to Matsuzawa (2013:4), Asahi Shimbun has since 2002 included feminine SFPs such as *yo* and *wa* in their list of gendered language that one is strongly urged to avoid in their style guide. While it was not possible to locate any information about the contents of the style guide of *Elle Japon*, it seems highly questionable that any such stipulations exist therein.

## 5. Conclusion

Although women's language might be dead as a language used by real Japanese women, the results of the study indicated that it is very much alive in the imagined Japanese of foreign women, at least in the pages of *Elle Japon*. The results of the study showed that foreign women in translation frequently utilized feminine SFPs, with actresses, singers, and models utilizing it at very high frequencies compared to the Japanese women whose usage was near inexistent. In the previous chapter it was speculated that there might be some sort of ideal user of women's language. That there were such notable differences between the different type of occupations in the results suggest that occupation might be one of the factors determining how close a given woman hews to that ideal. However, it needs to be stated that actresses, singers and models, particularly those interviewed in mainstream women's magazines such as *Elle*, tend to closely embody many other traits traditionally associated with femininity. Given this fact and also considering that it was not in the scope of the present thesis to determine the attractiveness or femininity of a given woman, it is important to not put too much focus on solely the occupation as a factor.

In order to further examine the actual factors at play behind when women's language is utilized, more research is needed. While there exists a fair amount of research regarding the phenomenon of real foreign women using women's language in translations, there have not been many studies attempting to quantify the phenomenon outside of those discussed in section 2.5. A limitation of the present thesis is that it only used a single magazine as a source. In order to ascertain what value the results hold as a measurement of the usage of women's language in women's magazines as opposed to just the magazine of *Elle Japon*, research into other women's magazines will be needed. Comparisons with several other media, men's magazines, newspapers, etc., is another potential venue for future research. Finally, another potentially interesting option would be to compare the usage of women's language in translations of real women with how its used in fiction.

## Bibliography

### References

- Brown, Lucien. 2008. 'Contrasts between Korean and Japanese honorifics', *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, 81(1/4), 369-385
- Endo, Ori. 2008. 'The role of court lady's language in the historical norm construction of Japanese women's language', *Gender & Language*, 2(1), 9-24
- Furukawa, Hiroko. 2010. *De-feminising Translation: Making Women Visible in Japanese Translation*. Doctoral thesis, University of East Anglia
- Hasegawa, Yoko. 2014. *Japanese: A Linguistic Introduction*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hiramoto, Mie. 2009. 'Slaves speak pseudo-Toohoku-ben: The representation of minorities in the Japanese translation of *Gone with the Wind*', *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 13(2), 249-263
- Inoue, Miyako. 2002. 'Gender, language, and modernity: Toward an effective history of Japanese women's Language', *American Ethnologist*, 29(2), 392-422
- Inoue, Miyako. 2003. 'Speech without a speaking body: "Japanese women's language" in translation', *Language & Communication*, 23, 315-330
- Inoue, Miyako. 2006. *Vicarious language: Gender and linguistic modernity in Japan*. Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press
- Kinsui, Satoshi. 2017. *Virtual Japanese: Enigmas of Role Language*. Osaka: Osaka University Press
- Liberman, Mark. 2005. Bringing journalism into the 21st century. *Language Log* [blog]. Available at: <http://itre.cis.upenn.edu/~myl/language-log/archives/002275.html> (Accessed: 7 April 2020)
- Matsuzawa, Akihiro. 2013. 'Asahi shinbun no yoogo ni miru jendaa ishiki no henka' [Evolution of gender consciousness seen in the vocabulary of Asahi Shimbun], *Nihongo to Jendaa* [Japanese and Gender], 13, 4-7
- Matsuzawa, Akihiro. 2013. 'Asahi shinbun no yoogo ni miru jendaa ishiki no henka' [Evolution of gender consciousness seen in the vocabulary of Asahi Shimbun], *Nihongo to Jendaa* [Japanese and Gender], 13, 4-7

- Murata, Masami. 1999. *Syntax and Semantics of the Nominals 'mono' and 'koto' in Japanese*. Master's thesis, Massey University
- Nakamura, Momoko. 2004. 'Discursive construction of the ideology of "women's language": "Schoolgirl language" in the Meiji period (1868-1912)', *Nature-People-Society*, 36, 43-80
- Nakamura, Momoko. 2011. 'Translation: Inter-lingual construction of indexicality', *Nature-People-Society*, 51, 25-59
- Nakamura, Momoko. 2013. *Hon'yaku ga Tsukuru Nihongo: Hiron wa 'Onnakotoba' o Hanashitsuzukeru* [Japanese Constructed by Translation: Heroines Continue to Speak 'Women's Language']. Tokyo: Hakutakusha
- Nakamura, Momoko. 2014. *Gender, Language and Ideology: A Genealogy of Japanese Women's Language*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company
- Narahara, Tomiko. 2002. *The Japanese Copula: Forms and Functions*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Okamoto, Shigeko. 1995. "'Tasteless" Japanese: Less "feminine" speech among young Japanese women'. In Kira Hall and Mary Bucholtz (eds.), *Gender Articulated: Language and the Socially Constructed Self*. London and New York: Routledge. 297-325
- Okamoto, Shigeko & Shibamoto Smith, Janet S. 2008. 'Constructing linguistic femininity in contemporary Japan: scholarly and popular representations', *Gender & Language*, 2(1), 87-112
- Ota, Makie. 2009. 'Usain Boruto no "I" wa, naze 'ore' to yakusarerunoka – supootsu hoosoo no 'yakuwarigo'' [Why is Usain Bolt's "I" translated as "ore" in Japanese?: Role language in sports broadcasting], *The NHK Monthly Report on Broadcast Research*, 59(3), 56-73
- Philips, Mieko. 2001. 'Are Japanese women less feminine now?: A study of sentence-final forms in Japanese women's conversation'. In T.E. McAuley (ed.), *Language Change in East Asia*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press. 70-84
- Svahn, Axel. 2016. *The Japanese Imperative*. Doctoral thesis, Lund University
- Takatori, Yuki. 2015. 'More Japanese than the Japanese: Translations of interviews with foreigners', *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, 23(3), 475-488

- Yabe, Hiroko. 1996. 'Shinbun hoodoo no gaikokujin danwa ni miru danjosa – buntai to shujoshi shiyoo no kankei o chuushin ni' [Male-female distinction in foreigner's speech in newspapers – Focusing on the usage of sentence final particles], *Kotoba* [Language], 17, 58–72
- Yoshida, Nina Azumi. 2008. 'The agent-obfuscating function of "mono" "things" in Japanese discourse'. In Sarah Berson et al. (eds), *Proceedings of the thirty-fourth annual meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley linguistics society. 353-364

### **Primary Sources**

*Elle Japon*. 2020a, January

*Elle Japon* 2020b, February

*Elle Japon*. 2020c, March

*Elle Japon*. 2020d, April

*Elle Japon*. 2020e, May

Elle Japan. 2020. 'Ajia Kei Joyuu de Hatsu! Gooruden Guroobu Shoo, Ookuwafaina ga Shuen Joyuu Shoo o Jushoo' [A first for Asian Actresses! Awkwafina Receives Golden Globe Award for Best Actress], *Elle Japan*, 6 January. Available at: <https://www.elle.com/jp/culture/movie-tv/a30420019/awkwafina-golden-globe-200107/> (Accessed: 6 May 2020)

Gianinni, Melissa. 2019. 'Scarlett Johansson Is a Happy Woman Who Can't Stop Playing Sad Women', *Elle*, 9 October. Available at: <https://www.elle.com/culture/a29338449/scarlett-johansson-marriage-plot-interview-2019/> (Accessed: 6 May 2020)

Nagasaka, Yoko. 2020. ''Hasuraazu' no Konsutansu Uu, Sutorippaa no Fukumen Baito o Yatteita' ['Hustlers' Star Constance Wu Worked Undercover as a Stripper], *Elle Japan*, 18 February. Available at: <https://www.elle.com/jp/culture/celebgossip/a30985014/constance-wu-stripper-200219/> (Accessed: 6 May 2020)



## Appendix

**Table 4:** Summary of results

	Number of people	Amount of characters	Number of sentences	Sentences containing feminine SFFs*	Sentences containing the polite form	Average intensity of feminine SFFs	Average Intensity of the polite form	Number of people who utilized feminine SFFs	Number of people who utilized the polite form
Entertainers (F)	47	14665	452	195 (43%)	53 (12%)	159	20	37 (79%)	7 (15%)
Creatives (F)	21	6852	213	72 (34%)	46 (22%)	86	76	11 (53%)	8 (38%)
Elle Staff (F)	26	1583	60	17 (28%)	3 (5%)	127	11	15 (58%)	8 (2%)
Other occupations (F)	13	2885	69	3 (4%)	42 (61%)	21	137	2 (15%)	10 (77%)
Overall (F)	107	25985	794	287 (36%)	144 (18%)	120	43	65 (61%)	27 (25%)
Entertainers (J)	15	6450	171	0	103 (60%)	0	162	0	15 (100%)
Creatives (J)	25	7312	187	0	103 (55%)	0	128	0	19 (76%)
Elle Staff (J)	2	545	18	0	4 (22%)	0	106	0	2 (100%)
Other occupations (J)	18	11880	279	4 (1%)	169 (61%)	3	133	4 (22%)	17 (94%)
Overall (J)	60	26187	655	4 (1%)	379 (58%)	1	137	4 (7%)	53 (88%)

*Abbreviations:* F, Foreign; J, Japanese

\*Same as total number of feminine SFFs