Japanese Native Speakers' Derogatory Language Use Against Men and Women

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Abstract

This thesis explores the differences between how Japanese native speakers use insults and derogatory language toward men and women. Initially, impoliteness is described as an area of sociolinguistics that explores face-threatening acts, the offensiveness of which is modified by various factors, such as the interlocutors' relationship and gender. Then, gendered language is described as a subset of role language. Next, female speech is described and discussed as a spontaneously occurring aspect of the Japanese language, and as a manufactured ideal for how women should speak created after the Meiji restoration. This linguistic ideal of a woman should use polite and elegant language — an idea that lingers on to this day. From this theoretical background emerges the research question: "Is there a difference in how speakers of Japanese use derogatory and insulting language against men and women?" To investigate this, a survey was distributed to and answered by 12 participants. The survey consisted of two parts. In the first part, the participants were asked to judge the offensiveness of sentences, each containing one of the selected 10 Japanese derogatory words. The sentences were contextualized using the information about the interlocutors' relationship, as well as their gender — shown through the use of male and female names. After that, the participants were given a list of 30 terms and asked what gender they associated with the words and how likely they were to use them in a friendly context. The results showed a pattern of the women's use of insults being perceived as more offensive compared to men's use of those same words. Thus, this thesis suggests that the use of derogatory language by women is seen as more offensive compared to its use by men.

Keywords: impoliteness, gender, insults, derogatory language

Conventions

In this thesis, the modified Hepburn system is used for transcription. Japanese words are shown in italics. English translation is provided within brackets.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors for being patient with me and giving very helpful feedback on my thesis and construction of my survey, as well as Hayashi-*sensei* for helping me with translating my survey into Japanese. I would also like to thank my linguistics teacher Ishihara-*sensei* for giving me extra assistance with my thesis, as well as my friend for helping me brainstorm and proofreading it for me.

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1. Introduction

Nishimura (2019) states that in the field of Japanese sociolinguistics, politeness has received much more attention from researchers than impoliteness. She traces back the first proper research on impoliteness to the work of the psychologist Hoshino in the 1970s. Hoshino blamed the unwillingness to describe Japanese impoliteness among linguists on their additional role as language teachers, who had the underlying assumption that you should not teach bad Japanese but rather good Japanese. Thus, impoliteness was not an attractive research topic among scholars (Nishimura, 2019, pp. 264-265). This had carried into the modern day, as pointed out by Calvetti (2020) when looking at an up-to-date list of papers on Japanese impoliteness made by Nishimura. The list shows that publications on the topic are few and far between (Calvetti, 2020, p. 101). Impoliteness is thus a field with a relative lack of research, which is why it is important to contribute additional data by investigating it further.

Impoliteness is also often tied to a balance (or imbalance) of power between interlocutors, which in some cases may relate to their gender. Therefore, it is possible that the gender of the speaker and the addressee may affect the perceived impoliteness of an utterance. This makes it interesting to investigate whether native speakers differ in their use of insults and derogatory language depending on their own gender, as well as that of the addressee.

Perceived impoliteness is also affected by the context, such as the relationship between interlocutors, with the closer relationships allowing for joking or ironic use of seemingly offensive language. For example, it is more acceptable to use teasing insults with friends than with superiors at work — it might be acceptable to jokingly call one's friend an idiot, while saying the same thing to one's boss, teacher, or parents would certainly be seen as less acceptable.

If the factors such as gender and the relationship between the speaker and the addressee affect the interpretation of impolite utterances such as 'idiot', it is natural to assume that they might interact and create complex patterns of perceived impoliteness.

This thesis will explore whether there is a difference between how native Japanese speakers use insults and derogatory language towards men and women. First, in the background chapter, the notion of impoliteness as well as gendered language use in Japanese will be described and explained. The background chapter will then end with the formulation of the research question. In the following chapter, the methodology will be explained, and the design of the study elaborated upon. In the next section, the analysed results of the study will be shown,

examined and then further discussed in the following chapter. Finally, some conclusions will be drawn.

2. Background

2.1. Impoliteness

According to Culpeper (2011), impoliteness is a multidisciplinary area of research, involving fields such as social psychology, sociology, and socio-pragmatics. In social psychology, it falls into the broader field of aggression research. Research on aggression is largely focused on physical violence but, in the right conditions, impolite language such as insults that cause, for example, public embarrassment or deprive someone of love, can be aggressive. Within the study of aggression, the theory of social harm comes close to verbal impoliteness. Social harm attacks the target's social identity in order to remove their power or social status by means of insults, sarcasm, and other types of impolite behaviours. In sociology the focus has been on the social effect of verbal abuse, focusing on verbal abuse in relation to gender, ethnicity, education, among other things. For instance, Culpeper gives the example of how girls find non-physical or verbal behaviours to be more damaging than physical ones (Culpeper, 2011, p. 4).

Socio-pragmatics is a branch of pragmatics that focuses on explaining communicative behaviour. Therefore, most research on impoliteness in linguistics is done within the field of socio-pragmatics. An important theory within socio-pragmatics when it comes to studying impoliteness is the idea of 'face'. In English, it is mostly used as part of the phrase 'to lose face', meaning to receive damage to one's public image (Culpeper, 2011, p. 24). However, in linguistics, there are two kinds of face: a positive face and a negative face. A positive face-threatening act can be defined as insulting, criticising, ridiculing, etc. the addressee. On the other hand, if the act impinges on someone's freedom of action, then it is a negative face-threatening act (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp. 65-66).

Given that impoliteness is being researched within the framework of many fields, it is natural that there are many ways to define it. For instance, Culpeper (2011) writes that "[i]mpoliteness involves (a) a mental attitude held by a participant and comprised of negative evaluative beliefs about particular behaviours in particular social contexts, and (b) the activation of that attitude by those particular in context behaviours." This implies a very strong reliance on the subjective perspective of the person who deems a phrase, behaviour, act, etc., impolite (Culpeper, 2011, p. 22). A slightly simpler definition comes from Nishimura (2019)

who defines impoliteness as a cover term for insults, face-threatening acts, and violation of expected norm behaviour in each context (Nishimura, 2019, p. 264).

Both definitions of impoliteness stress that there are many ways one can act to appear impolite. This is because impoliteness is not just about the words being used, but also about how, and in what context, they are used. Culpeper (2011) writes that many derogatory terms are used both to hurt others, and as playful banter among friends. Much of impolite language is not necessarily viewed as impolite by the receiver, given the right context. Different kinds of people have different kinds of norms for what they perceive as impolite and what they do not. An impolite phrase can be perceived as more severely offensive if it is believed to be intentional.

Thus, insulting another person can either be hurtful or can be seen as just harmless banter. For instance, calling a stranger an 'idiot' can be seen as rude but calling a close friend one can be seen as playful banter. This is because each individual culture and community, such as individual friendships within a certain group of people, have different kinds of norms for what is acceptable or not.

On the other hand, Culpeper (2011) also mentions work by Locher and Watts (2008) who state that the interpretation of an utterance by the addressee is of equal, if not greater, importance when judging the severity of impolite language (Culpeper, 2011, p. 50). Thus, even if the speaker signals that they consider calling their friend an idiot just a bit of harmless fun, it can still be perceived as impolite or insulting if the addressee interprets it as such. Therefore, given that impoliteness is a highly context-dependent aspect of interaction, each culture will have different ideas of what is seen as acceptable behaviour and what is not. Furthermore, within those cultures, there will be sub-cultures with different norms. This consequently makes it important to look at impoliteness within the context of not only the culture you are studying but also within individual and situational contexts as well.

When it comes to impoliteness in the Japanese language, Calvetti (2020, p. 1) writes that "in Japanese the simple use of an alternative form of the personal pronoun, one less honorific than the expected form, could be perceived as a genuine attack against the interlocutor, with the same derogative value as a true swear word in another language." Thus, in Japanese, impoliteness can be achieved by using the simple form of a verb such as *suru* (to do) when the situation calls for the polite version — *shimasu* (to do).

Another example would be *keigo* (honorific speech), which is used when talking to people of higher status than yourself and is seen as a polite way of speaking. However, if used in a casual context such as talking to a friend or loved one, it can be a face-threatening act (Calvetti, 2020). Thus, *keigo* is not always polite.

Another important thing to note here is that, according to Calvetti (2020), just changing the personal pronoun to a more casual one can elicit a sense of rudeness for the addressee. This is because there are multiple ways of expressing the equivalent of the English first-person pronoun 'I' in Japanese. The clearest example of this is the male pronouns *boku* and *ore* — both seen as casual pronouns and used in casual conversations, while in situations where *keigo* is needed more polite versions such as *watashi or watakushi* are used. Thus, if one makes the mistake of using *boku* when the situation calls for *watashi,* one risks causing damage to their interlocutor's 'face'

However, there are not many studies exploring impoliteness in Japanese, as pointed out by Nishimura (2019) (as cited in Calvetti, 2020). Thus, conducting research on impoliteness becomes more important, as it helps to strengthen our understanding of politeness, as well as language use in Japan. To further understand impoliteness in a Japanese context, and for the purposes of this study, Japanese gendered speech needs to be discussed.

2.2. Gendered speech

In Japanese, there are linguistic differences between how men and women speak, usually centred around specific word use, first-person pronouns and sentence-final particles. Female speech is exemplified by its use of *atashi* (casual) and *watashi* (neutral) as first-person pronouns, and the use of sentence-final particles such as *kashira, no-ne, no-yo-ne, wa, wa-ne*, and *wa-yo*. Male speech, on the other hand, is characterised by the use of the first-person pronouns *boku* and *ore* in informal settings and using sentence-final particles *na, yo-na, zo, ze* (Hasegawa, 2015).

In Japanese, male speech has been seen as a stable baseline for comparison between male and female speech. Thus, female speech has been described in terms of how it deviates from men's speech (Ohara, 2019, p. 289). The natural conclusion from this is that the Japanese language is very restrictive about what is socially acceptable for men and women to say.

However, research from Hasegawa (2015) has shown that, for women, gendered speech is not as restrictive as it can be for male speakers. Girls have been observed using *zo* and *ze*

while fighting, and to present themselves as more assertive. In some instances, female speakers also use *ore* and *boku*, while men never use female forms according to Hasegawa (2015). Women can use the aforementioned masculine forms to convey power and roughness. However, men do not use female forms to show tenderness.

Another facet of gendered speech in Japanese is that it is also a creation of language ideology. The idea of Japanese female speech was started during the Meiji restoration (Hasegawa, 2015). Okamoto & Shibamoto-Smith (2004) write that due to rising nationalism in Japan, proper use of women's language was taught through the media. For example, in 1935 Yoshida Sumo gave lectures on proper speech for women, in which he claimed that gender differences were biological, and women's speech had always been beautiful and elegant. Another big influence on the construction of women's speech was Kakumoto (1929), who described *nyōbo kotoba* (court lady language) as polite, indirect, elegant, beautiful, and avoiding Chinese loanwords (as cited in Obana, 2019). This has influenced Japanese people to perceive female speech as elegant and beautiful. In addition to this, the lexicon of *nyōbo kotoba* contains words that are mainly used by women in modern-day Japan such as *himojii* (hungry) or *oishii* (delicious) (Ohara, 2019). Okamoto & Shibamoto-Smith (2004) write that although *nyōbo kotoba* is not the origin of female speech, it played a large role in influencing the language ideology surrounding women's speech as an index of femininity and class status.

Nyōbo kotoba and female speech are part of what is called *yakuwari-go* (role language). *Yakuwari-go* is defined by Kinsui (2011) as a specific type of speech encompassing specific grammar, vocabulary, expressions, intonation and more. It makes it possible to distinguish the speaker's age, occupation, status, appearance, personality and more (Kinsui, 2011, p. 1).

Women are also expected to use more honorifics. The notion that women should speak politely indicates that polite speech is feminine speech. For instance, how-to books instruct women to speak politely, because it makes them more attractive as women. When the National Language Association was created in 1937, they selected correct forms, such as nouns and polite language as correct women's speech, with the goal of subordinating women into being good wives and mothers to men (Ohara, 2019).

All this suggests that female speech in Japanese is not solely a spontaneously occurring phenomenon, but also a slowly implemented ideal of how a woman should speak. Okamoto and Shibamoto-Smith (2004) report a common observation that women speak using polite language more often than men. This contrasts with the findings of Rich (1987), who challenges

this assumption in her study on women's use of derogatory language against men in English (Rich, 1987, p. 357).

There is also a clear difference between younger and older generations of women in how much they use honorifics; the older generations tend to speak more politely than the younger generations (Okamoto and Shibamoto-Smith, 2004). This, then, is probably part of the reason for the opinion polls being sent out to the public asking if women's speech is being corrupted.

Those opinion polls indicate that some parts of Japanese society frown upon the deviation from the expectation that women should speak more politely. This leads to the question of whether this affects the perception of insults and impolite language when used by women rather than men. If women are perceived to be more polite than men, then once they break these norms, one can assume it will be seen as a stronger face-threatening act. However, women are not a monolith where everyone exhibits the same traits. As stated earlier by Okamoto & Shibamoto (2004), age impacts the amount of polite language use amongst women.

Furthermore, as stated before by Culpeper (2011) "different groups have different value systems", which means that what is acceptable to say changes depending on the social context around the individual (Culpeper, 2011, p. 116). Therefore, what is acceptable to say to one's superior at work would not be appropriate to say to a significant other or a close friend and vice versa. Culpeper (2011) also states findings indicating that regional differences exist in how severe an insult is perceived to be (Culpeper, 2011, p. 142). This then means that many factors affect how people interpret impolite language such as insults and derogatory terms.

A survey conducted on American English-speaking university students looked at men and women's use of insults and derogatory terms against men and women in the United States. They found that most of the derogatory terms used reflected the opposite of an ideal man or woman (James, 1998, p. 413). James (1998) also found that terms such as 'slut', which is mostly used towards women, had started to change, and were beginning to be used towards men. The James (1998) study cannot be generalized to all the English-speaking world. However, if in American English terms such as 'slut' seem to have started to change their target to include men, questions can then be raised about the degree of face damage it causes and whether some similar development might be seen in Japanese. As Japanese is a more honorific-focused language, with clear ideas of how a man or a woman should speak, one could assume

that the use of impolite language such as insults, and derogatory terms would also continue to be more male-dominated.

However, insults are more diverse than that. Studies conducted in queer bars and LBTQ+ spaces have already shown people using different gender role languages to express themselves (Abe, 2010). Furthermore, women have been shown to use typically male sentence-final particles and terms to seem more assertive (Hasegawa, 2015). Gender-related insults in Japanese could rather plausibly vary in their use amongst the sexes.

2.3. Research question

Thus, this study aims to investigate Japanese speakers' use of derogatory language against men and women, guided by the research question "Is there a difference in how speakers of Japanese use derogatory and insulting language against men and women?", as well as the sub-questions "Does the gender of the interlocutors impact the offensiveness of insults?" and "Does the relationship between the interlocutors have an impact on the offensiveness of insults?".

3. Methodology

To answer the research question "Is there a difference in how speakers of Japanese use derogatory and insulting language against men and women?" and its sub-questions "Does the gender of the interlocutors impact the offensiveness of insults?" and "Does the relationship between the interlocutors have an impact on the offensiveness of insults?", an online survey (see Appendix) was constructed and sent out to willing participants. Derogatory words to be examined were collected from many sources such as a Wikipedia article on Japanese profanity, Valentine's (1997) chapter on queer Japanese and a short preliminary survey sent out to speakers of Japanese asking them to list as many insults they knew as possible. This short survey was also used to check if the words collected from other sources were in use. The two questions asked in this initial survey were: *ika-no kotoba-no naka-de tsukatta koto aru-ka, mata-wa kiita koto-ga aru-ka-o erande kudasai* (From the list below, please chose the words you have used or heard), and *jōki no kotoba igai-ni oboeteiru, shitteiru bujoku ya besshō-o zenbu kaite kudasai* (With the exception of the above-stated words, please write all insults and derogatory terms you know). These words were then checked for definition using web dictionaries jisho.org and weblio.jp.

After the words were collected, they were separated into the following categories: intelligence, LGBTQ+, promiscuity, societal standards, age, personality, appearance, and other (ethnicity, disability, and speaker's feeling of disgust) as shown in Table 1. Due to many words having complex meanings, they were assigned to the two most fitting categories. This was to ensure that the words used in the sentence part of the survey included at least one representative of each group and therefore were not limited to just one category.

	Intelligence	LGBTQ+	Promiscuity	Societal standards	Age	Personality	Appearance	Other
Yariman (male slut)			x					
Rezu (lesbian)		x						
Homo (homosexual)		x						
Busu (ugly woman)				x			x	
Kusogaki (damn brat)					x	x		
Baka (idiot)	x							

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Kuzu (scum)				x		x		
Anpontan (idiot)	x							
Bitchi (bitch, slut)			x			x		
Kimoi (gross)								x
Yarichin (male slut)			*x*					
Aho (idiot)	x							
Okama (transsexual, homosexual)		x						
Onabe (transsexual)		x						
Katawa (cripple)				x				x
Kusobabā (old hag)				x	x	x		
Kusoyarō (son of a bitch)						x		
Chon (a derogatory term for Koreans)	x							x
Debu (fatty)							x	
Nonke (an exclusionary term for a heterosexual)		x						
Parasaito shinguru (Parasite single)				x				
Mīhā (poser)				x		x		
Moyashi (spineless child)				x		x		
Wakazō (youngster)					x			
Warugaki (misbehaved brat)					x			
Baita (whore)			x					
Rōgai (problems caused by the elderly)					x			
Yajū (wild beast)						x		
Yabanjin (barbarian)						x		
Inkya				x		x		

(anti-social person)							

Table 1 Category membership by word

3.1. Part one of the survey

Using the words collected from the sources mentioned in the previous section, the second three-part survey was constructed (see Appendix). The first part was used to collect basic demographic data such as age, gender, and dialect. The reason dialect information was collected was to be able to spot if dialect ended up having any effect on the interpretation of the insults. After this, in the second part of the survey, the participants were given a scenario with one speaker and one addressee. Each scenario contained 10 sentences involving different insults the speaker used toward the addressee. There were 11 words picked from the previously collected items and used in the 10 sentences for each scenario. The 11 words used were *anpontan* (idiot), *baka* (idiot), *bitchi* (bitch or slut), *busu* (ugly woman), *homo* (homosexual), *rezu* (lesbian), *kimoi* (gross), *kusogaki* (damn brat), *kuzu* (scum), *yarichin* (male slut) and *yariman* (female slut). The reason why only 10 sentences were constructed was because *homo* was used when there was a male addressee, and *rezu* was used when there was a female addressee.

There were 16 different scenarios in total. Each scenario had 2 factors: the relationship between the speaker and addressee and the gender combination of the speaker and the addressee. The relationships were given as *koibito* (romantic partners), *tomodachi* (friends), *shiriai* (acquaintances) and *mishiranu hito* (strangers). The gender combinations of the speaker and addressee were given as male to male (MM), female to female (FF), male to female (MF) and female to male (FM). However, due to a mistake in the survey, the FM romantic partners condition was mistakenly turned into a second MF romantic partners condition, so the data for that specific combination is missing. To further signal the gender of the speaker and addressee without it being intrusive, clearly gendered names were used. So, an example of one condition would be as shown in 1a.

(1)   a. *Shiriai: Takahiro to   Yūko*

        (acquaintances: Takahiro and Yuko).

The four relationship conditions were chosen to give a broader range of context for why and when the words are used. In each scenario, the participant was asked to rate each sentence on a scale of 1-5 on how humiliating they found the word use. The average judgment across

participants was then calculated and will henceforth be referred to as the Average Impoliteness Value (AIV).

For each scenario the participants were given the same instructions, i.e. to judge the word use, with the only change being the names marking interlocutors' gender and the information about their relationship. An example of these instructions is provided below in 2b.

(2) b. *Takahiro-wa Yūko-ni taishite ika-no hyōgen-o chokusetu iimashita. Anata wa dono yō-ni kanjimasuka*

([if] Takahiro used the expression below towards Yuko. How does this make you feel?)

Each sentence followed the same pattern to maintain consistency, i.e. name + particle + insult. An example of this from the survey is given in 1c.

(1) c. *Yūko-no baka*

(Yuko is an idiot)

Kutsujokuteki de-wa-nai   1, 2, 3, 4, 5   totemo kutsujokuteki da

(Not humiliating at all   1, 2, 3, 4, 5   very humiliating)

3.2. Part two of the survey

At the end of the survey, two identical lists of 30 words were given to the participants, who were asked to consider their initial impression of those terms and which gender they associated them with. They were then asked to select one out of five options: 'male', 'female', 'both', 'neither', and 'do not know the word'. However, as was later pointed out and confirmed in personal communication with a native speaker, the question did leave the issue of whether the participant was meant to imagine the user or the addressee of the term open to interpretation, which might have affected the results. The words used in the sentence part of the survey were included in the list among 20 new terms, making the complete list total 30 items. This was to further investigate the presence of any trends among the type of insults used.

Finally, the participants were given the same list of words, but this time they were asked whether they would ever use the word in jest. This was done to give more context to the words and to see whether there was any correlation between words seen as very humiliating and words that can be used in a joking manner. There were five different choices: *zettai-ni tsukawanai* (never use it), *tsukau toki-ni chūcho suru* (hesitant to use it), *aite-ni yotte tsukaeru baai-ga aru*

(dependent on the addressee, I might use it), *jōkyō-ni yotte tsuakeru baai-ga aru* (dependent on the situation I might use it), and finally *mondai-naku tsukaeru* (no problem using it).

3.3. Participants and sampling

Participants for the study were sourced through opportunity sampling, such as asking members of Japanese conversations groups, the Japanese community of Skåne, and personal friends of the researcher to fill out the survey. In total 12 participants answered the survey — ten women, one man, and one participant of non-disclosed gender. Nine of the participants were between the ages of 20-29 and three participants were between 40-55 years old. Participants between the ages of 20-29 were classified as 'young' and participants between the ages of 40-55 were classified as 'older'. From the dialects reported by the participants, four dialect groups were isolated: Tokyo dialect, Kansai dialect, self-proclaimed no dialect, and other.

4. Results

4.1. Insults and gender

The data from the survey was analysed in two parts, the first one being the results of the sentences and the second one being the judgments (perceived gender, friendliness) of the word lists. From the sentence part data, the Average Impoliteness Value for each word regardless of condition was taken.

Word	Average impoliteness value
Anpontan (idiot)	3.24
Baka (Idiot)	3.51
Bitchi (bitch or slut)	4.45
Busu (ugly woman)	4.53
Homo (homosexual)	4.54
Rezu (lesbian)	4.23
Kimoi (gross)	4.52
Kusogaki (*damn brat)*	3.91
Kuzu (scum)	4.58
Yarichin (male slut)	4.45
Yariman (female slut)	4.61

Table 2 Average Impoliteness Value regardless of condition

Table 2 shows that on average all the words received a score of three or higher, with *yariman* (female slut) being the most offensive with an AIV of 4.61, and *anpontan* (idiot) being the least offensive word with an AIV of 3.24. Words such as *anpontan* and *baka,* which are both derogatory terms for unintelligent people, received much lower average impoliteness values compared to the rest. Another word that got an average score of below four is *kusogaki,* which roughly means 'damn brat' in English and can be categorised as a behaviour-related derogatory term.

Another expected result is that words related to sexuality, appearance and societal value received on average a very high impoliteness value, indicating that among this sample of participants, words targeting behaviour and intelligence were seen as less humiliating than words related to sexuality, appearance, and societal value. This can also be further observed in the average judgement of the words within the four gender combination scenarios as seen in

Table 3, where *anpontan* (idiot), *baka* (idiot), and *kusogaki* (damn brat) had much lower scores compared to the rest of the words.

Another interesting result of the sentence part of the survey is that the Average Impoliteness Values for the words were higher when it was used by a female speaker compared to a male speaker. However, this trend was not always reflected in the data as exemplified by *yariman* (female slut), which received the higher score when a woman was the target of the insult, with the AIV of 4.67 for FF (female to female) and 4.76 when it was MF (male to female), compared to 4.48 for MM (male to male) and 4.47 for FM (female to male). These are, however, very small differences, and given the small number of participants, this can only be interpreted as a potential trend. Another interesting finding is that *rezu* (lesbian) had a lower average score compared to *homo* (homosexual), which can indicate that insulting someone by implying male homosexuality is seen as worse compared to female homosexuality. However, the differences here are again small, so it also at best indicates a potential trend that could be more prominently shown with a larger participant number.

Words	Male-to-Male	Male-to-Female	Female-to-Female	Female-to-Male
	MM	MF	FF	FM
Anpontan (idiot)	3.17	3.02	3.38	3.53
Baka (idiot)	3.34	3.30	3.63	3.92
Bitchi (bitch or slut)	4.31	4.53	4.48	4.47
Busu (ugly woman)	4.29	4.57	4.69	4.56
Homo (homosexual)	4.46	n/a	n/a	4.64
Rezu (lesbian)	n/a	4.20	4.27	n/a
Kimoi (gross)	4.56	4.45	4.46	4.67
Kusogaki (damn brat)	3.75	3.79	3.94	4.31
Kuzu (scum)	4.56	4.53	4.54	4.75
Yaricin (male slut)	4.46	4.38	4.44	4.58
Yariman (female slut)	4.48	4.76	4.67	4.47
Total average	4.14	4.15	4.25	4.39

Table 3 Average Impoliteness Value by gender condition

Another potential trend observable in the data is that *busu* (ugly woman) appears to be seen as more offensive when a woman is involved compared to when it is just men — the MM condition had an Average Impoliteness Value of 4.29 compared to the highest AIV at 4.69 for FF, 4.57 for MF and 4.56 for FM. This, again, indicates a potential trend for *busu* (ugly woman), which may be more offensive when a woman is involved compared to when male to male use.

Another similar pattern emerged for *kuzu* (scum), which in all other conditions (MM, FF, MF) had an average score between 4.53 and 4.56, while under the FM condition it had an AIV of 4.75 indicating that it is potentially more offensive when women say *kuzu* (scum) to men than under any other condition.

The same pattern can be observed for the words *baka* (idiot) and *anpontan* (idiot), which were seen as most offensive when used by women against men. With *baka,* it had an 0.62 higher Average Impoliteness Value in the FM condition compared to MF, and a 0.29 higher AIV in the FF condition compared to MM. The same pattern was seen for *anpontan* where the FM condition had a 0.51 higher AIV compared to MF, and a 0.21 higher impoliteness score in the FF condition compared to MM. This is also supported by the total average of each gender condition, where FM had the highest impoliteness value of 4.39, followed by 4.25 in the FF condition. MF had an Average Impoliteness Value of 4.15 and MM had an AIV of 4.14. This further indicates that women were perceived to be more offensive when using insults and derogatory language compared to their use by men.

4.2. Relationship between interlocutors

Before looking at words compared to the relationship conditions it is worth looking at the relationships on their own and then comparing them to the gender condition before looking that them compared to the individual derogatory terms.

When looking at the Average Impoliteness Values for the different relationship conditions, as shown in Table 4, on average, friends and romantic partners (Fr: 4.02 and R:4.07) scored lower than strangers and acquaintances (St:4.47 and A: 4.30). However, it must be acknowledged that this is a very small difference, and given the low number of participants means nothing conclusive can be said about it more than that it seems to indicate a trend.

Relation	Average Impoliteness Value
Strangers	4.47
Acquaintances	4.30
Friends	4.02
Romantic partners	4.07

Table 4 Average Impoliteness Value by relationship, regardless of gender

However, the situation becomes a bit more nuanced when we look at the interaction with the gender conditions as shown in Table 5.

Gender combination	Strangers	Acquaintances	Friends	Romantic partners
	St	A	Fr	R
MM	4.46	4.08	3.87	4.15
FF	4.41	4.52	4.10	3.97
MF	4.49	4.14	3.98	4.08
FM	4.53	4.48	4.16	n/a

Table 5 Average Impoliteness Value by relationship and gender

In Table 5, it is visible that friends and romantic partners have a lower impoliteness value in all conditions. However, due to a mistake in the survey, the FM romantic partners condition was mistakenly turned into a second MF romantic partners condition. So, the data for that specific combination is missing. However, if it follows the general trend of this table, then it should be around the same value as the FM friends condition's value and at least lower than the acquaintances and strangers FM conditions. Unfortunately, since the relevant data was not collected, nothing can be said about this condition beyond just speculations. Another deviation here is that the MM Romantic partners condition receive the second-highest Average Impoliteness Value compared to the other three relationship conditions. This is, however, a very small difference in value, which is not necessarily significant.

Table 5 also shows that when the speaker is male, the offensiveness of the word is viewed as lower, compared to when the speaker is female. The only two exceptions to this are when the speaker and addressee are strangers, in which case the average values suggest that it is almost always seen as equally offensive regardless of the speaker's gender. The other exception is the FF romantic partners condition, which has the lowest value among the romantic partners conditions. However, this is a very small difference and with the data for FM missing nothing conclusive can be said about it.

This pattern of female speakers being more offensive when insulting others is most pronounced with acquaintances, where the two impoliteness scores for female speakers were 4.52 (FF) and 4.48 (FM), compared to the male speakers 4.08 (MM) and 4.18 (MF). The MM friends condition received the table's lowest offensiveness value at 3.87, marking it as the least offensive condition. However, one needs to bear in mind that the participants in this survey were mostly women, which may have impacted the results.

The data on the ten derogatory terms was also analysed and averaged within the 4 different relationship conditions as shown in Table 6.

Word	Strangers	Acquaintances	Friends	Romantic partners
	St	A	Fr	R
Anpontan (idiot)	3.90	3.31	2.88	2.86
Baka (idiot)	4.40	3.60	3.00	3.02
Bitchi (bitch or slut)	4.40	4.56	4.33	4.52
Busu (ugly woman)	4.75	4.60	4.33	4.42
Homo (homosexual)	4.57	4.63	4.54	4.25
Rezu (lesbian)	4.33	4.46	4.17	4.06
Kimoi (gross)	4.79	4.56	4.38	4.35
Kusogaki (damn brat)	4.42	4.04	3.54	3.65
Kuzu (scum)	4.63	4.60	4.52	4.58
Yarichin (male slut)	4.46	4.48	4.40	4.48
Yariman (female slut)	4.52	4.73	4.52	4.69

Table 6 Average Impoliteness Value by word and relationship

In Table 6, *anpontan* (idiot) still has the lowest Average Impoliteness Value, even dipping below 3.00 in the Fr (2.88) and R (2.86) conditions. This suggests that *anpontan* is the least offensive when speaking to a romantic partner or a friend. However, *anpontan*'s perceived impoliteness increased significantly when used towards a stranger, which received a value of 3.90. Its AIV is also higher when speaking to an acquaintance coming up at 3.31.

A similar result can be observed for *baka* (idiot), where the friends and romantic partners conditions had a value of around 3.00, while acquaintances condition had a higher value of 3.60. However, the larger increase here is for the strangers condition, which had received an AIV of 4.40, making it obvious that *baka*'s offensiveness is very much related to the situation and whom you use it with.

Another word of note here is *kusogaki* (damn brat), which has a much lower Average Impoliteness Value when used towards a romantic partner (3.54) or a friend (3.65), but a much higher value when used towards an acquaintance (4.04) or a stranger (4.42), indicating that *kusogaki* is less offensive to use towards a friend or romantic partner than towards a stranger or an acquaintance.

Yet another interesting case is *rezu* (lesbian), which while being offensive towards acquaintances (4.46) and strangers (4.33) is seen as much less offensive by comparison in the romantic partners (4.06) and friends (4.17) conditions. This becomes more significant when compared to *homo* (homosexual), which is seen as more offensive in all conditions (A: 4.63,

Fr: 4.54, R: 4.25, St: 4.57). However, *homo* was seen as less offensive when used towards a partner compared to all other conditions. This would then suggest that the attitude towards *rezu* is that it is less offensive to use compared to *homo*, except for when it is toward a partner, in which case it is still seen as less offensive but the difference is much smaller.

4.3. Gender of the speaker and addressee

The impact of the speaker and addressee's gender can be observed in Tables 7, 8, and 9.

	Male speaker	Male addressee	Female speaker	Female addressee
all words /conditions	4.15	4.25	4.31	4.20

Table 7 Average Impoliteness Value by gender and role, all conditions

When looking at the Average Impoliteness Value for male and female speakers and addressees shown in Table 7, there is overall very little difference. However, it should be noted that female speakers received a higher value compared to male speakers, while female addressees on average scored lower than their male equivalents.

In Table 8, one can see that female speakers almost always received a higher AIV than male speakers. However, in most cases, the difference was too small for it to indicate anything significant.

	Male speaker	Male addressee	Female speaker	Female addressee
Anpontan (idiot)	3.08	3.32	3.44	3.18
Baka (idiot)	3.31	3.58	3.75	3.44
Bitchi (bitch or slut)	4.44	4.38	4.48	4.51
Busu (ugly woman)	4.44	4.40	4.63	4.62
Homo (homosexual)	4.46	4.53	4.64	N/A
Rezu (lesbian)	4.20	N/A	4.27	4.23
Kimoi (gross)	4.50	4.61	4.55	4.45
Kusogaki (damn brat)	3.77	3.99	4.10	3.85
Kuzu (scum)	4.50	4.64	4.60	4.54
Yarichin (male slut)	4.42	4.48	4.50	4.41
Yariman (female slut)	4.64	4.51	4.58	4.72

Table 8 Average Impoliteness Value for male and female addressees and speakers by word

The exception to female speakers' use of derogatory language being generally perceived as more offensive is the word *yariman* (slut), which received a marginally higher impoliteness value when it was said by a man compared to a woman. *Yariman* does, on the other hand, have the highest impoliteness value when the addressee is female.

When it comes to words related to intelligence, such as *baka* (idiot) and *anpontan* (idiot), female speakers received higher Average Impoliteness Values than male speakers. *Anpontan* received a 0.36 higher AIV for female speakers compared to males, and *baka* received a 0.44 higher AIV for female speakers compared to male speakers.

When it comes to female addressees and words related to intelligence, it seems that using *baka* (idiot) or *anpontan* (idiot) towards a woman is less offensive than using it toward a man. However, the difference is small, with only a 0.14 difference between male and female addressee for *anpontan* and *baka*. When used by a man, *anpotan* is also perceived to be the least offensive.

Another case where a more significant increase in impoliteness value was found for a female speaker compared to a female addressee is the word *kusogaki* (brat). *Kusogaki* has a 0.33 increase when the speaker is female compared to a male speaker. Both insults of intelligence and *kusogaki* are perceived to be more impolite when used by a woman compared to when a man uses them.

Additionally, this table also shows that *rezu* (lesbian) is seen as less offensive compared to the male counterpart *homo* (homosexual), further indicating that female same-sex love is seen as less offensive than male same-sex love. However, it should be noted that the participants of this study were mainly female, which may have affected the results.

Table 8 also further suggests that it is often perceived to be more offensive when women use derogatory and insulting language compared to when men use it.

Table 9 shows the Average Impoliteness Value of words for the relationship, gender and conversational role combinations. For most conditions, female speakers received higher impoliteness values than men, with the exception of the romantic partners condition, in which they had the lowest value.

Relationship	Male speaker	Male addressee	Female speaker	Female addressee
Strangers	4.50	4.50	4.47	4.45

Acquaintances	4.11	4.28	4.50	4.33
Friends	3.92	4.01	4.13	4.04
Romantic partners	4.10	4.15	3.97	4.04

Table 9 Average Impoliteness Value by gender and relationship

In the acquaintances condition, female speakers had a significantly higher impoliteness value compared to male speakers (a difference of 0.39), indicating that when women use insults or derogatory language towards acquaintances it is seen as the most offensive, while men's use of derogatory language is perceived to be less offensive in this condition. The use of insults was seen as almost equally regardless of the addressee's gender, with women receiving a 0.05 higher value than men.

Friends and romantic partners conditions had a smaller difference between male and female speakers. In romantic partners condition, it was a difference of 0.13, with male speakers having the higher value of the two. In the friends condition, there was a larger difference compared to romantic partners, with female speakers having a larger AIV by 0.21. The friends and romantic partners conditions have also received the two lowest values for the genders. For women, the lowest value was recorded for using insults or derogatory terms towards a romantic partner, with an impoliteness value of 3.97. Men, on the other hand, received the lowest value when speaking to a friend (an AIV of 3.92).

 The most stable condition was strangers with only differing between 0.05 impoliteness value at most. Indicating that this is almost always equally offensive when using insult in this condition. Further strengthening the previous results that the stranger conditions is the most stable when assessing impoliteness.

Overall, the difference between the female and male addressee conditions was minuscule, indicating that ultimately, the use of derogatory language is equally offensive regardless of the addressee's gender. Table 7, 8 and 9 support the results presented in the previous table, indicating that women's use of insults and derogatory language is perceived to be more offensive compared to men's use. It does, however, show that this is not always the case when women are the addressee as seen in Table 6, where even when the values were very similar for men and women, they varied as to which one was perceived to be slightly more offensive for each word, with words such as *baka* (idiot), *anpontan* (idiot), *kimoi* (gross), *kuzu* (scum), *yarichin* (male slut) and *kusogaki* (damn brat) being seen as more offensive when the addressee was a man, while words such as *busu* (ugly woman), *bitchi* (bitch, slut), and *yariman* (female slut) were seen as more offensive when the addressee was a woman.

4.4. Gender association and friendliness

Looking at the results of the third part of the survey where participants were asked to select the gender they first think of when reading the words, and then to describe how willing they would be to use them. Due to practical limitations, only the ten words used in the first part of the survey were analysed, so that the two parts could be compared. Let us first look at the gender associations of the individual words as shown in Table 10.

Word	Woman	Man	Neither	Both	Don't know the word
Anpontan (idiot)	0	0	3	8	1
Baka (idiot)	0	0	2	10	0
Bitchi (bitch, slut)	12	0	0	0	0
Busu (ugly woman)	7	0	0	5	0
Homo (homosexual)	1	11	0	0	0
Rezu (lesbian)	11	1	0	0	0
Kimoi (gross)	0	0	2	10	0
Kusogaki (damn brat)	0	8	0	4	0
Kuzu (scum)	0	3	2	8	0
Yarichin (male slut)	1	11	0	0	0
Yariman (female slut)	10	1	1	0	0

Table 10 Gender association by word

Some words in Table 10 are noticeably more gendered than others. Words such as *bitchi* (bitch, slut), *yariman* (female slut), and *rezu* (lesbian) would typically describe a woman, whereas *homo (homosexual)* and *yarichin* (male slut) — a man. On the other hand, words such as *baka* (idiot), *anpontan* (idiot), and *kimoi* (gross) do not carry a strong gender association. Words such as *kuzu* (scum), *busu* (ugly), and *kusogaki* (damn brat) are mixed between having a specific gender association and being used for both male and female, or neither, as in the case of *kuzu* (scum).

Looking then at Table 11, which shows the participants' willingness to use the ten words jokingly, clearly gendered words such as *homo* (homosexual), *rezu* (lesbian), *yarichin* (male slut), and *yariman* (female slut) are the least likely to be used in a friendly way.

A point of interest is that out of the two words implying promiscuity, i.e. *yariman* (female slut) and *yarichin* (male slut), only *yarichin* has any participants willing to use it depending on the situation, while *yariman* has no such response. It should, however, be noted that, due to the majority of this survey's participants being female, this result could be skewed.

Word	Depends on situation	Depends on the addressee	Hesitant to use	Never use	No problem using
	DS	DR	HU	NU	NPU
Anpontan (idiot)	1	4	0	6	1
Baka (idiot)	3	6	0	2	1
Bitchi (bitch or slut)	2	2	1	7	0
Busu (ugly woman)	3	1	1	7	0
Homo (homosexual)	0	0	1	11	0
Rezu (lesbian)	0	0	1	11	0
Kimoi (gross)	4	2	2	3	1
Kusogaki (damn brat)	1	4	1	6	0
Kuzu (scum)	3	4	0	5	0
Yarichin (male slut)	2	0	0	10	0
Yariman (female slut)	0	0	0	12	0

Table 11 Likelihood of friendly use by word

Another interesting result here is that words such as *kuzu* (scum) and *kimoi* (gross) both have a varied number of situations in which the participants would be willing to use the words. Even though, most words had the highest number of responses be "never use", words such as *baka* (idiot) and *kimoi* (gross) had more participants being willing to use them given the right conditions rather than never use them at all. Falling somewhere in the middle, *kuzu* (scum), *anpontan* (idiot), *bitchi* (bitch, slut), *busu* (ugly woman), and *kusogaki* (damn brat), despite having mainly NU answers, still had some participants who were willing to use them given the right situation.

4.5. Dialect and age

Dialect (any condition)	Kansai	Other	Self-proclaimed no dialect	Tokyo
Any condition	4.30	4.13	4.74	3.91

Table 12 Average Impoliteness Value for dialects, any condition.

Table 12 shows that those who determine themselves to have no dialect have assigned the highest Average Impoliteness Value. Additionally, the speaker of the Kansai dialect assigned a 0.39 higher impoliteness value than those using Tokyo dialect, who had the lowest Average Impoliteness Value, and other dialects fell somewhere in between.

Age	Young	Older
Any condition	4.36	3.80

Table 13 Average Impoliteness Value by age, any condition

Table 13 shows the Average Impoliteness Value by age, regardless of condition. It shows that young people perceived derogatory terms as more offensive than older people by 0.56.

With both Table 12 and 13, the study had too few participants for the results to be reliable. However, further research with a larger and more diverse group of participants could potentially show a reliable difference in perceived impoliteness for different dialects and age groups. The results found in this study merely indicate a potential trend of young people and speakers of the Kansai dialect ascribing a higher impoliteness value to derogatory terms.

5. Discussion

The data described above suggests a few things. Firstly, the offensiveness of a given word is dependent on its inherent offensive connotations. Secondly, the gender of the speaker and the addressee can make the word more or less offensive. Lastly, the relationship between the interlocutors affects the perceived offensiveness of the word.

When it comes to the items' inherent offensiveness, words related to intelligence (e.g. *baka*, *anpontan*) and behaviour (e.g. *kusogaki*) seem to be less offensive, while words related to sexuality, societal value, and appearance are perceived as more offensive.

5.1. Gender of the speaker and the addressee

When considering the gender of the speaker, *anpontan* (idiot) is more offensive when used by women as compared to men. In Table 3, the female-to-male condition for *anpontan* was the most offensive with an Average Impoliteness Value of 3.53 and the male-to-female condition was the least offensive with an AIV of 3.02. The difference of only 0.51 between the two conditions indicates that the offensiveness does not rise drastically. However, it does show an indication of a trend.

This trend is also exhibited by *baka* (idiot), which had a male-to-female AIV of 3.30 and a female-to-male AIV of 3.92 — a difference of 0.60. Looking at the male-to-male and female-to-female conditions for both *baka* and *anpontan* (idiot), one can see that the female-to-female use is perceived as marginally more offensive compared to the male-to-male condition, with *anpontan* (idiot) having a 0.21 higher AIV and *baka* (idiot) having a 0.29 higher value in the female-to-female condition. Although the difference is smaller for the male-to-male and female-to-female conditions, both results indicate that intelligence-based insults are seen as more offensive when used by female speakers towards men.

Another case where female-to-male use is seen as more offensive is *kusogaki* (damn brat). Although it has an Average Impoliteness Value of 3.91, when considered alongside the gender conditions, it received an AIV of 3.75 for male-to-male and 3.79 for male-to-female interactions, compared to the AIV of 3.94 for female-to-female and 4.31 for female-to-male use. Here it is observable that in both scenarios involving a male speaker the degree of offensiveness was perceived as being comparable, with only a 0.04 difference, while the female-to-female condition was seen as a little more offensive, with an increase of impoliteness

value of 0.19 when compared to the male-to-male condition. The biggest increase in impoliteness value, however, appears between the female-to-male and male-to-female conditions, measuring 0.52. This again suggests that it is perceived as more offensive when a female speaker uses a derogatory term, and even more offensive when it is directed at a man. This increase in offensiveness when women use insulting or derogatory language is observed in most of the data.

Furthermore, Tables 7, 8, and 9 further show that female speakers are seen as more impolite when using insults and derogatory language. Table 7 shows that the Average Impoliteness Value averaged across all conditions was 4.31 for female speakers, while male speakers had an AIV of 4.15. Table 6 also shows that male addressees had an average impoliteness value of 4.25, which was marginally higher compared to female addresses, who had an AIV of 4.20. When comparing words to the gender of the speaker and addressee, female speakers had higher impoliteness value than male speakers with a few exceptions. In Table 8, the words *anpontan* (idiot), *baka* (idiot), and *kusogaki* (damn brat) had significantly higher impoliteness values in the female speaker condition than in the male speaker condition, *baka* having the largest difference between male and female speakers, with female speakers receiving a 0.44 higher AIV. Those results indicate that when women use insults or derogatory terms they are often seen as more impolite or offensive, with the most noticeable difference being observed when they use *anpontan*, *baka*, or *kusogaki*.

The exception to this trend of the use by female speakers having a higher average impoliteness value compared to male speakers is the word *yariman* (slut), for which male speakers scored 0.06 higher than female speakers. This difference is, however, too small to be significant. Nevertheless, with a larger number of participants, this word may be shown as much more severe when used by a man compared to a woman.

When looking at the addressee condition, the impoliteness value appears much more dependent on the word being used than the gender of the speaker. *Anpontan* (idiot), *baka* (idiot), *kusogaki* (brat), *kimoi* (gross), *kuzu* (scum), and *yarichin* (male slut) had higher impoliteness value when used towards a man compared to the female addressee, while words like *bitchi* (bitch, slut), *busu* (ugly woman), and *yariman* (female slut) received a higher AIV when addressed to a woman compared to a man. However, the addressee condition has very small differences between the male and female conditions, making it hard to ascribe significance to this pattern. This may suggest that the perceived impoliteness is more dependent on the insult

itself than the gender of the addressee. Ultimately, further research is needed to determine anything conclusively.

When the gender of the speaker and the addressee is combined with the relationship conditions in Table 9, female speakers are perceived to be more impolite when using derogatory language toward a friend or an acquaintance. However, they are seen as less impolite when speaking to a romantic partner, and marginally less impolite when speaking to a stranger. This then suggests that there are situations in which female speakers are allowed to be more impolite than men. For instance, in the romantic partners condition, female speakers had an Average Impoliteness Value of 3.97, while male speakers had an AIV of 4.10. This is a small difference, but it could potentially indicate a trend that can be explored in further research. Furthermore, the acquaintances condition had the largest increase in impoliteness value for women as compared to men. Male speakers received an AIV of 4.11, while female speakers had an AIV of 4.50 — a difference of 0.39. This suggests that men are perceived as less impolite when using insults towards acquaintances compared to women.

When it comes to the male and female addressee conditions, it can be observed that in the romantic partners condition when the addressee is male, the use of derogatory language is perceived to be more impolite as compared to when the addressee is female. In the other conditions (friends, acquaintances, and strangers) the difference is too small to say anything significant; however, it is observed that the use of derogatory language towards female addressees is perceived as more impolite in the friend and acquaintances conditions, while in the stranger condition, it is more offensive when the addressee is male. However, the results for the strangers condition are rather similar across different gender and conversational role conditions.

The patterns found in Table 9 support the data findings from Table 5. Table 5 shows that female speakers in the acquaintances condition are perceived to be more impolite than male speakers regardless of the addressee's gender. The relationship between the speaker and the addressee is further discussed in later sections of this chapter but, for now, it should be noted that the same pattern emerges in Tables 5 and 9.

5.2. Association of insults with gender

For words that are mostly associated with women, such as *bitchi* (bitch, slut), *busu* (ugly woman), and *yariman* (female slut), the impoliteness value seems to be greater when they are used toward a female addressee compared to a male addressee. This suggests that these words

constitute a stronger face-threatening act when used toward a member of the associated gender. An exception from this is the word *rezu* (lesbian), which, when compared to its male-oriented counterpart *homo* (homosexual), had a much lower impoliteness value in both conditions. The results for *rezu* and *homo* might indicate that the lesbian identity is seen as less negative than the male homosexual identity. However, the small number of participants in this study means that this is something that needs to be explored more in a future study in order to be able to say anything conclusive.

Although one might expect a similar effect to be found for the male-associated words, it is only observed for *kusogaki* (damn brat) within the female-to-male condition, which had the highest impoliteness value out of the four gender conditions. In addition, *kusogaki* within the male-to-male condition had the lowest impoliteness value out of the remaining three.

Another notable word here is *kimoi* (gross), which, although described as a more gender-neutral word in Table 10, shows a slight increase in severity when the addressee is male. However, as before, the difference here is around $0.10 - 0.20$ which is not significant by itself. A follow-up study with a larger number of participants could obtain more results and perhaps a more pronounced difference, which makes it worth exploring further. As it is, the results obtained in this study suggest that the increase in the impoliteness value of this word does not come from the gender of the addressee, but rather from the gender of the speaker, as suggested earlier. This is supported by the other two mostly male-associated words, *homo* (homosexual) and *yarichin* (male slut), which show a similar pattern for each condition with minimal differences between them.

Another finding is that female-associated words such as *busu* (ugly woman), *bitchi* (bitch, slut)*, rezu* (lesbian), and *yariman* (female slut) are the least likely to be used by the participants, while male-associated words such as *kusogaki* (damn brat) might be used by some participants in specific situations.

5.3. Relationships and insults

The impact of the relationship on the perceived impoliteness of derogatory language is explored in Tables 4 and 5, which compile the Average Impoliteness Values for the different relationships and the Average Impoliteness Values of derogatory words for the different combinations of relationship and gender conditions. The data in Table 5 shows that insults have a somewhat higher AIV when directed toward strangers and acquaintances compared to friends

and romantic partners. However, this becomes more nuanced when incorporating the results of Table 6 and Table 9.

Table 5 shows the Average Impoliteness Values for different combinations of relationship and gender conditions. The results show that in all four gender combinations, the stranger relationship condition had a consistent AIV of around 4.50, which expectedly suggests that face-threatening acts directed at strangers are always seen as equally insulting regardless of gender.

However, more significant value differences appear in the other three relationship conditions, where the use of insults by male acquaintances is seen as less offensive compared to their use between female friends and acquaintances.

Within the friendship condition, the differences in impoliteness values are very small between male and female speakers — only around 0.10 to 0.20. However, the difference is much greater for a woman speaking to an acquaintance, with female-to-female condition measuring 4.52 and female-to-male condition measuring 4.48. This is respectively 0.44 and 0.34 more compared to the equivalent male speaker data. That difference, when combined with high values for the use of derogatory language towards strangers might suggest that women's use of insults and derogatory terms towards acquaintances is seen as equally offensive as their use towards strangers.

This can also be observed when looking at the friends condition, where impoliteness values for female speakers are smaller, but still exceed those of the male speaker conditions. The exception to this, however, is female speakers using derogatory language towards a partner, in which case they were seen as less offensive compared to when it was a male speaker. Unfortunately, due to missing data in the female-to-male romantic partners condition, very little can be said about it in this thesis. If the trend observed for other conditions is maintained, then potentially this condition would also be judged as less offensive compared to the male speaker conditions. However, that would require further research to confirm. Furthermore, it needs to be pointed out that the overall differences in the romantic partners and friends relationship conditions are found across all gender combination, so this indicates a trend at best.

As discussed in section 5.1, female speakers are often perceived to be more impolite when using insulting or derogatory language. Therefore, what Tables 3 and 5 suggest is that women insulting men are often perceived to be more offensive, while men insulting women are seen as less offensive. This, combined with the conclusions drawn from the data found in

Tables 7, 8, and 9, suggests that women using insulting or derogatory language are perceived to be more offensive and that this offensiveness increases when the addressee is a man. However, this is also dependent on the specific words being used, as some words such as *kimoi* (gross) display very small variation between different gender conditions. Even though *kimoi* is more offensive when used by a woman towards a man, the difference between the MF and FM conditions is very small. This fact, combined with the low number and the unequal gender distribution of participants, means that further research is needed to say anything conclusive about this finding.

The impact of the relationship between the addressee and the speaker on how impolite a word is perceived to be can be clearly observed in Table 6, where words such as *anpontan* (idiot) and *baka* (idiot) received a lower Average Impoliteness Value when used towards a friend or a romantic partner. *Anpontan* received an AIV of 2.88 when used towards a friend and 2.86 when used towards a romantic partner, while its use towards an acquaintance scored 3.31, and toward a stranger — 3.90. Similarly, *baka* received a low AIV when employed toward a friend or a romantic partner — 3.00 when used towards a friend, and 3.02 when used toward a romantic partner. However, when used towards an acquaintance it received a value of 3.60, and when used toward a stranger it scored 4.40 — a drastic increase of 1.40 compared to the friends condition.

This pattern holds true for almost all of the items. Most words have lower values when the relationship between the speaker and the addressee is that of friends or romantic partners. Some minor but noteworthy exceptions to this can be found in the data for the words *yariman* (female slut), and *bitchi* (bitch, slut), which received very high values when used toward a romantic partner — *bitchi* receiving an AIV of 4.52, which is slightly higher than when used toward a stranger (4.40) or a friend (4.33). *Yariman* was also slightly more offensive when used toward an acquaintance (4.73) or a romantic partner (4.69) as compared to a friend (4.52) or a stranger (4.52). This could indicate that these words are more impactful when used in close relationships than when one does not know the addressee well. Another exception to the pattern of words being more offensive when used towards strangers and acquaintances than friends and romantic partners is shown by the word *homo* (homosexual). *Homo* has a very similar Average Impoliteness Value across the stranger (4.57), acquaintance (4.63), and friend (4.54) relationship conditions. However, when used toward a partner (4.25), it is seen as less offensive. Thus, this word appears to be less offensive when used toward romantic partners, but more offensive when used among friends.

From this, a pattern emerges that suggests that, in Japanese, when an insult is used by a woman, it is often perceived as more severe than if it was used by a man. Words like *baka* (idiot) and *anpontan* (idiot) have shown a clear increase in perceived impoliteness when used by female speakers compared to male speakers. However, this difference becomes smaller the more offensive the word is perceived to be. Furthermore, these words were also seen as most severe when spoken by a woman towards a man. This was the case for most words, except for those items that had a strong female association, e.g. as *yariman* (female slut), where the severity of the offence was highest when used towards a female addressee. This was, however, not the case with words associated closely with men, such as *kusogaki* (damn brat), where the severity was higher when the speaker was female.

When it comes to the relationship and gender combinations, female speakers were also seen as more offensive when using derogatory language towards an acquaintance compared to male speakers, while being seen as less offensive when using it towards a friend or a romantic partner. This would then suggest that when female speakers use insults toward acquaintances, it is perceived as much more offensive than when it is done by men. The impact is also modified by the choice of derogatory term and the relationship between the interlocutors. However, the findings of this survey seem to suggest that female speakers using insults and derogatory language are seen as much more impolite and offensive compared to equivalent scenarios involving male speakers

5.4. Age and dialect

The results of the age and dialect analysis showed that young people and self-described speakers of Kansai dialect ascribed a higher Average Impoliteness Value to the derogatory terms, which suggests that they perceive these words to be more offensive than the older group and speakers of other dialects. This is somewhat surprising given the common belief that Kansai speakers and young people use more casual language or impolite language. This result is, however, rather unreliable due to the small number and unequal age distribution of the survey's participants.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, the results of the study conducted for this thesis suggest that women's use of impolite language is often seen as more offensive than its use by men. The perceived impoliteness changes in severity dependent on the relationship between the speaker and the addressee. It is more impolite when used towards people the speaker does not know or is only a little familiar with. Female speakers are seen as equally offensive when insulting an acquaintance as when insulting a stranger, compared to men who had a much lower score. Women's use of insults was less impactful when directed at a romantic partner and or a friend. The one instance where women's use of insults was seen as less offensive than their use by men was in romantic partners relationship condition.

Furthermore, female-associated words were perceived as more offensive when used towards women, but male-associated words were not seen as more offensive when used towards men, which suggests that it is more offensive to insult a woman than a man.

This study also finds that the gender of the addressee had little impact on the perceived impoliteness of the words. Instead, the impoliteness value was more dependent on the words used rather than the gender of the addressee.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that there is a difference with regards to the perception of men and women's use of impolite language. The results of this study suggest that it is perceived as less offensive when a man uses impolite language, such as insults and derogatory language, compared to when a woman does so.

Due to the overrepresentation of women amongst the participants in this survey, it cannot be determined if there is gender variation in how native speakers of Japanese use insults and derogatory language towards women. However, what can be said is that there is a pattern showing that women's use of insults and derogatory language is perceived as more offensive compared to their use by men and that female-associated words are seen as more severe when used toward women than male-associated words are when used toward men.

For further research, it might be interesting to look deeper into the connection between how the relationship between the speaker and the addressee and their respective genders affect the face threat of insulting and derogatory language. It would also be worth looking at whether the perceived offensiveness of these words changes when used by LGBTQ+ individuals.

However, it could also be beneficial to modify future studies to have shorter surveys to minimise survey fatigue, as well as to try to secure a more gender-diverse group of participants in order to be able to properly investigate if there is a difference between the native Japanese speakers' use of derogatory language towards men and women.

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Appendix

性別と侮辱について調査

この調査は私がルンド大学で学士論文を書くための行うものです。この調査で得られたデータは論文執筆以外に使用することはありません。調査中にやめることも可能です。 この調査は性別と侮辱の言葉の関連について調べます。最初の文を読んで、それぞれの表現を使うときに心理を1から５までのスケールで評価してください。最後に質問で使用した単語のリストがあります。最初のリストでは男女を連想して選んで、次の同じリストでは冗談めかして使った場合を考えて１から５までのスケールを評価 してください。 最後にコメントを書く欄があります。この調査についてご意見があればお書きください。 この調査は５-10分ぐらいをかかります。 何か質問があったら私にメールを送ってください.

ol5285br-s@student.lu.se

Kono chōsa-wa watashi-ga rundo daigaku-de gakushi ronbun-o kaku tame-no okonau mono desu. Kono chōsa-de erareta dēta-wa ronbun shippitsu igai-ni shiyō suru koto-wa arimasen. Chōsachū-ni yameru koto-mo kanō desu. Kono chōsa-wa seibetsu-to bujoku-no kotoba-no kanren-ni tsuite shirabemasu. Saisho-no bun-o yonde, sorezore-no hyōgen-o tsukau toki-ni shinri-o 1-kara 5-made-no sukēru-de hyōka shite kudasai. Saigo-ni shitumon-de shiyō shita tango-no risuto-ga arimasu. Saisho-no risuto-de-wa danjo-o rensō shite erande, tsugi-no onaji risuto-de-wa jōdan-mekashite tsukatte baai-wo kangaete 1-kara 5-made-no sukēru-o hyōka shite kudasai. Saigo-ni komento-o kaku ran-ga arimasu. Kono chōsa-ni tsuite go-iken-ga areba o-kaki kudasai. Kono chōsa-wa 5-10-bun gurai-o kakarimasu. Nani-ka shitsumon-ga atttara watashi-ni mēru-o okutte kudasai.

(This survey was made for my bachelor thesis. The data collected in this survey will not be used anywhere else. It is possible to quit this survey at any point. This survey looks into the connection between gender and insulting language. In the first part of the survey, please read the sentences and rate each expression on a scale of 1 to 5. In the last question, there are word lists. The first list asks [you] to pick the associated gender, the next identical list asks [you] to evaluate if there is any situation where [you] would use the word jokingly. Lastly, there is a space where [you] can write comments. Please write if [you] have any comments on this survey. This survey takes around 5-10 minutes. If you have any questions, please send me an email.)

Nansai (what is your age)

○ 19 *ika* (19 or less)

○ 20-24

○ 25-29

○ 30-34

○ 35-39

○ 40-44

○ 45-49

○ 50-54

○ 55-59

○ 60 *ijou* (60 or more)

Seibetsu (gender)

○ *dansei* (man)

○ *josei* (woman)

○ *kaitō shinai* (do not want to answer)

○ other _____

Hōgen (dialect)

_____

Shiriai: *Takako to Takahiro*

(acquaintances: Takako and Takahiro)

Takako-wa Takahiro-ni taishite ika-no hyōgen-o chokusetsu iimashita. Anata-wa dono yō-ni kanjimasu-ka

(Takako says this expression directly to Takahiro. What is your impression of this?)

Takahiro-no baka

(Takahiro, you are an idiot)

	1	2	3	4	5	
Kutsujokuteki de-wa nai	○	○	○	○	○	*Totemo kutsujokuteki da*

(Not humiliating)   (Very humiliating)

Takahiro-wa kimoi

(Takahiro, you are gross)

                              1 2 3 4 5
Kutsujokuteki de-wa nai ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ *Totemo kutsujokuteki da*

(Not humiliating)   (Very humiliating)

Takahiro-no yariman

(Takahiro, you are a slut)

                              1 2 3 4 5
Kutsujokuteki de-wa nai ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ *Totemo kutsujokuteki da*

(Not humiliating)   (Very humiliating)

Takahiro-no anpontan

(Takahiro, you are an idiot)

                              1 2 3 4 5
Kutsujokuteki de-wa nai ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ *Totemo kutsujokuteki da*

(Not humiliating)   (Very humiliating)

Takahiro-no busu

(Takahiro, you are an ugly woman)

                              1 2 3 4 5
Kutsujokuteki de-wa nai ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ *Totemo kutsujokuteki da*

(Not humiliating)   (Very humiliating)

Takahiro-no bitchi

(Takahiro, you are a bitch)

                              1 2 3 4 5
Kutsujokuteki de-wa nai ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ *Totemo kutsujokuteki da*

(Not humiliating)   (Very humiliating)

Takahiro-no homo

(Takahiro, you are gay)

                        1 2 3 4 5

Kutsujokuteki de-wa nai ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ *Totemo kutsujokuteki da*

(Not humiliating)   (Very humiliating)

Takahiro-no kusogaki

(Takahiro, you are a brat)

                        1 2 3 4 5

Kutsujokuteki de-wa nai ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ *Totemo kutsujokuteki da*

(Not humiliating)   (Very humiliating)

Takahiro-no yarichin

(Takahiro, you are a slut)

                        1 2 3 4 5

Kutsujokuteki de-wa nai ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ *Totemo kutsujokuteki da*

(Not humiliating)   (Very humiliating)

Takahiro-no kuzu

(Takahiro, you are scum)

                        1 2 3 4 5

Kutsujokuteki de-wa nai ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ *Totemo kutsujokuteki da*

(Not humiliating)   (Very humiliating)

Nani-ka komento-ga arimasu-ka ([Do you have] any comments?)
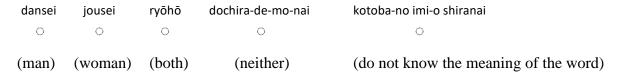
_____

_____

_____

_____

The remainder of the section contained the other possible name and relationship combinations. All the words followed the structure of the above example, with the exception of *rezu* (lesbian) and *homo* (homosexual), which were used with female and male addressees, respectively.

- *Shiriai: Takahiro-to Yūko* (acquaintances: Takahiro and Yuko)
- *Tomodachi: Haruto-to Tomoko* (friends: Haruto and Tomoko)
- *Koibito: Yuito-to Hanako* (romantic partners: Yuito and Hanako)
- *Mishiranu hito: Natsuko-to Hanako* (Strangers: Natsuko and Hanako)
- *Tomodachi: Yamato-to Riku* (friends: Yamato and Riku)
- *Mishiranu hito: Sōta-to Hanako* (strangers: Souta and Hanako)
- *Tomodachi: Kimiko-to Takako* (friends: Kimiko and Takako)
- *Koibito: Kanako-to Yūko* (romantic partners: Kanako and Yuuko
- *Koibito: Jin-to Sora* (romantic partners: Jin and Sora)
- *Mishiranu hito: Hanako-to Ren* (strangers: Hanako and Ren)
- *Shiriai: Kazuko-to Haruto* (acquaintances: Kazuko and Haruto)
- *Koibito: Takashi-to Natsuko* (romantic partners: Takashi and Natsuko)
- *Tomodachi: Masako-to Takahiro* (friends: Masako and Takahiro)
- *Mishiranu hito: Riku-to Takahiro* (strangers: Riku and Takahiro)
- *Shiriai: Hanako-to Mariko* (acquaintances: Hanako and Mariko)

Ika-no tango-o mita toki, mazu saisho-ni dono yōna imēji-o mochimasu-ka. Dansei, josei, ryōhō, dochira-de-mo-nai, kotoba-no imi-o shiranai.

(When [you] look at the words what is the first image you get? Man, woman, both, neither, do not know the meaning of the word)

*Parasaito shinguru (*Parasite single)

dansei	jousei	ryōhō	dochira-de-mo-nai	kotoba-no imi-o shiranai
○	○	○	○	○

(man)   (woman)   (both)   (neither)   (do not know the meaning of the word)

The following list consists of the rest of the words used in this section. For each word, the participants were asked to pick from the same options as in the example above.

- *Yariman* (female slut)
- *Rezu* (lesbian)
- *Homo* (homosexual)
- *Nonke* (exclusionary term for a heterosexual)
- *Okama* (homosexual, transsexual)
- *Onabe* (transsexual)

- *Katawa* (cripple)

- *Busu* (ugly lady)

- *Warugaki* (misbehaved brat)

- *Kusogaki* (damn brat)

- *Baka* (idiot)

- *Kuzu* (scum)

- *Kusoyarō* (son of a bitch)

- *Kusobabā* (old hag)

- *Aho* (idiot)

- *Anpontan* (idiot)

- *Chon* (a derogatory term for Koreans)

- *Baita* (whore)

- *Bitchi* (bitch)

- *Debu* (fatty)

- *Moyashi* (spineless child)

- *Wakazō* (youngster)

- *Kimoi* (gross)

- *Rōgai* (problem caused by the elderly)

- *Yajū* (wild best)

- *Yabanjin* (barbarian)

- *Inkya* (antisocial personality)

- *Mīhā* (poser)

- *Yarichin* (male slut)

Korera-no hyōgen-o jōdan-to shite jibun-ga shiyō suru baai, donoyō-ni kanjimasuka. (When it comes to a situation when you would use these expressions as a joke, what are your feelings?)

*Parasaito shinguru (*Parasite single)

zettai-ni tsukawanai	tsukau toki-ni chūcho suru	aite-ni yotte tsukaeru baai-ga aru
○	○	○
([I] never use it)	([I] am hesitant to use it)	(Depends on whom I am talking to)

jōkyō-ni yotte tsukaeru baai--ga aru   mondai-naku tsukaeru

       ○   ○

(Depends on the situation)   (I have no problem using it)

The following list consists of the rest of the words used in this section. For each word, the participants were asked to pick from the same options as in the example above.

- *Yariman* (female slut)
- *Rezu* (lesbian)
- *Homo* (homosexual)
- *Nonke* (a derogatory term for a heterosexual)
- *Okama* (homosexual, transsexual)
- *Onabe* (transsexual)
- *Katawa* (cripple)
- *Busu* (ugly woman)
- *Warugaki* (misbehaved brat)
- *Kusogaki* (damn brat)
- *Baka* (idiot)
- *Kuzu* (scum)
- *Kusoyarō* (son of a bitch)
- *Kusobabā* (old hag)
- *Aho* (Idiot)
- *Anpontan* (Idiot)
- *Chon* (a derogatory term for Koreans)
- *Baita* (whore)
- *Bitchi* (bitch)
- *Debu* (fat)
- *Moyashi* (spineless child)
- *Wakazō* (youngster)
- *Kimoi* (gross)
- *Rōgai* (problem caused by the elderly)
- *Yajū* (wild best)
- *Yabanjin* (barbarian)

- *Inkya* (antisocial personality)
- *Mīhā* (poser)
- *Yarichin* (male slut)