

16 Sociolinguistics: Honorifics and Gender Differences

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0 Sociolinguistics in Japan

This chapter focuses primarily on two issues of relevance for the discussion of sociolinguistics: i.e. politeness and gender issues. However, a short overview of sociolinguistics in Japan may prove useful, since scholars there developed research methods and programs distinct from the Western tradition.

Japanese sociolinguistics developed independently of the Western discipline. Research in this field started in 1949, when the National Language Research Institute was founded with the stated purpose of "doing scientific research on the Japanese language and on the speech behavior of the Japanese people in their daily lives, as well as establishing a solid basis for improving the Japanese Language" (article one of the legal document establishing the Institute).

The main interest of this research institution is concentrated on dialectology and *genko seikatsu*, which could be literally translated as "language life," and by which is meant the study of speech behavior in daily life. Language varieties according to the speaker's regional background, social status, age, sex, and education are investigated. The aim of such study is to provide a total description of the speech behavior of the people in a community. This work serves to provide the scientific foundation for solving current language problems.

Large-scale projects on dialectology and *genko seikatsu* have been completed. These projects are ordinarily conducted by choosing a community and collecting data from several hundred subjects picked by random sampling. Usually a team of 10 to 20 researchers and a number of assistants participate in a project, and various kinds of statistical analysis are applied to the data collected.

There is an assumption basic to Japanese sociolinguistics that language differs from individual to individual, rather than from group to group. Researchers do not begin their research by looking into the varieties of language used by people, but look for the factors which cause language varieties by analyzing

the massive data reflecting an individual's speech behavior. This runs contrary to the assumption of sociolinguistics in the West, which investigates linguistic varieties while focusing on predetermined linguistic and social variables.

It has often been pointed out that, in the study of *genko seikatsu* or dialectology, there are few attempts to construct theoretical frameworks as a basis for the design of the surveys, as is usual for sociolinguistic studies in the West. If individual Japanese surveys were based on theoretical frameworks or models, more general descriptions about local speech behavior could be achieved, and more general conclusions about communication patterns in Japanese could be drawn. Therefore, attempts to set up such original frameworks for the analysis of the Japanese language and society have to be undertaken. On the other hand, the Japanese approach to the study of language could make a contribution to the development of more encompassing theories for use by scholars in the West by providing multiple descriptions of analyzed data.

1 Politeness

Human interaction always has the potential to lead to conflict between the participants, and human behavior involves a variety of devices to avert these crises. A key concept at the heart of all of these devices is politeness, which is the speaker's consideration for the addressees in order to make communication among them smooth. Politeness is realized through various verbal and non-verbal devices, and this section discusses the verbal devices, termed linguistic politeness.

Linguistic politeness may be approached through the investigation of language use and of language expressions.

1.1 The aspect of language use

There are two modes for the realization of the aspect of language use: *wakimae* (discernment) and volition.

1.1.1 Wakimae (discernment)

Wakimae (the closest equivalent term in English is discernment) refers to behavior based on socially expected norms. In Japanese society, all speakers are expected to assess and acknowledge their sense of place in relation to both the situational context and the social context.

This acknowledgment of one's sense of place in relation to the situational context involves the participants' interpersonal relationship and the formality of the situation. The interpersonal relationship is affected by the social and psychological distance between the participants. Various factors such as

differences in age, status, and power and the degree of intimacy all play a role in determining social and psychological distance. The speaker's sense of belonging, which is realized as the categorization of the addressee/referent into *uchi* (in-group) or *soto* (out-group), also relates to social and psychological distance. This sense of belonging goes beyond formal group memberships, and the speaker recognizes *uchi* or *soto* whether the addressee or referent belongs to an actual group such as a company or circle or not. In other words, *uchi* refers to a sense of a close relationship, as with people who belong, in some sense, to the same group, whereas *soto* refers to a sense of a more distant relationship. The speaker uses language to acknowledge both a sense of place in the situational setting, in concordance with the social and psychological distance between participants, as well as the formality of the situation.

The speaker's acknowledgment of the sense of place in relation to society as a whole is reflected through self-presentation. People evaluate their place in society in terms of their age, status, role, gender, ethnicity, culture, and regional background. The speaker's self-presentation is related to a concern for demeanor. Through language use according to *wakimae*, the speakers are able to present themselves as well-demeaned persons in the society.

Social convention requires that a speaker manifests an acknowledgment of this sense of place in relation to the situational context and the society through the choice of linguistic expressions. *Wakimae* in Japanese society means people's discernment of their own place.

This behavior according to *wakimae* can be considered polite behavior for two reasons. One reason stems from the speaker's observation of the socially expected norms. This behavior puts the addressee at ease, since it establishes that the speaker will not threaten the addressee. Furthermore, the observation of the common norm creates an atmosphere of sharedness with the addressee. Therefore, behavior according to *wakimae* functions as a realization of politeness.

1.1.2 Volition

The second mode of linguistic politeness is the volitional use of expressions. This can be described as the use of a strategy to achieve politeness. Speakers use strategies intentionally in order to allow their messages to be received favorably by the addressee. Unlike language use according to *wakimae*, language use according to volition allows the speaker's creative use of strategies toward the addressee.

Language use according to volition forms the core of linguistic politeness, particularly in Western societies. This perspective comes from the basic assumption in Western societies that speaking is the realization of the speaker's intention. Speech act theories (Austin 1962, Searle 1969, 1975) and conversational maxims (Grice 1975) are established on this tacit assumption, which we call here the speaker's volitional use of language. It is in this context that *wakimae* is proposed as the other type of speaking by Ide (1989). In contrast to the volitional use of language, *wakimae* is not determined by volition.

Studies of politeness from a western perspective discuss the strategies to achieve politeness assuming the speaker's volitional use of language. P. Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) illustrations in their framework are all from the category of volitional strategies of politeness. On the basis of the concept of face wants and the idea that all human beings share them, Brown and Levinson present two kinds of politeness strategies: positive politeness and negative politeness strategies. Positive face wants are those relating to the need for approval or the establishment of a cooperative relationship, and are addressed by positive politeness strategies. Negative face wants have to do with the need not to feel hindered, pressured, or coerced, and are addressed by negative politeness strategies. In addition to these two kinds of politeness strategies, the strategy of "off record" should also be counted as a strategy of politeness. Speakers plan their language behavior so as to realize their intention of maintaining the face of both participants. Thus, language use according to volition means the speaker can make an active choice of expressions from an almost unlimited range of possibilities to achieve the desired politeness.

1.1.3 The relationship between the two modes of politeness; *wakimae* and volition

Both language use according to *wakimae* and language use according to volition are modes of behavior employed to achieve politeness. The speaker focuses on prescribed social norms in the former behavior, but on the intention in the latter. While the goal is the same in both cases, the means to achieve it are different. *Wakimae* is oriented toward the need for acknowledgment of the positions or roles of all the participants as well as adherence to the prescribed norms of formality appropriate to the particular situation. Volition, on the other hand, is oriented toward the need to maintain the face of all the participants.

Weber's typology of human actions and its reformulation by Habermas (1982) provide a useful framework for the discussion of these two modes of language use. According to Weber (1972), human actions can be classified into four categories and these are characterized by their degree of rationality. Habermas (1982) added a two-dimensional mode of action: action oriented to success, that is, strategic action, and action oriented to understanding, that is, communicative action. The relative positions of language use according to *wakimae* and volition in this framework are as in figure 16.1.

Language use according to volition is an example of strategic behavior in which the speaker intentionally chooses the most effective means to achieve politeness, and this is considered to be the most rational action. This behavior reflects (1) instrumental-rational action, which is determined by consciously calculated attempts to attain the desired ends by the choice of appropriate means. On the other hand, language use according to *wakimae* is motivated by the observation of socially expected norms, and is considered to be non-rational action. This behavior reflects the least rational and most communicative action, (4) traditional/conventional action, which is determined by ingrained

Degree of rationality \ Mode of action	Strategic (oriented to success)	Communicative (oriented to understanding)
Rational	<i>Volition</i> (1) instrumental-rational (interest)	(2) value-rational (value)
Nonrational	(3) affectual (drive/feeling)	<i>Discernment</i> (4) traditional (convention)

Figure 16.1 Framework incorporating *wakimae* and volition in terms of Weber's typology of actions and its reformulation by Habermas
Source: Ide 1989: 232

habituation. Weber's other two categories of human action are (2) value-rational action, which is determined by a conscious belief in the intrinsic value of acting in a certain way, and (3) affectual action, which is determined by specific affects and feeling status. In addition to *wakimae* and volition, there may well be other modes of language use employed in other language to achieve politeness which could fall within these categories.

1.2 The aspect of language expressions

1.2.1 Language expressions used according to *wakimae*

Wakimae is realized through the choice of appropriate language expressions in concordance with the situational and social context. Because speakers are expected to show their acknowledgment of their sense of place in relation to the situational and the social context, the use of proper linguistic forms correspondent to the situations expresses the speakers' politeness according to *wakimae*. Formal forms are the representative linguistic expressions for manifesting politeness according to *wakimae*, because their use presupposes socio-pragmatic concord with the situation.

Formal forms used according to *wakimae* are typically realized as honorifics. Every speaker has a sense of place *vis-à-vis* the addressee or referent, and this place is acknowledged through the use of the appropriate linguistic forms, honorifics. Honorifics are linguistic forms to index the speaker's acknowledgment of this sense of place toward the addressee/referent. If honorifics are used, they index the deferential relations of the speaker, addressee, and referent. They constitute the core of the devices for linguistic politeness in Japanese and many other Asian languages as evidenced by the morphologically well-defined systems developed in these languages. In addition to honorifics, there are some formulaic and other expressions used according to *wakimae*.

Japanese honorifics are mainly of two kinds: one is expressed by means of changing the shape of nominal elements, and the other by predicative elements. Honorifics expressed by means of changing the shape of nominal elements are used to refer to people or objects. There are three types of honorifics which modify person referents: personal pronouns, names with titles, and professional ranks. In personal pronouns, *watakusi* is the honorific form of the first person pronoun, compared to the plain forms *watashi* for women's speech or *boku* for men's speech. In addition, *ano kata* (that person Ref Hon) is the honorific form to refer to the third person, while *ano hito* (that person) or *kare* (he) or *kanozō* (she) are the plain forms.

The notable aspect of honorifics of personal pronouns is that there are no second person honorifics. *Anata*, the second person plain form, is not used to refer to the addressee to whom the speaker is expected to show deference. It is considered impolite to refer to a person toward whom deference is due by using pronouns in their presence. This is a conspicuous example of avoiding direct reference to the addressee, or that person's belongings or behavior, and constitutes an important characteristic of honorifics. Instead of a personal pronoun, the last name with title or professional rank is generally used in such cases.

Titles attached to names also have honorific expressions. There are varieties of these titles.

- (1) LN/FN/kinship terms + *sama***
(e.g. *Satoo-sama*, *Hanako-sama*, *otōo-sama* "father")
LN/FN/kinship terms + *san**
(e.g. *Satoo-san*, *Hanako-san*, *otōo-san*)
LN/FN/ + *kun*
(e.g. *Satoo-kun*, *Taroo-kun*)
- (2) (LN) + *sensei*** (e.g. *Satoo-sensei*)
(LN) + *senpai*** (e.g. *Satoo-senpai*)

(LN: last name; FN: first name. Asterisks show the honorific forms; two of them indicate a higher degree of honorification.) *Sensei* literally means a "teacher," and it is used for various high-status professionals such as doctors, politicians, and writers as well as ordinary teachers. *Senpai* literally means a senior colleague, and is used for senior colleagues in organizations.

Professional ranks are used independently or with last names.

- (3) (LN) *syatyō* "president (of a company)"
(LN) *senmu* "executive director (of a company)"
(LN) *butyō* "division chief (of a company)"
(LN) *katyō* "department chief (of a company)"
(LN) *gakutyō* "president (of a university)"
(LN) *gakubutyō* "dean (of a university)"
(LN) *kyōozū* "professor"

These professional ranks and names with titles are used both as address terms and as nominal elements of sentences such as subjects or objects.

The honorific prefixes *o* or *go* are attached to nouns that refer to objects that are possessed or produced by persons who are worthy of the speaker's respect; for instance, *sensei no go-hon* "teacher's book," or *sensei no o-hanasi* "teacher's talk." *Go* is generally used with Japanese nouns derived from Chinese, while *o* occurs with other nouns.

Honorifics expressed by means of changing the shape of predicative elements can be divided into two types: referent honorifics and addressee honorifics. Referent honorifics occur when the noun phrases of a sentence refer to someone toward whom respect is due. Addressee honorifics occur when the speaker's respectful attitude toward the addressee is expressed.

Referent honorifics are further divided into two types: subject honorifics and object honorifics. The former represents the speaker's respectful attitude toward the subject referents, while the latter represents the speaker's humble attitude toward the object referents.

Subject honorifics are used when the subject noun phrase refers to a person toward whom the speaker is expected to show great respect. They involve the prefix *o* (*go*) and the ending *ni naru*, which is attached to the infinitive form of a verb. Only the prefix is attached when the predicate is an adjective or a nominal adjective, as in (5) and (6).

- (4) Satoo-sensei wa eki made o-aruki ni nat-ta.
Satoo teacher(Title Hon) Top station to walk Ref Hon Past
"Professor Sato walked to the station."
- (5) Satoo-sensei wa o-isogashi.
Satoo teacher(Title Hon) Top busy Ref Hon
"Professor Sato is busy."
- (6) Satoo-sensei wa go-rippa-da.
Satoo teacher(Title Hon) Top admirable Ref Hon Cop
"Professor Sato is admirable."

In addition to this honorific form, there are a number of irregular or suppletive subject honorific forms. When verbals which consist of Japanese nouns derived from Chinese and the verb *suru* "do" undergo subject honorification, *suru* is supplemented by *nasaru*.

- (7) Satoo-sensei wa go-ryokoo nasat-ta.
Satoo teacher(Title Hon) Top travel Ref Hon Past
"Professor Sato traveled."

The usual *o* (*go*) . . . *ni naru* form does not attach to some verbs. These verbs inflect idiosyncratically and need to be learned separately.

- | | | | |
|-----|------|---------|----------------|
| (8) | iku | "go" | o ide ni naru |
| | | | irassyaru |
| | iru | "exist" | irassyaru |
| | kuru | "come" | irassyaru |
| | miru | "see" | go ran ni naru |
| | iu | "say" | ossyaru |

There is a productive subject honorifics verb ending beside *o* . . . *ni naru*. The suffix (*r*) *are* (homophonous with the passive suffix) may be attached to a verb to obtain a subject honorific.

- (9) Satoo-sensei ga go-hon o kak-are-ta.
Satoo teacher(Title Hon) Nom Ref Hon book Acc write Ref Hon Past
"Professor Sato wrote a book."

Along with subject honorifics, an adverb may be converted into an honorific form by the prefixes *o* and *go* when it modifies the activity of a person toward whom special respect is due.

- (10) Satoo-sensei wa o-hayaku o-kaeri ni nat-ta.
Satoo teacher(Title Hon) Top early Ref Hon return Ref Hon Past
"Professor Sato returned early."

Another type of referent honorifics is object honorifics. Object honorifics occur in connection with nonsubject noun phrases. They involve the prefix *o* (*go*) and the ending *suru* attached to the infinitive form of a verb.

- (11) Watasi wa Satoo-sensei ni sono wake o
I Top Satoo teacher(Title Hon) Dat that reason Acc
o-tazune si-ta.
ask Ref Hon Past
"I asked Professor Sato the reason."

When verbals which consist of Japanese nouns derived from Chinese and the verb *suru* "do" undergo object honorification, the prefix *o* is replaced by *hai*.

- (12) Watasi wa Satoo-sensei no o-syasin o
I Top Satoo teacher(Title Hon) of photo Ref Hon Acc
hai-ken si-ta.
see Ref Hon Past
"I saw Professor Sato's photo."

There are some idiosyncratic suppletive forms.

- | | | | |
|------|-------|-----------|-------------|
| (13) | iku | "go" | ukagau |
| | kiku | "hear" | ukagau |
| | au | "meet" | omenikakaru |
| | morau | "receive" | itadaku |
| | | | tyoodaisuru |
| | siru | "know" | zonziageru |
| | yaru | "give" | sasiageru |

Another type of honorifics expressed by means of changing the shape of predicative elements are the addressee honorifics. The addressee honorifics are used when the speaker's deference toward the addressee is expressed. They can be applied independently of the referent honorifics.

- (14) Taroo ga ki-ta. (plain)
Taro Nom come Past
"Taro came."
- (15) Taroo ga ki masi-ta. (addressee honorific)
Taro Nom come Add Hon Past
"Taro came."
- (16) Satoo-sensei ga ki-ta. (plain)
Sato teacher(Title Hon) Nom come Past
"Professor Sato came."
- (17) Satoo-sensei ga irassiyat-ta. (subject honorific)
Sato teacher(Title Hon) Nom come Ref Hon Past
"Professor Sato came." (Professor Sato's behavior is indexed as honorified.)
- (18) Satoo-sensei ga ki masi-ta. (addressee honorific)
Sato teacher(Title Hon) Nom come Add Hon Past
"Professor Sato came." (The addressee is indexed as honorified, and/or the situation is indexed as a formal one.)
- (19) Satoo-sensei ga irassyai masi-ta.
Sato teacher(Title Hon) Nom come Ref Hon Add Hon Past
(subject and addressee honorifics)
"Professor Sato came." (Professor Sato's behavior and the addressee are indexed as honorified, and/or the situation is indexed as a formal one.)

In actual speech events, the addressee and the referent are often one and the same person, as in (20).

- (20) Anata wa irassyai masu ka. (subject and addressee honorifics)
you Top come Ref Hon Add Hon Q
"Are you coming?"

Besides referent and addressee honorifics, there are forms which neither exalt the referent nor show special respect to the addressee, but humble the speaker. The typical honorific of humility is *itasu*, which replaces the verb *suru* (do) or *suru* of the regular object honorific from *o* . . . *suru* as in (21) and (22).

- (21) Watasi ga itasi masu.
I Nom do Hum Hon Add Hon
"I will do (it)."
- (22) Watasi wa Satoo-sensei ni sono wake o o-tazune
I Top Sato teacher(Title Hon) Dat that reason Acc ask Ref Hon
itasi masi-ta.
Hum Hon Add Hon Past
"I asked Professor Sato the reason."

Humble forms are used in referring to the speaker's behavior, and by using these humble forms, the speaker's own status is lowered with the consequence that the status of the other participant is relatively raised.

In actual utterances, these honorifics attached to predicative elements are used together with the ones attached to nominal elements. Just as the English speaker must obey the grammatical rule of concord when constructing a sentence, the choice of linguistic forms of honorifics is obligatory in the light of social conventions. Example (23) is pragmatically incorrect, while (24) is appropriate in Japanese society.

- (23) #Sensei wa kaetta.
teacher(Title Hon) Top return Past
"The teacher returned."
- (24) Sensei wa okaeri ni natta.
teacher(Title Hon) Top return Ref Hon Past

Because the subjects in these sentences are people due respect and the honorific title *sensei* is used for them, the predicative elements must also be modified by honorifics. Thus, the concord of honorifics is sociopragmatically obligatory.

These honorifics function as indexical signs to express speakers' *wakimae*, that is, the acknowledgment of their sense of place in the situation and in the society to which they belong. For example, the use of honorific titles or professional ranks in addressing or referring to a person shows the speaker's assessment

that the person is of a higher position in status or role relationship or that the person has power in the relationship with the speaker. Examples would be subordinates who address their bosses with their professional rank, such as (LN) *butyoo* "a division chief," or students who refer to their supervisors with the appropriate honorific title, such as (LN) *sensei*. In response, the boss may address the subordinate with a plain title, for instance LN+*kun*. This shows that the speakers are observing *wakimae* by showing their acknowledgment of their sense of place in the society to which they belong and in relation to others. However, the same phenomena could be interpreted as the speaker's expression of power in relation to the addressee/referent.

In general, people who are objectively in a lower position cannot shorten the psychological distance by not using honorifics, because that behavior is considered rude according to the politeness of *wakimae*. Therefore, when a subordinate wants to express solidarity with the boss, this cannot be conveyed by avoiding honorifics. It can be expressed by using modal linguistic devices such as sentence-final particles in addition to the honorifics used.

The choice of honorifics or plain forms also shows the speaker's acknowledgment of the *uchi* (in-group) or *soto* (out-group) membership of the addressee or referent. This sense of belonging sometimes takes priority over other factors in determining the choice of linguistic forms, especially in the workplace. For example, a subordinate would refer to the boss without any honorific titles (the last name alone in many cases) when talking with a person who does not belong to the same company. In this case, the speaker intentionally avoids using honorifics, which shows the speaker's categorization of the boss as an in-group person, while the addressee is an out-group person. The speaker's manifestation of this distinction between *uchi* and *soto* is considered important polite linguistic behavior in this situation. The same speaker would of course use the appropriate honorifics when speaking to the boss directly.

The speaker's acknowledgment of the degree of formality of the situation might affect linguistic choices. The boss may address the subordinate with an honorific title, such as (LN) *katyoo* "a department chief" and use honorifics in direct address in an official meeting. This boss's use of honorifics toward a subordinate shows an acknowledgment of the fact that the situation is formal. Another example of this social meaning of honorifics is the speaker's use of high-level honorifics or the honorific first person pronoun *watakusi* at a job interview or in a speech at a wedding reception. Both situations are considered rather formal, and the speaker's choice of honorifics indicates an acknowledgment of it.

The speaker's acknowledgment of the sense of place in relation to the society relates to a personal sense of demeanor, and it often appears in the reciprocal use of honorifics between persons with different status, age, or power in the relationship. For instance, customers may use honorifics when speaking to sales assistants even if they are much older than those assistants, although it is the customer who has power in this relationship. In this case, customers

consider their place in the society in terms of their social status, age, role, gender, etc. and choose honorifics as appropriate linguistic forms according to their personal qualities. This use of honorifics indexes their demeanor. The customer's self-portrayal is thus of a desirable person in the society, an end achieved through the linguistic forms chosen. The fact that women use honorifics more frequently than men might also be attributed to their manifestation of demeanor.

These examples have illustrated the various functions of honorifics in indexing speakers' acknowledgment of their sense of place in relation to both the situational and the social context. Interactions in which formal linguistic forms are used repeatedly may appear somewhat stiff, especially to people in Western societies in which volitional language use forms the core of linguistic politeness, because the use of formal forms causes a formal, stiff attitude in the participants. However, such formality is socially expected when there is a large social and/or psychological distance between participants in the interactions in Japanese society, and is considered to be polite. In fact, a lack of honorifics in a situation in which they are expected, which Westerners would feel to be more casual and thus more comfortable, would be decidedly less comfortable for Japanese, since their expectations would not be met.

A person's observation of *wakimae* is also shown by the use of formulaic expressions. For example, people say *Itadaki-masu* (eat Ref Hon Add Hon) "I am going to eat" and *Go-tisou-sama (desita)* (Ref Hon feast Ref Hon (Cop Add Hon Past) "Thank you for your good food" before and after a meal. These are formulaic expressions which are expected to be used in those situations. Another example is *Tumaranai mono desu ga* (trifling thing Cop but) "This is a trifle, (but please accept it)." This expression is often used when the speaker gives a present to someone, especially to a person who is of a higher position in status or role or a casual acquaintance. The speaker does not think that the present is a trifle, but this expression simply shows a humble attitude toward the addressee.

The observation of *wakimae* may constrain the use of a formulaic expression, *Go-kurou-sama (desita)* (trouble Ref Hon Cop Add Hon Past) "Thank you for your hard work," in some situations. This expression would be impolite if used toward an addressee in a higher position. This is because this utterance has an implication of paternal care for the addressee, which the superior is expected to show toward the inferior, not the other way around.

Furthermore, language use according to *wakimae* is concerned with constraints with regard to when to speak or what to say. For example, students in a seminar in a university keep listening to the professor without uttering a word until the professor yields the floor to the students. Similarly, students are not expected to compliment the professor on the lecture by saying something such as *Sensei no ohanasi wa omosirokatta desu* (teacher (Hon Title) of lecture Ref Hon Top interesting Past Cop Add Hon) "Your lecture was interesting." The students are not allowed to interrupt the professor or to make comments on the professor's behavior.

1.2.2 Language expressions used according to volition

Language use according to volition is the speaker's active use of strategies to achieve politeness, and there are various possibilities for their realization as shown in P. Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). The strategies to achieve politeness proposed in this work, as "off record," "positive politeness," and "negative politeness," are all applied to politeness according to volition in Japanese.

Honorifics are categorized as one of the negative politeness strategies, "give deference" in Brown and Levinson's framework. Although the use of honorifics according to *wakimae*, which indexes the social and psychological distance between the speaker and the addressee, is the basic rule of use, honorifics can be used creatively according to the speaker's volition in order to manipulate the psychological distance in some situations. For example, when speakers use honorifics to addressees toward whom they do not normally use them, psychological distance is created through the choice of linguistic forms. Examples are mothers' scolding their children with honorifics, creating distance to assert their awareness of the children's good behavior, and making expensive requests to spouses with honorifics.

Honorifics can also be used as a tool to expand the psychological distance toward the addressee when honorific forms of a high level inappropriate to the situation are employed. In this way the speaker can make *ingin burei* (which literally means "polite impoliteness").

On the other hand, when people want to shorten the psychological distance to the addressee, they can intentionally avoid using honorifics. Ikuta's (1983: 46) example from natural conversations in TV talk shows showed that the interviewer, who generally spoke with honorifics to suit the formal situation appropriate to TV audiences, expressed her attitudinal closeness to the addressee by dropping the honorifics. This strategy of dropping honorifics creates empathy between speakers and addressees, thus making it possible for the interviewee to open up and talk about personal topics in depth.

1.3 A cross-cultural comparison of linguistic politeness

Every language has some devices for the realization of politeness, although the systems may be radically different. This section compares the concepts of "politeness" and "linguistic politeness" in American English and Japanese.

1.3.1 Japanese and American linguistic politeness

As has already been pointed out, there are two different modes of language use for the realization of linguistic politeness, *wakimae* and volition. A large-scale quantitative analysis led Hill et al. (1986) to the conclusion that Japanese

linguistic politeness, as compared to American linguistic politeness, tends to be determined by the *wakimae* type of language use.

Hill's research focused on the comparison of the *wakimae* type of language use in Japanese and American English. In their study, subjects were presented with language expressions and potential addressees. The expressions, all connected with borrowing a pen, showed various degrees of politeness, while the potential addressees were distinguished by power and status. In a questionnaire, the subjects were asked three questions: (i) the level of politeness of each expression, rated on a scale of 1 to 5; (ii) the appropriate politeness level due the various addressees, also rated on a scale of 1 to 5; and (iii) which linguistic form they would use for each type of addressees.

Comparing figures 16.2 and 16.3, it is found that, although both Japanese and American English speakers show the graded responses in which the relative ranking of an addressee correlates with the relative politeness of the linguistic form, Japanese subjects' responses cluster more tightly than do those of the Americans. This might reflect the Japanese subjects' strong observation of *wakimae*.

Furthermore, Japanese responses cluster more tightly within two larger groupings. This means that Japanese subjects tend to categorize the addressees into two groups, as evidenced by their choice of linguistic forms. The linguistic forms judged as relatively circumspect are used with addressees toward whom subjects report being relatively careful, while the forms judged to be relatively informal are used toward those with whom subjects felt relatively relaxed. The addressees in the former group are those considered to belong to the *soto* (out-group) for those subjects, such as people with higher status or strangers, while those in the latter group belong to their *uchi* (in-group), which includes people of equal status or familiar persons. The linguistic forms used toward the former group of addressees contain addressee honorifics such as *desu* or *masu*, while the forms employed toward the latter group do not.

This result provides a clue to finding the key factor which characterizes Japanese language use according to *wakimae*. Although there are a number of variables which determine people's perception of social and psychological distance, Japanese people recognize distance primarily by their sense of grouping people as either *uchi* or *soto*. Among various linguistic components which affect the degree of politeness of an expression, the use of addressee honorifics functions as a clear-cut device for differentiating the degree of politeness of linguistic forms. In other words, typical Japanese language use in accordance with *wakimae* is realized by the use of addressee honorifics toward out-group (*soto*) people and the lack of addressee honorifics toward in-group (*uchi*) people.

1.3.2 The difference in the concept of "politeness" in Japanese and American English

This section compares a definition of the concept of "politeness" between Japanese and American English. Although "politeness" is usually recognized

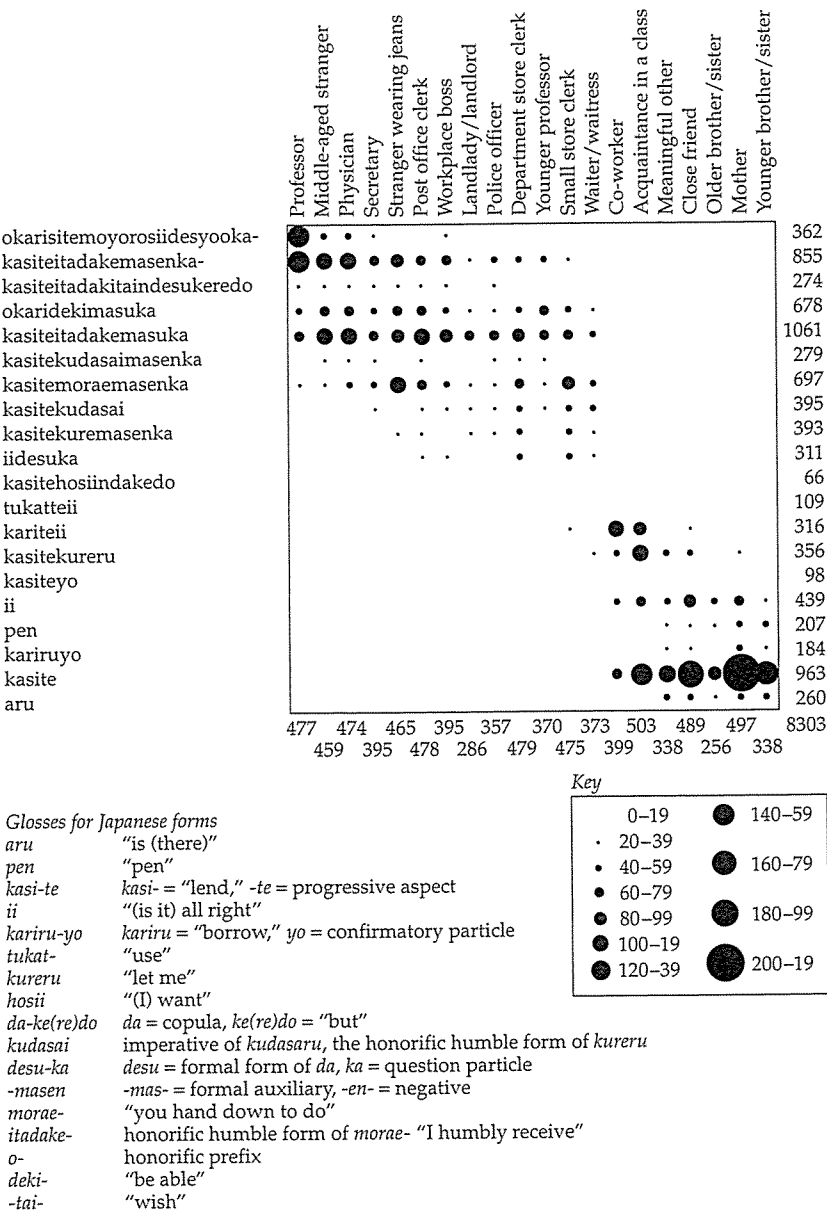


Figure 16.2 Correlation of linguistic forms and addressees: Japanese
Source: Hill et al. 1986: 357

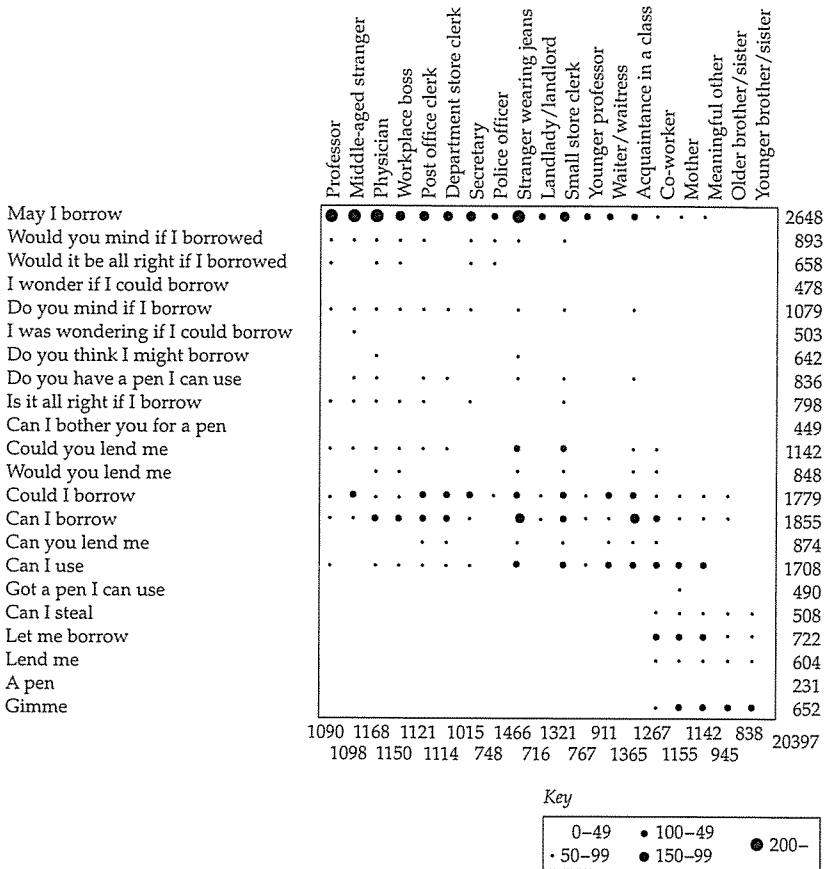


Figure 16.3 Correlation of linguistic forms and addressees: Americans
Source: Hill et al. 1986: 358

as a positive concept associated with smooth communication, the presumption that what is "good" for people's communication is the same in different cultures needs to be questioned. Ide et al. (1992) used quantitative analysis to investigate how politeness is conceptualized by Americans and Japanese.

In that survey, each subject was given a grid containing descriptions of 14 interactional situations and a list of ten adjectives evaluating human behavior, including "polite" and "teineina" (polite). The subjects were asked to connect the adjectives which would best represent their own evaluations with the interactional situations. Through multivariate analysis of the data, researchers compared the position of the terms "polite" and "teineina" relative to the other

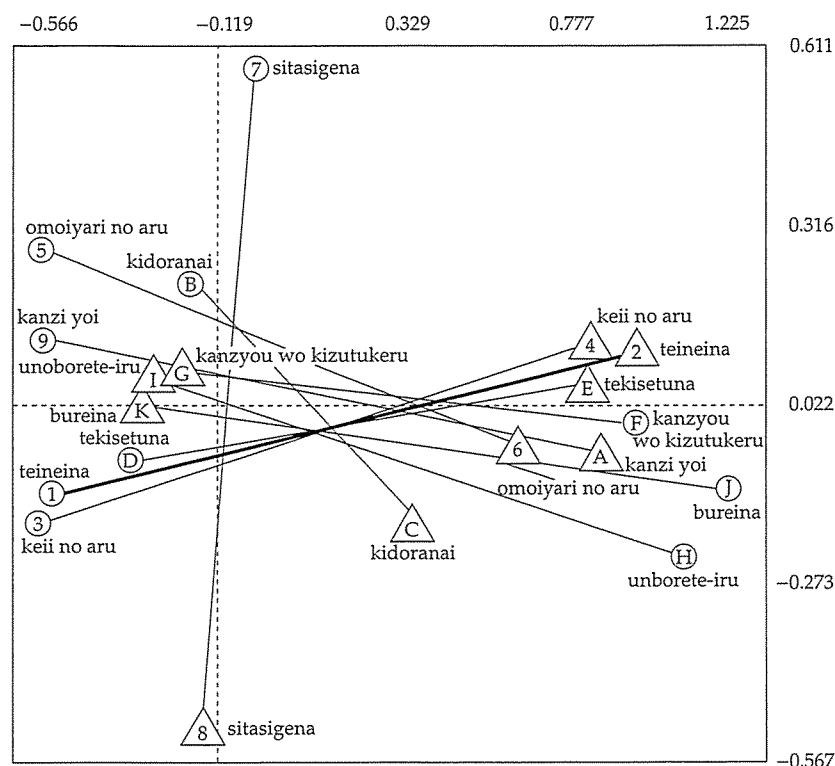


Figure 16.4 Multivariate analysis of adjectives related to politeness: Japanese
Source: Ide et al. 1992: 288

nine terms in a two-dimensional Euclidean space. Comparing figures 16.4 and 16.5 shows that the American case is clearly one-dimensional, while the Japanese case is more or less two-dimensional. This means that Americans exhibit unilateral judgment of various concepts of evaluation, while the Japanese judge in terms of two dimensions. The meaning of the common axis of Japanese and American evaluations can be consistently interpreted as "good" on the left half of the axis and "bad" on the right half. For Japanese responses, another axis can be postulated, the meaning of which could be characterized as "friendly" (upper half) and "nonfriendly" (lower half).

This result clarifies two important differences in the way Americans and Japanese conceptualize politeness. One is in the evaluation of the two concepts, "polite" and "friendly" (*teineina* and *sitasigena* respectively). Americans evaluate them on the same axis; "polite" and "friendly" are "good" concepts, while minus "polite" and minus "friendly" are "bad" concepts. On the other hand,

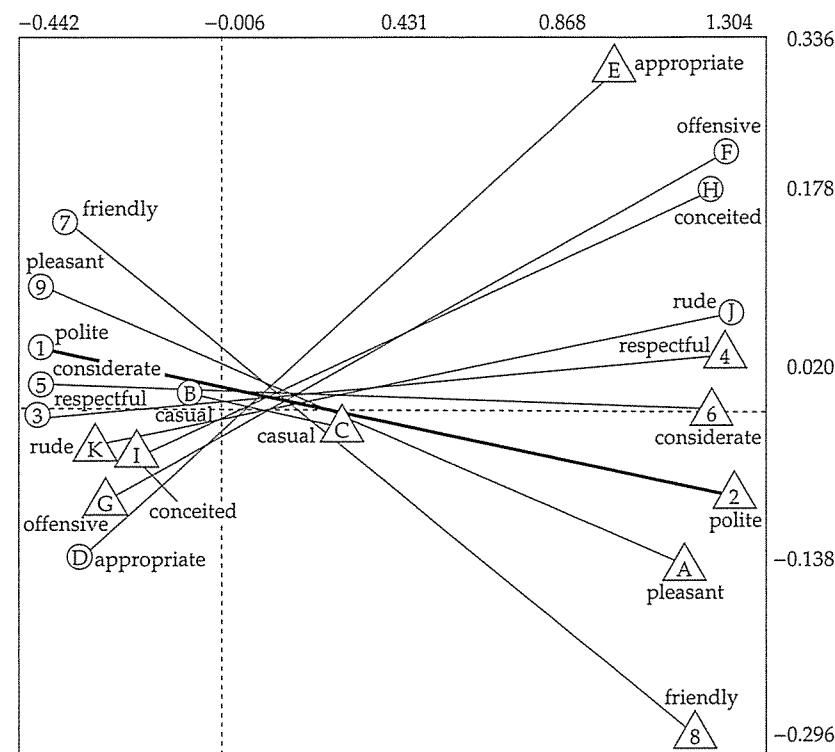


Figure 16.5 Multivariate analysis of adjectives related to politeness: American English
Source: Ide et al. 1986a: 286

Japanese evaluate them as discrete but not opposing concepts. This means that, for Japanese, the concepts "*teineina*" (polite) and minus "*sitasigena*" (friendly) are distinct but not contradictory concepts.

The second difference concerns the degree of correlation between seemingly equivalent concepts. The concept "respectful" (or "*keiinôaru*") has the highest degree of correlation with the key concept "polite"/"*teineina*." However, this degree of correlation does not obtain between the second and third concepts; "pleasant" and "*kanjiyoi*" (pleasant) are corresponding adjectives, and correlate closely, but "considerate" and "*tekisetuna*" (appropriate) do not. This difference appears to highlight the difference between Americans and Japanese in their preference for two different modes of polite language use, volition and *wakimae*, discussed in the section above. While "*tekisetuna*" (appropriate) is used in Japanese to evaluate behavior in the light of worldly criteria, i.e. *wakimae*, "considerate" is used in English to evaluate behavior represented by one's

volitional exhibition of consideration to others. This difference in the orientation of highly correlated concepts can be seen to exemplify the orientation of politeness in the two languages; "polite" is oriented towards volition, while "teineina" (polite) is oriented towards *wakimae*.

From these results, the foundation of Japanese linguistic politeness can be described as behavior according to *wakimae*, which includes a focus on the appropriate distance between participants in the relationship. However, as shown in the distinct but not opposing concepts "teineina" (polite) and "sitasigena" (friendly), Japanese people can express friendliness toward others while observing *wakimae*. This is done through the use of modal devices such as sentence-final particles which co-occur with the use of honorifics, as mentioned in the section above. For example, students may say to a professor something like, *Sensei, kono hon omoshiroi desu ne* (teacher(Hon Title used as an address term), this book interesting Cop Add Hon FP) "Professor, this book is interesting, isn't it?" The speakers show their observation of *wakimae* by using the honorific title *sensei* or an addressee honorific *desu* toward their professors, but at the same time they express friendliness by using a sentence-final particle *ne*, which seeks confirmation from the addressees.

2 Women's Language

2.1 Features of women's language

2.1.1 Phonological features

Women speak with a higher pitch than men. Physiological differences between men and women undoubtedly play a role, but are not the only factor involved. Results of empirical research led Ohara (1997) to argue that, in Japanese society, there are sociolinguistically analyzable reasons for the difference in voice pitch between men and women.

Ohara's experiment (1997) examined the pitch of voice of male and female speakers, both in naturally occurring conversations and while reading sentences in Japanese and English. The results show that women speak and read with a higher pitch in Japanese than in English, while men's pitch did not change significantly in the different situations or languages. The physiological differences between men and women do not explain women's change of pitch between the two languages.

Ohara's second experiment clarified the meaning of women's higher pitch in Japanese. In the experiment, two women uttered some greeting words such as *konnitaiwa* (hello) and *sayounara* (goodbye). With the aid of a computer, these recordings were altered to produce three different pitches for the greetings. These recordings were then played for male and female subjects, who were asked to assess the various characteristics of the two women. As the pitches became lower, the rating of the characteristics "stubbornness," "selfishness,"

and "strength" rose; while as the pitches became higher, the rating of such characteristics as "cuteness" (like a little girl), "kindness," and "politeness" rose. Thus, this experiment showed clearly that pitch level is closely associated with characteristics of the speaker; in particular, that high pitch is associated with characteristics that are highly valued in Japanese society, characteristics such as "cuteness," "kindness," and "politeness."

2.1.2 Morphological features

2.1.2.1 Sentence-final particles Sentence-final particles express the speaker's nonpropositional modal attitude, and they are heard most frequently in informal spoken discourse. They are linguistic features that index the speaker's various cognitive and emotional assessments concerning the contextual factors. Some sentence-final particles characterize male or female speech because of their exclusive use by one sex or the other.

McGloin (1991, 1993) and Ide (1982a, 1991, 1992a) discuss some of the sentence-final particles used exclusively or primarily by one sex. McGloin investigated *zo*, *ze*, *sa*, *wa*, and *no*. She argues that *zo*, *ze*, and *sa*, which are used primarily by men, express the speaker's insistence on the propositional statement.

- (25) Kore kara issyookkenmei yaru zo.
now from one's best do FP
"I will do my best from now on. I strongly insist."
- (26) Kore kara issyookkenmei yaru ze.
now from one's best do FP
"I will do my best from now on. I insist."
- (27) Kore kara issyookkenmei yaru sa.
now from one's best do FP
"I will do my best from now on. That's the way it goes." (McGloin 1991: 27)

In examples (25) to (27), the speaker adds insistence to his propositional statement that he will do his best. McGloin also discusses the different meanings of these three particles: both *zo* and *ze* add strong emphasis to the speaker's statement, although *ze* is milder than *zo*. Thus, examples (25) and (26) both express the speaker's determination. They also imply that the speaker takes full responsibility for his statement. On the other hand, *sa* lacks such commitment and gives the sense that the speaker is portraying the proposition as an objective description.

While *zo*, *ze*, and *sa* are the sentence-final particles of insistence, *wa* and *no* indicate rapport and are used mainly by women. McGloin (1991: 33, 34)

explains that *wa* and *no* create emotional rapport between the speaker and the addressee, as illustrated in (28) and (29).

- (28) Watasi mo iku wa.
I also go FP
"I will go too."

- (29) Watakusi kore ga daisuki desu no.
I Sup Hon this Nom like very much Cop Add Hon FP
"I just love this."

In (28), the speaker adds emotional emphasis directed toward the addressee and thus creates for the participants an emotional common ground. *No* in (29) engenders a feeling of shared knowledge.

Ide (1982a, 1991, 1992a) discusses the sentence-final particles *wa* and *kasira*, both of which are considered to be items of the feminine vocabulary. In examples (30) and (31), both *wa* and *kasira* indicate the speaker's uncertainty and soften the speech.

- (30) Watasi wa Taroo ga suki da wa. (Ide 1982a: 381)
I Top Taro Nom like Cop FP
"I like Taro."

- (31) Sensei wa o-kaeri-ni naru kasira. (Ide 1982a: 381)
teacher Top return Ref Hon FP
"I wonder if the teacher will return."

According to McGloin and Ide, the feminine sentence-final particle *wa* seems to have two different functions. On the one hand, it establishes empathy between speaker and addressee, which is a positive politeness strategy. On the other hand, it expresses deference to the feelings of the addressee, and thus softens the statement, which is a negative politeness strategy. In fact, *wa* should be considered to have a dual nature. Ide (1992a: 126) explains that "it is the softening function of the particle *wa* (the effect of negative politeness strategy) that makes it possible to create an atmosphere of relaxation because of its function of no-imposition and respect for the other, which in turn creates an atmosphere of the sharedness (the effect of positive politeness strategy)."

Ide's (1979) quantitative analysis shows general tendencies concerning the frequency of use of various sentence-final particles. The survey was based on data collected by recording naturally occurring conversations of university students. Figure 16.6 shows the ratios of frequency of various sentence-final particles used by men and women.

As the figure shows, some particles are used exclusively by men or by women, while others are merely preferred by either men or women. The meaning of this exclusive or preferred use of particular sentence-final particles is

→ The proportion of use by male speakers		The proportion of use by female speakers ←	
kaa yona yonaa ze monna monnaa tara		The proportion of use by male 100% speakers	
zo	94.4%		
naa ↗ *	94.1%		
na	90.2%		
saa	86.2%		
ka	84.0%		
wakeyo	83.3%		
ke	79.2%		
yo	66.5%		
kanaa	64.3%		
mon	59.0%		
yoo	52.4%		
kedo	51.9%		
yone	50.0%	50.0%	yone
		51.8%	ne
		52.3%	sa
		53.3%	kana
		54.5%	wake
		58.3%	nano ↗
		60.0%	yuuka
		62.7%	toka
		62.8%	no
		63.2%	yoo
		72.5%	no ↗
	77.8%		monne
	77.8%		none
	85.7%		nano
	88.9%		wa
	92.3%		naa ↘ **
	97.2%		noyo
100%	The proportion of use by female speakers		wane noyone kashira nanone wayo

Key: * ↗ indicates rising tone ** ↘ indicates falling tone

Figure 16.6 Frequency of the use of sentence-final particles according to the gender of the speakers

Source: Ide 1979: 8–9

great, since it relates to the communicative competence of all members of the speech community and thus the use of a certain particle indexes the femininity or masculinity of the speaker. For example, people who frequently use *wa*, *wane*, and *wayo* thereby also index their identity as female, while people who tend to use *zo* or *na* at the end of utterances index their identity as male. It parallels the way in which a Southern accent in the United States or a Scottish accent in Great Britain indexes the speaker as a Southerner or a Scot.

Figure 16.6 shows that women use the sentence-final particle *sa* slightly more frequently than men do, while McGloin (1991) claimed this was a particle used primarily by men. This difference might stem from the formality of the speech style; McGloin's data depended on her intuition, which expected the rather formal style, while figure 16.6 shows language use in informal conversations. Thus, *sa* seems to be used frequently by both men and women in informal conversations. This is probably because of its weaker level of insistence as compared to other particles such as *zo* and *ze*.

Although figure 16.6 shows communicative competence concerning the use of sentence-final particles based on casual conversation by male and female speakers, Okamoto's (1997) work led to different results. According to Okamoto, some women (especially younger ones) tend not to use sentence-final particles such as *wa*, which represent femininity. Moreover, some of these younger female speakers sometimes use the particles which represent masculinity in informal situations. From interviews with the subjects, Okamoto discovered that the indirectness and lack of assertiveness in feminine sentence-final particles are felt to create distance between the speaker and the addressee, and so the younger speakers are not likely to use them in conversations with close friends. For them, the use of particles such as *yo* preferred by men shows intimacy toward the addressees because of their directness. Okamoto explained that the use of the particles such as *zo* which index strong masculinity were intentionally used by young female speakers only between close friends in order to reinforce their solidarity. It should also be noted that these pragmatic phenomena are observed in informal situations where the uninhibited attitude of the speaker makes it possible to ignore gender identity markers.

Crossing the border of gender-linked usage and using sentence-final particles normally associated with the other sex creates a new identity, that of a person acting outside the conventional gender category.

2.1.2.2 Honorifics and polite expressions Women tend to use honorifics and polite expressions more frequently than men. This tendency has been examined by several quantitative studies. For example, Ide et al. (1986a), reports on quantitative research focused on women's polite language use. It was found that the politeness level of the linguistic forms women use toward various types of addressees is generally higher than the linguistic forms men would use toward the same addressees.

Table 16.1 shows the average politeness level of the linguistic forms used toward a variety of different addressees. This score is presented based on the

Table 16.1 Average politeness level used for a category of addressees as rated by 500 male and female subjects each (Ide et al. 1986a: 30)

Types of addressee	Men	Women
a. Child	1.39	1.15
b. Spouse	1.41	1.85
c. Delivery person	2.19	2.39
d. Friend	2.15	2.55
e. Workplace inferior	1.91	2.39
f. Same-status colleague	2.41	2.45
g. Neighbor	3.72	3.25
h. Spouse's friend	3.53	3.99
i. Parent at PTA meeting	3.83	3.50
j. Instructor of hobby group	3.99	4.31
k. Daughter's or son's professor	4.19	4.40
l. Workplace superior	4.31	4.39

analysis of the answers to two questions. The first asked that the respondents rank the level of politeness of a number of variants of "to go" on a scale of 1 (the least polite) to 5 (the most polite). The second asked respondents to choose the most appropriate linguistic expression of "to go" for use when talking with 12 types of addressees. Except in the case of children, the politeness level of the linguistic forms chosen by women is always higher than that of the forms chosen by men. This means that women choose higher-level linguistic forms toward each addressee.

Ogino (1986) also studied honorific usage based on the data collected in interviews based on questionnaires. In his survey, the respondents were asked which of the linguistic variations of *shitte iru* (I know) they would use toward various types of addressees. Ogino quantified the level of politeness of each type of addressee by analyzing the frequency of each expression used toward each addressee. The level of politeness used toward each addressee is judged to be higher when expressions rated as showing higher-level politeness are employed. Figures 16.7 and 16.8 show the relative politeness level used toward different addressees. A block in figure 16.8 is always higher than the corresponding block in figure 16.7. This means that, compared to men, women use more formal expressions with honorifics toward these addressees.

The use of honorifics and polite expressions indexes the speaker's recognition of the particular relationship with the addressee. Therefore, women's frequent use of higher-level polite expressions in these studies might show that women categorize these addressees as being both higher in social status and out-group people. At the same time, the use of polite expressions can be considered as the speakers' display of their own desirable characteristics of good demeanor. Women therefore seem to present themselves as well-demeaned persons by

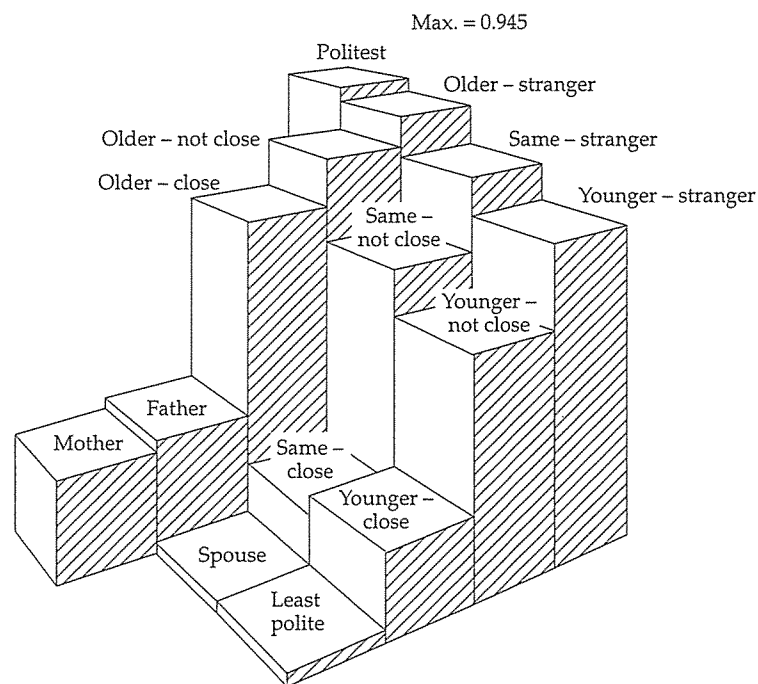


Figure 16.7 The politeness level of linguistic forms used towards addressee by male speakers
Source: Ogino 1986: 45

their linguistic behavior, i.e. by using more polite expressions than those used by men.

Ide and Inoue (1992) present an example of the use of high-level honorifics by women in higher positions in companies in Tokyo. They showed that those women use higher-level honorifics than office ladies who hold lower positions. This use of higher-level honorifics by women in higher positions contradicts the basic pragmatic rule of politeness in Japanese society, because it is the person in the lower position who is required to use honorifics toward the person in the higher position. Why does this opposite phenomenon happen? The use of formal language by those women in higher positions shows their demeanor in their positions, and indexes their identity as well-brought-up persons. The use of formal language becomes a tool in their exercising power, and by doing so, they maintain their high positions in the company.

2.1.2.3 Beautification/hypercorrected honorifics Beautification honorifics and hypercorrected honorifics are most likely to occur in female speech. Beautification honorifics are used, not to express a respectful attitude toward addressees/

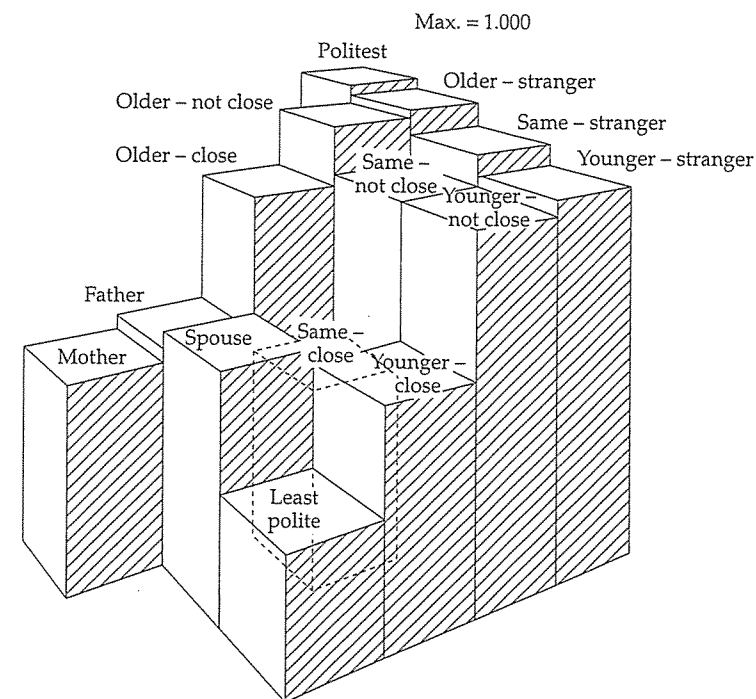


Figure 16.8 The politeness level of linguistic forms used towards addressee by female speakers
Source: Ogino 1986: 46

referents, but to beautify the speech. The prefix *o* (and *go* for Japanese nouns derived from Chinese) is generally attached to nouns as in *o-kane* instead of *kane* (money) and *o-yasai* instead of *yasai* (vegetable). They are different from referent and addressee honorifics even though the same linguistic form of the prefix *o* is employed.

- (32) *sensei no o-heya* (honorification)
teacher of Ref Hon room
"teacher's room"
- (33) *watasi no o-heya* (beautification)
I of Bea Hon room
"my room" (Ide 1982a: 379)

The prefix *o* in (32) functions as a referent honorific in that it shows the speaker's respectful attitude toward the referent, *sensei*, but *o* in (33) prefixed

to the speaker's own belongings beautifies the speech. Women use these beautification honorifics much more frequently than men do, and many of the beautification nouns are used exclusively by women.

Honorifics are sometimes used indiscriminately. Although their use is expected in connection with an addressee or referent who is to be treated respectfully, they are sometimes used incorrectly with people toward whom the speaker is not expected to show a deferential attitude. This is the case when speakers use honorifics, for instance, toward their own mother or husband.

- (34) Haha ga o-kaeri ni nari masita.
mother Nom return Ref Hon Add Hon Past
"My mother returned."

- (35) Syuzin ni mousiage te oki masu.
husband Dat talk Hum Hon Add Hon
"I will talk (about it) to my husband."

It goes against the rules to use honorifics in connection with one's mother or husband, since these individuals belong to the speaker's in-group in Japanese society. If honorifics are used in such situations, they are considered to be hypercorrected honorifics. These hypercorrected honorifics are often used by women.

Beautification honorifics and hypercorrected honorifics index the speaker's intention of displaying demeanor. Honorifics are considered to be prestigious linguistic forms, and are generally associated with high social class. Women are likely to have the intention of showing themselves as well-demeaned persons by displaying a higher social class than that to which they actually belong, which leads to their using these prestigious linguistic forms excessively.

2.1.3 Lexical features

2.1.3.1 Personal pronouns The repertoires of personal pronouns used by men and by women tend to be different. Table 16.2 shows the most frequently used personal pronouns. In addition to the differences in the linguistic forms, a difference in the levels of formality of the same linguistic form can be observed. The first person pronoun *watasi*, which is women's most commonly used first person pronoun in informal speech, is used only in formal speech by men. Moreover, in formal speech, men use the pronoun *watasi* more frequently than *watakusi*, which is more formal first person pronoun, while women use *watakusi* more frequently than *watasi*. The level of the formality of the first person pronoun *watasi* is assessed as being higher by men than by women. In addition, this first person pronoun *watasi* is considered to be in the repertoire of female children's formal forms, while male children do not have a parallel form. This might indicate that only female children develop a sensitivity to the formal attitude of the adults around them as characterized by language use.

Table 16.2 Sociolinguistic structure of personal pronouns

Person	Style	Speaker		Young child	
		Adult			
		Male	Female	Male	Female
First person pronoun	Formal	<i>watakusi</i> , <i>watasi</i>	<i>watakusi</i> , <i>watasi</i>	None	<i>watasi</i>
	Normal	<i>boku</i>	<i>watasi</i> , <i>atasi</i>	<i>boku</i>	FN**+ <i>tyan</i>
	Deprecatory	<i>ore</i>	None	<i>ore</i>	None
Seond person pronoun	Formal	<i>anata*</i>	<i>anata*</i>	(<i>kimi</i>)***	(<i>anata</i>)
	Normal	<i>kimi</i>	<i>anata</i>	FN + <i>kun</i>	FN + <i>kun</i>
	Deprecatory	<i>omae</i>	None	FN + <i>tyan</i> <i>omae</i>	FN + <i>tyan</i> None

* not applicable in addressing superiors

** FN represents first name

*** () begins to appear around the age of five

Another difference concerns the repertoire of deprecatory pronouns. There are pronouns on a deprecatory level in both male adult and male child repertoires: *ore* as a first person pronoun, and *omae* as a second person pronoun, while there are no such pronouns in both women's and girls' speech. Contrary to the female children's sensitivity, male children develop a sensitivity to the deprecatory attitude of the male adults.

These differences in the levels of formality of certain pronouns and even in the existence of certain deprecatory pronouns exemplify the sociolinguistic structure in the repertoires of male and female personal pronouns. This sociolinguistic structure represents the cultural understandings which may seem sexist from a feminist's perspective. Women's more polite first person pronoun in formal settings may reflect women's more polite linguistic behavior in society in general, as may the fact that women's speech lacks deprecatory pronouns. Women's use of personal pronouns in conformity with this repertoire inevitably shows their acceptance of this sociolinguistic structure and indexes "female" as part of the speakers' identity. In addition, the fact that these differences are also evident in female children's repertoires indicates that this system forms a part of the communicative competence which is acquired as part of the process of socialization. Women index their femininity and display their own good demeanor through their polite linguistic behavior.

2.1.3.2 Vulgar expressions Women do not normally use vulgar expressions. The deprecatory suffix *yagaru*, as in *utai-yagaru* (sing), is likely to be used only by men. Profanities, such as *tikusyoo* (damn), obscenities, and rough expressions, for example, *dekai* for *ookii* (big) or *kuu* for *taberu* (eat), are all expected to

be limited to men's speech. Phonological reduction forms, such as *dekee* for *dekai* or *sugee* for *sugoi* (great), are also considered to be unfeminine vocabulary. These forms have a lower level of politeness than the normal expressions.

The exclusive use of these vulgar expressions by men is recognized in both the speaker's and the addressee's mind as part of their normal communicative competence. When men use these expressions, they often acquire the positive value of "covert prestige" (Trudgill 1975: 102) since they display masculinity because of their uninhibited quality. On the other hand, vulgar expressions are seldom heard in women's speech, and women show themselves as well-demeaned persons by not using them. The lack of vulgar expressions indexes the display of demeanor.

2.1.4 Syntactic features

Shibamoto (1987) discussed syntactic differences between men's and women's speech. The syntactic phenomena at the center of her inquiry are the inversion of subjects and verbs and the deletion of subject noun phrases, both of which are conversational features found in informal speech. She tabulated the occurrences of these syntactic features and concluded that it is women who tend to employ inversion and deletion most frequently. However, it could be argued that these phenomena are observed in the data from conversations in less formal situations, and they are not systemic features of women's language.

The conversational data from both the male groups and the female groups were collected by the researcher who observed the conversation. The difference in the networks of the subjects who participated in the conversations might be a problem that could affect the results. The male subjects were workers at a city hall in a suburb of Tokyo, and their conversations took place during the lunch break in the dining room at the workplace, while the female subjects were all housewives, and their conversations took place at the subject's apartment amid children running in and out and interruptions by the phone. It must be noted that there is an apparent difference in the networks of the male and the female subjects, and this may affect the subjects' choice of topics in the conversations; the topics of the female subjects' conversations at their apartments are less formal than those of male subjects' conversations during lunch time at the workplace. Another problem may concern the gender of the participants of the conversations. Because a female researcher collected all the data, the events became male-female on the one hand and female-female on the other hand. It could be argued that the existence of the female researcher as an observer in the conversations made the context more formal for the male subjects who participated in the conversations.

As for the inversion including the subject's postverbal shift, a survey conducted by Ide (1979) indicates that it is a frequent feature in a male college student's mixed conversations. How can these different results with respect to the inversion of subjects and verbs be accounted for?

An analysis of the occurrence of subject and verb inversion, which is in effect merely loose syntax, reveals that it occurs in relaxed conversations when the speaker is paying less attention to form than to content. It could therefore be argued that, in Shibamoto (1987), the females are conversing in a relatively relaxed situation, since the subjects are in their home setting, whereas in Ide (1979) in the mixed-gender conversations, the males felt the situations were more relaxed than the females felt them to be. This means that the issue of inversion is a factor that reflects the perceived formality of the situation. Does this phenomenon mean anything significant about gender differences in the Japanese language? No. This highlights the important question as to what exactly the linguistic features are that are relevant to the gender and language issue, and are thus worth investigating.

2.1.5 Pragmatic features

The role of women in conversations is likely to be different from that of men. K. Abe (1989) noted several differences in communicative functions of utterances according to the sex of the speaker.

In that study, a communicative function is defined as the function that each utterance fulfills in response to the previous utterance in order to carry the conversation forward. Abe classified the communicative functions into four groups: (i) carrying forward the conversation by explaining or adding details, (ii) interrupting the conversation by introducing different facts or denying the previous utterance, (iii) showing reactions, and (iv) suggesting a new direction for the conversation by offering new topics or letting new participants join. Using the data collected in recordings of naturally occurring informal conversations of college students, the communicative functions of men's and women's utterances in conversations of groups of men, of women, and of men and women were examined.

The analysis showed that both men's and women's utterances fulfill different functions according to the sex of the participants of the conversation. Women's utterances tend to have the communicative functions of showing reactions and suggesting a new direction for the conversation in mixed groups (iii) and (iv), while utterances are more likely to have the functions of carrying the conversation forward and interrupting the conversation in groups of the same sex (i) and (ii). This pattern is opposite to the functions of men's utterances. Abe concluded that, in mixed-group conversations, men play an important role in carrying the current topic forward or reiterating it, while the role of women is primarily to support the men's role by reacting to their utterances or offering further topics. This difference in men's and women's roles in conversations can be considered a reflection of their role differences in society. Men's leadership in advancing or reiterating the conversation is likely to show that they have power in social relationship with women, while women's supporting role for men in conversations tends to be a manifestation of their supplementary role in social relationships with men.

2.2 Politeness and women's language

The previous section offered an overview of various features of women's speech. This section focuses on politeness as one of the most noticeable features in women's language. As mentioned in the section above, women tend to use higher-level honorifics and to use these more frequently than men, and this means that women's language is more polite than that of men. Why do women use polite language?

Ide et al. (1986a) provided statistical evidence for the factors involved in women's frequent use of polite linguistic forms in their analysis of questionnaires about language use. The survey was conducted by asking more than 500 middle-class, middle-aged men and women about their use of polite linguistic forms. The men were mostly businessmen; the women mostly housewives. The questionnaires presented the subjects with a list of 12 addressees of different ages and degrees of familiarity with the subjects as well as with the variants of *iku* (go) in the context of "when do you go?" Three questions were asked concerning the person category and the linguistic forms: the politeness level of the variants of the linguistic form of "go" (Q1), the politeness level due each addressee in the person category (Q2), and the choice of the linguistic form of "go" the subject would use in conversation with these addressees (Q3). The politeness level in Q1 and Q2 were established on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being least and 5 most polite. Q3 was asked after a few weeks' interval from Q1 and Q2.

It was the analysis of the answers to Q3 that showed that women choose more polite linguistic forms for each addressee than those that men choose. Three factors concerning women's polite language use become clear: (i) women assess the politeness level of linguistic forms as being lower than men do; (ii) women assess the appropriate politeness level due to different types of addressees as being higher than men do; (iii) women use the kind of interactional patterns which call for higher linguistic forms more frequently than men do.

From the analysis of the answers to Q1, it was found that women ascribe to each linguistic form a lower politeness level than men do. This appears to influence women's choice of linguistic forms because, as a consequence of the lower politeness level attributed to the various forms, they must choose higher-level politeness forms to achieve the same politeness effect that men achieve with lower-level forms. The second reason for women's more polite language use compared to men's is that women assign each addressee the necessity to use a higher politeness level than men do. This also influences women's choice of linguistic forms, because it results in their use of a polite form of a higher level in connection with the same addressee.

The third reason for women's choosing more polite linguistic forms stems from women's interactional patterns. This factor could be found in the results of Q2 and Q1 × Q3 as shown in figure 16.9. The horizontal lines represent

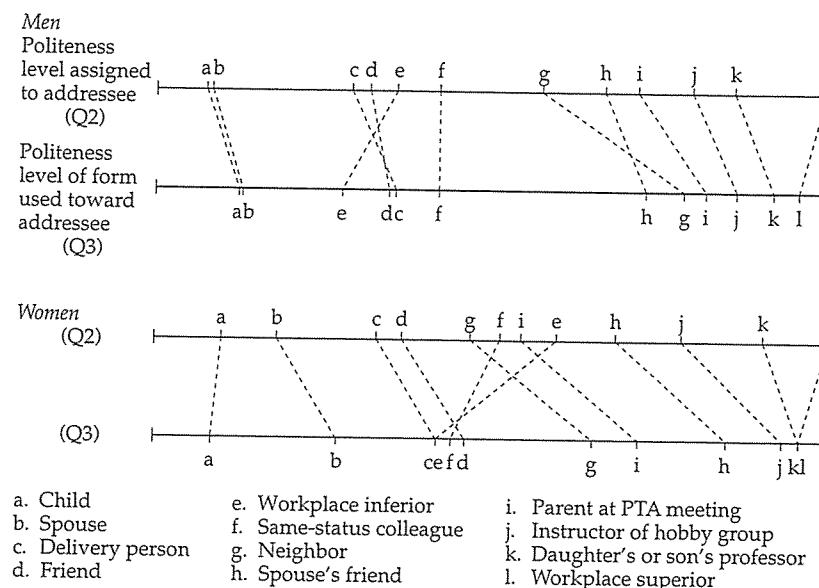


Figure 16.9 Comparison of two kinds of politeness level: politeness level assigned to addressees and politeness level of linguistic forms used toward addressees
Source: Ide et al. 1986a: 32

scales of politeness, with politeness increasing toward the right. On the upper lines, the politeness level assigned to addressees (the results of Q2) are plotted and on the lower lines the politeness level of the linguistic forms actually used toward addressees (the results of Q1 × Q3) are plotted. By comparing these two kinds of politeness level, researchers found that these two politeness levels were not parallel. For some addressees, both men and women chose more polite linguistic forms than the politeness level they assigned toward these addressees in Q2 would indicate. These addressees are the ones with whom one is required to be sociable, for example, the people in the domain of the neighborhood, hobbies, and the home. For other addressees, they chose equal or less polite linguistic forms than the politeness level they assigned to them in Q2. These are addressees in the domain of the workplace with whom solidarity is sought. The grouping of addressees is similar for men and for women, the only exception being the case of children, with whom women choose less polite forms and men choose more polite ones.

Taking men's and women's interaction in their daily lives into account, women in this study had more frequent interaction with people with whom they employ higher-level politeness forms than the politeness level these addressees would require. This is another reason for women's use of more polite speech.

These results can account for the observed differences in the politeness level of linguistic forms and for women's relatively frequent use of beautification and hypercorrected honorifics. Since women engage more frequently in interactions which calls for higher linguistic forms, they employ higher linguistic forms more frequently. It is a general tendency that the frequent use of specific linguistic forms will gradually exhaust their politeness value. Women's lower assessment of the politeness level of the linguistic forms in question can be considered as an example of such a case. Moreover, the frequent use of beautification and hypercorrected honorifics can be traced to this exhaustion of the politeness value of linguistic forms. Since women do not recognize the high politeness level of some linguistic forms, they consequently seek even higher-level linguistic forms, and this can account for their frequent use of beautification honorifics and indiscriminate use of honorifics, that is, hypercorrected honorifics.

3 How Politeness Forms and Women's Language Represent the Speaker's Identity

The previous sections discussed the structure and the social meaning of politeness forms and women's language. The choice among these linguistic forms is associated with the representation of one's identity.

In addition to expressing referential meaning, language has a function of indexing some situational information. In order to interpret this situational information, the speaker and the addressee must have shared knowledge about the situation and language use. This shared knowledge forms a part of the communicative competence of the speaker and of the addressee. When the proper linguistic forms are selected in accordance with the situation, addressees can interpret the social meaning of these linguistic forms because of their communicative competence. This mechanism shows the indexicality of language. The linguistic forms chosen by the speaker function as indexical signs reflecting the speaker's assessment and acknowledgment of the contextual situation for the addressee. Silverstein (1976: 27) explained these indexes as "signs where the occurrence of a sign vehicle token bears a connection of understood spatio-temporal contiguity to the occurrence of the entity signaled. That is, the presence of some entity is perceived to be signaled in the context of communication incorporating the sign vehicle."

The structure of communicative competence contains some cultural understanding of or presuppositions about the society in which it is used. The use of honorifics according to *wakimae* or women's use of polite language, for example, might reflect people's presuppositions concerning behavior conforming to *wakimae* or women's polite behavior in Japanese society. The choice of one linguistic form over another reflects a perception of the structure of cultural

understandings and represents the speaker's identity as a member of the society. Therefore, using honorifics or women's language appropriate to the contextual situation exhibits speakers' behavior in accordance with the cultural understandings inherent in honorifics or women's language, and indexes their identity as a person who observes *wakimae* both in the situation and in the society in general. On the other hand, young women's use of language forms which show masculinity, such as the first person pronoun *boku* or the sentence-final particle *ze*, manifests the face that the speakers are violating the sociolinguistic structure realized through women's language.

Furthermore, the appropriate linguistic choice has the effect of avoiding conflict or misunderstandings in the interaction. This effect stems from the fact that the speaker and the addressee confirm for each other that they have shared knowledge about sociopragmatic language usage and that they both conform to those rules of language use. This confirmation in turn engenders a sense of security for both the speaker and the hearer in that they belong to the same speech community and conform to the same cultural understandings realized by the sociolinguistic structure. Thus, the proper use of politeness forms or men's or women's language indexes the speaker's identity as a proper member of the Japanese speech community.

The indexical function of politeness forms and women's language is related to the representation of the speaker's demeanor. Demeanor is explained by Goffman (1967) as an element of a person's ceremonial behavior, typically conveyed through deportment, dress, and bearing, which serves to express the personal quality of desirability. The use of high-level politeness forms is associated with the speech of people in higher social classes, and this sociolinguistic structure concerning the use of politeness forms is shared by people in Japanese society as a part of the structure of the communicative competence. The customer's use of honorifics toward the sales assistants as explained in section 1.2.1 shows the speaker's demeanor. The use of honorifics by a male speaker in higher position, for example, or the fact that women use honorifics more frequently than men would also represent the speakers' demeanor.

The following example shows the representation of a speaker's identity through her language use. This is to review the politeness forms and women's language used in natural conversations. How the speaker represents her identity as a well-demeaned woman of the upper middle class through her choice of honorifics and other linguistic features is revealed in this example.

The data (Ide et al. 1984) was collected by recording naturally occurring conversations. In this conversation, the participants A, C, and D are housewives (and mothers) in their forties, and B is the husband of a novelist. The speaker A visits the famed novelist's house with two other mothers to pay their respects. The novelist and her husband made a donation to the charity event the mothers had held for their daughters' high school. They are all in the entrance hall of the novelist's house, and the three mothers are about to leave.

- (36) 1A: (to B) Mata doozo, ano sensei ni mo
 again please (Filler) teacher(Title Hon) Dat too
 yorosiku otutae kudasai mase.
 regard tell Ref Hon give Ref Hon Add Hon Imp
 "Please give sensei our best regards."
- 2B: (to A) Ee.
 yes
 "Yes."
- 3A: (to B) Siturei itasi masi ta.
 impolite do Hum Hon Add Hon Past
 "It was impolite of us to have bothered you."
- 4A: (to C, D) Aa, irasite yokatta wa nee.
 Ah be Ref Hon good Past FP FP
 "It was good that he was at home."

In this conversation, A at first speaks to B, who is the husband of the novelist, with many honorific expressions. This use of honorifics shows A's acknowledgment of the fact that B is of higher position and status, and thus is a person who is not considered familiar, and therefore belongs to the *soto* (out-group). It also acknowledges that B has power in the relationship as the result of being the benefactor. A's formal speech style also manifests her demeanor and indexes her femininity. In utterance 1, A says *sensei* (a term used as an honorific referent) to refer to the novelist. The addressee B and the bystanders C and D interpret the meaning of A's formal style. After the three mothers leave the house (in utterance 4), A speaks to other mothers C and D without honorific expressions, using *yokatta* (good Past) instead of *yokatta desu* (good Past Add Hon). A's change of speech style shows her acknowledgment of the change in the situational setting. This time the addressees are two other mothers, and the speech style of A indexes her close relationship with them, since they belong to the *uchi* (in-group) for her. However, in this utterance, A still uses a honorific form, *irasite* (be Ref Hon) instead of *ite* (be). This is because A is referring to B's behavior with *irasite*. The choice of *irasite* instead of other honorific forms such as *oide ni natte* (be Ref Hon) shows A's femininity. The hearers C and D understand the social meaning of this change of A's speech style to plain forms toward them, of A's use of honorifics toward B, and of A's use of the form *irasite*.

4 Further Problems and a Future Agenda

The goal of this chapter has been to present a description of fundamental sociolinguistic issues focusing on politeness and women's language. Further problems and a future agenda should be noted for the development of research in this field.

Situational constraints play a central role in any discussion of Japanese sociolinguistics. However, insufficient attention has been paid to the crucial influence of context/setting/situational factors in pragmatic and sociolinguistic research. The determining factors are far more complex than what has so far been investigated. Factors concerning the speaker, interpersonal factors such as the relationship between the speaker and the addressee, factors of the situational context, and discursive factors should all be considered as important factors of great relevance in Japanese pragmatics. Unlike most European languages, it is a feature of the Japanese language itself to have rich pragmatic constraints at the core of the appropriate use of the language.

Further research should be concerned with the intricate mechanism of these pragmatic factors relevant to the choice of linguistic forms. The determining factors need to be defined rigorously by carefully observing them at each moment of speaking in natural conversations. It is only after we have a clearer picture of the interrelationship of these determining factors that we can establish a comprehensive analysis of the gender-related differences in language use.

The second set of questions revolves around language and the speaker's identity. The indexicality of language allows the speaker to express the ideology of the shared knowledge of the speech community through the choice of particular linguistic forms and expressions. This language ideology comes from the sociolinguistic structure inherent in the linguistic forms and expressions. The speakers recognize the sociolinguistic structure of their language as their communicative competence and choose the appropriate linguistic forms and expressions from the sociolinguistic varieties. The speaker's choice shows the speaker's identity as a person who shares the language ideology in that speech community.

Sociolinguistic research has not yet connected the problem of the speaker's linguistic choice with the speaker's identity. However, language should also be discussed from the perspective of a marker indexing the speaker's identity. In the study of women's language, for instance, the description and interpretation of gender-related differences in language use and the questions of women's inferior social power have been the main concern of the research. However, the more important question requiring investigation should be the indexical function of women's language as a gender identity marker. The study of the indexicality of language which represents the shared ideology of the speech community will clarify the dynamic system of the speaker's identity and language use.

The third problem is the need for an historical approach to gender-related language issues in Japanese society. Women's language in Japan used to refer to special languages used by court ladies, nuns, or courtesans in their secluded worlds, and were studied in these contexts by Japanese philologists long before the surge of research on this topic that began in the 1970s. Contemporary Japanese women's language, which has borrowed a large amount of vocabulary from these earlier special languages, continues the image of high culture

carried by educated women in traditional worlds. The studies of gender and language of contemporary Japanese that are based on the perspectives of gender research that have originated in Western research fail to do justice to the issue as it is generally understood in Japanese society.

These problems amount to a confirmation of the importance of research based on the careful observation of language use in each speech community. Sociolinguistic studies must become useful tools for everyone to understand both their own and other cultures by way of clarifying the mechanism of the language, the ideology, and the identity of those who speak the language. This is essential for mutual understanding between peoples of differing cultures.

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