

## CONSTRUCTING JAPANESE MEN'S MULTIDIMENSIONAL IDENTITIES: A CASE STUDY OF MIXED-GENDER TALK

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### Abstract

Most previous studies of language and gender have focused on English as well as women's language. The present study focuses on context dependency and the multiple functions of Japanese men's language, or "masculine Japanese." It reports a case study that qualitatively analyzes four conversations between a Japanese male and a female speaker collected in a naturalistic setting. The findings suggest the specific nature of the mixed-gender pair is important in examining these aspects. In mixed pairs where the male speaker is in a superior position to the female speaker, his use of masculine Japanese may be limited in "direct talk" or when he is directly addressing his female interlocutor because of their relatively hierarchical interpersonal relationship. On the other hand, his use of masculine language may be more frequent in direct quotations used to reveal his inner thoughts or simulate male speakers' speech from prior contexts during his storytelling. In each context, masculine Japanese seems to have different functions. In direct talk, it provides linguistic resources for constructing traditional masculinities, even if they are not necessarily used, for example, when his relative status is a more salient feature than his gender. By contrast, in direct quotation, masculine language may be used as an involvement strategy or to consolidate solidarity, thus constructing different dimensions of interpersonal relationships in the mixed pair, though it may also be used as an entertainment strategy. The paper also discusses the need for a more holistic approach by including interactional features in research on gender and Japanese language.

**Keywords:** Masculine language; Japanese men; Masculinity; Gender; Identity; Mixed talk; Amount of talk; Storytelling; Direct quotation; Direct talk.

### 1. Introduction

Research on gender and language has generally been conducted in relation to English and has characterized men's language as competitive and aggressive and women's conversational style as cooperative and supportive (Coates 2004; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013; Holmes 2006; Holmes and Meyerhoff 2003; Kiesling 1998; Maltz and Borker 1982; Talbot 2010; Tannen 1990). These gender-associated conversational styles are viewed as enacted through the use of specific linguistic and interactional features. For example, Coates (2003, 2004) discusses how men's competitive and aggressive conversational style is partly performed through monologues, verbal sparring, swearing, taboo language, and refraining from using hedging devices. By contrast, women's cooperative conversational style is constructed

through the use of minimal responses, facilitative questions, and the co-construction of turns. While these gender-associated conversational styles develop during the socialization process within same-sex groups (Maltz and Borker 1982; Tannen 1990), similar features of men's conversational styles are observed in mixed-gender talk or 'mixed talk'. For example, men have often been found to dominate women through topic control, interruptions, and amount of talk (Coates and Pichler 2011; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013; Fishman 1983; Holmes 2006; James and Drakich 1993; Kollock, Blumstein, and Schwartz 1985).

In researching gender and language, social constructionist approaches have been extensively adopted, especially in relation to English (e.g., Cameron 2005; Holmes 2005, 2006). In this theoretical perspective, speakers construct gender identities rather than enacting the masculine or feminine identity they are born with (Butler 1990; Weedon 1987). Speakers develop cultural beliefs and values associated with normative masculinities and femininities in the given community of practice, and produce, reproduce, or challenge these to construct and claim their own gender identities (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013). The construction of gender identities is therefore viewed as a performance representing speakers' choice, even though such choice is embedded within sociocultural ideologies and gender practices that impose social constraints (Butler 1999; Weedon 1987). In conversation, gender identity is constructed by using (or avoiding) the resources afforded by linguistic features associated with masculine or feminine qualities, including lexical and grammatical forms and also interactional strategies such as turn-taking, topic control, interruptions, and amount of talk (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013; Holmes 1997, 2006; Johnstone and Bean 1997; Kiesling 2002).

According to social constructionist approaches, conversation is one of the important sites in which speakers create and reaffirm their gender identities (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013; Holmes 1997; Johnstone and Bean 1997; Kiesling 2002). For example, Holmes (1997) suggests that language is the site of the cultural production of gender identity, and storytelling is a particularly effective means of constructing masculine and feminine identities in alignment with the dominant social ideology, or alternatively, to subvert or contest that ideology.

Although a significant number of studies have been conducted in the field of language and gender and have revealed the importance of the context dependency of linguistic meanings and functions as well as their role in the construction of identities, most of the findings are based on studies focusing on English. Although the number of studies focusing on Asian languages is increasing, their number remains comparatively low. Moreover, compared with the number and findings of previous studies of Japanese women's language, little is known about Japanese men's language. In response, the present study focuses on Japanese men's language in the hope of filling a gap in the field of language and gender. Following social constructionist approaches and also by building upon limited but enlightening research findings on Japanese men's language (e.g., Shibamoto Smith 2004; Sturtz Sreetharan 2004, 2006, 2009), the present study investigates the context dependency of the use and functions of Japanese men's language and its possible relationship with interactional features by reporting a case study. In particular, it examines the use of masculine Japanese in mixed talk by addressing the following questions:

1. To what extent is the use of masculine Japanese dependent on context in mixed talk?
2. To what extent are morphological features of masculine Japanese related to interactional features?

These two questions will be explored by closely analyzing conversations involving two young Japanese speakers, one male, the other female, and studying in Hong Kong as exchange students. Question 1 will be investigated by examining the particular mixed pair and the activities the two participants engage in (e.g., storytelling). For question 2, amount of talk was chosen as one of the most widely reported features of the masculine conversational style in research on gender and language in relation to English. As the present study is among the first of its kind, it is intended to identify possible areas of context dependency of use and functions of masculine Japanese, the possible nature of the link between morphological and interactional features, and how these are related to the particular mixed-gender pair under consideration here. As there is no well-established analytical framework for adoption, the study explores interactional sociolinguistics as a possible analytical framework for exploring these issues. The empirical evidence and these theoretical underpinnings are intended to lay a foundation for future studies to build upon on a larger scale.

## **2. Japanese men's language**

Japanese men's language has traditionally been associated with being powerful (Abe 2004; Okamoto and Shibamoto Smith 2008), aggressive, rough, vulgar, and less polite than women's speech (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013; Ide 1991; Ide and Yoshida 2002; Okamoto and Shibamoto Smith 2004; Sturtz Sreetharan 2004, 2006). Although Japanese men's language has been characterized in similar ways as men's language in English, including indexing power and aggressiveness, it differs from English in that Japanese has a range of gender-specific morphological, grammatical, and lexical features that index traditional masculinities (masculine Japanese) more closely than is the case for English (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013: 281). Whereas masculine and feminine linguistic features are generally seen as indexing gender indirectly as their meanings are mediated by the context (Ochs 1992), in Japanese, the relationship between linguistic features and gender is more explicit as it has been set historically and politically within its particular ideological domain. Masculine and feminine Japanese thus represent the normative (or "ideal") mode, that is, a cultural model of how Japanese men and women are expected to speak rather than how they are likely to speak (Inoue, 2004, 2006; Okamoto and Shibamoto Smith 2004). Sturtz Sreetharan (2004: 276) points out that feminine and masculine Japanese constitutes part of the native speaker's cultural knowledge of what it means socially to "talk like" a woman or a man.

Previous studies of gender and language in Japanese differ from comparable studies of English in that most of the former have focused on morphological features such as address terms and sentence final particles (Sturtz Sreetharan 2004, 2006, 2009). By contrast, little attention has been paid to interactional features such as turn taking, interruptions, and amount of talk (but see Horiguchi 1991; Itakura 2001; Uchida 1993).

One of the most commonly cited features of gender and language in Japanese is women's generally higher level of linguistic politeness, with Japanese men's language being generally perceived as being less polite (e.g., Ide and Yoshida 2002; Inoue 2006; Shibamoto Smith 1992; Sturtz Sreetharan 2006, 2009). Non-reciprocal use of plain and polite forms (that is, contrasting verbal and adjectival conjugation forms in the sentence final position) normatively manifests a status-related hierarchy or social distance. Gender difference is widely believed to be one of the social variables that account for non-reciprocal use, in addition to differences in age and social position (e.g., Maynard 1990, 1997; Matsumoto 1988).

Another frequently discussed feature of masculine Japanese is that of address terms (Shibamoto Smith 2004; Kobayashi 2002; Sakurai 2002). For example, according to Shibamoto Smith (2004), in normative use, *boku* and *ore* are male-associated self-address forms (corresponding to the personal pronoun "I" in English), and *atashi* is a female-associated form. For second-person address terms (corresponding to "you" in English), *kimi*, *omae*, *kisama*, and *temee* are described as male-associated, and *anata* as a neutral form. Among male-associated address terms, varying kinds or degrees of masculinities are discussed. For example, Shibamoto Smith (2004: 120-124) argues that *boku* and *ore* are both informal but that *ore* is a more masculine self-address term in that it projects a powerful masculinity, while *boku* indexes relative powerlessness. Focusing on the use of masculine self-address terms in a number of workplaces, Sakurai (2002) observed that the use of *boku* was frequent among faculty members in universities but was rarely used by designers and musicians, while *ore* was frequently used by designers and musicians and was not used at all by faculty members in universities and research institutes. Sakurai related these differences to different degrees of informality in different workplaces. For her part, Shibamoto Smith (2004) argues that among male-associated second-person address terms, *omae* is an old-fashioned term with more condescending connotations than *kimi*, while *kisama* and *temee* are aggressive and vulgar forms (see also Okamoto and Shibamoto Smith 2004). Similarly, Sturtz Sreetharan (2009) argues that men are stereotypically associated with *ore* and *omae*, which are perceived as vulgar, rough, rude, and deprecatory. However, the meaning of *ore* is context-dependent. For example, Shibamoto Smith (2004) reports that *ore* and plain forms are associated with attractiveness in romantic fiction.

Similar observations have been made in relation to sentence-final particles. Shibamoto Smith (2004) argues that sentence-final particles serve to index a speaker's stance or attitude toward the propositional information. Among these, *-zo* and *-ze* (e.g., *iku-zo* and *iku-ze*, 'I go') are perceived as strongly masculine, projecting aggression and authority, while *-na* (e.g. *omowanai-na*, '(I) don't think') and *-sa* (e.g. *chigau-sa*, '(it's) wrong') are perceived as relatively masculine (see also McGloin, 1990; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013).

Some grammatical forms are also associated with strong masculinity. For example, bald imperatives (e.g. *tabero*, 'Eat') and negative imperative-*na* (e.g., *taberu-na*, 'Don't eat') are described as sounding blunt and harsh (Abe 2004; Shibamoto Smith 2004). In addition, the use of *-ee* instead of the standard *-ai* in forming adjectives (e.g., *urusee*<*urusai*,<sup>1</sup> 'noisy'), negative forms (*nee*<*nai*, 'no'), and the use of copular *da* in

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<sup>1</sup>The symbol "<" indicates that the underscored form on the left is a masculine form based upon the standard form on the right. Thus, in this example, *urusee* is a masculine form based on the standard form *urusai*.

questions (e.g., *nani yattenda* ‘What are you doing?’) are perceived as projecting roughness (Abe 2004; Shibamoto Smith 2004). The use of the particle *-ka* in plain interrogatives (e.g., *nomu-ka*, ‘Do you drink?’; *wreshii-ka*, ‘Are you happy?’) is also described as strong (Abe 2004). Although a number of morphological, grammatical, and lexical forms have thus been identified as strongly or relatively masculine, other forms have also been identified as masculine but without any discussion of degrees of masculinity, including the modal expression *daroo*, ‘(I) assume...?’ in Nakajima (2002) and the copula *da* used in declarative forms in Endo (2002).

A number of previous studies have suggested that the above-mentioned gender-related linguistic forms are stereotypical and represent ideal norms stipulating how Japanese men are expected to speak while people’s actual use and attitudes often differ from such norms (Abe 2004; Inoue 2006; Okamoto and Shibamoto Smith 2004, 2008). For example, Okamoto and Shibamoto Smith (2004) observe that while the ‘masculine’ self-address terms *boku* and *ore* are likely to be used by Japanese men to express powerful (or less powerful) masculinities, respectively, they are also used by schoolgirls to reject social norms and be non-conformist, not to index masculinities. Similarly, in her study of Japanese lesbians, Abe (2004) showed that these speakers use a range of masculine expressions strategically in order to convey a range of meanings, such as creating solidarity or intimacy and expressing powerfulness. She also observes that a speaker may shift her speech style depending on the context and to negotiate her shifting gender identities. Meanwhile, as mentioned above, empirical studies of Japanese men’s language remain scarce (but see Sturtz Sreetharan 2004, 2006, 2009).

### 3. The study

The present study is a case study, reporting on an analysis of the use of masculine language by Akira, a Japanese male speaker, in his conversations with Miyoko, a Japanese female speaker, both exchange students in a university in Hong Kong (both names are pseudonyms). At the time of recording, they were both 21 years old. Akira had been in Hong Kong for about ten months, and Miyoko about four months. Akira and Miyoko held conversations in Japanese over lunch on four separate occasions, and these were recorded.

Akira was initially approached by the researcher and was requested to ask a Japanese female friend of his to participate in a research project involving the recording of conversations. Both lived in a campus dormitory and were good friends, having known each other for about three months. They attended many social functions together, such as going to restaurants, karaoke bars, and parties. However, due to a slight difference in age (eight months), their relationship remained somewhat hierarchical, Akira being the senior partner (see the Discussion section below).

The lunch-time conversation setting was chosen because meal-time conversations tend to capture naturalistic exchanges and can create ideal opportunities for talk to become a joint activity among participants (Leung 2009; Ochs, Smith, and Taylor 1996). Both participants gave their consent (written and oral) to participate and have their conversations recorded. They were given a small recorder and asked to turn it on at the start of their conversations and to turn it off at the end. They were told that they could stop the recorder any time and that any parts of their conversations could be

deleted later by the researcher's assistant, should they express that wish. Each conversation lasted between 40 to 60 minutes (approximately three and a half hours in total). It is possible that their awareness of being recorded may have impacted their conversational behavior. For example, they may have avoided certain topics. However, the effects of any such awareness appear to have been minimal as their transcripts showed that they were relaxed and enjoyed freely discussing a range of topics, including exchanging personal details and private opinions about their friends, teachers, classes, university life, and traveling experiences. Their conversations were also accompanied with frequent shared laughter, which indicates that they were consolidating intimacy.<sup>2</sup> The study examined Akira's use of masculine Japanese in all four of his conversations with Miyoko, excluding sections where the participants were discussing sensitive content.

All conversations were transcribed by the researcher and analyzed in detail, focusing on Akira's use of masculine Japanese, including: (a) plain and polite forms, (b) address terms, (c) sentence-final particles, and (d) question and imperative forms. In particular, his use of strongly masculine forms expressing aggressiveness and roughness (as discussed above) was analyzed in terms of whether they were used consistently throughout his conversations.

#### **4. Findings**

Generally, Akira produced a number of monologues in which he talked about a range of topics, including his problems with his girlfriend, prior conversations with their mutual friend Kim (an exchange student from South Korea studying in the same university and Akira's roommate in the student dormitory), problems with his previous roommate, university life, films, and traveling experiences. By contrast, Miyoko rarely told long stories or held long turns. Her utterances were considerably shorter and generally limited to answering questions from Akira and providing backchannels during Akira's storytelling. In terms of amount of talk, Akira clearly dominated Miyoko.

Although Akira used masculine Japanese throughout his conversations with Miyoko, their frequency and type differed according to context. Below, I analyze selected conversational excerpts showing a contrast between his rather limited use of masculine forms during his "direct talk" (see below) with Miyoko as well as his more prevalent use of these forms in quotations, which were frequently observed during his storytelling. (For details of transcription conventions, see the Appendix.)

##### **4.1. *Masculine Japanese in "direct talk"***

When talking to Miyoko directly, a most prominent feature of Akira's use of social deixis is his consistent use of the plain form, while Miyoko non-reciprocally uses the polite form for the major part of their conversations (see Akira's Turn 1 and Miyoko's Turn 2 in Example 1 below), except for a limited number of contexts, which will be discussed below. Second, although Akira regularly omits self-address terms ('I'), as is

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<sup>2</sup> To protect personal identities, certain personal details were changed in the transcripts presented below.

often observed in Japanese, when he chooses to identify himself as the subject of a sentence, Akira uses *ore*, which is more strongly masculine, and never uses the more moderate *boku*:

Example (1)

*Akira is telling Miyoko that he does not understand why their mutual friend Mary recently started being unfriendly.*

- 1 **Akira:** *ore (Mas./S) bestuni nanmo shitenai (PLAIN) yo, nanka benkyoo isogashii kara renraku (.) shitenai dake nanoni nannan daroo (PLAIN), are ((laughter))*

I (Mas./S) haven't done (PLAIN) anything particularly, I mean, as [I] have been too busy with [my] coursework and [I] haven't been in touch [with her], [I] wonder (PLAIN) what that [her unfriendliness] means ((laughter))

- 2 **Miyoko:** *omoshiroi desu (POLITE) ne ((giggles))*

[that] is (POLITE) funny, isn't it? ((giggles))

Akira's linguistic choice constructs multidimensional identities and interpersonal relationships with Miyoko. His performance of masculinity does not appear salient in this context because, although *ore* expresses strong and powerful masculinity, it is often omitted<sup>3</sup>. In addition, the non-reciprocal use of plain and polite forms (e.g. *shitenai*, 'haven't done' vs. *omoshiroi desu* '[that] is funny') is traditionally described as constructing a hierarchical or distant relationship (e.g., Matsumoto 1988; Maynard 1990: 87; see above). However, Akira's use of plain forms and informal expressions (e.g., *nanmo* (> *nanimo*; 'anything') also expresses informality. In addition, although this occurs on a limited number of occasions, he uses the affectionate term *-chan* in addressing Miyoko. Example 2 below illustrates this with two of Akira's non-consecutive turns taken from separate contexts:

Example (2)

- 1 **Akira:** *Miyoko-chan toka dattara dooyuu no konomu (PLAIN) kana (Mas.)*

what kind of present would [you] Miyoko- chan like to get (PLAIN)?

- 2 **Akira:** *Kim ga Miyoko-chan no koto hometeta (PLAIN) yo*

Kim was speaking highly (PLAIN) of [you], Miyoko-*chan*

Compared to other ways of addressing Miyoko, such as 'family name - *san*' or second person address terms such as *kimi* and *omae*, *-chan* is an affectionate term that expresses the speaker's caring attitude toward the addressee (Takanashi 2011), as for example, in looking after one's junior (Sturtz Sreetharan 2006). Similarly, the sentence-final particle *-kana* in Example 2 above, which turns an utterance into a question, is used to address an intimate interlocutor, making it "moderately masculine" (Sturtz Sreetharan 2004:

<sup>3</sup> Shibamoto Smith (2004) points out that Japanese speakers tend to avoid explicit self-reference.

280), while Akira's compliment, which is offered in the plain form, also indicates his intimacy with Miyoko. Although Akira's choice of the other address term thus creates intimacy, its extent is highly limited as self- and other- address terms are mostly omitted when the referent is obvious in the context.

#### **4.2. Masculine Japanese in direct quotation<sup>4</sup>**

In contrast with his direct talk with Miyoko, in the context of direct quotation (e.g., He said, 'Well, I have a story to tell'), Akira frequently uses a number of masculine forms other than *ore*, including sentence-final particles as well as bald imperative and grammatical forms linked with aggression, bluntness, roughness, and vulgarity.<sup>5</sup> Three kinds of direct quotations were identified in the present dataset: (1) Reporting his inner thoughts; (2) Quoting his own words and those of his non-Japanese male interlocutors in prior conversations held in English (all-male talk); and (3) Quoting his own words from prior conversations in Japanese (mixed talk).

In fact, direct quotation is not truly direct. For example, it is unlikely that Akira remembered the exact words he used when he was talking to himself (inner thoughts). In addition, when quoting his own words or those of his male interlocutors from conversations they originally held in English and quoting (i.e., translating) them in Japanese, Akira made the choice to use strongly masculine forms to represent the male speakers' speech.

Tannen (1989: 98-133) discusses how direct quotation (or direct reported speech) is a misnomer as it represents a current speaker's constructed dialogue, designed to suit his or her own perspective and communicative purposes rather than a dialogue reported close to its original form. By casting inner thoughts and another speaker's speech in quoted phrasings, the speaker is able to create and animate the voices of the quoted characters. According to Tannen, this facilitates a storyteller's task of conveying his or her evaluation of the characters and establishes a sense of identification with the listener. Similarly, according to Clark and Gerrig (1990), direct quotation represents selected aspects of the original phrasings chosen in accordance with the nature of the experience the current speaker wishes to convey to the listener. Relevant features include the voice pitch and emotional state (e.g., anger, sarcasm, excitement) of those being quoted, the register of the language (e.g., formal or informal), and specific speech acts. Clark and Gerrig argue that one of the important functions of direct quotation is that it allows the current speaker to invoke a frame indicating that the quoted phrases are non-serious. This enables the current speaker to attain a range of discourse acts and effects, such as expressing impolite or inappropriate attitudes and attribute them to others without taking responsibility. Direct quotation also makes the listener directly experience the depicted event and become engrossed in the

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<sup>4</sup> Based upon Tannen (1989: 99), "direct reported speech" refers to an utterance conveyed (or claimed to be conveyed) as the original speaker's exact words (e.g., "Sam said, 'I'll come'"). This is also referred to as a "direct speech," "direct discourse," or "direct quotation." This contrasts with "indirect reported speech", which paraphrases another speaker's speech in the current speaker's voice (e.g., "Sam said he would come"). In the present study, the term "direct quotation" is adopted for the former.

<sup>5</sup> In her study of all-male talk, Sturtz Sreetharan (2004) also shows that strongly stereotypical masculine styles are observed in limited contexts, for example, when they are engaged in role play.



character's voice. A limited number of studies have addressed direct quotation in Japanese language. For example, Maynard (1996) shows that casual speech embedded in direct self-quotation in the course of formal speech style enables the current speaker to “alter the social reality” (p. 215) as it enables him or her to provide information that is otherwise unavailable to the addressee, such as communicating the speaker’s masculinity or femininity and private or revealed thoughts, thus encouraging a sense of closeness and intimacy. Maynard concludes that direct self-quotation creates multiple voices. In addition, Kamada (2000) argues that linguistic features of quoted phrases represent the current speaker’s choice of a range of social deixis including the age, social status, and gender of the speaker being quoted in light of the current speaker’s ongoing register in direct talk and its intended effects. According to Kamada, the most important functions of direct quotation are to animate the characters and dramatize the quoted dialogue.

Drawing on the finding that direct quotation is a constructed dialogue in accordance with the current speaker’s intended effects, I analyze below the kind of communicative purposes Akira's masculine Japanese may have fulfilled in direct quotations.

Example 3 below illustrates how Akira switches to the use of aggressive expressions when he quotes inner thoughts:

Example (3)

*Akira is telling Miyoko that he decided not to go and see his girlfriend over Christmas as he thinks it would be troublesome to go and see her as she lives in Miyagi, in northern Japan, which is very far from his hometown.*

- 1 Akira: ***Miyagi, Miyagi itte Shiga kaen no sugoi mendokusainda (PLAIN) mon***  
***((laughter))***  
  
going to Miyagi, Miyagi and coming back to Shiga is (PLAIN) very troublesome ((laughter))
- 2 Miyoko: ***ah attsu, ie, doko nan desu (POLITE) ka?***  
  
oh, uhm, where is (POLITE)[ your] home?
- 3 Akira: ***ie, Shiga, Shigaken de//***  
  
[my] home is in Shiga, Shiga Prefecture and//
- 4 Miyoko: ***//ah, sokka (PLAIN), sokka (PLAIN)***  
  
// Oh I see (PLAIN), I see (PLAIN)
- 5 Akira: ***daigaku ga Miyagi de, sono, kanojo-san ga Miyagi ni iru kara, “chitto mendokusee (Mas./S),”// ((laughter)) toka omotte***  
  
[my] university is in Miyagi, and uh, my girlfriend is in Miyagi, so “It’s a little troublesome (Mas./S),” ((laughter)), sort of thing, [I] thought [to myself]
- 6 Miyoko: ***//((laughter))***

In the example above, similar to Example 1, Akira uses the plain form whereas Miyoko uses the polite form except when she is providing backchannels to support Akira's story about his girlfriend in Turn 4. Akira shifts from the plain form to strongly masculine forms as he shifts from direct talk to direct quotation to report his inner thoughts. That is, in Turn 1, Akira explains to Miyoko that he felt it would be *mendokusai* ('troublesome') to go and see his girlfriend in a remote area of Japan by adding the sentence-final particle *-mon* to its copula form (*-da*) in the plain form) as *mendokusainda-mon*. According to Sturtz Sreetharan (2004: 281), *-mon* is "moderately feminine." However, when Akira begins to quote his inner thoughts, he uses the same word but in the strongly masculine form *mendokusee* < *mendokusai*, which evokes aggression, roughness, and vulgarity. His use of aggressive and rough masculine forms result in shared laughter (see below).

The link between Akira's use of masculine forms and strong emotions is further illustrated in the following example, in which he quotes his inner thoughts twice from his prior conversation with his girlfriend. However, in only one of these cases is this accompanied by a masculine form:

Example (4)

*Akira is talking about why he decided to give his girlfriend a Christmas present because she told him that she had never received a Christmas present from her previous boyfriends.*

- 1 Akira: *imamade tsukiatta hito (.) no hanashi o kiiteru to ((Miyoko: un)), "ikkai mo kurenakatta," mitaina koto itteta kara ((laughter)) ((Miyoko: un un un)), "dondake sachi usuinda"<sup>6</sup> (Mas./S)!" ((laughter)) to omoi nagara ((Miyoko: waa !)), "maa maa kanojo-san rasii," to omotte*

when [I] heard [her] talk about who [she] previously went out with ((Miyoko: yes)), "[I] have never received any present," [she] said this kind of thing so ((laughter)) ((Miyoko: yes, yes, yes)), "How unlucky [she] is (Mas./S)!" ((laughter)) [I] thought ((Miyoko: wow!)), "Well, that's sort of how my girlfriend is," [I] thought

- 2 Miyoko: *ii kareshi desu (POLITE) nee*

[you] are (POLITE) a good boyfriend, aren't you?

In the excerpt above, Akira uses direct quotation three times. First, he quotes his girlfriend's statement that she never received any presents from her previous boyfriends with laughter, which may be used to mitigate his embarrassment at his girlfriend's description of her 'unlucky' past (see Ladegaard 2013 for a discussion of different functions of laughter). The direct quotation receives Miyoko's backchannels (*un un un*, 'yes yes yes'), indicating her involvement in his storytelling. In his second direct quotation, where he self-quotes inner thoughts referring to his girlfriend's condition, Akira uses the aggressive masculine form "*dondake sachi usuinda!*" ('How unlucky she is!'). His aggression is accompanied with his laughter, which suggests that he finds this masculine form amusing, although it may also mitigate his criticism of his

<sup>6</sup> The *-da* particle is analyzed here as a strongly masculine form on the basis of its similarity to the *-da* particle used in question forms (Abe 2004; Shibamoto Smith 2004).

girlfriend. His aggressive language also receives Miyoko's backchannel (*waa!* or 'wow!') as well as her amazement that Akira is a good boyfriend as he decided to give his girlfriend a present as she is 'unlucky' (Turn 2). This concurs with previous studies suggesting that direct quotation is an involvement strategy used to create intimacy and solidarity (Clark and Getting 1990; Maynard 1996; Tannen 1989, 2004; see above). That is, masculine forms used in direct quotation appear to trigger laughter and also secure backchannels and emotional reactions from the addressee, which indicates intimacy and involvement (Coates 2007). Masculine Japanese may trigger laughter because it invokes exaggerated masculine selves and arguably non-real (that is, not necessarily spoken by actual people) ways of talking, thus sounding amusing. Together with laughter and backchannels, masculine forms appear to be part of the contextualization cues that invoke or maintain a play frame signaling that their talk is non-serious and playful (Clark and Getting 1990; Coates 2007; Takanashi 2011; Tannen 2004) and thus reinforcing intimacy. Similarly, laughter consolidates their solidarity as it invokes their shared cultural acknowledgement that masculine forms are stereotypical ways of talking, and sound funny if put in the mouths of "real" people in simulated dialogues. By contrast, in his third direct quotation, *maa maa kanojo-san rashii* ('Well, that's sort of how my girlfriend is'), Akira does not use masculine forms to quote inner thoughts that were sympathetic toward his girlfriend non-assertively.

In addition, Akira uses masculine forms in direct quotations when he constructs dialogues from all-male talk originally held in English. Below is an example of Akira's constructing a dialogue between himself and Kim (his Korean friend and roommate), in which similar patterns of style shifting are observed:

Example (5)

*Akira is telling a story about his previous conversations with Kim about Kim's girlfriend. Prior to the excerpt below, Akira tells Miyoko about Kim's plans to give his girlfriend beef jerky for Christmas, and he asks her about her opinion on what women appreciate as presents.*

- 1 Miyoko: *... nandemo sukina hito kara dattara nani morattemo zettai ureshii desu (POLITE)*  
 ... [I] would definitely love (POLITE) anything if it was given by someone [I] fancy
- 2 Akira: *demo sasugani beef jerky wa hiku deshoo (POLITE) ((laughter))*  
 but surely [you] would (POLITE) not like beef jerky (for your Christmas present) ((laughter))
- 3 Miyoko: *sore wa chotto eeh! tte narimasu (POLITE) yo ne*  
 that will make (POLITE) [me] go a bit like "Oh my god!," you know, won't it?

- 4 Akira: *“sore wa otokomesen daroo (Mas.),” tte tsukkondara “nn tashikani,” “dare ga beef jerky Christmas ni moratte ((laughter))((Miyoko: laughter)) yorokobundayo (Mas./S) ((laughter)),” “hitori de tabetara((laughter)) munashikunee (Mas./S),” mitaina hanashi shite “mm sore wa tashikani,” tte (3) maa maa yokatta (PLAIN) ((Miyoko: laughter)) anmari pinto hazuretenakute yokatta (PLAIN) ((laughter))//*

“That would be (Mas.) men’s point of view,” [I] challenged [Kim], “Mm true,” [he said], “Who will appreciate (Mas./S)((laughter)) getting beef jerky for Christmas?((laughter))((Miyoko: laughter)),” [I said], “Eating it alone ((laughter)), won’t that be (Mas./S) pathetic?” [we] had that kind of talk, “Mm that’s true,” [he] said, (3) well, I’m glad (PLAIN), I’m glad (PLAIN) ((Miyoko: laughter)) that [my view] is not off-track much ((laughter))//

- 5 Miyoko: //nn *daiseikai desu (POLITE) ((laughter))*

mm it is (POLITE) right on-track ((laughter))

- 6 Akira: **((laughter))**

In Turn 2, Akira expresses his assumption that beef jerky would not be an ideal present for a woman by using the polite form, accompanied with laughter. However, his use of the polite form is rare in the present dataset, and his use of it accompanied with his laughter in this excerpt may be due to his motivation to mitigate his disagreement with Miyoko (Warner-Garcia 2014). In addition, it may also be intended to create a humorous effect, for example, by pretending to sound as if he were an informed reporter through the use of formal speech.

However, in Turn 4, when he begins to simulate his previous dialogues with Kim, Akira switches to strongly masculine forms to quote his challenging and playful insults to Kim. For example, he quotes himself as having said *otokomensen daroo*, ‘(That) would be a male point of view,’ which, in combination with the lexical choice of *tsukkondara*, ‘when (I) challenged (him),’ indicating aggressiveness and roughness. In addition, equally strong masculine forms are used in *dare ga... yorokobunda yo*, ‘Who would appreciate...’ and *munashikunee*, ‘Won’t that be pathetic?’ As in the examples above, these aggressive and vulgar masculine forms are accompanied with his own or Miyoko’s laughter, indicating their playful talk and reinforcing intimacy between them. In addition, the simulated all-male dialogue is conveyed at a fast tempo and in a loud voice. When Akira concludes his storytelling, the end is indicated by a long pause. When he reverts back into his direct talk with Miyoko, he switches back to the plain form *yokatta*, ‘(I’m) glad,’ which projects informality but without masculinity.

In the excerpt above, Kim’s complying responses to Akira’s aggressive challenges, “*mm (sore wa) tashikani*” (“Mm (that’s) true”) are quoted without masculine forms. By contrast, in the example below, Kim’s speech is quoted with strong masculine forms when it is linked to his active part in verbal sparring and strong emotion:

Example (6)

Akira is telling Miyoko that Kim rejected his suggestion that Kim should give his girlfriend some food and articles of clothing such as a scarf or a pair of gloves.

- 1 Akira: “yasuku mieru kara damenanjanee (Mas./S),” ore (Mas./S) ni tsukkomi, “tashikani,” (xxx) ((laughter)) ((Miyoko: ah giggles)) nanka sugoi kechitteru kanji ga nanka sugoi (xxx) dakara metcha muzukashii (PLAIN) ne, tte hanashi, matomeruto

“That would look cheap, so it wouldn’t be any good (Mas./S), would it?” [Kim] challenged me (Mas./S), “True,” (xxx) ((laughter)) ((Miyoko: ah giggles)), [he] seems to economize a lot, that’s quite (xxx) so that’s really hard (PLAIN), isn’t it? this is [my] story, if [I] summarize it

- 2 Miyoko: muzukashii (PLAIN) ((laughter))

hard (PLAIN) ((laughter))

Example (7)

Akira is telling Miyoko that Kim expressed his anger toward Mary, their mutual friend, for flirting and misleading his Korean male friend.

- 1 Akira: “ore (Mas./S) wa sore ga moo haratatte (Mas./S) shikataganai,” tokka itte ((laughter))

“I (Mas./S) can’t help but feel angry (Mas./S),” [Kim] told [me] and //((laughter))

- 2 Miyoko: //((laughter))

In example 6, Akira quotes Kim as challenging him during their verbal sparring, which is typically associated with the enactment of solidarity in male culture (Coates 2003; Kiesling 2007). In Example 7, he quotes Kim as getting angry about how their mutual female friend treated Kim’s close friend as well as other men by using *ore* and *haratatte shikatanai* (‘I can’t help but feel angry’), a lexical expression typically associated with strong anger. In both instances, vulgar masculine forms used in direct quotations are followed with shared laughter between Akira and Miyoko.

In addition, a limited number of examples in the dataset suggest that masculine forms are also used in direct quotations to construct stereotypical male speech and behavior in mixed talk:

## Example (8)

Akira is recounting his experience of how he responded to his girlfriend, whom he met in university, when she told him for the first time that she liked him.

1 Akira: ...**“ah ore (Mas./S) mo sonna betsuni kimi (Mas.) no koto kirai, nanka omae (Mas./S) no koto kiraijanai,” mitaina kanji de...**

... “Oh I (Mas./S) don’t especially dislike you (Mas.), I mean, [I] don’t dislike you (Mas./S),” it was something like this...

In reporting how he responded to a confession from his girlfriend-to-be in Japan, Akira quotes himself as having addressed himself with the strongly masculine *ore*, which is also associated with sexual attractiveness in a romantic context (Shibamoto Smith 2004; see above). In addition, he quotes himself as having addressed his girlfriend-to-be first as *kimi*, a masculine address term for ‘you,’) but then corrects himself by replacing it with *omae*, which is more informal and carries somewhat condescending connotations. Here, Akira may view *omae* as more appropriate in the constructed romantic context of replying to his girlfriend-to-be as *kimi* is rather distant and authoritative (Takanashi 2011). By contrast, *ore* and *omae* index a stereotypical romantic and intimate relationship in Japanese culture, as where the man is the dominating figure and the woman is in a subordinate but intimate position, as in a husband and a wife exchange (Maynard 1990). In addition, Akira’s self-quotation evokes a stereotypical Japanese man, assumed to be unexpressive and taciturn (Occhi, Sturtz Sreetharan, and Shibamoto Smith 2010; Sturtz Sreetharan 2006), which contrasts with Akira’s overall dominance with regard to amount of talk in the dataset. That is, his self-quotation as being curt and inexpressive when receiving a woman’s confession might have been meant to project non-self-disclosure and a “cool” stance, another aspect associated with men’s conversational style (Coates 2011; Kiesling 2007: 665). In brief, his self-correction from less masculine to more strongly masculine self-address terms in quoting his own speech when approached by his girlfriend-to-be as well as his representation of himself as reticent in a romantic context is similar to the previous examples in that when he recasts his voice in direct quotation, he seems to portray himself as more stereotypically masculine in that specific context.

While the above analysis might suggest that masculine forms are used in direct quotation to express strong emotions rather than to index the gender of those quoted, no examples were found in the dataset where Miyoko might be observed using masculine forms to quote male interlocutors’ speech or her inner thoughts.<sup>7</sup> Below is an example of how she typically quotes her strong emotions in inner thoughts:

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<sup>7</sup> In quoting her Japanese boyfriend’s speech, Miyoko used *boku* for self-address term, and *somete* ‘Please dye your hair’ in the non-masculine imperative form (cf. *Somero*). As the number of her direct quotations of male speakers is lower, her direct quotation of male speakers’ speech is not discussed in this paper.

Example (9)

Akira and Miyoko are talking about problems with pierced ears.

- 1 Miyoko: *atashi mo piasu saisho aketetandesu (POLITE) kedo ((Akira: un)) nanka umi toka dete kite “ah moo mendokusaa,” toka omotte ((laughter))*

I had [my ears] pierced (POLITE) at the beginning but ((Akira: yes)) something like pus came out so “Ah [it’s] really troublesome,” [I] thought [to myself] something like this ((laughter))

- 2 Akira: *ore (Mas./S) mo kanojo-san ni nanka “doo yatte arau no?” toka kiitanda kedo ((Miyoko: un un)) nanka soo, umi toka, koo zurashi nagara arawanakya ikenaijan ((Miyoko: aa yada, yada, yada, yada, yada!)) nanka sore ga moo iya de ((Miyoko: un)) “mendokusee (Mas./S) na,” to omotte nanka ((Miyoko: un)) totte // ((laughter))*

I (Mas./S) also once asked [my] girlfriend something like “How do you do that?” but ((Miyoko: yes, yes)) I mean, well, something like pus, I mean, [we] have to clean [them] by removing [the earrings from the ears] like this, haven’t we? ((Miyoko: ah, no, no, no, no, no!)) I mean, [I] really didn’t like that and ((Miyoko: yes)), “How troublesome (Mas./S)!” [I] thought [to myself] and [I] kind of ((Miyoko: yes)) removed [them]//((laughter))

- 3 Miyoko: *//((laughter)) honto mendokusai desu (POLITE) yo ne ((Akira: un)) soo yuu teirekee*

//((laughter)) [it] is (POLITE) really troublesome, isn’t it? ((Akira: yes)) that sort of things that need looking after

[11 seconds omitted]

- 4 Miyoko: *dakara zuutto tsuketeru onnanoko nanka “sugoi naa,” tte omoimasu (POLITE)*

[I] therefore feel (POLITE) “Amazing,” toward girls who keep them on all the time

- 5 Akira: *un*

Yes

[2 minutes and 40 seconds omitted, during which they are talking about how their friends had changed at their respective alumni reunion from high school]

- 6 Miyoko: *shikamo kodomo tsukutteru hito imasen deshita (POLITE) ka?*

also wasn’t (POLITE) there anyone who already had children?

- 7 Akira: *ah ore (Mas./S) no gakunen dewa otoko de kekkon shiteru hito wa inakattanda kedo onna no hito de hitori dake nanka tabun roku-sai toshiue no hito to kekkon shiteru hito ga ite ((Miyoko: fuun)) nanka sensee yatteru*

*hito de ((Miyoko: hoo)) "hee sugee (Mas./S) na"=*

ah in my (Mas./S) year, there weren't any men who were married but among women, there was one person who was married to someone who was, well, probably six years older ((Miyoko: I see)) [she] was a schoolteacher or something and ((Miyoko: I see)) "Wow! Amazing (Mas./S)" [I thought to myself]=

- 8 Miyoko: = *shikkari shiterundesu* (POLITE) *ne, sono hito*  
= [she] is (POLITE) mature, isn't she? that person

The excerpt above illustrates contrasting linguistic forms used by Akira and Miyoko to express strong emotions. In quoting the same kind of inner thoughts over it being 'troublesome' to have to clean pierced ears and earrings, Akira uses the strong masculine form *mendokusee* (<*mendokusai*; Turn 2) along with *-na*, which expresses the speaker's inner thoughts in a casual tone of voice (Maynard 1996: 214-215). By contrast, Miyoko uses the same adjective but in its informal form *mendokusaa*. She also uses the same adjective in polite form (*mendokusai desu*; Turn 3). In addition, in expressing amazement as *sugoi* ('amazing'), Akira uses the masculine form *sugee* while Miyoko uses its plain form *sugoi*. Miyoko's expression of her strong dislike is also expressed in her repetition of the adjective *yada*<sup>8</sup> "*aa yada, yada, yada, yada, yada!*" ('ah, no, no, no, no, no!') (Turn 2), which expresses her strong dislike but without sounding aggressive or vulgar.

## 5. Discussion

In summary, Akira's use of masculine Japanese can be related to two discourse contexts. In "direct talk" with Miyoko, his use of masculine Japanese is mostly limited to the masculine self-address term *ore*. However, Akira and Miyoko consistently use plain and polite forms non-reciprocally. This suggests that although they are engaged in informal conversations over lunch, both follow relatively closely the Japanese sociocultural norm for speech within a hierarchical relationship based on a difference in age. Although Akira and Miyoko are the same age, Akira is around eight months older and was in a higher year in university in Japan. That is, Akira was in his senior (fourth) year and Miyoko in her junior (third) year in their respective home universities. This may have encouraged them to see each other in terms of a hierarchical relationship, with Akira as Miyoko's superior, or *senpai* (senior or mentor) (see Leech 2007, for the importance of age as a factor in creating power relations in Japanese culture).<sup>9</sup> In addition, at the time of recording, Akira had been in Hong Kong six months longer than Miyoko, and this may have encouraged Miyoko to view him as her superior with regard to his knowledge and experience of studying abroad. Their non-reciprocal use of plain and polite forms therefore seems to manifest Akira's superior and authoritative status, though it may also be linked to gender (Maynard 1990). However, Akira addresses

<sup>8</sup> The form *yada* is an informal variant of *iya da* 'I don't want' or 'I don't like [something].'

<sup>9</sup> Akira also told the researcher that he had asked Miyoko to stop calling him *senpai* ("Senior").



Miyoko by using a term of endearment (*Miyoko-chan*), thus expressing an affectionate and caring aspect of the *senpai* (senior/mentor) role toward Miyoko as his *koochai* (junior/protégé), although its use is highly limited as personal pronouns are often omitted in Japanese. By contrast, in direct quotations during his storytelling, Akira frequently uses strongly masculine forms to depict his inner thoughts as well as his own and other male characters' voices.

Below I discuss context dependency and the multiple functions of masculine Japanese. I then discuss implications of the present study for research on gender and the Japanese language as well as a number of methodological issues.

### 5.1. Context dependency and the multiple functions of masculine Japanese

Previous studies show that Japanese masculine and feminine forms are generally used in highly casual Japanese and are not normally used in formal Japanese (e.g., Maynard 1997). These findings point to the need for a more fine-grained differentiation of context dependency because participants' use of casual (plain) and formal (polite) forms can be non-reciprocal. Within such a hybrid linguistic context, masculine language may be used differently depending on the nature of the discourse activities in which they are engaged, including direct talk and direct quotations.

In direct talk between a superior male and a subordinate female speaker, masculine language may not be predominantly adopted as a linguistic resource in constructing masculinity. Although certain masculine forms used as self- and other-address terms may be used, they tend to be omitted in Japanese. By comparison, verbal and adjectival conjugation forms are used consistently as they force upon Japanese speakers a choice they must make in every sentence-final position in order to signal the nature of their relationship with the addressee (Matsumoto 1988). Such a mixed pair may therefore choose non-reciprocal plain and polite forms in order to systematically signal the nature of the hierarchical so as to show that they wish to follow the appropriate sociocultural speech norms without strongly expressing masculinity or femininity. However, in direct quotation during storytelling, masculine language seems to have different uses and functions. First, strongly masculine forms may be used much more frequently in this context to trigger (often shared) laughter and receive backchannels, suggesting that they are used as an involvement strategy and to consolidate solidarity. In this context, masculine language might therefore provide socially superior male speakers engaging in mixed talk with the linguistic means of constructing interpersonal relationships of different kinds from the hierarchical one constructed in direct talk. Similarly, direct quotation may facilitate those male speakers to perform traditional masculinities by creating a dramatized context in non-serious and humorous manners, possibly to entertain the female audience. This may be because strongly masculine forms sound exaggerated and conjure up a stereotypical masculine persona and conversational style. They may thus sound amusing and invoke a play frame, which facilitates the engagement of the pair in playful and intimate talk.

These findings concur with previous studies that describe masculine Japanese as closely linked to strong emotions such as aggression, roughness, and vulgarity (see above). While this may suggest that masculine Japanese is a resource available to both male and female speakers with which to quote their own emotional inner thoughts or

simulate male speakers' utterances, the findings of the present study point to the possibility that this may in fact be gendered. No example was found in the present dataset of the female speaker using strongly masculine forms to quote her emotional inner thoughts or simulate male speakers' utterances. While no generalization can be made, it is possible that in this specific type of mixed talk, the expression of strong feelings such as aggression, roughness, or vulgarity via masculine forms may be more constrained for female speakers than for male speakers even in the embedded discourse context of direct quotation. For example, in a hierarchical mixed talk, subordinate female speakers may refrain from expressing strong emotions with masculine forms. In this respect, Ide and Yoshida (2002) argue that vulgar expressions conveyed by masculine Japanese are for the exclusive use of men as it is a part of a Japanese speaker's communicative competence that women with a good demeanor should not use such masculine forms. Findings from the present study suggest that this may also be applicable when Japanese women quote men's utterances, as well as during direct talk, although this remains to be further investigated by collecting additional datasets, for example of Japanese women's use (or avoidance of) masculine forms in direct quotation in mixed talk in which they are in a superior position to men or in all-female talk.

## ***5.2. Researching Japanese men's language***

As mentioned above, previous studies on gender and the Japanese language focused mostly on morphological aspects and on women's language. In the process, many of them adopted a method consisting of quantifying certain morphological features and comparing their frequencies for male and female speakers and characters in spoken and written discourses of various kinds as a basis for investigating the diversity of Japanese speakers' linguistic style (e.g., Shibamoto Smith 2004; Sturtz Sreetharan 2004). In this section, I discuss the implications of the present study for future studies on gender and Japanese and especially the need for more holistic approach of Japanese men's (and also women's) language.

First, it will be necessary to conduct further empirical studies of interactional features of gender and Japanese as well as those that integrate morphological features and interactional features observed within the same conversation. This is because focusing exclusively on morphological aspects may be missing a fuller dimension of gender identities. For example, male speakers' limited use of masculine language in their direct talk could be interpreted as the non-construction of salient masculinity. However, an analysis of interactional features such as amount of talk may reveal male dominance. Previous studies of gender in relation to English have widely reported men's quantitative dominance in mixed talk as linked to their possession of social power (Coates 2003, 2004; Coates and Pichler 2011; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013; Holmes 1997, 2006). Storytelling is also the manifestation of the storyteller's control over the addressee in that it demands total attention and silence from the audience (Labov 1972). It is therefore possible that both the power dimension and interactional features should be considered in researching gender and Japanese. Second, morphological features and interactional features may be interrelated as resources for constructing masculinity in conversation. For example, dominance in amount of talk may provide a basis for using direct quotation in order to create and dramatize

storytelling, thus providing male speakers with a context in which to use masculine forms in order to perform multidimensional masculinities.

As regards future research in Japanese men's (and women's) language, interactional sociolinguistics and the related notion of "frame" should be particularly useful as an analytical framework. Interactional sociolinguistics is concerned with the linguistic cues (or contextualization cues) speakers use to signal the nature of the conversational activities they think they are engaged in and the kind of interpersonal relationship and identity they are negotiating and constructing (Gumperz 1982; Tannen 2004, 2005). Similarly, the notion of "frame" refers to the expected ways of speaking or performing a particular kind of conversational activity, for example, joking or lecturing (Tannen 1979). Switching from one frame to another (e.g., from argument to humor or from conflict to solidarity) will be marked by a range of linguistic cues, including a change of register (formal or informal) and para-linguistic features such as voice pitch and intonation contours (Gumperz 1982; Tannen 2004, 2005). In the excerpts analyzed in the present study, strongly masculine forms used in direct quotations appear to be used as part of contextualization cues that mark a shift in register used to invoke or maintain a play frame, within which the participants perform different kinds of identities and interpersonal relationships for fun, as distinct from those constructed in the serious or standard context of direct talk. This theoretical framework could be usefully applied to various kinds of datasets in order to investigate whether a similar frame shift is observed, for example, in a mixed pair in which the male speaker is younger.

### **5.3. *Methodological issues***

The research method adopted for the case study reported here has a number of advantages. For example, by analyzing in detail transcripts of conversations collected from the same pair on four separate occasions, the study was able to identify fairly consistent patterns such as the non-reciprocal use of verbal and adjectival conjugation forms or the male speaker's dominance of amount of talk across four different occasions covering a range of topics. In addition, by closely examining the use (or avoidance) of a range of masculine forms in their conversations, the present study was able to identify two possible contexts that appear to be related to their different frequencies and functions. Third, the study was able to identify a range of contextualization cues such as backchannels, emotional reactions, and laughter as well as masculine Japanese the participants generally used to signal the kind of identities and interpersonal relationships they were constructing within the social constraints of Japanese norms of communication.

On the other hand, the study has a number of limitations. Most importantly, it examined only one kind of mixed talk as a dataset. Future research will need to extend the scope of the present study by collecting a wider range of types of mixed talk as the datasets, for example, where a female speaker is in a senior position, where a male and a female speaker are close friends of the same age and in the same school year, or non-dyadic (small group) mixed talk. It will also be necessary to compare the use of masculine language between mixed talk and single-sex interactions (all-male or all-female talk). Such evidence will enhance our understanding of the extent to which the

use of masculine language is influenced not only by the gender of speaker and addressee but also other social factors such as age and social distance. It will also be necessary to investigate datasets of different kinds to investigate the extent to which masculine language is a resource for expressing strong emotions in direct quotation for both male and female speakers. Moreover, it will be important to investigate the relationship between morphological features of masculine language and other interactional features including interruptions, topic control, and amount of talk.

#### ***5.4. Comparison of men's language in Japanese and English***

The link between Japanese masculine language and strong emotions appears to share similarities with swearwords in English. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013) suggest that Japanese masculine forms are similar to English profanity in that they serve to emphasize statements. Previous studies of gender in English suggested that swearwords are important features of masculine language as a means of consolidating male solidarity in all-male talk (Coates 2003). Studies of swearword use in English suggest that they constitute a linguistic means of evoking strong feelings, such as aggression and anger (Ljung 2011; Montagu 2001). However, it remains necessary to further investigate the level of similarity, for example, by examining whether English swearwords are also resources for male speakers in mixed talk as involvement strategies or for performing masculinity in humorous and entertaining ways in direct quotation. Coates (2003) suggests that while swearwords are used frequently during storytelling in all-male talk, men use them far less in mixed talk, thus suggesting that swearwords in English may not be as prevalently used for those functions in mixed talk in English. This may be because of the different nature of Japanese masculine forms and swearwords in English. To the extent that masculine Japanese is part of gender norms and of the cultural model of how men normatively speak or are expected to speak, it may be more widely accepted or tolerated than are swearwords in English, which are seen as taboo and socially censured (Montagu 2001).

## **6. Conclusions**

The present study reported the findings from a case study of a Japanese male speaker's conversations in mixed talk with a Japanese female speaker collected in a natural setting in Hong Kong. By closely examining the specific features of the mixed talk, it provided empirical evidence for the context dependency ("direct talk" and "direct quotation") and multiple functions of masculine language in an Asian language, which remains under investigated. In addition, the study examined a possible link between the morphological and interactional features of masculine Japanese, and emphasized the need for a more holistic approach to research in Japanese men's and women's language. Moreover, the study suggested that interactional sociolinguistics and the notion of "frame" could provide valuable analytical frameworks for future studies of both the construction of gender identity and direct quotation, especially as regards Asian languages. Despite its relatively limited scope, the study provides a point of departure for future research in

these areas as well as insights for the cross-cultural comparison of the construction of gender identity across different languages.

### **Acknowledgements**

I am indebted to Akira and Miyoko, the two Japanese students who participated in the recording sessions. I also greatly appreciate the valuable comments provided by an anonymous reviewer on an earlier version of the paper. I am also grateful to participants in the IALIC conference held at Hong Kong Baptist University in December, 2013, for their constructive comments.

### **Transcription conventions**

- (.) Short pause (less than 1 second)
- (2.0) Longer pause (in seconds)
- (xxx) Unintelligible speech
- // Simultaneous speech
- = Latching
- [ ] Material within square brackets does not appear in the Japanese original conversations but was supplied by the author to facilitate the understanding of the content of the excerpts.
- (POLITE) Indicates that the preceding expression used in the original Japanese conversation was in the polite form.
- (PLAIN) Indicates that the preceding expression used in the original Japanese conversation was in the plain form.
- (Mas.) Indicates that the preceding expression was in the Japanese masculine form.
- (Mas./S) Indicates that the preceding expression was in a Japanese masculine form that expresses strong masculinity.
- (( )) Double round brackets within an utterance with the interlocutor's name (e.g. ((Miyoko: laughter)) indicate a backchannel.

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