The Myth of Femininity:

Neglected Heterogeneity of Women's

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1. INTRODUCTION

A traditional view of social construction of gender in Japanese society emphasizes men's public roles as heads of households and women's domestic roles as housewives and mothers (Lebra, 1984; Smith, 1987). Bernstein (1991: 12), a historian of Japan, however, calls this monolithic definition a "myth." Male-female relationships have been more diverse and subject to constant dynamic revision throughout the history of Japanese society than they have been credited for, and the complex realities of the apparently fixed division of gender roles seem to have been oversimplified or greatly misunderstood.

Of greater significance is that the traditional division of gender-linked social practices is in rapid transition on a monumental scale in contemporary society. While Japan's modernization and industrialization gradually consolidated sexual segregation between businessmen-husbands and housewives and led to the exclusion of the housewife from the public sphere, a dramatic diversification of the roles of housewives has taken place since the 1960s —— the decade of Japan's economic miracle. Due to a serious shortage of labor, increasing numbers of housewives started to work as part-time. By the late 1970s, social approval of being a *sengyoo shufu* (full-time housewife) and its prestige as representing upward social mobility began to fall apart, and the *sengyoo shufu* had become a "social minority" with their self-identity threatened (Ueno, 1987: 139).

Whereas the prescribed view of male/female complementary relationships still rigidly survives as an ideology, the great majority of Japanese women now desire careers beyond the home (Kashima, 1993: 106). Marriage and becoming a wife are not necessarily recognized as a top priority in life (Kashima, 1993: 106; Soorifu, 1993: 29-

30). Today, increasing numbers of Japanese women actively partici-pate in labor market activities outside the home (Inoue & Ehara, 1991: 83), and it has come to be taken as less abnormal for women to be given opportunities to play traditional male roles of authority and leadership in the public sphere.[1]

Nevertheless, mainstream research on gender differentiation in Japanese has been captured precisely by what Bernstein calls a 'myth': working Japanese men, typically white-collar businessmen in Tokyo, are considered to be typical Japanese men and represent men's language, and Tokyo middle-class full-time homemakers, who are considered to be typical Japanese women playing traditional female roles within the domestic sphere, are the exclusive focus of research on Japanese women's language (e.g., Ide, et al., 1986; Shibamoto, 1985, 1990; Smith, 1992a).[2] The 1989 demographic data in Table 1 below, however, show that full-time homemakers, who have been the exclusive target of the mainstream research, constitute only about thirty percent of the total female population. In a 1991 survey, the number of full-time homemakers had become even smaller, falling to 24% (Soorifu, 1993: 329).

About fifty percent of the female population worked in 1989, with 34.1% of Japanese women participating in the labor force as third-

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1 A governmental survey conducted in 1991 reports (Soorifu, 1993:103-4) that white-collar office clerks constitute the largest group of working women (34.1%), whereas other major occupational groups include blue-collar workers at manufacturing plants (20.1%), technical experts and professional workers (13.9%), salesclerks (12.6%), and maintenance and service personnel (10.8%). While women in managerial positions still constitute a tiny minority among working women (1.0%), diachronic changes in the proportion of women to men in the positions indicate that this particular group of working women has been steadily growing over the past decades: 5.4% of those who held managerial positions were female in 1975, 6.8% in 1980, and 8.4% in 1985 (Inoue & Ehara, 1991:105). A 1989 survey, which investigated the number of female company executives, also reports that more than thirty percent of Japanese companies increased the number of female employees in managerial positions such as section chiefs (ka-choo) or chief clerks (kakari-choo), and that sixteen percent did so in the position of section manager (bu-choo) (Soorifu, 1993:115). It is certain that the number of female company executives will keep rising from now on (Kashima, 1993:37).

2 Gender distinctions in Japanese defined and circulated so far are also primarily an urban phenomenon (Kitagawa, 1977). There are, in fact, a number of local dialects which do not involve male-female distinctions (Kindaichi, 1969; see Yamaguchi, 1991 for example).

Table 1 *Employed and Non-Wage Earning Population Distribution in 1989 Survey*

		Female	Male
Total Employed Population		2533(49.5%)	3737(77.0%)
	3rd-party Employees	1749(34.1%)	2929(60.3%)
	Self-Employed	281(5.5%)	615(12.3%)
	Family Business	437(8.5%)	94(1.9%)
Total Non-Wage Earning Population		2564(50.5%)	1091(21.5%)
	Homemakers	1522(29.7%)	12(0.2%)
	Students	452(8.8%)	546(11.2%)
	Others	590(11.5%)	532(11.0%)

The figures are in ten thousands.
(Adapted from Inoue & Ehara, 1991: 83)

party employees (i.e., working for a party other than the family business), and about seventy-five percent of those women being all full-time workers. The female working population has been growing since 1989 (49.5%): 50.1% of Japanese women worked in 1990, and 50.7% in 1991 (Soorifu, 1993: 100). In 1991, the number of third-party employees constituted 38.3% (Soorifu, 1993: 102).

It is thus obvious that the scope of previous investigation into Japanese women's language and its sampling have been focused on the currently 'minority' group of full-time homemakers as a result of the bias stemming from the traditional ideology on mythical comple-mentary gender roles. Linguistic evolution proceeds hand in hand with the social change of a speech community, where the shape of linguistic behavior changes rapidly as the speaker's social position changes (Labov, 1972a). Without empirical investigation of the impact of the ongoing evolution of women's gender roles on their language, it is plausible that typical characteristics of homemakers' speech have provided an enormously reduced picture of how contem-porary women speak and have stereotyped the speech of Japanese women as a whole.

Furthermore, serious problems arise when the stereotyped char-acterization (based on homemakers' speech) is used to make superfi-cial judgments against the practical value (i.e., economic/political values) of women's language.[3] Definitions from some of major

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3 In addition to the problem with the restricted scope of investigation to the

language-related dictionaries and essays publicized in Japan seem to exemplify the 'static,' prescribed definition of how Japanese women speak in the changing society. Women's language in Japan is typically blanketly attributed to being indirect, polite, deferential, and emotionally loaded, but deprived of logicality, solemnity, and authority.

> Women use expressions which show the speaker's respect for others and emphasize politeness of attitudes, speak in an indirect manner, and often leave utterances incomplete (Mashimo, 1969).

> Women use more honorific expressions, speak more politely and more indirectly, and produce more incomplete utterances (Nakano, 1980).

> Women produce incomplete utterances, use repetitions, and use adjectives (Kanemaru, 1988).

> Women's speech often ends with incomplete sentences; in requests, women tend to ask a favor in a noncommittal way, using ambiguous expressions and excuses (Nakamura, 1989).

> "Women's ways of speaking ... are soft, cooperative, and indirect, but they are inclined to focus on trivial topics of conversation and use a great deal of repetition" (Horii, 1990: 29).

Jugaku's series of work (1979, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1990) argues that the prevalent cultural ideology that women should talk in feminine ways ('onna rashiku') inhibits equality in communication between men and women who are supposed to collaborate or compete with one another in the marketplace. Stigmatization against women who adopt non-feminine ways of speaking and stereotyped images of their powerlessness in communication (derived from prescribed politeness

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particular sector of the female population, heavy reliance on introspective data and anecdotal evidence is another problem prevalent in previous studies of Japanese gender differentiation (Endoo, 1991). It is rather commonsense in western sociolinguistics that both quantitative and qualitative discrepancies are usually identified between what people 'perceive' about their language use and what they actually 'do' in real-world communicative settings (Wolfson, et al., 1983; Sankoff, 1988; Wolfson, 1989; Schmidt, 1993).

and indirectness) are both likely to segregate Japanese women from the public sphere (Reynolds, 1990). As increasing numbers of women enter into the marketplace today, the linguistic ideologies are beginning to conflict with how women actually speak in playing their new gender roles in the public sector. This type of conflict tends to become most critical particularly for women who work in positions of authority and leadership, which have traditionally belonged to men (Mogami, 1986; Smith, 1992b; Takenobu, 1994).

The objective of the present study is to reveal neglected sociolinguistic heterogeneity within the grammar of Japanese women who are playing increasingly diverse gender roles in contemporary society.[4] Adopting the variationist approach, the study will quantitatively compare spontaneous speech of two diametrical groups of Japanese women: full-time working women who play traditionally male roles in the public sphere and full-time homemakers who play traditional female roles in the domestic sphere. Once we shift the traditional, restricted scope of investigation to the speech of the currently dynamic sector of Japanese women, namely, full-time working women leading social lives linked closely to the public sphere, linguistic behaviors of the innovative group hardly conform to some of the biased, even stigmatized, characteristics of Japanese women's language. Variable rule analyses of three morphosyntactic phenomena, which have been found to be female-specific by previous studies, will detect statistically significant degrees of intra-gender-group differentiation and obtain fairly systematic correlation between the detected variability and the subjects' occupation-based group membership.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1. Subjects and Data Collection

A total of 12 women who were born and raised in the Tokyo metropolitan areas participated in this study.[5] All the subjects were recruited through my "second-order networks" (i.e., friends or

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4 "Grammar" in the present paper is equivalent to a performance (or sociolinguistic) grammar involving structured, rule-governed variation in language use, which is covariate with a composite of linguistic/discoursal constraints and extralinguistic factors (i.e., the speaker's demographic characteristics, setting and audience design) (Cedergren & Sankoff, 1974). Whenever the term "grammar" appears hereafter, this same definition applies.

acquaintances of friends or acquaintances of mine) during the summer of 1994 (Milroy, 1980: 53). I had never met any of the subjects prior to the interviews. Six of them are full-time working women in positions of authority and leadership, which have traditionally been part of male roles. This group of women can be assumed to represent a leading edge of contemporary Japanese women who are finding increasingly more opportunities to play innovative gender roles in the changing society today. The remaining 6 speakers, acting as a control group, are full-time homemakers who have no employment of any kind outside their households. As mentioned earlier, this group of women has been portrayed as 'typical' Japanese women and has consistently been the exclusive target of previous studies of Japanese gender differentiation.

Table 2 below is a summary of the subjects' demographic characteristics.

To elicit spontaneous speech from the subjects, I adopted a particular interview technique called the "sociolinguistic interview," which is designed specifically for quantitative sociolinguistic research (Labov, 1981: 7-16). The primary aim of the sociolingusitic interview is to elicit the subject's narratives of personal experiences with high degrees of involvement in his or her talk. In conducting sociolinguistic interviews, the interviewer makes every effort to throw in topics which seem likely to get the interviewee highly involved in his or her talk and contribute to the smooth flow of his or her narratives. This technique was found beneficial for the present study in three respects. First, it allows us to obtain the speaker's "vernacular"——a speech style to which the speaker pays the minimum attention (Labov, 1972b: 112). Previous sociolinguistic work has proven that the vernacular is most regular in its structure, thus providing the best data for revealing the systematic and regular character of grammar (Labov, 1972b, 1981). Second, conducting the sociolinguistic interview guarantees a sufficient quantity of data for quantitative analysis of various variables with every single subject (Labov, 1981). Last and most crucially, the sociolinguistic interview consists of some formal protocols and allows us to moderately

5 Though I pointed out earlier that the exclusive focus on Tokyo Japanese has led to oversimplification of sociolinguistic heterogeneity in Japanese language use, the present study has also chosen Tokyo Japanese speakers as the subjects because of the research objective.

Table 2 Profile of Informants
(2 Groups, 12 Speakers)

GROUP I: Employed Women in Managerial Positions (EWM) (6 Speakers)

Speaker	Age	Education	Profession	Interview Setting
A(M,1C)[6]	46	Junior College	Division Chief at a Publishing Company	Workplace
B(M,2C)	53	Ph.D.	Division Chief at a Research Institute	Coffee Shop
C(M,2C)	42	BA	Company President	Coffee Shop
D(S)	28	BA	Officer/Educator at Reform School for Female Juvenile Delinquents	Coffee Shop
E(M)	27	Medical School	Ophthalmologist at a University Hospital	Coffee Shop
F(M,1C)	40	BA	Law Office Manager	Workplace

GROUP II: Full-time Homemakers (HM) (6 Speakers)

Speaker	Age	Education	Profession	Interview Setting
G(M,2C)	43	Junior College	(Company President)	Home
H(M,2C)	62	High School	(Laundry Owner)	Home
I(M,2C)	39	BA	(Independent Architect)	Coffee Shop
J(M,2C)	39	BA	(Company Employee, Managerial Position)	Home
K(M,2C)	35	Junior College	(Company President)	Coffee Shop
L(M,3C)	47	BA	(Company Employee, Managerial Position)	Home

Profession (   ): Husbands' occupations

control the content and direction of talk (i.e., chain of topics talked about) in a uniform manner across the subjects (Labov, 1981), whereby the gathered data would involve a high degree of comparability between the two groups of subjects who lead totally different types of social lives. That is, what was talked about in the interviews might otherwise have been focused predominantly on personal, relatively informal, subject matters (e.g., children, husbands, homemaking,

6 M＝married, S＝single, ♯ C＝the number of children.

hobbies, etc.) in the case of full-time homemakers, and on work-related, relatively formal, topics in the case of full-time working women in charge. I have assumed that such gaps in the content of narratives might damage accurate comparative measurements of occurrences／non-occurrences of variables in question across the two distinctive groups of Japanese women, so I welcomed the sociolinguistic interview's formal protocols.

The final note about data elicitation through sociolinguistic interviews concerns the interview setting. It can be expected that less formal interview settings (e.g., the home environment) tend to have positive effects on the speaker's production of the vernacular, and vice versa (i.e., the workplace would inhibit such production). Because the home grounds of social lives of the two groups of women are quite distinctive, I attempted to choose neutral places such as coffee shops to make different degrees of formality of the interview setting uniform across the subjects. This attempt, however, could not always be accomplished, usually due to various time constraints of the subjects.[7] Consequently, while the distribution of interview settings resulted in some discrepancy between the groups, no systematic correlation between the detected variability and the settings was found. Thus, I concluded that the interview setting could not be a major factor affecting intra-gender-group variability, as discussed in Section 3 below.

2.2. The Analytical Tool

In dealing with variable linguistic phenomena quantitatively, there are a few methodological requirements researchers must fulfill in order to gain empirically sound results. The first requirement is the statistical verification of frequencies of occurrence. Any generalization, which is derived particularly from a large amount of quantification, must be evaluated for significance by a statistical test of that body of data (Guy, 1987). This procedure is indispensable because of inherent problems of skewing in the distribution of sociolinguistic data elicited from uncontrolled natural speech (Sankoff, 1985) and

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7 Some of the working women preferred to be interviewed at their workplaces whenever they could find some spare time. They expressed difficulties with meeting me after work due to their extremely busy professional schedules. Some of the full-time homemakers also told me that they could not leave their home due to their domestic chores.

because of possible errors and bias in sampling procedures. No previous quantitative studies of gender distinctions in Japanese follow this elementary procedure (except for Shibamoto, 1987, which investigates contextual variation within women's language). It follows that without such a check, a resulting interpretation tends to have a great potential for involving bias derived from researchers' impressionistic comparisons of bare percentages and subjective interpretations of the comparative results.

The second crucial requirement of the quantitative paradigm concerns the intersecting relationships between the occurrence of a variable under investigation and a large number of other types of factors that may simultaneously constrain its occurrence (Sankoff & Labov, 1979). In variable linguistic behavior, every token of a variable occurs under the simultaneous influence of a number of factors, such as the nature of the grammatical context, discursive function of the utterance, topic, style, interactional context, and personal or sociodemographic characteristics of the speaker or other participants. What the variationist wants to know is the relative status or rank in importance of those intersecting factors in terms of the strength of influence on the production of the dependent variable.

The last requirement concerns the advantage of probabilistic accounts of variable applications of linguistic rules over the use of bare percentages of frequencies. Due to the unavoidable skewing of sociolinguistic data and the necessity of figuring out the enormously complex intersecting relationships among a number of potential influencing factors, probabilistic accounts of occurrences or non-occurrences of a variable in question have proven to be superior to the use of bare percentages by a number of sociolinguistic studies (Guy, 1975, 1987; Sankoff, 1985, 1986).

The present study employs one of the most recent versions of the VARBRUL program: VARBRUL 4 (Rousseau, 1989). It is a computer application of the statistical model of sociolinguistic variation initiated by Cedergren and Sankoff (1974). It estimates the probability values from observed frequency distributions of the factors in the data across a variety of intersecting linguistic and extralinguistic contexts and allows us to obtain an overall picture of the variable tendencies of the speaker's linguistic performance in question.

The program conducts a multivariate analysis of data using the maximum likelihood technique and yields a probability estimate of the effect of each contextual constraint on the application of the rule

in question in relation to the other remaining constraints.[8] Further-more, the output of the program allows us to calculate the level of significance of any factorial effect. This can be done using values of log-likelihood; the difference in the log-likelihood between two variable rule runs, the second of which ignores the constraint to evaluate, is multiplied by-2, and the result to be obtained is the chi-square value (Weiner & Labov, 1983: 40-1).

Data are transformed into a token file, in which observed frequencies of rule application (i.e., the number of tokens to which the rule in question has been applied out of the total number of possible environments) are recorded along with potential linguistic and extralinguistic constraints the analyst hypothesizes may be relevant or distinctive based on factors such as previous theoretical work, impressionistic observations, and preliminary investigation.[9]

2.3. Feminine Variables Examined

Ellipsis of the topic marker -wa

The variables the present study focuses on include three kinds of morphosyntactic phenomena, which have widely been recognized as markers of feminine speech by previous research (at least from research based on the speech of full-time homemakers). The first variable is the ellipsis of Japanese topic marker-*wa*:

1) *Watashi (wa) misshon sukuuru dattan desu yo.*
   I   TOP mission   school   was COP FP[10]
   (My school was a mission school/I graduated from a mission school.)
   [Subject A, a 46-year-old division chief (buchoo) at a major publishing company]

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8 A similar program to this is ANOVA. Algorithms for calculating ANOVA, however, normally require balanced numbers of tokens in each cell, which would be possible only with data from controlled experimentation (Young & Bayley, 1996). Thus, the VARBRUL programs are the only and best alternative to successfully handle the extremely skewed nature of sociolinguistic data from natural speech.

9 Among a number of intersecting factors, both linguistic and extra-linguistic, analyzed, the present paper reports only the results regarding one of the social factors, namely, the speaker's participation in the marketplace. Further discussions on the other potential factors are presented in detail in Takano (1997).

10 TOP＝Topic Marker; COP＝Copula; FP＝Final Particle

The topic marker -*wa* is often omitted in the casual mode of discourse without any change in propositional meaning.

Analyzing naturalistic same-sex peer-group conversations involving 15 housewives in a white-collar neighborhood and 15 white-collar businessmen in Tokyo, Shibamoto (1985) found that her female subjects deleted the particle more often (23.9% of the time) than the male counterparts (11%). In her follow-up study (1990), Shibamoto further confirmed the gender-linked differentiation: 3 housewives from middle to upper-middle class households in Tokyo deleted the particle 35.7% of the time when engaged in peer-group conversations, whereas the counterpart of 3 white-collar businessmen in Tokyo deleted it 11.1% in their peer-group interactions.[11]

Identification of this particular variable as categorically female-specific may contribute to the stereotypes of women's language use as 'non-canonical,' 'deviant,' or 'marked,' as opposed to men's language use as 'canonical,' 'standard,' or 'unmarked' (Spender, 1980). We should first note that in both of Shibamoto's studies cited above, the two groups of speakers are not truly comparable in terms of primary domains of social lives where the groups of speakers are engaged in everyday communicative activities and routines: businessmen in the public sphere interact actively with out-group people from a variety of backgrounds, whereas housewives in the domestic sphere interact mainly with other family members or peers in their neighborhood. Second, as is the case in other mainstream studies of Japanese gender differentiation, the status of this particular variable as a feminine marker has been based exclusively on the speech of full-time homemakers, but has not been empirically confirmed with the speech of other subgroups of women in contemporary society (e.g., white-collar 'businesswomen'). Moreover, women's advanced unmarking of the particle are empirically disproved in cross-sex peer conversations where male speakers tended to elide the particle more often than female speakers as a result of accommodative convergence (Takano, 1994).

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11 No statistical tests were conducted in either study. In Shibamoto (1985), recording sessions for female data took place at the home of one of the participants, and male interactions were recorded during the subjects' lunch break at their workplace. In Shibamoto (1990), on the other hand, both female and male interactions were tape-recorded at the home of one of the participant in each gender group.

Utterance-final forms

The second variable to examine in the present study concerns variable surface manifestations of utterance-final forms. Utterances recorded were classified into three major types in terms of the forms of the predicate:

1) complete utterances with full-forms of the predicate;
2) incomplete utterances with non-conclusive forms of the predicate;
3) fragmental utterances typically with the predicate or the copula elided or consisting of noun phrases with/without the postpositions.

The following excerpt from an interview with Subject G (a 43-year-old full-time homemaker) illustrates the three types. Letter I designates the interviewer (the author) asking about her everyday activities.

I: *Fudan doo itta koto o shite, jikan sugosarerun desu ka?*	Usually, what kinds of things do you do to spend time?
G: *Fudannnnn, kaji ga taihan de, ato, anoo, shuu ni kai eigo o watakushi yatteru nde xxx*	Usually, mostly domestic chores, And, um, twice a week I do (study) English, so xxx
I: *Aa, soo desu ka?*	Ah, is that so?
G: *Eikaiwa yattete.*(1) *Anoo mishishippii no anoo shus-shin no amerika jin no sensei*(2) *ni.*	I study English conversation Well, (I'm taught English) by an American teacher from Mississippi.
I: *Nannin ka issho desu ka?*	(Do you study) with several other people?
G: *Soo desu ne.*(3) *Ima sannin.*(4)	That's right. Now, (there are) three of us.
I: *Sannin de?*	Only three?
G: *Ee, ee, ee, ee.*	Yes, yes.
I: *Otoko no sensei desu ka?*	Is your teacher male?
G: *Otoko no sensei.*(5) *Nijuu-hachi.*(6) *A, moo sorosoro...., nijuu hachi gurai de kite, a, nijuuroku ka shichi de kite, ima moo sorosoro sanjuu ni*	Male teacher. 28 years old. soon.... He came when he was 28, ah, no, he came when he was 26 or 27, so now he should soon be 30, I

naru to omoimasu.(7)	think.
Dakara onaji gurai.(8)	So, about the same age (as you).
I: *Donna sensei desu ka.*	What is he like?
G: *Sugoku ne, ano tanoshii desu yo.*(9) *Anoo, tokai no hito ja nai kara, sugoku soboku da shi, tottemo reigi tadashii si ne. Tottemo ki o tsukatte kuretari shite.*(10)	(He's) very, well, entertaining. And, He's not a city person, so he's very pure, and very polite, and very considerate.

Underlines 3, 7, and 9 are classified as the first type, the complete utterances. Underlines 1 and 10 with the gerundive endings are typical non-conclusive utterances observed in the data. Other typical endings of this type include those ending with the alternative particle -tari. Underline 2 is regarded as a fragmental utterance with the entire predicate (possibly, *naratte imasu* 'I learn' or 'I am taught') elided. Underlines 4, 5, 6, and 8 are all regarded as fragmental with possibly the copula (-da/desu) elided.

While the full-forms of the predicate strike the listener as assertive, straightforward, and formal, the incomplete forms with non-conclusive forms of the predicate render the utterance a certain ambiguity and make it sound gentler, indirect, and hesitant (Jorden & Noda, 1987: 324-5). Fragmental utterances, on the other hand, as part of in-group register, strike the listener as highly casual, friendly, less distancing, but too blunt, sloppy, or even childish in certain situations where the speaker is talking with someone who does not share in-group solidarity and rapport.

Previous studies have characterized the first type of variant (the complete utterances) as part of men's grammar and the latter two variants as part of women's grammar. Among a very few data-based studies done so far regarding variable uses of the predicate in Japanese, Smith (1992a) upholds the apparently prescribed, normative properties of Japanese women's language —— indirect, non-assertive ways of speaking. Rather than examining the data for complete/incomplete/fragmental utterances, she looked at "secondary modalities." In Smith's terms, *setsumei* (explanation) modality forms (e.g., -hazu da, -wake da, -no da) "imply mutual knowledge and agreement as to that knowledge's factuality ... (and) play important

roles in constructing convincing arguments and in effective persuasion" (p.545), whereas *gaigen* (evidentials) modality forms (e.g., -daroo, -yoo da, -soo da) "suggest that the speaker has not witnessed or experienced the situation about which she/he is making an assertion and therefore cannot make a definite statement, … (and) serve to soften or mitigate its assertive force and factuality" (p.544). Therefore, using *gaigen* forms, the "speaker takes less personal responsibility for the accuracy of the associated propositions and also indicate less certainty as to its accuracy" (p.544). Using as data two same-sex conversations of three male and three female Tokyo-Japanese-speaking friends from a middle-class neighborhood,[12] Smith analyzed sex-based differences in degrees of the speaker's assertiveness and confidence concerning the proposition. She found that there was a quantitative difference, though not statistically proven, in the uses of "secondary modalities," *setsumei* (explanation) and *gaigen* (evidentials), the latter of which was exploited more by the female speakers (Women: 20.6%; Men: 9.2%). Smith concludes that the result is indicative of the prescribed roles and cultural images bound to gender (i.e., soft, indirect, and humble for women), and that the still quite extreme degree of sexual division of the society fosters different interactional styles appropriate to each of the sex groups.

These generalizations, however, can be challenged by another study of natural speech, which investigated language use by women who belong to a different social stratum from Smith's subjects——working women participating fully in the marketplace. Endoo's (1992) comparative study of the speech of 10 male and 10 female professionals provides striking counter-evidence to stereotypical claims about Japanese women's ways of speaking. This study is highly significant in that her comparative analysis is based on naturalistic speech data of men and women from similar occupational categories. The claim that women tend to produce more incomplete utterances with ambiguous propositional content than men was disproved by her analysis of variation in the use of assertive sentences (*iikiri-bun*) and stop-in-the-middle sentences (*iisashi-bun*): no significant differences

were found between the sexes (Women: 62.8% vs. Men: 69.1% in assertive sentences; Women: 37.2% vs. Men: 30.9% in stop-in-the-middle sentences) (Endoo, 1992: 63). Her analysis of suspended utterances (*chuushi-bun*) also obtained counter-evidence (Women: 24.1% vs. Men: 24.8%) to the claim that women tend to leave utterances incomplete more often than men.[13]

These results suggest the necessity of taking into account speakers' participation in the marketplace as an important extralinguistic factor affecting gender-linked differentiation in uses of this particular variable. The present study has integrated this perspective into its research design and will empirically prove that some of the previous claims are overgeneralizations about all women's language; and that in reality, heterogeneity of women's language use is manifested closely linked to occupational factors.

Uses of gender-linked final particles

The final variable is the usage of Japanese final particles (*shuu-joshi*) (FPs), which are often cited as one of the most salient gender marking systems in Japanese. There are roughly three groups of particles, namely, gender-neutral particles (e.g., *ne*, *yo*), female-exclusive particles (e.g., *wa* with rising intonation, *kashira*), and male-exclusive particles (e.g., *zo*, *na*) (McGloin, 1990). However, changes in particle use are evident, with increasing use of masculine particles by younger females (Okamoto & Sato, 1992) and particle gender neutralization by the younger generation in general (Peng et al., 1981). The present study is another attempt to shed light on such ongoing sociolinguistic variation and change; more specifically, to identify any systematic correlation between variability in uses of gender-linked final particles and the two subgroups of women leading distinctly different social lives. Is the apparently widespread increasingly masculine use of final particles a linguistic change superimposed on different subgroups of Japanese women? Does it otherwise involve any social stratification? How differently do the em-

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12 No further descriptions are available with respect to the speakers' demographic backgrounds such as occupation, marital status, and individual age. They are presumably white-collar businessmen and housewives from middle-class neighborhoods in Tokyo, as was the case in her other studies (Shibamoto, 1985, 1990).

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13 Endoo's "assertive sentence" is roughly equivalent to my 'complete utterances,' and "suspended sentence" to 'fragmental utterance,' and "stop-in-the-middle sentence" presumably to my 'incomplete utterances," though her illustrations of the types do not explicitly include the particular kinds of forms described above (e.g., the gerundive form or the ending with the alternative particle).

ployed and non-wage earning women deal with culturally prescribed femininity through the use of FPs?

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Ellipsis of the Topic Marker-wa

Table 3 shows individual rates of the ellipsis of the topic marker. A total number of tokens (i.e., the occurrence and non-occurrence of the topic marker -wa in the potentially occurring environment) in the present data was 1568. A grand average of ellipsis rates turned out to be 31% (485 out of 1568), which lies between 24% in Shibamoto (1985) and 36% in Shibamoto (1990).[14]

The results also show that there are no coherent relationships between the rates of particle ellipsis and interview settings. For example, it does not necessarily seem to be the case that the workplace enhances the level of formality of speech, in that Subject F, who elided the particle (30%) far above the group average (22%) among the Group I members, was interviewed at her workplace. Although the interviews done at coffee shops appear to involve relatively lower rates of particle ellipsis, Subject C, who elided it relatively more frequently than the others (28%), was also interviewed at this setting. Similarly, while the home environment appears to contribute to higher rates of ellipsis among the Group II members, Subject I, who elided it 50% (8% above the group average), was interviewed at a coffee shop. Subjects G and H, who were both interviewed at their homes, do not necessarily elide the particle with particularly higher frequencies (i.e., 39% and 38%, respectively).

As seen in Table 3 below, the difference between the two groups of women is large: EWM elided the particle an average of 22% of the time, whereas HM elided it 42%. Table 3 also displays a great deal of individual variation in particle ellipsis. Among others, the subjects' age is particularly examined below as a potential factor that may be

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14 In both studies, the topic marker (-*wa*) and the nominative marker (-*ga*) were collapsed, so the rates counted the occurrences of both types. Considering that the data in both of Shibamoto's studies were elicited from single-sex peer conversations (though the researcher, a non-Japanese female, was present as an eavesdropper), the first-encounter, cross-sex interactions on which the present study relied appear to be successful in collecting low-monitored, naturalistic casual speech from the subjects.

Table 3 Ellipsis of the Topic Marker -wa
(2 Groups, 12 Speakers)

GROUP I: Employed Women in Managerial Positions (EWM)
(6 Speakers)

Speaker	Age	Profession	Setting	-wa Ellipsis %[#Elided/Total]
A(M,1C)	46	Division Chief at a Publishing Company	Workplace	27%[50/186]
B(M,2C)	53	Division Chief at a Research Institute	Coffee Shop	14%[26/185]
C(M,2C)	42	Company President	Coffee Shop	28%[22/ 80]
D(S)	28	Officer/Educator at Reform School for Female Juvenile Delinquents	Coffee Shop	18%[24/135]
E(M)	27	Ophthalmologist at a University Hospital	Coffee Shop	17%[21/126]
F(M,1C)	40	Law Office Manager	Workplace	30%[42/142]
			Group Average	22%[185/854]

GROUP II: Full-time Homemakers (HM) (6 Speakers)

Speaker	Age	Profession	Setting	-wa Ellipsis %[#Elided/Total]
G(M,2C)	43		Home	39%[35/ 89]
H(M,2C)	62		Home	38%[34/ 90]
I(M,2C)	39		Coffee Shop	50%[46/ 92]
J(M,2C)	39		Home	52%[51/ 99]
K(M,2C)	35		Coffee Shop	32%[52/163]
L(M,3C)	47		Home	45%[82/181]
			Group Average	42%[300/ 714]
			Summed Average for Both Groups	31%[485/1568]

responsible for the wide range of variation.

As Figure 1 below shows, there seems to be no clear-cut correlation between the speaker's age and the rates of particle ellipsis. However, the regression line divides the subjects into two groups, according to the occupation-based categories. The six speakers in the circle are all full-time homemakers (Group II), and the speakers appearing below the line are all full-time working women in positions of authority (Group I). Figure 2 recaptures this sociolinguistic

aspect of variability as a continuum, which clearly reveals the difference in particle ellipsis between the two groups.

Accordingly, the result of a variable rule analysis in Table 4 below reveals that the intergroup difference is statistically highly significant at p<.001. The VARBRUL program calculates a probability weight for potential contributing factors and assigns each of them a value from 0 to 1. A weight of .50 indicates that the factor has no effect on the production of the dependent variable (i.e., -wa deletion). The closer the weight is to 0, the more strongly the contributing factor disfavors the dependent variable. The closer the weight is to 1, the more strongly the factor favors it.

Table 4 shows that the group of homemakers strongly favors -wa ellipsis at the weight of .62, whereas the group of professional women in positions of authority and leadership strongly disfavors particle ellipsis at .38.[15]

All these results indicate that a division into the two occupation-based categories helps account for the wide range of individual variability in particle ellipsis. Each group's speakers are quite homo-

Figure 1   *Individual Distribution by Age in Particle Ellipsis*

PERCENTS=20.688+0.280*AGE

Figure 2   *Occupational Categories and -wa Ellipsis*

PERCENTS=14.109+2.029*RANK
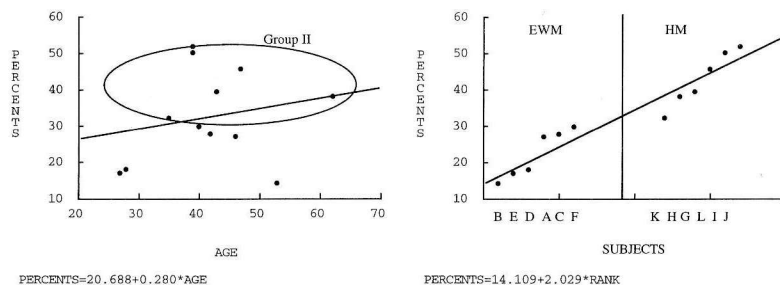
Table 4   *Variable Rule Analysis of -wa Ellipsis*

	No. of Tokens	% Deleted	Varbrul Weight
WWM	854	22%	.38
HM	714	42%	.62

[p < .001]

15 These varbrul weights indicate the strength relative to other potential

geneous in degrees of variability in their performance grammars.

3.2. Utterance-Final Forms

Table 5 below shows individual uses of the three types of utterance-final forms. A total number of tokens coded was 1505, among which complete utterances were produced 75% of the time, incomplete ones were 7%, and fragmental ones were 18%.

As is the case in the ellipsis of the topic marker -wa, striking intra-gender-group differences can be observed in the rates of the two subgroups of women. While working women in positions of authority predominantly use complete utterances (86% of the time), full-time homemakers use the same variant 65% of the time. This latter group, on the other hand, use fragmental utterances much more frequently (27%) than the former group which use the same variant only 7%. No such salient difference between the groups is observed in the use of incomplete utterances.

A closer look at individual variations in the uses of these two variants here again reveals that the individual distributions are not accounted for in terms of generational differences in Figures 3 and 4 below. They can rather be best described by occupation-based groupings, each of which consists of a homogeneous set of speakers holding similar employment status (Figures 5 and 6 below).

As was observed in particle ellipsis, the two groups of women are almost perfectly demarcated by the regression line in the uses of both variants. However, Subject H (a 62-year-old housewife), whose behaviors are deviant from her own group and rather closer to Group I, is the only exception to this consistent pattern of intergroup discrepancies (See Figures 5, 6). Though I do not have any objective evidence available for explaining this exceptional case, I speculate that the speaker's out-group contacts through the family business (a small laundry her first son runs) may be responsible for her ways of speaking.   Subject H mentioned in my sociolinguistic interview that she sometimes helped at her son's laundry if needed. This presumably gives her frequent opportunities to interact with out-group customers from a variety of backgrounds, which would encourage her to use a

independent factors; in other words, they have been calculated in relation to the constraining force of other intersecting factors such as linguistic environments of particle ellipsis, and discoursal and stylistic factors. Discussions on the other factors are presented in Takano (1997).

Table 5　Utterance-final Forms

GROUP I: Employed Women in Managerial Positions (EWM)
(6 Speakers)

Speaker	Age	Profession	Setting	Forms %[# Elided/Total] Complete Incomplete Fragmental
A(M,1C)	46	Division Chief at a Publishing Company	Workplace	83%[86/104] 13%[13/104] 5%[5/104]
B(M,2C)	53	Division Chief at a Research Institute	Coffee Shop	80%[96/120] 6%[7/120] 14%[17/120]
C(M,2C)	42	Company President	Coffee Shop	83%[116/139] 9%[12/139] 8%[11/139]
D(S)	28	Officer/Educator at Reform School for Female Juvenile Delinquents	Coffee Shop	92%[108/118] 3%[3/118] 6%[7/118]
E(M)	27	Ophthalmologist at a University Hospital	Coffee Shop	88%[80/ 91] 2%[2/ 91] 10%[9/ 91]
F(M,1C)	40	Law Office Manager	Workplace	92%[112/122] 2%[2/122] 7%[8/122]
			Group Average	86%[598/694] 6%[39/694] 8%[57/694]

GROUP II: Full-time Homemakers (HM) (6 Speakers)

Speaker	Age	Profession	Setting	Forms %[# Elided/Total] Complete Incomplete Fragmental
G(M,2C)	43		Home	59%[84/ 142] 15%[22/ 142] 25%[36/ 142]
H(M,2C)	62		Home	81%[109/ 134] 6%[8/ 134] 13%[17/ 134]
I(M,2C)	39		Coffee Shop	66%[95/ 144] 8%[12/ 144] 26%[37/ 144]
J(M,2C)	39		Home	62%[80/ 130] 6%[8/ 130] 32%[42/ 130]
K(M,2C)	35		Coffee Shop	69%[95/ 138] 6%[8/ 138] 25%[35/ 138]
L(M,3C)	47		Home	52%[65/ 124] 6%[8/ 124] 41%[51/ 124]
			Group Average	65%[528/ 811] 8%[66/ 811] 27%[217/ 811]
			Summed Average for Both Groups	75%[1126/1505] 7%[105/1505] 18%[274/1505]

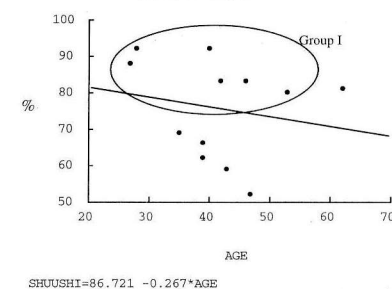Figure 3　Individual Distribution by Age in Use of Complete Utterances

SHUUSHI=86.721 −0.267*AGE

Figure 4　Individual Distribution by Age in Use of Fragmental Utterances

RENTAI=12.914+0.114*AGE
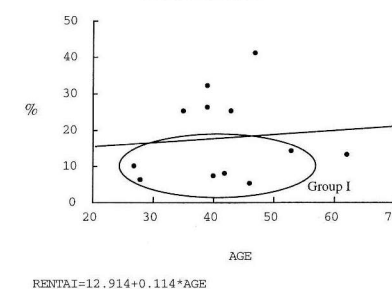
Figure 5　Occupational Categories and Use of Complete Utterances

SHUUSHI=94.691 −2.123*RANKZ
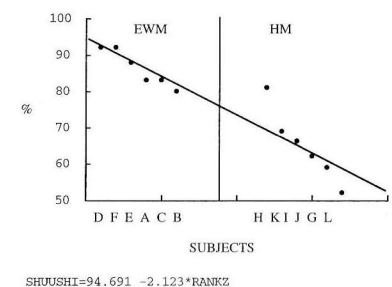
Figure 6　Occupational Categories and Use of Fragmental Utterances

RENTAI=1.250+1.824*RANKJ
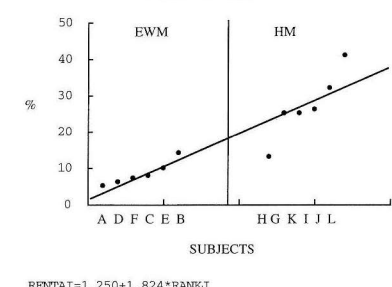
relatively more canonical, formal variety of speech. This unique situation truly draws a line between this subject and the other homemakers who appear to be confined to the home without any noteworthy exposure to communicative activities in the public domain.

Figures 5 and 6 recapture the wide range of individual variations as being correlated with the occupational categories.

Accordingly, a variable rule analysis figures out the following probabilities and the level of significance of the inter-group differences in Table 6. Since the dependent variable has three levels rather than two, the neutral weight is .33. The higher than .33 a weight is, the more strongly the factor favors the production of the variant in

Table 6　Variable Rule Analysis of Utterance-final Forms

	Complete	Incomplete	Fragmental
WWM	86% .47	6% .31	8% .22
HM	65% .21	8% .33	27% .46

[p < .001]

question.　The lower than .33 it is, the more strongly the factor disfavors it. It is obvious that working women in charge are very likely to speak with complete utterances (.47) and very unlikely to produce fragmental utterances (.22). Full-time homemakers' behaviors, on the other hand, involve precisely diametrical patterns, in that they are very likely to speak with fragmental utterances (.46) and very unlikely to use complete utterances (.21).

　　Without any earlier empirical evidence to the contrary, 'Japanese women' were presupposed to constitute a single, homogeneous group in terms of ways of speaking. However, as was the case in particle ellipsis, these results reconfirm the empirical fact that two linguistically distinct groups of Japanese women exist in contemporary society.

3.3. Uses of Gender-linked Final Particles

　　Table 7 below shows individual variation in uses of the three types of final particles (FPs): gender-neutral (e.g., *ne, yo*), female-exclusive (e.g., *wa* with rising intonation, *kashira*), and male-exclusive (e.g., *zo, na*).[16]

　　Overall, FPs as the markers of interpersonal 'affect' occurred very infrequently in the data (6% for feminine FPs, 1% for masculine FPs), presumably due to the sociopsychological climate of the interview: first-encounter, cross-sex conversations. Because of such low rates of occurrence and tremendous degrees of individual variation (i.e., some speakers have only a few occurrences of gender-bearing FPs; others do not use them at all), my analysis is based exclusively on

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16 Whether a particular FP strikes the listener as feminine, masculine, or gender-neutral depends not only on the choice of the particle per se but also on their concurrence with various forms of the predicate (e.g., direct-informal style vs. distal-formal style). To classify the subjects' particles into these three groups reliably, I have asked another Japanese linguist to review my coding. The level of inter-rater agreement was over 99%, and the tokens with which we did not reach to agreement were disregarded from further analysis.

Table 7　Gender-linked Final Particles

GROUP I: Employed Women in Managerial Positions (EWM) (6 Speakers)				
Speaker	*Age*	*Profession*	*Setting*	*Forms* %[# Elided/Total]
				Neutral Feminine Masculine
A(M,1C)	46	Division Chief at a Publishing Company	Workplace	85%[82/ 96] 15%[14/ 96] 0%[0/ 96]
B(M,2C)	53	Division Chief at a Research Institute	Coffee Shop	100%[83/ 83] 0%[0/ 83] 0%[0/ 83]
C(M,2C)	42	Company President	Coffee Shop	99%[92/ 93] 1%[1/ 93] 0%[0/ 93]
D(S)	28	Officer/Educator at Reform School for Female Juvenile Delinquents	Coffee Shop	97%[85/ 88] 2%[2/ 88] 1%[1/ 88]
E(M)	27	Ophthalmologist at a University Hospital	Coffee Shop	94%[85/ 90] 2%[1/ 90] 4%[4/ 90]
F(M,1C)	40	Law Office Manager	Workplace	93%[90/ 97] 0%[0/ 97] 7%[7/ 97]
		Group	Average	95%[517/547] 3%[18/547] 2%[12/547]

GROUP II: Full-time Homemakers (HM) (6 Speakers)				
Speaker	*Age*	*Profession*	*Setting*	*Forms* %[# Elided/Total]
				Neutral Feminine Masculine
G(M,2C)	43		Home	86%[83/ 97] 14%[14/ 97] 0%[0/ 97]
H(M,2C)	62		Home	98%[96/ 98] 2%[2/ 98] 0%[0/ 98]
I(M,2C)	39		Coffee Shop	94%[77/ 82] 1%[1/ 82] 5%[4/ 82]
J(M,2C)	39		Home	86%[75/ 87] 13%[11/ 87] 1%[1/ 87]
K(M,2C)	35		Coffee Shop	98%[66/ 68] 1%[1/ 68] 1%[1/ 68]
L(M,3C)	47		Home	83%[74/ 89] 15%[13/ 89] 2%[2/ 89]
		Group	Average	90%[471/ 521] 8%[42/ 521] 2%[9/ 521]
		Summed Average for Both Groups		93%[988/1068] 6%[60/1068] 1%[21/1068]

group data with some reservations about the validity of the results.

Figure 7 below visually tabulates individual rates per group. As for the use of gender-neutral FPs, the variability of Group I (Employed Women in Positions of Authority) seems more stable (except for Subject A) with higher rates of occurrence (95%) than that of Group II (Full-time Homemakers) (90%). While Subject A uses feminine FPs far more frequently than the other subjects in Group I, three subjects (G, J, L) in Group II use them to a similar extent. As for masculine FPs, it seems hard to identify any differences between the groups. There are only a few subjects who use masculine FPs at all, and then with low frequencies in each group.

The following results of a variable rule analysis in Table 8 below are derived from group data.

Since there are three levels, the neutral weight is .33. The higher the weight is, the more the factor (EWM vs. HM) favors, and the lower it is, the more the factor disfavors the variant in question. While a slight tendency for Group I to be ahead in the use of gender-neutral FPs (.35 for EWM; .33 for HM) is observed, some salient effects of the occupational categories on the uses of the gender-linked FPs can be identified. Homemakers are likely to exploit feminine FPs (.38), strongly disfavoring masculine FPs (.29).

Working women, on the other hand, are highly likely to use masculine FPs (.39), disfavoring feminine FPs (.26).[17]

The individual variations in the uses of FPs are also found to involve an intriguing pattern of generational change, as shown in Figure 8 and Table 9 below.

For the comparative purpose, I divided the subjects into two generational groups: 6 subjects whose age is under 40 are lumped together as the younger group (Subjects D, E, F, I, J, K), and 6 subjects whose age is over 41 are lumped together as the older group (Subjects A, B, C, G, H, I). This type of comparison seems to yield more recognizable intergroup differences, as compared with the occupation-based grouping (Figure 7). The variability of the younger group can be characterized in three terms: stability in the use of gender-neutral FPs among the individuals, more advanced adoption

Figure 7 Individual Rates in Use of Gender-linked Final Particles
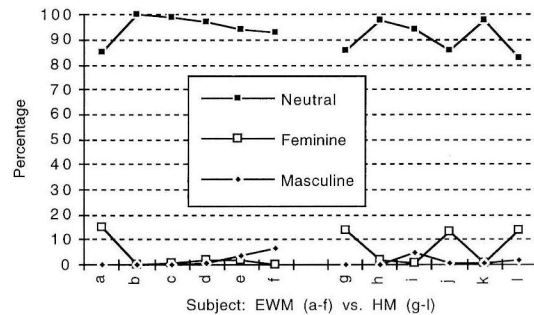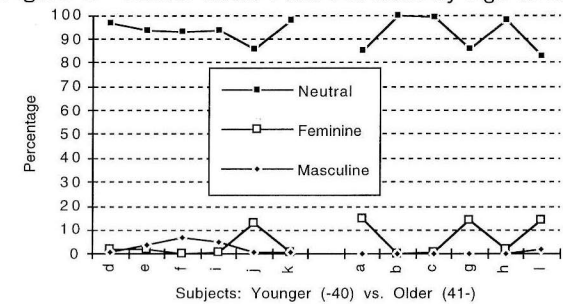

Table 8 Variable Rule Analysis of Gender-linked Final Particles

	Neutral	Feminine	Masculine
EWM	95% .35	3% .26	2% .39
HM	90% .33	8% .38	2% .29

[p < .001]

Figure 8 Gender-linked Final Particles by Age Groups

Table 9 Variable Rule Analysis of Gender-linked Final Particles through Age

	Neutral	Feminine	Masculine
YOUNGER	94% .35	3 % .25	3 % .40
OLDER	92% .34	7.7% .45	0.3% .21

[p < .001]

17 The varbrul weights are calculated as the relative probabilities to the frequencies of occurrences of the other remaining variants. Thus, while the difference in the percentages of masculine FPs between EWM and HM is only 1%, the high weight for EWM's use of masculine FPs (.39) may be derived from the relative configuration to the percentages of the other variants (i.e., gender-neutral and feminine FPs).

of masculine FPs, and almost categorical exclusion of feminine FPs (except for Subject J). The patterns of the older group, on the other hand, seem to involve a wider range of individual variations in the use of gender-neutral FPs, and exploit feminine types and exclude masculine types to a greater extent than the counterpart.

The varbrul weights obtained in Table 9 clearly indicate the prevalent generational change of masculinization in the use of Japanese FPs (Okamoto & Sato, 1992). The younger group strongly favors the use of masculine FPs (.40) and disfavors that of feminine FPs (.25). The older group, on the other hand, displays the opposite type of linguistic behaviors, strongly favoring feminine FPs (.45) and disfavoring masculine FPs (.21).

3.4. Discussion

All these results from systematic analyses of natural speech empirically prove that sociolinguistic subgroups can be identified in terms of their performance grammars among Japanese women in contemporary society, with at least two social factors (i.e., speakers' occupation-based categories and generational groups) being responsible for the formation of subgroups. Focusing on the impact of participation in the marketplace (i.e., the public sphere) on language use, I argue below that the potential causes of the group-specific patterns of variability revealed stem from the speakers' communicative experiences and routines in their unique domains of everyday lives.[18]

The speech of full-time homemakers, whose lives are restricted to the domestic sphere, has been found to be heavily correlated with a relatively less canonical, informal variety of speech that allows for a great deal of particle ellipsis and frequent uses of fragmental utterances. The non-canonicality and casualness of full-time homemakers' speech seem to be fostered through typical communicative activities the speakers are likely to encounter in their everyday lives in the local communities. Full-time homemakers are likely to be engaged in interactions involving a restricted set of single-sex, in-group locals who share mutual rapport and ties in linkage to the domestic domain (e.g., family matters and domestic chores).

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18 The following discussion ignores the generational change in the use of final particles.

Through the dense, peer-oriented social network relationships, uses of covert, vernacular types of variants are likely to be encouraged (Milroy, 1980). Less distancing, informal, and positive-polite uses of language tend to be valued as interactional norms in closeknit, dense networks (Brown, 1980; Brown & Levinson, 1987). Common background and the greater degrees of shared knowledge and assumptions promoted through their dense communication networks allow for a greater degree of "linguistic economy," a reduction of the code and a greater reliance on implicit meaning (Finegan & Biber, 1994: 320; Coupland, 1983).

Though empirical evidence involves weak validity, a more feminine variety of speech (encoded through feminine FPs) also seems to be encouraged as part of predominantly single-sex, in-group linguistic repertoires among full-time homemakers.

On the other hand, working women in positions of authority and leadership, whose life styles and everyday communicative activities are predominantly oriented to the public sphere (i.e., job-related relationships), are associated with a more formal, canonical variety of speech involving less particle ellipsis and frequent use of complete utterances. In their more diffused, open, job-linked communication networks, the speakers are more likely to interact with people from a wide variety of demographic backgrounds and share less overlap in mutual understanding and interpersonal rapport with them in various communicative situations. In striking contrast to those of the homemakers, these types of communicative experiences and routines through their occupational roles tend to inhibit exploitation of linguistic economy, encouraging more standard, explicit encoding of messages (Sankoff & Laberge, 1978; Nichols, 1980, 1983, 1984) and promote negative-polite uses of language, maintaining appropriate degrees of distance from interlocutors (Brown, 1980; Brown & Levinson, 1987). Speakers in open communication networks also tend to be more subject to overt norms for language use and have more opportunities for careful speech production. The qualifications and abilities as persons in charge are judged to a great extent through their ways of speaking, thus their occupational roles require them to show off their powerfulness through language, speaking assertively and clearly. All these communicative requirements from their occupational roles have resulted in reinforcing a more formal, canonical variety of speech (Coupland, 1983; Finegan & Biber, 1994).

As the analysis of the uses of FPs indicates, the speech of

working women also seems to display a tendency of masculinization and preference for gender-neutral speech, presumably due to their extensive contact with the external gender subculture in the male-oriented marketplace and their reaction against 'sounding feminine' as being powerless (Reynolds, 1992; Smith, 1992b).

4. CONCLUSION

The quantitative sociolinguistic approach to variations in the speech of two distinctive subgroups of Japanese women in contemporary society have empirically proven that women's language use involves a patterned heterogeneity that has long been neglected in the traditional approach to gender differentiation in Japanese. Statistically verified discrepancies are found in variable linguistic performance of the two subgroups of women leading distinct social lives. The internal heterogeneity in Japanese women's language can be identified as involving social stratification, but the one most meaningfully correlated with the speakers' participation in the marketplace and related communicative networks and routines in their everyday lives.

The previous mainstream studies, which are primarily concerned with the speech of the traditional group of women, seem to have overgeneralized the grammar of Japanese women's language, and even stereotyped the way women speak while actually playing increasingly diverse gender roles in the changing society. It is now evident that the negative stereotypes about women's language use, such as their ostensibly marked, non-standard, sloppy grammar, are due to serious oversimplification of the complex realities how women need to talk in order to fulfill their various gender roles and identify their related group membership within the society.

This outcome substantiates Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's (1992) community-based theory of linguistic gender differentiation. It maintains that how women (or men) speak is not derived from the speaker's biological sex per se, but is heavily constrained by social construction of gender which interacts with a number of local factors: how speakers identify themselves in their everyday social practices which are determined by individuals' gender roles (both private and public) in the local community. Further investigation should focus more on these qualitative, dynamic aspects of speakers' practices of gender and their systematic relationships with variation and change

in Japanese gender differentiation.

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[ABSTRACT]

Social constructions of gender in Japanese society today are undergoing drastic transformation. While the ideal of traditional gender roles (i.e., men's public roles and women's domestic roles) survives as an ideology, this ideology coexists with the reality of increasing numbers of women engaged in labor and even leadership roles outside the home. Mainstream research on gender differentiation in Japanese rests upon a simplistic view of the traditional complementary relationship: men work, and women stay at home with full responsibility for domestic matters. This common view has consistently led linguists to base their descriptions of Japanese women's language exclusively on the speech of a traditional group of women —— sengyoo shufu ('full-time homemakers'), especially those from middle-class salaried households in urban settings. While feminine characteristics based on data from the restricted sector of the female population are usually purported to represent the speech of Japanese women as a whole, they do not necessarily conform to the speech of the 'majority' of Japanese women, many of whom lead different types of social lives in the changing society today.

This paper challenges the prescribed homogeneous definition of Japanese women's language by shedding light on the speech of a currently most dynamic sector of Japanese women who play non-traditional gender roles —— professional women in leadership positions. Spontaneous speech of 6 professional women in positions of authority will be analyzed quantitatively in terms of three 'feminine' variables: the ellipsis of the Japanese topic marker -wa, manifestations of utterance-final forms, and the use of sentence final particles. Their variable grammar will then be compared with the grammar of a control group of 6 full-time homemakers, who have been the exclusive focus of previous studies of Japanese gender differentiation.

The results of variable rule analysis will demonstrate that the speech of working women in positions of authority differs from that of homemakers to a statistically significant extent, and that the intra-gender-group variability is correlated systematically with the subjects' occupation-based group membership. A common assumption of 'women' (or 'men') as a linguistically homogenous group is simply a myth. Gender differentiation in language should be accounted for on the basis of an individual's social practices in close linkage to her socioeconomic activities rather than her biological category per se.