HOKUSEI REVIEW

THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

Marketplace Membership as a Variable Outranking Gender: Further Evidence from 1999 Tokyo Fieldwork

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INTRODUCTION

The objective of the present report is to provide further supportive evidence from supplementary fieldwork for the claims laid in my previous work (Takano, 2000) on gender-linked differentiation in Japanese and its systematic correlation with speakers' patterns of participation in the marketplace. Takano (2000), whose overall research aim was to empirically challenge a widespread sociolinguistic fallacy of Japan as a homogeneous speech community, demonstrates that statistically verified discrepancies exist in variable linguistic performance of the occupation-bound subgroups of women leading distinct social lives: full-time employed women in positions of authority and leadership, full-time employed women in clerical positions, and full-time homemakers. This outcome has led to a conclusion that the intra-gender-group heterogeneity in Japanese women's language involves social stratification, but individual patterns of variable linguistic usage are more meaningfully correlated with a concrete social category of degrees of the speakers' integration into the marketplace and related communicative experiences and routines in their everyday lives than with such abstract categories as social class index.

Conducting systematic, objective analysis of natural speech data in the variationist framework, Takano (2000) criticizes the mainstream, intuition-based approach to gender differentiation in Japanese, in that it has prescribed normative, stereotypical usage of language for each gender group and perpetuated a "mythical," homogeneous picture of gender-linked linguistic behaviors in the Japanese speech community today. The study further points out that prior influential studies of natural speech have also been caught up with a traditional complementary view of male/female relationships: men work in the public domain as the heads of households, whereas women function in the domestic domain as wives and mothers. This monolithic, static view on social construction of gender has led the majority of research on Japanese women's language to focus exclusively on the speech of a traditional, but currently minority, sector of Japanese women (i.e., full-time homemakers), which has oversimplified the dynamic realities of the speech community in practice where gender roles and ideologies are in transition.

While Takano (2000) succeeds in empirically revealing neglected 'internal' (intra-gender-group) heterogeneity of Japanese women's language in accord with individual speakers' social lives rather than their gender category per se, one of the major weaknesses of the study in generalizing the findings for the whole community lies in its

research design in which speech data from the male counterpart are not taken into account. Adding men's linguistic behaviors to further comparative analysis in the present project allows us to confirm Takano's (2000) thesis that 'concrete' occupation-bound categories and related communicative experiences and routines tend to exert much stronger effects on individuals' language use regardless of whether the speaker is male or female; namely, the speaker's marketplace membership 'outranks' his or her gender.

The present project also deals with the question on the validity of the "sociolinguistic interview" (Labov, 1981) as a primary source of natural linguistic behaviors for analysis of variation. While Takano (2000) adopts the sociolinguistic interview as an efficient technique for data elicitation in order to attain a high degree of comparability across the three groups of women who presumably possess communicative repertoires distinctive from one another, there has been an argument that speech data elicited through interview sessions are stylistically deprived and thus are not always adequate to reveal a full range of the speaker's competence in natural settings (Coupland, 1980; Rickford & McNair-Knox, 1994). The present project sheds light on this claim by amplifying the data analyzed in Takano (2000) with different stylistic dimensions and examines the obtained analytical results in terms of the argument.

THE PROJECT

The Variable

The common variable examined in Takano (2000) and the present project is utterance-final forms involving variable manifestations of the predicate, which have been defined as gender-differentiated in Japanese. They are divided into three broad types:

1) Complete utterances with full-forms of the predicate;
2) Incomplete utterances with non-conclusive forms of the predicate;
3) Fragmental utterances with the entire predicate or the copula omitted or consisting of noun phrases with/without the postpositions.

Prior intuition-based and 'homemaker-oriented' studies of Japanese gender differentiation associate the first canonical type with male speech and the latter two non-canonical types with typical female speech. Takano (2000), however, empirically found that variable uses of two of the types, (1) and (3) in particular, involves highly systematic correlation with the speaker's job-linked social lives.

The following excerpt from an interview with Subject B (a 43-year-old full-time homemaker) illustrates the three types. Letter I designates the interviewer (the author) asking about her everyday activities (Takano, 2000: 58-9).

I : *Fudan doo itta koto o shite,*　　　　　'Usually, what kinds of
　　jikan sugosarerun desu ka?　　　　　things you do
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　to spend time?'

B : *Fudannnnn, kaji ga taihan de,* 'Usually, mostly domestic chores,

ato, anoo, shuu ni kai eigo o And, um, twice a week I do

watakushi yatteru nde xxx (study) English, so xxx'

I : *Aa, soo desu ka?* 'Ah, is that so?'

B : *Eikaiwa yattete.* 'I study English conversation.'

(1)

Anoo mishishippii no anoo 'Well, (I'm taught English)

shusshin no amerika jin no by an American teacher from

sensei ni. Mississippi.'

(2)

I : *Nannin ka issho desu ka?* '(Do you study) with several other people?'

B : *Soo desu ne.* 'That's right.'

(3)

Ima sannin. 'Now, (there are) three of us.'

(4)

I : *Sannin de?* 'Only three?'

B : *Ee, ee, ee, ee.* 'Yes, yes.'

I : *Otoko no sensei* 'Is your teacher male?'

desu ka?

B : *Otoko no sensei.* 'Male teacher.'

(5)

Nijuu-hachi. '28 years old.'

(6)

A, moo sorosoro...., 'Ah, soon....

nijuu hachi gurai de kite, a, He came when he was 28,

nijuuroku ka shichi de kite, ah, no, he came when he was 26 or 27,

ima moo sorosoro sanjuu ni so now he should soon be

naru to omoimasu. 30, I think.'

(7)

Dakara onaji gurai.	'So, about the same age
(8)	(as you).'

I : *Donna sensei desu ka.*　　　　　'What is he like?'

B : *Sugoku ne,*　　　　　　　　　　'(He's) very,
　　ano tanoshii desu yo.　　　　　well, entertaining.'
　　　　(9)

　　Anoo,　　　　　　　　　　　　'And,
　　tokai no hito ja nai kara,　　　He's not a city person, so
　　sugoku soboku da shi,　　　　　he's very pure, and
　　tottemo reigi tadashii si ne.　very polite, and

　　Tottemo ki o tsukatte　　　　　very considerate.'
　　　　(10)
　　kuretari shite.

Underlined segments 3, 7, and 9 are classified as the first type, the complete utterances. Segments 1 and 10 with the gerundive endings are one of the typical non-conclusive utterances observed predominantly in the data. Another relatively frequent ending of this type includes an ending with the alternative particle -tari (e.g., *Ato wa zasshi yondetari,* 'and I also read magazines'). While the full-forms of the predicate strike the listener as assertive, explicit, and formal especially when used in distal (polite) style, the non-conclusive forms of the predicate bear the tone of continuation (without surface realization of it) (Jorden & Noda, 1987). Leaving the following slot for the conclusive element or remark empty renders the utterances ambiguous to a certain degree, provides the addressee with the liberty to guess and thus makes them sound reserved, indirect, and gentler. Underline 2 is regarded as the third type, a fragmental utterance with the entire predicate (possibly, *naratte imasu* 'I learn' [habitually]) omitted. Underlines 4, 5, 6, and 8 are all regarded as fragmental with possibly the copula (-*da/desu*) elided. Fragmental utterances, as part of an in-group register, strike the listener as highly casual, less distancing, straightforward, but blunt, sloppy, or even childish in certain situations where the speaker is talking with someone who does not share in-group solidarity and rapport.

Data

　　　Supplementary data for the present project were collected through my fieldwork conducted in Tokyo in April, 1999. In comparison with demographic characteristics of 17 subjects analyzed in Takano (2000) (Table 1), Table 2 describes 5 male and 4 female subjects participating in the present project. All 4 male speakers in the sociolinguistic interviews (Data Set 1) were recruited through my second-order networks (i.e., friends or acquaintances of friends or acquaintances of mine) as were the 17 subjects in Takano (2000), whereas the

remaining 5 speakers in casual conversations are all friends of mine from college. The male speaker, V (Data Set 2), is talking with me as a conversation partner, and the female speakers, W, X (Data Set 3), Y, and Z (Data Set 4), are all participating in a casual group conversation including me as one of the participants. All of the 9 speakers are regarded as speakers of Tokyo dialect, being born and raised in the Tokyo metropolitan areas, as are the subjects in Takano (2000).

TABLE 1
Profile of 17 Subjects in Takano (2000:53)

**GROUP I : Employed Women in Managerial Positions (EWM)
in the Sociolinguistic Interview (6 Speakers)**

Speaker	Age	Education	Profession	Interview Setting
A	46	Junior College	Division Chief at a Publishing Company	Workplace
C	53	Ph.D.	Division Chief at a Research Institute	Coffee Shop
E	42	BA	Company President	Coffee Shop
F	28	BA	Officer/Educator at a Reform School for Female Juvenile Delinquents	Coffee Shop
H	27	Medical School	Ophthalmologist at a University Hospital	Coffee Shop
L	40	BA	Law Office Manager	Workplace

**GROUP II: Employed Women in Non-Managerial Positions (EW)
in the Sociolinguistic Interview (5 Speakers)**

Speaker	Age	Education	Profession	Interview Setting
I	35	BA	Office Clerk at a Governmental Office	Coffee Shop
J	46	BA	Office Clerk at a Travel Agency	Coffee Shop
K	28	Technical School	Accountant at a Travel Agency	Coffee Shop
N	29	BA	Bank Clerk	Coffee Shop
O	45	Junior College	Office Clerk at a Kindergarten Association	Workplace

GROUP III: Full-time Homemakers (HM) in the Sociolinguistic Interview (6 Speakers)

Speaker	Age	Education	Husband's Profession	Interview Setting
B	43	Junior College	(Company President)	Home
D	62	High School	(Laundry Owner)	Home
G	39	BA	(Independent Architect)	Coffee Shop
M	39	BA	(Company Employee, Managerial Position)	Home
P	35	Junior College	(Company President)	Coffee Shop
Q	47	BA	(Company Employee, Managerial Position)	Home

TABLE 2

Profile of 9 Subjects in the Present Project

Data Set 1: White-collar Businessmen in the Sociolinguistic Interview (4 speakers)

Speaker	Age	Education	Profession	Interview Setting
R	35	MBA	Staff at a Security Company	Coffee Shop
S	37	BA	Section Chief at a Governmental Office	Coffee Shop
T	27	BA	Staff at a Security Analysis Company	Coffee Shop
U	36	BA	Section Chief at a Manufacturing Company	Coffee Shop

Data Set 2: White-collar Businessman in Casual Conversation (1 speaker)

Speaker	Age	Education	Profession	Interview Setting
V	37	MBA	Staff at an Insurance Company	Coffee Shop

Data Set 3: Full-time Employed Women in Casual Conversation (2 speakers)

Speaker	Age	Education	Profession	Interview Setting
W	37	BA	Staff at a Travel Agency	Coffee Shop
X	38	BA	Staff at a Computer Company	Coffee Shop

Data Set 4: Full-time Homemakers in Casual Conversation (2 speakers)

Speaker	Age	Education	Husband's Profession	Interview Setting
Y	37	BA	(Section Chief)	Coffee Shop
Z	38	BA	(Section Chief)	Coffee Shop

With respect to the stylistic dimension of collected speech data, note that the present project analyzes casual conversations between friends (Data Sets 2, 3, 4) as well as the sociolinguistic interviews (Data Set 1). The purpose of this design is to reinforce Takano's (2000) aforementioned thesis (based exclusively on the sociolinguistic interviews) by showing that the observed strong correlation between occupation-bound categories and language use is not distracted by stylistic factors; in other words, the obtained results are by no means an artifact of the research design in which interview data were the exclusive resource for analysis.

Regarding occupational categories of the subjects, two of the 5 male subjects (S and U) can be considered to be comparable to EWM (full-time employed women in managerial positions) in Table 1. The remaining 3 (R, T, and V) are comparable to EW (full-time employed women in clerical positions). Two of the female subjects (W and X) are EW, and the remaining 2 (Y and Z) are full-time homemakers (HM). Note again that the last five speakers (V, W, X, Y and Z) are participating in casual conversations as compared with those 17 speakers interacting in the sociolinguistic interviews in Takano (2000).

FINDINGS

Figures 1 and 2 show the overall patterns of variability in which the additional 9 subjects are embedded in the occupation-bound continuum of 17 subjects described in Takano (2000: 69). Male subjects are marked by the square and female subjects by the oval. Each individual is located in one of the occupational groups (i.e., a group of full-time employed women in managerial positions [EWM], a group of full-time employed women in clerical positions [EW], and a group of full-time homemakers [HM]) according to his or her types of participation in the marketplace. Note on the stylistic dimension that all the female speakers in the oval (W, X in EW; Y, Z in HM) are college classmates, conducting a casual group conversation. Only one of the male white-collar businessman (V in EW) also talks in a casual conversation with me as a friend from college, whereas the remaining 4 businessmen (U, S in EWM; R, T in EW), whom I met for the first time, interact with me in the sociolinguistic interviews.

FIGURE 1

Occupational Categories and the Use of Complete Utterances

☐ Male Speakers

◯ Female Speakers in Casual Conversation
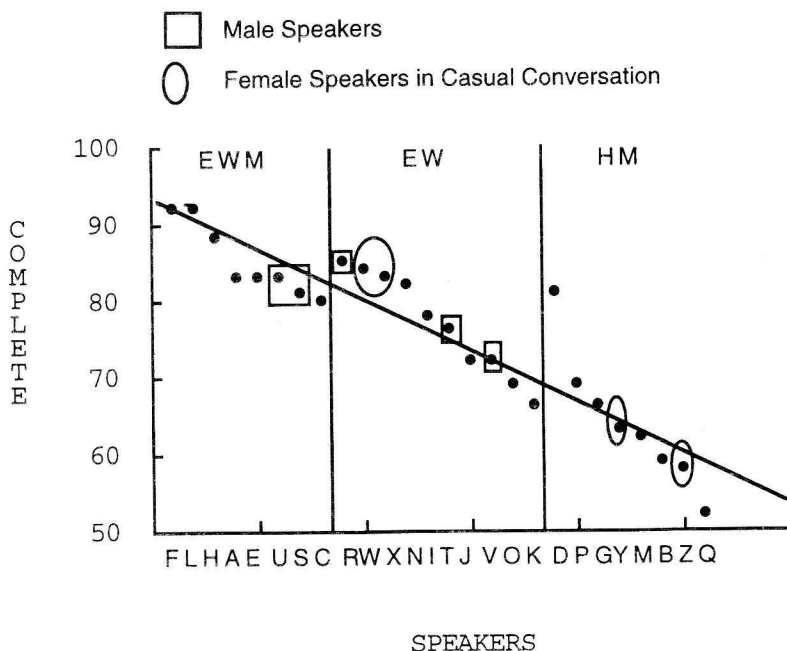
SPEAKERS

COMPLETE=93.314 -1.331*SPEAKERS

As for variable uses of complete forms of the predicate (Figure 1), we notice that all 9 speakers line up on the continuum of correlations with the occupation-bound categories, irrespective of their gender and stylistic dimensions of analytical data. Two businessmen in managerial positions (U, S) in the sociolinguistic interviews belong to the group of full-time EWM who talked in the same stylistic dimension, as expected. Though the speech of Speaker R, who is a staff member at a security company, shows a relatively higher degree of use perhaps as the only minor deviation among the male group, the remaining two businessmen without managerial statuses (T, V) perfectly fit the EW category, despite the fact that the former (T) talks in a sociolinguistic interview and the latter (V) in a friendly casual conversation.

Two female full-time homemakers (Y, Z) in a casual conversation can also be regarded as natural members of the HM group, who on the other hand spoke in the sociolinguistic interviews. However, the other two full-time employed women (W, X) in the identical casual conversation are accommodated within the range of the EW category or even close to the EWM range, irrespective of the stylistic dimension being the same.

FIGURE 2

Occupational Categories and the Use of Fragmental Utterances

□ Male Speakers

○ Female Speakers in Casual Conversation
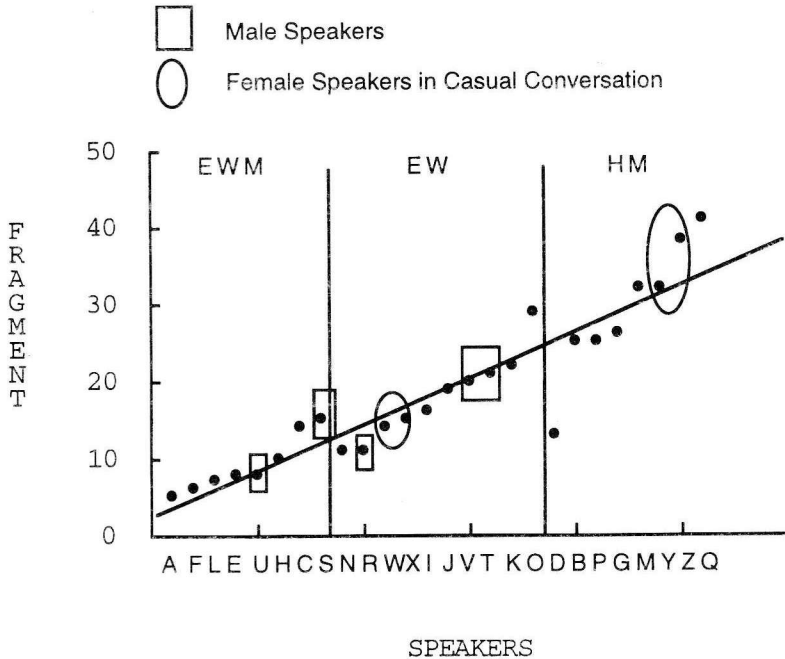
SPEAKERS

FRAGMENT=2.142+1.217*SPEAKERS

Similar observations can be obtained with respect to variable uses of fragmental utterances and their systematic correlations with the occupational categories, as shown in Figure 2. All the 5 businessmen marked by the square appear to fit each of the occupational categories (with the relatively high rate of Speaker S as a possible deviation), whereas all the female speakers marked by the oval line up on the continuum (with Speaker Z's highly advanced use) in accord with their occupation-bound membership.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results show that full-time employed subjects (only women in Takano [2000]) in managerial positions in the public domain are most likely to use the canonical, complete forms of the predicate, whereas full-time homemakers in the domestic domain are more likely to use the vernacular-type, fragmental forms of utterances. This continuum again involves full-time employed subjects (only women in Takano [2000]) in non-authoritative positions as intermediate users in both types of variables.

Based on both quantitative and qualitative accounts of subjects' social networks, Takano (2000) argues that the distribution of the subjects along the continuum is strongly correlated with individuals' degrees of integration into the marketplace; namely, communicative experiences and routines in speakers' everyday lives that are determined by the types and nature of their participation in the marketplace. The former

canonical forms, which sound more formal and distancing, and deliver information in an explicit way, belong to the group of full-time employed subjects in managerial positions, who are likely to be encouraged to exploit more standard, explicit, at times careful, encoding of messages with less linguistic economy in their more diffused, job-linked open networks with a large number of heterosexual public ties (Sankoff & Laberge, 1978; Milroy, 1980; Nichols, 1980, 1983, 1984). The latter non-canonical, vernacular-type forms, which are oriented to less distancing, informal, positive-polite interactional norms involving a great deal of linguistic economy, are heavily exploited by full-time homemakers in particular, who tend to have closed single-sex communication networks composed of in-group locals with shared knowledge and high rapport in strong linkage to the domestic domain (Finegan & Biber, 1994:320; Coupland, 1983). Full-time employed subjects in non-authoritative positions, whose network content was found in-between the two contrastive groups in Takano (2000), are consistently found to be intermediate users in both variables.

The present study, which attempts to compensate methodological weaknesses of Takano (2000), shifts its focus of investigation to men's linguistic behaviors and the possible impact of different stylistic dimensions on variability and further confirms the validity of the thesis put forward in Takano (2000): the superiority of the intimate link between the occupation-bound category and language use to the speaker's gender category as an explanatory variable for linguistic variation. The outcome shows that the speaker's occupation-bound categories 'outrank' his or her gender. The speakers, whether they are male or female, talk accordingly to the roles and identities they perform in their social lives. Job-linked communicative experiences and routines in everyday lives more strongly constrain our linguistic behaviors than 'static' gender. Variable uses of linguistic features that have been characterized categorically as female-specific in prior mainstream studies of 'mythical homogeneity' require re-interpretations from more dynamic perspectives.

Furthermore, the analysis of stylistically heterogeneous sets of data in the present project also reveals that the obtained systematicity is stable across different stylistic dimensions such as casual conversations. Systematic variability inherent in speakers' performance grammars can be revealed through their "vernaculars" from the sociolinguistic interview, regardless of whether the communicative task itself is 'being interviewed' or 'participating in casual conversations.' This outcome also verifies the utility of the sociolinguistic interviews as an efficient data elicitation technique for studies of linguistic variation.

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