Japanese Women's Language on Twitter
A Case Study on Gendered Language Among Women Online

Stephanie Boncina
jap12sbo@student.lu.se

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to examine gendered language among Japanese women on Twitter. Specifically, this thesis takes a look at the history of Japanese gendered language and the connection it has with role language. Further, the most common features of traditional Japanese gendered language among women on Twitter are examined through a case study. Similarities and differences between these occurrences are then analysed and discussed.

It is possible to draw the conclusion that Twitter is a unique platform that allows languages to develop. There is a significant amount of traditionally masculine features in the language analysed, much more than previous studies show, such as the most frequently used sentence-final particles are traditionally considered masculine. Thus it appears that a certain freedom from gender norms exists on Twitter, which otherwise is not as prevalent in the real world, and people seem to feel that they can use language in ways they necessarily cannot in the real world.

Keywords: Japanese gendered language, Japanese Twitter language, Japanese Women's language, Internet linguistics, Computer-Mediated Communication, CMC

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Conventions and Abbreviations

In this thesis the modified Hepburn method will be used when transcribing Japanese. Cases with long vowels will therefore be indicated by diacritic macrons. For example, the word "mathematics" (すうがく) will be transcribed as *sūgaku* instead of *suugaku*. Loanwords with long vowels will also be indicated by the usage of diacritic macrons. *Takushii* (タクシー taxi) will therefore be transcribed as *takushī*. Place names and personal names will be transcribed with conventional spelling, e.g. Tokyo and not Tōkyō.Elongated consonant sounds, which in Japanese are marked by つ known as the *sokuon* will be marked with doubling the consonant following the *sokuon*.

In regard to the sentences extracted from Twitter, I will include the original sentence, followed by transcription as well as translation. The sentences will be completely unaltered. Example sentences created for the purpose of this thesis will only be included as Romanised versions, as the purpose of those is only to demonstrate the usage of the Japanese language and choice of words. Lastly, Japanese words throughout the running text will be marked by cursive, followed by a literal translation in brackets as per se: *kuruma* (car).

The Leipzig rules for glossing is applied when glossing is needed and the abbreviations applied in this thesis are listed below:

COP	Copula
GEN	Genitive
HON	Honorific
NEG	Negative
NOM	Nominative
NPST	Non-past
SFP	Sentence-final Particle
TOP	Topic Marker
PST	Past
POT	Potential

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And as the Internet comes increasingly to be viewed from a social perspective, so the role of language becomes central. […] If the Internet is a revolution, therefore, it is likely to be a linguistic revolution.

－ (Crystal 2004:viii)

1. Introduction: Japanese Women's Language on Twitter

As the Internet is rapidly evolving, so are languages adapting to the different requirements of the medium (Crystal 2011). Japanese is not an exception. Masculine and feminine forms of language are a part of the average Japanese person's everyday life. This includes personal pronouns indicating gender, certain sentence-final particles that portray the speaker as feminine or masculine, and prefixes that enhance the politeness level of one's language.

Twitter, with its close to endless amount of publicly available metadata and relative ease of collection, is ideal for linguists who are looking to explore the realm of Internet linguistics (Zappavigna 2012:15). For those who are studying Japanese linguistics, Twitter is exceptional in the sense that it is the most frequently used social media in Japan, with over 40 million active users.

In this thesis I will look at the language of Japanese women on Twitter, for the purpose of understanding if and how gendered language is used online, and how it compares to gendered language as used in real life. The Internet allows us to be anonymous. Thus I believe it affects the way we express ourselves. What sort of Japanese linguistic revolution can possibly be taking place under the surface of the sea that we call the Internet?

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the use of Japanese gendered language on Twitter among Japanese women. This will be done through analysing tweets focusing on sentence-final particles, first-person pronouns, and honorifics and wording. It is presupposed that there will be an occurrence of Japanese gendered language. The question is to what extent it will be outside of the ordinary scope of socially accepted usage. I will therefore explore to what extent Japanese gendered language occurs as well as in what context it is used.

Considering that Twitter language is a relatively unexplored area in the field of sociolinguistics, there are few previous studies on the subject. I hope that this thesis will encourage others to explore the linguistic goldmine of Twitter.

1.2 Disposition

In section 2.1 I will discuss Japanese gendered language from a historical point of view, to gain understanding of how and why the language has changed. In section 2.2, I will elaborate on the features of Japanese gendered language that I will focus on in my research. This includes sentence-final particles, first-person pronouns, as well as honorifics and wording. In section 2.3, I will briefly talk about the connection between Japanese gendered language and Japanese role language.

In chapter 3 I will explore slightly more in-depth what Twitter is, how it can be used as a means of research, and the reason for its popularity in Japan. In section 3.2 previous studies on Twitter language studies will be discussed.

Chapter 4 consists of my own research, namely a case study of Japanese women's language on Twitter. Section 4.1 includes the purpose and methodology, 4.2 addresses the study's limitations, and 4.3 introduces the subjects used in the study. In Section 4.4 I will include my own study, followed by the results and discussion. This is followed by a summary in section 4.5

Finally, I will round off this thesis with a conclusion in chapter 5.

2. Japanese Gendered Language

Japanese gendered language, also known in Japanese as *joseigo* (lit. female language) and *danseigo* (lit. male language), is known to be an important part of everyday Japanese, not to mention one of the most heavily researched subjects in the world of Japanese sociolinguistics.

In this chapter, I will start by introducing some historical aspects of gendered language. I will then present three typical aspects of what is considered Japanese gendered language, namely sentence-final particles, first person and second person pronouns, and honorifics and wording. These aspects of gendered language will be the focus of my study.

Finally, I will talk about the connection between role language and gendered language. I will therefore briefly touch upon the definition of role language and how it is connected with Japanese gendered language.

2.1 Japanese Gendered Language: Then and Now

Looking back at Japan's history, gendered language is thought to have been a feature of the Japanese language since ancient times. Ide (2003:229) claims that the earliest traces of gendered language in Japanese occur in a collection of poems known as *Manyōshū* (lit. Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves), dating back to Nara Period (710-794 A.D). *Manyōshū* contains second person pronouns that indicate the speaker's or addressee's gender, Ide claims. However, Ide does not go further into details about which pronouns were used.

During Heian period (794-1185) however, linguistic evidence of differences in social status have been found, while gendered differences have not (Fujita, Fujimura & Endo 2003:85). Vranic (2013:15) elaborates on this further by taking an example from *Genji Monogatari* (Tale of Genji), a classic work of literature by Murasaki Shikibu, where a woman scolds her husband, and therefore uses rougher language, while the husband speaks politely. This in its essence would be the opposite of what Japanese gendered language is thought to be today, as women are supposed to be graceful and polite.

Additionally, during this period while Japanese men still used Chinese characters in writing, Japanese women devised a phonetic writing system known as *hiragana*, still in use today. This contributed to the fact that women were now able to

write in a manner that represented the way they would usually express themselves (Ide 2003:230). This allows us today to examine the changes women's language has seen since then.

Following the Kamakura and Muromachi periods (1192-1573), gendered language took a new turn with the emergence of *nyōbō kotoba* (lit. woman's or court lady's words). It was a language developed by court ladies, the career women of the medieval times, who lived with and served the imperial families in the inner quarters of the imperial court. Ide (2003:230-231) explains further that due to a transition of power between the emperor and the *samurai*, the court ladies invented *nyōbō kotoba* as a secret language functioning as a communicative code where phonology and syntax remained the same, but new lexical items were created. This allowed them to discuss the hardship the imperial and noble families were suffering, without exposing it to outsiders. There were several different methods of word formation in *nyōbō kotoba*. One that might be specifically worth mentioning is adding the honorific prefix *o-* to existing words. One such example is *o-yu* (hot water) instead of *yu* (Vranic 2013:16). This word, along with many others, are traces of *nyōbō kotoba*, which we can find in contemporary Japanese, though now to some extent used by both men and women (Ide 2003:232).

In the end, *nyōbō kotoba* gradually spread through the lower classes in connection with the imperial court being overthrown. The language of the court ladies, however, remained and was regarded as a prestigious language in the following period, the Edo Period (1600-1868).

Another event that is thought to have influenced Japanese gendered language was the emergence of the language of the courtesans, or play ladies, as they were known. It was during the Edo Period, a time of male domination over women due to the influence of Confucian ideologies, when the *yūjogo* (lit. play girl language) appeared. Japan closed its borders to the outside world, and started experiencing both economical development as well as cultural maturation, which in turn lead to pleasure quarters, among others, being built in today's Kyoto, Osaka and Tokyo. The women who worked in the pleasure quarters were, according to Ide (2003:233), much respected professionals; being eloquent performers, carrying on witty conversations with guests, and mastering both the art of *haiku* (Japanese poems) and Chinese reading. Because they came from different regions of Japan, they spoke different dialects, in addition to being of different social status. The *yūjogo* was therefore created for the

purpose of being a sort of common means of communication through eliminating dialectal differences, and to create a certain kind of atmosphere.

Furthermore, Ide (2003:233) explains that this exclusive language contributed to a feeling where "the real world was forgotten in this special world", and while the linguistic features of the *yūjogo* did not contribute any special meaning, the amount of expressions reflected the entertainment business and its atmosphere.

Although *nyōbō kotoba* is thought to have initiated a focus on women's language, the basis of the ideological women's language we know today was institutionalized in the Meiji Period (1868-1912). By opening the borders once again after almost three hundred years of seclusion, an educational system and ideas of human rights flooded in through influence from the West. Thus it was the beginning of the Meiji Restoration, which would change Japan's entire social system.

One of the major reforms was the one of *genbun'itchi* (the unification of written and spoken languages). Until the Meiji Restoration, Japan used a complicated and wide range of historical and classical styles in written Japanese. The Japanese realised that modernizing language would be critical for importing Western science and technology. After much experimenting, *hyōjungo* (standard Japanese) was established to unite the nation, and was conceptualised as "men's national language" (Inoue 2002:400).

To further modernise Japan, women's secondary education was incorporated in the state-regulated public education system, allowing women to become students. Women would then wear *hakama*, a trouser style kimono, and use male language (Vranic 2013:20). At the same time, women were taught to become *ryōsai kenbo*, 'good-wife, wise-mother'. This idea represented the ideal for womanhood as well as traditional virtues and values, despite the on-going modernisation. That is to say, women came to symbolise the shifting boundary between tradition and modernity (Inoue 2002:397).

By the Showa Period (1926-1989), so-called *modan gāru* (modern girls) started rebelling against the traditional view of Japanese women who were expected to conform to 'good wife, wise mother'. They rebelled against the elegance and politeness that was continuously forced upon them by cutting their hair short and wearing Western style clothing. Linguistically, they started addressing men in a masculine and casual way, and used the masculine first person pronoun *boku*. The differences between Japanese women's language and men's language were then

brought to attention by linguist Kikuzawa Sueo, who claimed: "Women's speech is characterized by elegance, that is, gentleness and beauty. Moreover, such characteristics correspond with our unique national language." (1929:75, as cited in Inoue 2002:392). Kikuzawa was referring to *nyōbō kotoba*, which he considered to be the pinnacle of Japanese women's language.

Furthermore, during the bubble economy in the 1980's and 1990's, the EEOL (Equal Employment Opportunity Law) was implemented. This opened up for a new type of consumer in the Japanese society, namely the workingwoman. Now unsparing and skilled discerners of brands, smoking, drinking, and gambling, the Japanese women's gentleness and language were yet again considered corrupted. The term *ojō-sama*, meaning lady or princess, referring to a feminine way of talking, acting and dressing, suddenly resurfaced after having little currency since the Meiji Period. Furthermore, *ojō-sama* came to be fiercely discussed in the media, with slogans such as "the status that money can't buy", encouraging women to behave and talk in a feminine way (Inoue 2016:157).

Following, in the period between 1991 and 2010, generally known as The Lost Decades, the bubble burst and Japan was hit by recession. Inoue (2016:164) argues that the media's input on women's language has since then decreased, and further ponders the possibility of a connection between a country's political economy and the effect the society has on women's language. This, however, is beyond the scope of the present discussion.

In conclusion, traces of Japanese women's language have been prevalent since the ancient times, and it has changed and adapted throughout the ages due to various situations. An example of such language is *nyōbō kotoba*, which was considered a prestigious language used and developed by the court women as a secret language. Another example mentioned is *yūjogo*, the language of the play ladies, was created for the purpose of having a common means of communication, and to eliminate dialectical and class differences amongst each other. During the Meiji Restoration women were taught to be *ryōsai kenbo*, 'good-wife, wise-mother', and later the so called *modan gāru* rebelled against the elegance and politeness forced upon them, by using masculine first person pronouns, and addressing men in a masculine and casual way.

2.2 Sentence-Final Particles, First-Person Pronouns, and Honorifics

There are many elements in Japanese that mark attitude and/or emotion, and the sentence-final particles (henceforth SFP) are one of the most frequently used. They occur mostly in speech and a greater variety can be found in informal speech than in formal speech (Narahara 2002:151). They allow the speaker to express various cognitive and emotional assessments concerning contextual factors. Some SFP characterize masculine or feminine speech, and some are unisex. Below is a simplified table based on a list of SFP from Kawasaki & McDougall (2003:44), separated into neutral, masculine, and feminine.

Table 1: Classification of sentence-final particle according to gender

Neutral	Masculine	Feminine
ne	*zo*	*kashira*
yo	*ze*	*wa* (used independently or with *ne* and/or *yo*)
yone	*sa*	*no* with *ne* and/or *yo* after a noun or a *na*-adjective
	na (used independently or following *yo*)	

Table 1. Kawasaki & McDougall 2003:44

The reason why some SFP are thought to be associated with male and female language is not due to the SFP themselves being masculine or feminine, but rather due to their exclusive use by one sex or the other (Loveday 1986; Ide & Yoshida 2001:465). For example, a quantitative analysis, done by Ide (1979:8-9) on frequency of the use of SFP according to gender among university students, shows that *yona* and *ze* were exclusively used by male speakers. Additionally, *zo* and *sa* were showed to be preferred by men by 94.4% and 86.2% respectively. In the same sense, SFP indicating feminine speech, such as *kashira* and *wane,* were solely used by female speakers.

It is widely recognised that the semantic function of SFP which indicate feminine language is used for the purpose of softening said sentence, and to sound less assertive. On the other hand, masculine sentence-final particles are used for the

opposite reason: to convey forcefulness and strong insistence. Kawasaki & McDougall (2003:44-45) summarise it by stating that SFP conveying softness are therefore associated with women's speech, seen in example sentences (1) and (2), whereas those that convey force are associated with men's speech, demonstrated in example sentences (3) for *zo* and (4) for *ze*.

(1) *Mō*   *jikan*   *ga*   *na-i*   <u>*wa*</u>   (Feminine)
Already   time   NOM   be-NEG.NPST   SFP.wa
There is no more time

(2) *Ashita*   *wa*   *hareru*   <u>*kashira*</u>   (Feminine)
Tomorrow   TOP   clear-POT   SFP.kashira
I wonder if it'll clear up tomorrow

(3) *Make-na-i*   <u>*zo*</u>!   (Masculine)
Lose-NEG-NPST   SFP.zo
[I] won't lose!

(4) *Kono*   *karē*   *wa*   *saikō*   *da*   <u>*ze*</u>   (Masculine)
This   curry   TOP   best   COP   SFP.ze
This curry is the best, I tell ya'

It is, however, interesting to note that Kawasaki & McDougall (2003:41) also point out that there is a reported shift in female speakers' usage of traditional feminine forms to more natural and even masculine ones.

While the neutral SFP are used by both men and women, and thus do not express neither feminine nor masculine features, they instead seek confirmation from the listener or soften the sentence (*ne*), or to mark assertion (*yo*) (Martin 2004:919). This is demonstrated in (5) and (6) below. Additionally, it is also possible to combine the two. This creates a sentence that indicates both strong agreement and softening, as shown in (7).

(5) *Omoshiro-i   eiga   dat-ta   ne*   (Neutral)
    Fun-NPST   movie   COP-PST   SFP.ne
    It was a fun movie, wasn't it?

(6) *Watashi   wa   sake   ga   nom-e-na-i   yo* (Neutral)
    I   TOP   alcoholNOM   drink-POT-NEG-NPST   SFP.yo
    I can't drink alcohol, you know

(7) *Ashita   ik-u   yone*?   (Neutral)
    Tomorrow   go-NPST   SFP.yone
    [You're] going tomorrow, right?

Furthermore, despite the fact that *ne* and *yo* are gender-neutral SFP, a woman who uses *ne* or *yo* after the copula *da* in informal speech is usually regarded as blunt, vulgar and even rude (Okamoto & Sato 1992). Narahara (2002:153) further supports this by claiming that in men's informal speech, a nominal predicate for an affirmative in present tense almost always occurs with *da* when followed by *yo* or *ne*. This will henceforth be referred to as masculine-neutral SFP. On the other hand, *yo* and *ne* following the predicate nominal without *da* is almost exclusively found in women's (informal) speech, and will be considered feminine SFP. This is demonstrated below in (8a) and (8b).

(8a). *Kono machi wa   nigiyaka   da   yo/ne* (Masculine-neutral)
     This city TOP   lively   COP   SFP.yo/ne
     This city is lively

(8b). *Kono   machi wa   nigiyaka   yo/ne*   (Feminine)
     This   city TOP   lively   SFP-yo/ne
     This city is lively

Finally, it is also possible to use the gender-neutral SFP together with some of the non-gender neutral ones, whereas the gender neutral becomes either feminine or masculine. This is displayed in (9) and (10) below.

(9) *Sonna koto   na-i   <u>wayo</u>*   (Feminine)

    Such thing be-NEG   SFP-wayo

    That's not true

(10) *Sono inu   kawai-i   <u>yona</u>*   (Masculine)

    That dog   cute-NPST   SFP.yona

    That dog is cute.

Beyond SFP, pronouns in the Japanese language also differ greatly between the sexes. Table 2 below is a modified list showing the most frequently used first and second person pronouns, separated into categories of style and gender, according to Ide & Yoshida (2001:471).

Table 2: First person and second person pronouns according to style and sex

Person	Style	Male	Female
First person pronoun	Formal	*watakushi, watashi*	*watakushi, watashi*
	Normal	*boku*	*watashi, atashi*
	Informal	*ore*	NONE
Second person pronoun	Formal	*anata**	*anata**
	Normal	*kimi*	*anata*
	Informal	*omae*	**anta**

* Not applicable in addressing superiors
Table 2: (Ide & Yoshida 2001:471)

From looking at Table 2, we can assume that the first person pronouns *watakushi* and *watashi*, as well as the second person pronoun *anata* are all gender-neutral in the case of formal speech style. However, *watashi*, which is women's most frequently used first person pronoun in informal speech, is only used in formal speech, not informal, by men. At the same time, men supposedly prefer to use *watashi* instead of *watakushi* in formal speech, while women prefer *watakushi* (Ide & Yoshida 2001:470-471). In other words, the level of formality of *watashi* is assessed as being higher by men compared to women.

    Moreover, Ide and Yoshida (2001:470-471) claim that there is a lack of deprecatory first- and second pronouns among women's language, whereas men use

omae. According to Takahara (1992:119-120) however, women, although more conservative in their pronominal uses, do have a deprecatory pronoun in the shape of *anta*, marked in bold in Table 2. Finally, it is important to note that second person pronouns in Japanese tend to be avoided altogether.

The last features of Japanese gendered language that I will examine are honorifics together with wording. According to Ide (1991:74), women's speech is characterised by the lack of profanity and obscenity. Words with deprecatory connotation, such as phonological reductions or rough expressions are a part of men's vocabulary, she claims. Phonological reductions, such as *nagē* instead of *nagai* (long), and lexical differences between the sexes, such as *dekai* instead of *ōkii* (big), *kuu* instead of *taberu* (eat), are all supposedly limited to men's language (Ide & Yoshida 2001:471-471).

Furthermore, several quantitative studies (such as Ide 1991) show that women tend to use polite language more often than men, where honorifics are one of many ways for Japanese to enhance the level of politeness in their speech. Due to this thesis' limitations, however, honorific language (*keigo)* will not be included as a part of my study.

Beautification honorifics are also features that tend to occur mainly in women's speech. These possess the same linguistic form as the addressee honorifics, in other words the prefix *o-* (and *go-* for nouns derived from Chinese). However, the former are not used to express a respectful attitude towards the addressees, but simply to beautify the speech. Example (11) demonstrates a polite honorific used to refer to the manager's story, while (12) demonstrates a honorific used to beautify the speaker's own wallet.

(11) *Shachō*   *no*   *o-hanashi*   (Addressee Honorific)

Manager   GEN   HON-story

The manager's story

(12) *Watashi*   *no*   *o-saifu*   (Beautification Honorific)

My   GEN   HON-wallet

My wallet

Finally, Ide & Yoshida (2001) argue that the purpose of using beautification honorifics such as example (12) is to index the speaker's intention of displaying a positive

demeanour. In conclusion, since honorifics are in general associated with high social class, women are likely to have the intention of showing themselves as well-bred people, and thus leading them to use these prestigious linguistic forms excessively.

2.3 Role Language and its Connection To Japanese Gendered Language

Japanese gendered language is often associated with Japanese role language or *yakuwarigo*. This term refers to the speech of fictional character types. In other words, certain language features in Japanese, such as vocabulary, grammar, wording, and intonation, can be psychologically associated with attributes of particular character types. These may include gender, personality, age, social status, appearance, and occupation (Kinsui 2003:205). For instance, the following examples (13a-13g) can all be translated to "Yes, I know", however, depending on who says it and the role language they portray, several linguistic features change.

(13a) *Sōyo, atashi ga shitteru wa*	(Young girl)
(13b) *Sōja, washi ga shitteoru*	(Old male)
(13c) *Soya, wate ga shittoru dē*	(Kansai dialect)
(13d) *Sōja, sessha ga zonjite oru*	(Samurai)
(13e) *Sō desu wayo, watakushi ga zonjite orimasu wa*	(Ojōsama 'princess')
(13f) *Sō da yo, boku ga shitteru no sa*	(Young boy)
(13g) *Nda, ora shitteru da*	(Countryside person)

(Kinsui 2003:v)

One of the arguably most obvious differences is the first person pronouns, underlined in examples (13a-13g) above. Depending on the person speaking, the pronoun differs in all seven cases, and together with for example the SFP used, they each portray a strong stereotypic character. For instance, example (13e) indicates an *ojōsama* (princess) character. The peculiar linguistic features shown in this example is according to Kinsui (2003:130-133) commonly referred to as *ojōsama kotoba*. There are several special traits in *ojōsama kotoba*, such as using the SFP *wa* with verbs and/or nouns, or polite verb form *-masu* plus SFP *no*, Kinsui (2003:130-133) explains.

Furthermore, in the case of gendered, or women's language, Inoue (2003:315) ponders the question of who actually speaks the most authentic women's language, and

considers the answer to be paradoxical. More often than not the Japanese women's language tends to be from imaginary voices, such as female characters in novels, movies, TV shows, drama scripts, animation and computer games, rather than from real Japanese women. In other words, what might be classified as women's language is to a large extent what is only thought to be the correct way for women to speak, uttered by fictional characters, rather than the way an actual Japanese woman would speak. That is to say, role language has a tendency to reflect linguistic stereotypes.

Nakamura (2014:16) elaborates this further by claiming that women's language is merely the knowledge Japanese women have accumulated by observing how male commentators describe it, and how female fictional characters speak it. Thus, she continues, to many women, it is not the language in which they express their own identities. This is further supported by looking at an example of how aliens would speak according to the Japanese if they were to visit the Earth. Nakamura (2014:13) claims that it is a generally known fact amongst the Japanese that if aliens came to visit, they would say as per below shown in example (14).

(14) *Wareware   wa   uchūjin   da*
       We   TOP   aliens   COP
       We are aliens

This would be said "with a flat intonation, in a shrill, mechanical voice". She further concludes that this is not proof that Japanese are in contact with and communicate with extra-terrestrial life, but simply the outcome of alien role language in Japanese media. In the same way, Japanese gendered language is a linguistic stereotype of the way Japanese women are thought to speak.

In conclusion, Japanese men and women possess knowledge of how certain groups of people are supposed to use the language, and it is thus possible to say that *yakuwarigo* has a large effect on 'real' Japanese gendered language. (Kinsui 2003:128)

3. Twitter Internet Linguistics

Twitter is a linguistically unique platform due to its character limit, and the short and frequent messages. In this chapter I will elaborate on Twitter as a means of research, its popularity, and findings in previous research.

3.1 The Social Media Platform Twitter as a Mean in Research

Twitter is one of several major social media platforms with 319 million active users world wide to this date. Twitter is a micro-blogging platform, which means that it combines the aspects of blogging and instant messaging shared with an online audience. What makes Twitter stand out is the 140-character limit.

The act of sending an instant message out into cyberspace without any particular recipient referred to as "to tweet", and the message itself is "tweet". Additionally, instead of accepting requests and becoming friends as you do on for example Facebook, on Twitter users "follow" (similar to subscribing on many other platforms) other users, to always stay updated on what they are tweeting about. In the same way, other users may follow you.

Further, "retweeting", often abbreviated as RT, is the act of reposting someone else's tweet, and thus spreading that person's post to those who follow you, but who do not necessarily follow the original poster. Like retweets, "hashtags" are a community-driven phenomenon, which increases the chance of a user's tweet being discovered by others who are not already following that person. The hashtag is marked with a "#", commonly known as a number sign, hash sign, or pound sign, followed by a label ("tag") marking the topic of the post. For example, if a Twitter user is going to or is at an event, and he/she includes the event name as a hashtag, e.g. #blizzcon2017, in the tweet, it will give him/her the opportunity to find people who talk about the same thing, or to be found by people interested in that event.

When certain events or topics are mentioned in a large amount of tweets, it often leads to them being included in a list that shows "trending" (popular) topics in the country where you are, or the country of your choice depending on settings. Such topics or events might be related to news, sports, and politics. Other topics that tend to reach 'trending' are natural disasters, as well as terror attacks.

The reasons why Twitter is so popular in Japan are thought to be many. Studies show that 40 million, 31.5% of the Japanese population, are active Twitter users (one

log in per month equals active twitter user, on any device), making it one of the most frequently used social media platforms in Japan. The ratio of male and female users is reported to be 51.4% versus 48.6% (Neely, 2017).

The first reason is thought to be the 140-character limit in tweets. Compared to English, it is easier to express more information with the Japanese writing systems, in a lot less characters. For instance, the following tweet consists of 134 characters, being 6 characters under the limit.

> 今日のクロ現は相続問題。私一人っ子だから全部ひとりでもらった。金持ちじゃないから金額はたいしたことなくても銀行、持ち家、郵便局、年金、保険、NHK にいたるまで手続きが膨大で大変だったけど、兄弟姉妹などと話し合いや了解の取り付け、押印など必要なかったから本当に楽だった。11 April 2017. 08:34.

The following is my English translation, which amounts to 403 characters.

> Today's Close-Gen's about inheritance problems. I'm an only child so I got everything myself. Since we're not rich the amount of money wasn't a big deal, but the formalities with the bank, our house, the post-office, pension, insurance, up through NHK were massive and dreadful. But because I didn't need to discuss with or secure approval, or receive signs, from any siblings and so on, it was truly a relief. 11 April 2017. 08:34.

Much due to the Chinese characters, the lack of space between words, as well as kana being syllabic in nature, the original tweet becomes much shorter than its translated version. For example, looking at the word "inheritance problems" which amounts to 20 characters in English, we can see that the corresponding Japanese word consists of only four characters "相続問題". If it was written in the Japanese phonetic writing system *hiragana*, however, it would amount up to 8 characters; *sôzokumondai* (そうぞくもんだい).

The second reason why Twitter is thought to be popular amongst the Japanese is because of the possibility to communicate during disasters, when the phone network might be down. The amount of Japanese users was reported to have increased with 33% after the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. (Sōsharumedia wa yakutatta no ka, 2011)

Lastly, another reason why Twitter is frequently used compared to other social media sites like Facebook, is thought to be that Japanese people do not like to brag about themselves, and the fact that it is possible to be anonymous. (Beck 2013)

3.2 Twitter in Previous Studies

Twitter is a relatively new social networking site, which suddenly exploded in popularity all over the world. Thus, it appears that Twitter has escaped researchers' attention, and has not been taken into account as this unique social media platform when wishing to analyse Japanese computer-mediated communication. Just like blogs, the data on Twitter is publicly available, although researches regarding linguistic features in blogs are far more prevalent. That is however to say that computer-mediated communication in general seems to be less studied in Japanese, compared to in English.

Studies of honorific language in Japanese blogs show that 18% of the posts were written completely in polite language, and 65% had a mixture of polite and impolite, amounting to 83% of blog posts including honorific language (Watanabe 2007:23). In the same same, Andersson (2009) claims she found the same pattern. I did not find any research on Japanese honorific language on Twitter. However, Andersson (2009) and Watanabe's (2007) results differ greatly from my research, despite its humble amount of data, where only 4.2% of the tweets include honorific language.

Additionally, several online forums reveal that Japanese users who are new to Twitter are surprised and even bothered by the informal tone. The user 'kepusonBBAtsurane' asks what other people think about users who suddenly use impolite language, and states that s/he feels very hurt when it happens. Another user, 'cry_stal_moon', at another forum says that s/he has been suddenly asked to use impolite language, but feels reluctant to do so. The replies vary from people who agree to people explaining that Twitter is a tool that allows people to easily connect with each other, and therefore impolite language happens to be used. Some people claim it

to be mainly students who suddenly use impolite language, others claim it is because of the close-knit community (KepusonBBAtsurane 2012; Cry_stal_moon 2012). Looking at these forums, it is possible that this further suggests that the language used in blogs compared to Twitter is distinctly different, and thus I have preferred to look at English research specifically on Twitter instead.

English research on Twitter language from recent years, which point to the use of language to differ from speech-like messaging, such as text messages and online chats where slang and abbreviations are common, despite sharing its brevity and interactivity. At the same time, as its language is closer to emails and blogs, research suggests that Twitter appears to be developing linguistically unique styles compared to other mediums (Hu, Kambhampati, & Talamadupula 2013:253).

Another English study focusing on English tweets (Ott, 2016) shows that men were more likely to tweet about anger and include sexual words. On the other hand, women were more likely to tweet about their home lives and personal concern (Ott, 2016:20-21). While this is according to the linguistic norms, Ott (2016) also found that women appeared to be sloppy with their words and men appeared to be tentative; a result she claims contradicts linguistic norms. She further suggests that Twitter is a place where people go to use language in ways they feel they cannot in the real world, if only subconsciously.

In conclusion, there are few previous researches to be found on the topic. By observing Japanese online forums, however, it is possible to see that some Japanese users who are new to Twitter reportedly find the occurrences of sudden impolite language surprising and bothersome. This suggests that the language on Twitter contradicts linguistic norms. According to previous research in English, the language used at Twitter, seems to differ from other computer-mediated communication mediums, such as blogs. Despite the humble amount of data in my research, I believe that it is possible to see similar results.

4. Case Study of Japanese Women's Language on Twitter

I will in the following chapter discuss my own research, and will therefore start with introducing the purpose, methodology and limitation for this study. Next, I will introduce some background information about the study and the subjects of the study, followed by results and discussion.

4.1 Purpose and Methodology

In this study I used the software 'Twlets' to collect a total amount of 3000 posts from five different users on Twitter. Twlets is a sort of Twitter add-on software that allows the user to extract a preferable amount of tweets from publicly open Twitter accounts, which then saves those tweets in an excel file downloaded to one's computer. Except for the content of each tweet, time published and hyperlinks to the original tweets are also saved in the excel file. The software is free to use up to a certain amount of downloaded data.

  The users were chosen based on the following requirements: (1) Being Japanese and female (2) Being an active Twitter user according to Twitter's definition (3) Providing varied content such as both posts relating to everyday life and current news (4) Actively replying to other users.

  Due to main part of the mined data consisting of republished messages from other users, which thus did not provide any linguistic data from the originally targeted users, those messages were excluded from the study. Out of the remaining data, the latest 100 posts per user, in other words a total of 500 posts, were extracted and analysed for the purpose of this case study.

  The extracted posts were first analysed based on the nature of the post, and then separated into the following categories (1) Everyday life, (2) News, (3) Replies, and (4) Others. Tweets that were categorised into (1) Everyday life were often about the user's personal life, while the tweets that were categorised into (2) News were direct reactions to recent news. Tweets that included the at-sign (@) followed by another username were categorised as (3) Replies. The remaining tweets that did not apply to any of these categories were categorised as (4) Others. These often only included links to sites, blogs, or pictures which neither fit into (1) Everyday life nor (2) News.

  Finally, the tweets were examined for the occurrence of (a) Sentence-final particles, (b) First- and second pronouns, and (c) honorifics and wording.

4.2 Limitation

This study will not include "retweets" (usually marked as the initialism RT), which is the act of republishing another user's message, and therefore do not provide linguistic data generated by the targeted users. Furthermore, this study only focuses at the Japanese women's language. This is because I found more extensive previous research on women's language compared to men's, making it easier to using in comparison.

4.3 Subjects

As mentioned earlier, in this case study I analysed a total of 500 tweets by five different Twitter users. The subjects of this study were chosen based on the following conditions: (1) Being Japanese and female (2) Being an active Twitter user according to Twitter's definition (3) Providing varied content such as both posts relating to everyday life and current news (4) Actively replying to other users.

I will here introduce the subjects of this study, who will henceforth be numbered F for female, followed by their age according to the time this paper was written.

User F27: The information provided in the profile is sparse. From reading her tweets however, it is possible to draw the conclusion that she is living in Tokyo together with her husband and daughter, and that she is a full-time housewife. At the time of data mining, F27 had a total amount of 1537 tweets posted, and out of the mined data 0.6% were retweets.

User F34: According to user F34's profile, she moved to Osaka due to employment, however, it is unclear where she is from originally. She further describes herself as "OL", a term abbreviated from "Office Lady", which is often used in Japan to describe a young female full-time worker.[1] User F34 expresses interest in politics and economics, as well as promoting her blog, where she reviews cafés in Osaka. At the time of data mining, F34 had a total amount of 3237 tweets posted, and out of the mined data 12.8% were retweets.

User F42: User F42 is originally from Kyushu, and is according to her profile a highly educated woman from a respected university in Tokyo. She majored in family

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[1] See Creighton, M. R. (1996). Marriage, Motherhood, and Career Management in a Japanese "Counter Culture". In Imamura. A. E (Ed.), *Re-imaging Japanese Women* (Pp. 194). Berkeley. University of California Press.

sociology, and holds speeches as well as lectures aimed at younger crowds about topics such as Japan's gender issues and family structure. At the time of data mining, F42 had a total amount of 57100 tweets posted, and out of the mined data 52.6% were retweets.

      User F50: User F50 is originally from Tokyo and currently living in Okayama. According to her profile, she started using Twitter after the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. Finally, she describes herself as a late bloomer, becoming a mother in her late 40's. At the time of data mining, F50 had a total amount of 12800 tweets posted, and out of the mined data 55.8% were retweets.

      User F66: According to F66's profile, she is an everyday *obasan* (Japanese for middle-aged woman, auntie), who loves vehicles. There is no information on where she is from. However, from reading her tweets it is possible to draw the conclusion that she is living in the Greater Tokyo area. At the time of data mining, F66 had a total amount of 22300 tweets posted, and out of the mined data 23.6% were retweets.

      The table below displays the different categories in which tweets were sorted in; Everyday – News – Replies – Other, and its ratio between the different users. Retweets are excluded in this data.

Table 3: Ratio of tweets in different categories according to user

User / Category	Everyday	News	Replies	Other
F27	32%	48%	20%	0%
F34	34%	38%	21%	7%
F42	38%	25%	27%	10%
F50	34%	37%	25%	4%
F66	30%	36%	30%	4%

4.4 Results and Discussion

In this part, I will present the linguistic findings from the extracted tweets. Firstly, I will examine the findings related to SFP, followed by first-person pronouns, and finally honorifics and wording. The analysis is based on the classifications explained in section 2.2.

4.4.1 Sentence-Final Particles

In some cases, certain SFP have several functions, which we will see in this chapter. Such cases include the casual SFP *kana*, corresponding to the English 'I wonder'. Its polite equivalent, *kashira*, is considered feminine. The casual *kana* is however considered neutral. Dialectal differences also affect SFP. For example *ya* instead of copula *da*, or the otherwise feminine SFP *wa* which then becomes neutral. My research shows that SFP are frequently used. This is displayed in Table 4.

Table 4: Occurrence of SFP according to amount of tweets

User ⟋ SFP	Total amount of SFP	Total amount of tweets containing SFP	Total amount of Tweets
F27	53	47	100
F34	38	26	100
F42	70	52	100
F50	33	32	100
F66	68	56	100

In Table 4 displays three different categories: total amount of SFP, total amount of tweets containing SFP, and total amount of tweets. User F34 and F50 use the least SFP. F34 used 38 SFP in 26 out of 100 tweets, and F50 used 33 SFP in 32 out of 100 tweets. The amount of SFP is similar, but the occurrence is slightly higher in F34's tweets. It is possible to draw the conclusion that F34 might not be a frequent SFP user, however she when she includes it in her tweet, she might do it more than once.

The remaining three users, F27, F42, and F66 all use fairly often. About 50% of their tweets include at least one SFP.

Next, Table 5 below displays the users SFP usage according to language gender significance.

Table 5: SFP usage according to language gender significance

User / SFP	Neutral *yo, ne, yone*	Masculine-neutral *dayo, dane,*	Masculine *zo, ze, sa, na*	Feminine *wa, kashira, none, noyo*
F27	18	6	**20**	9
F34	**19**	9	7	3
F42	15	5	**48**	2
F50	5	0	**28**	0
F66	25	5	**33**	5

At first glance, we can see that masculine SFP are in general preferred, except for user F34, who prefers neutral SFP to masculine-neutral SFP. Feminine SFP are the least used in all cases. Below are four examples of tweets including the usage of masculine SFP. Examples (15), (16) and (17) are reactions to news, (18a) is in a reply towards another user, and (18b) is related to everyday life.

(15) そんなん男の産婦人科医なんて犯罪者なるレベルやぞ。

Sonnan otoko no sanfujinkai nante hanzaisha naru reberu ya <u>zo</u>.
What kind of an ob-gyn guy, sheesh, he's the level of becoming an offender, I tell ya'. (F27)

(16) 人を殺すために金を使わないで生かす金を使えよ。

Hito o korosu tame ni kane o tsukawanaide ikasu kane o tsukae <u>yo</u>.
Don't use money to kill people, use money to keep people alive! (F50)

(17) そのうちだれか毒を盛られたり、偽造文書ではめられたりするぞ。

Sono uchi dareka doku o moraretari, gizōbunsho de hameraretari suru <u>zo</u>.
Someday someone will poison and set [someone] up for forged documents, or something, all right. (F66)

(18a) 世界狭いなあ！

Sekai semai <u>naa</u>!
What a small world! (F42)

(18b) 間に合った。全員並ぶと壮観だな。

Ma ni atta. Zenin narabu to sōkan __dana__.

I made it in time. When everyone lines up it's quite spectacular. (F42)

The copula *ya* we see in example (15) before the masculine SFP *zo*, is used instead of the copula *da*, and is used in some dialects, such as the Kansai dialect. It is however unclear if F27 is originally from an area using that dialect, or if she uses it to portray a certain image. In example (16), F66 uses the masculine SFP *zo* in a similar way to F27, which suggests the is to purpose of strengthen her statement.

Example (17) written by F50 demonstrates the masculine combination of the imperative form of *tsukau* (use) followed by the SFP *yo*. Additionally, the lack of honorific prefix *o-* of the word *kane* (money), despite it being a standardized expression, further conveys strong, and possibly, negative opinion of money.

In example (18a) F42 is using the masculine SFP *na* with an elongated vowel. According to Ide's (1979:8-9) quantitative analysis on general tendencies concerning the frequency of SFP usage among university students, the SFP *naa* (elongated vowel) when said with a rising intonation is used almost exclusively by men (94.1%). It is therefore possible to assume that the exclamation mark in (18a) is used to convey a rising intonation, and thus in accordance to Ide (1979:8-9) it most likely seeks confirmation, similar to how the SFP *ne* would. Using *na* instead of *ne*, however, gives a stronger, more masculine impression. It is worth mentioning, however, that due the exclamation mark, the *naa* used in example (18a), might also in some cases indicate a an exclamation, in which then it is different from the confirmation-seeking masculine SFP.

In example (18b) the SFP *na* neither has an elongated vowel nor an exclamation mark. The use of copula *da*, as can be seen in (18b), and as mentioned in section 2.2 is considered neutral-masculine. Additionally, according to Ogawa's analysis (1997:205-220) when the SFP *na* is used accordingly [noun + *na*] or [noun + *da* + *na*], it is to a large extent only males, in which (18b) falls into the second category, and thus it can be considered masculine.

I will now elaborate on one of the cases when a feminine SFP is used. Example (19) below is written by F34, who seems to be the most gender-neutral user.

(19) この仕組みも恐怖だけれど、無邪気に悪用方法を伝授する方も

どうなのかしら…。

Kono shikumi mo kyōfu da keredo, mujaki ni akuyō hōhō o denju suru

hō mo dō na no <u>kashira</u>… .

While this device also is terrifying, what about the person who innocently

teaches techniques of this abuse, I wonder… (F34)

In example (19), F34 expresses concern over a device or system of some sort that uses and spreads personal information. She uses the feminine SFP *kashira* to convey a wondering feeling, as she ponders about the person who innocently teaches how to make use of this device. Despite being a sensitive topic such as personal privacy, F34's word choice suggests that she wants to convey a calm, soft and polite behaviour. It is possible that the reason why F34 in general uses more polite language than the other users is because she is frequently advertising her blog in Twitter. Looking at previous research and as mentioned in section 3.2, blog users show a tendency to use more polite language compared to what my study of Twitter language has.

Moreover, my research shows that there is no distinct change between the two different topics of everyday related tweets and tweets regarding news. Neutral SFP, however, are in general slightly preferred in the act of replying to another user. This is demonstrated in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Number of SFP in relation to topic per user

Topic	**Everyday**			**News**			**Replies**			**Other**		
User	N	M (N-M)	F	N	M (N-M)	F	N	M (N-M)	F	N	M (N-M)	F
F27	1	**6** (1)	1	**16**	**12** (4)	7	1	**2** (1)	1	0	0 (0)	0
F34	4	2 (3)	2	4	2 (5)	1	**11**	1 (0)	0	0	**2** (1)	0
F42	9	**20** (1)	2	1	**15** (1)	0	3	**5** (2)	0	2	**8** (1)	0
F50	0	**15** (0)	0	0	**4** (0)	0	5	**5** (0)	0	0	**4** (0)	0
F66	1	**14** (1)	0	11	**18** (2)	4	**12**	4 (2)	0	1	**2** (0)	0

In table 6, we can see that masculine SFP are in general preferred in tweets relating to everyday happenings and news. Among the masculine SFP, only a few are neutral-

masculine (marked in brackets), except in the case of F34, who uses more neutral-masculine SFP than masculine SFP. It is possible to assume that the users do not feel the need to soften their speech in those cases, and that they on the contrary wish to convey force and strong insistence.

We can, however, observe a decline or complete lack of male SFP in the case of replies. In replying to others, every user except for F27 prefers using gender neutral SFP. F27, however, keeps using masculine SFP in replies.

In conclusion, except for in replies, we do see an overall use of masculine SFP among all users, while feminine SFP are in general avoided. Only one user, F34, prefers gender-neutral SFP.

4.4.2 First- Person Pronouns

Contrary to English, it is not necessary to include the subject in a Japanese sentence, unless one wishes to emphasize it. Taking that into consideration, together with the fact that Twitter is character limit-based, first person pronouns are sparsely encountered as subjects. Although, when they are included a clear pattern can be observed. Table 7 demonstrates this.

Table 7: Usage of first person pronouns among the users

User / Pronoun	Watashi	Watakushi	Atashi	Boku	Ore
F27	-	-	-	10	2
F34	3	-	-	-	-
F42	2	-	-	-	-
F50	8	-	-	-	-
F66	14	1	-	-	-

One can immediately notice the almost exclusive usage of the most gender-neutral first person pronoun *watashi*. F66 also uses the polite pronoun *watakushi* in one instance. It is, however, important to note that the *kanji* for *watashi* (私) can also be read as *watakushi*. Since I decided to interpret the *kanji* as *watashi*, *watakushi* has not been included in the data unless deliberately written with the phonetic writing system

hiragana. Furthermore, user F27 stands out by only using the masculine first person pronouns *boku* and *ore*. Lastly, similar to the SFP, the users are reluctant to use typically feminine words, in this case *atashi*. The following examples (20-22a) show the context in which *boku*, *ore*, and *watakushi* are used.

(20) バカなのかな…ど素人のぼくでもわかるんだけど……

　　　Baka na no kana… doshirōto no <u>boku</u> demo wakaru n <u>da kedo</u>……

　　　Are they stupid… Even a complete amateur like me knows that……

(21) こぉゆうインタビュー読んでも「あ、子供いないの。じゃあイージーモードだね」ってしか思えない最近の俺。ゆとりとかエリートとか超どうでもいいわー

　　　Kooyû intabyû yondemo "a, kodomo inai <u>no</u>. Jâ ījīmōdo dane" tte shika

　　　omoenai saikin no <u>ore</u>. Yutori toka erīto toka chō dō demo ī <u>waa</u>

　　　Recently even I if read these kind of interviews, I can only think

　　　"Ah, no kids. Well then, easy mode, huh". Relaxed [education system],

　　　elite [education system], or whatever, it so doesn't matter!

(22a). わたくしのお昼のおかずですのに。

　　　<u>Watakushi</u> no <u>o-hiru</u> no <u>o-kazu</u> <u>desu</u> noni.

　　　Despite it being my side dish for lunch.

Example (20) and (21) are both tweets by F27. Example (20) demonstrates the usage of the masculine pronoun *boku*, as well as the neutral-masculine combination of copula *da* together with the word for 'but' *kedo*. Except for that, and possibly the word choice *baka* (idiot), the language in the tweet is fairly gender neutral. The SFP *kana* is the gender-neutral version of the feminine SFP *kashira*, and is commonly used amongst both sexes. Example (21) is a longer tweet, where she uses the strongest masculine pronoun *ore*. In addition to the usage of *ore*, there are many interesting points worth mentioning. Out of three SFP, two, namely *no* and *wa*, are considered feminine. According to Ide (1979:8-9) *no* is frequently used by women by 74.6%, whereas *wa* is 100% used by women. *Wa* can sometimes be interpreted as gender-neutral, however, that is only in the case of certain dialects. F27 did demonstrate the usage of the

dialectal copula *ya* earlier, however, due to the prolonged vowel of the *a* in *wa*, it conveys a feminine feeling. The SFP *dane* is, as mentioned in chapter 2.2, considered a neutral-masculine combination. The controversial mixture of gender-related lexical items in this tweet may be interpreted as a way for F27 to assert herself over male users, or possibly expressing aggression or frustration towards the person who were interviewed.

In example (22a) F66 uses the most formal first personal pronoun *watakushi*. This is done in a response to another user. Furthermore, F66 uses two beautification honorifics, *o-hiru* and *o-kazu*, although *o-kazu* should be considered a standardized expression. In addition, F66 uses a peculiar combination of polite copula *desu* with *noni*, meaning despite or although, and appears grammatically awkward. At first glance, the reply appears to convey an extremely polite feeling, similar to *ojōsama kotoba*, mentioned in section 2.3. The biggest clue to understanding the word choices in example (22a) is looking at the sentence before in the same reply, provided below in example (22b).

(22b). ぶどう狩り、梨もぎ、ブルーベリー摘み、栗拾い全部だめ。

Budōkari, nashimogi, burūberītsumi, gurihiroi zenbu dame.

Grape picking, pear picking, blueberry gathering, chestnut gathering;
it's all bad.

Essentially, nothing in (22b) can be considered polite. On the contrary, *dame*, meaning that something is not allowed or that it is bad, is a rather strong opinion. Upon further inspection, the conversation between F66 and the recipient in (22a) and (22b) seems to be carried out exclusively in a relaxed, non-polite manner, except for (22a). This therefore suggests that the only time the polite pronoun *watakushi* was used in this study was done in a joking manner. An instance of overdoing honorific language, as done in example (22a) is a common way in Japan to convey sarcasm.

In conclusion, compared to the usage of SFP, where masculine SFP dominated, in pronouns the majority of the users preferred using the gender-neutral *watashi*. In the sole event where the polite form *watakushi* was used, it was being used sarcastically.

4.4.3 Honorifics and Wording

As mentioned in section 3.2, according to some Japanese people who are new to Twitter, they feel frustrated due to other users using casual language despite being unfamiliar, and in first-time messages and replies. On the other hand, other more active users explain it to be because of the close-knitted community feeling. One can therefore say that it appears that Twitter users in Japan deviates from the social rules and norms of Japan in terms of politeness. A tweet without a recipient is in general written in casual language, which is also in accordance with my findings. In this section I will elaborate on honorifics and wording.

Table 8: Beautification Honorific and Addressee Honorific usage according to user

User \ Hon. Prefix	Beautification Honorific (Standardized expression)	Addressee Honorific (Standardized expression)
F27	0 (3)	1 (1)
F34	1 (1)	1 (1)
F42	0 (1)	0 (6)
F50	1 (6)	0 (11)
F66	3 (7)	1 (6)

Over all, both beautification and addressee honorific usage was sparse. F50 is the user who prefers to use honorifics the most, whereas mostly addressee honorific standardized expressions are used. I believe this is due to the amount of tweets she posts in regards to a famous person she seems to like. The old amongst the users, F66, uses beautification honorifics the most frequently. In comparison to the amount of tweets, it is still not very frequent. The lack of beautification honorifics further emphasises the possible feeling of lack of obligation to conform to Japan's linguistic gender norms.

I will now demonstrate specific phrases, which are according to Ide (1991:74), and Ide & Yoshida (2001:465), exclusively used by males. The following categories are mentioned as limited to male speech: Profanity and obscenity, words with deprecatory connotation, such as phonological reductions or rough expressions, and lexical differences between the sexes. Examples of these, however, were found in at

least once in every user but F34's tweets. This can be observed in examples 23-25 below.

(23) 暇な女子大生っつったら、あのへたくそな似顔絵アイコンだと思っ
てたから、例の記事は驚き桃の木てぃんてぃん
Hima na joshidaisei ttsuttara, ano <u>hetakuso</u> na nigaoe aikon da to omoteta
kara, rei no kiji wa odoroki <u>momo no ki tintin</u>
Speaking of 'Hima na Jyoshidaisei', this article fucking surprised me,
because I thought it was a shitty emoji

(24) すげえええ！！！
Sugeeeee!!!
Sweeeet!!!

(25) レジ袋ちゃんとゴミ箱に入れなかったやつが悪い。
Rejibukuro chanto gomibako ni irenakatta <u>yatsu</u> ga warui.
The bastard who didn't throw the plastic bag in the bin is at fault.

Example (23) written by F27 consists of both the use of profanity and obscenity. Here, the user is writing about another Twitter account, '*Hima na Joshidaisei*' (lit. Bored College Girl), which is an account known in the Japanese Twitter world for its explicit content. *Hetakuso* can be translated to 'shitty' in English, and *tintin* is a cuter version of *chinchin*, which means penis. In this case however, after consulting three native speakers, the phrase '*momo no ki tintin*', (which translated literally becomes 'peach tree wee-wee') means something along the lines of 'fucking', as in 'very'. Moreover, an over-all analysis shows that F27 uses the profanity *kuso* (shit, shitty) in at least 15% of her tweets.

Example (24) written by F42 displays a phonological reduction, where *sugoi*, which means something along the lines of 'awesome' or 'sweet', is written as *sugeeeee*. This kind of 'rough' language could be observed in several tweets, and not limited to F42. In F66's tweet, marked as example (25), a rough expression in the shape of a third person pronoun, *yatsu* (bastard), can be observed.

After analysing the occurrences of honorifics and words with specifically masculine-related undertones, it is possible to draw the conclusion that the majority of the users in the study are distancing themselves from linguistic feminine gender norms. We can also see that they are more open to using words that are generally thought of as part of men's speech.

4.5 Summary

In four out of five users, masculine SFP (sentence-final particles) were preferred all over, despite that all users were female. On the contrary, compared to neutral, masculine-neutral, and masculine SFP, very few feminine SFP were found. User F34, who used gender-neutral SFP more frequently than masculine SFP, still preferred masculine SFP to feminine ones.

Upon further inspection we also saw little change in the usage of sentence-final particles in three out of four categories; everyday related tweets, news, and others, where masculine sentence-final particles dominated. Only in the category "replies" did we see a significant change in sentence-final particles, as gender-neutral sentence-final particles were slightly preferred among several users. This suggests that the three users who changed to gender-neutral SFP take the recipient into consideration when replying. This might be because the users do not feel the need to strengthen their statements in the replies, although it might also be because they are conforming to the Japanese norms and thus use gender-neutral particles to appear well behaved and polite. The user who still preferred using masculine SFP in replies, F27, is also the only user who uses the masculine first-person pronouns *boku* and *ore*. She also uses the most profanities of the five users, where at least 15% of her tweets include at least one profanity. Due to her extensive usage of *boku*, we see similarities the *modan gāru* mentioned in chapter 2.1.

In regards to the usage of first person pronoun, four out of five users use the gender-neutral *watashi*. The only time the more polite version, *watakushi*, was used, was in a situation where user F66 used it most likely to convey sarcasm in a reply by exaggerating the level of politeness. As explained earlier, it is not necessary to include the subject unless one wants to emphasise it, and therefore first person pronouns were sparse.

Beautifying and addressee honorifics were rarely used among neither of the users. If honorifics were used, they were mainly standardised expressions used both my men and women, which indicates that the users do not try to beautify their language, or to be portrayed as polite or well behaved.

5. Conclusion

Contrary to a blog where greeting or thanking one's readers is commonplace, Twitter is a much shorter and blunter platform. Presumably, followers are not interested in reading 15 lines of text. While blogs also gives the writer the chance of being anonymous, the potential reader often comes to mind. It is possible to draw the same comparisons with 'vlogging' (making video blogs on for example platforms such as YouTube). Although one is not anonymous, the 'vloggers' greet and thank theirs viewers. With blogging (as well as vlogging) you speak to two audiences; your current audience and your potential audience. With Twitter, it can be the only tweet of the day, or it can be followed up by another tweet a minute later. It has neither a beginning nor an end, and thus greetings are redundant.

In addition, and most likely due to the character limit, a message sent to out to cyberspace without a recipient is blunt and often stripped of its unnecessary politeness. Can it be that this bluntness started as a way to save characters, which then eventually led to a Twitter *bureikō* (free and easy party where hierarchy ranks are put away and only casual language is spoken), followed by a more gender-neutral atmosphere?

Finally, in future studies it could be interesting to observe the language use of users who do not frequently tweet about news but only tweets relating to everyday life, or users who are not considered active users in general. Japanese men's language on Twitter could also be another interesting aspect, in comparison to women's. This could be a few of many interesting topics to examine in the future.

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