

Language, gender, status, and power

I. Introduction

- (1) Language and ... gender?
 - (a) Many languages are said to have gender-specific language patterns
 - (b) However, many societies also have gender-related social roles or power structures
 - (c) Therefore, it is important to separate effects of **gender** from effects of **power** or **status**
 - Example: Do US-English-speaking men interrupt more often than women?
- (2) Gendered language and speaker **identity**

Social identity, including factors related to gender, is to a large extent **constructed by speakers** — speakers *choose* more/less masculine/feminine expressions
- (3) In Japanese, there are many characteristics that are traditionally thought to vary according to the gender of the speaker
 - How can we examine language use **empirically** to evaluate these claims?

II. Language patterns with gender(?) distinctions in Japanese

- (4) Some traditionally identified domains with gender differences in Japanese
 - (a) Pronoun use — traditional categories (normative, prescriptivist?)
 - (b) Sentence-final particles — chart from Ide (1979), via Ide & Yoshida (1999)
 - (c) Levels of politeness / honorific use — charts from Ide & Yoshida (1999)
 - (d) Patterns and levels of pitch (technically, fundamental frequency of glottal phonation)
- (5) But, consider the lessons learned more generally from studies of language and gender:
 - Is gender the only factor at play?
 - Are patterns changing over time?
 - Do different speech communities differ with respect to these patterns?

References

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