

【日本語ジェンダー学会ウェスタン・ミシガン大学研究例会発表要旨】

Expressions where Meanings Differ between Men and Women

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We will observe and analyze the expressions in which meanings differ between men and women.

① OTOKOZAKARI / ONNAZAKARI (男盛り・女盛り)

The term *sakari* suggests vigor and being filled with energy. *Otokozakari* has the same meaning as the expression *hatarakizakari* ('being in the prime of life'). However, the term *onnazakari* does not necessarily indicate a sense of being in one's working prime, but rather, is commonly accepted as referring to a time when a woman is considered to be her most beautiful. There is also a different perception in ages between the two, the standard for men referring to their working prime, while the one for women referring to their beauty.

② OTOKOZUKI / ONNAZUKI (男好き・女好き)

When you analyze literary sources, you find that in the expression *otokozuki no suru taipu* ('the kind of woman who is inexplicably attractive to men'), a woman's looks are an important factor, whereas in the expression *onnazuki no suru taipu* ('the kind of man who appears somehow attractive to women'), there is a greater emphasis attached to appraising the man's character. What is used as a basis for such appraisal is determined by the trend of the times or by the generally accepted ideas of society.

③ OTOKOBURI / ONNABURI (男ぶり・女ぶり)

The phrases *otokoburi ga ii* and *onnaburi ga ii*, both indicate being good-looking, referring to 'presence,' 'looks' and 'features,' however, in the case of *otokoburi*, which refers to men, there is an additional connotation of 'honor' and 'reputation.' Why is this so?

④ OTOKOMYOORI / ONNAMYOORI (男冥利・女冥利)

The expression *otokomyoori ni tsukimasu* ('It is simply the fortune of having been born a man.') is used when praising a man's charm or ability. However, the phrase *onnamyoori ni tsukimasu* ('You could put it down to the joy of having been born a woman.') is frequently used in situations where a woman has been accorded some favorable treatment by a man (particularly by someone she is fond of). When used with men, there are even instances where the expression is used to praise a man's professional capacity, whereas when referring to women, the occasions for using such a turn of phrase are extremely limited.

⑤ ONNADE / OTOKODE (女手・男手)

In the sentence *Onnade hitotsu de kosodate o shita* ('She worked hard and raised here children on her own. '), the sense of *onnade hitotsu de* is that a woman earned an income single-handedly, without a husband. *Otokode hitotsu de* in the sentence *Otokode hitotsu de kosodate o shita* ('He raised his children on his own. ') suggests,

however, that the man, not having a wife, fulfilled the functions of feeding and changing the baby, on his own. A strong sense of the sharing of sexual roles is evident in these expressions, where the male is equated with being the breadwinner and the female being saddled with domestic and childcare duties.

⑥ KIKOOSHI / KIFUJIN (貴公子・貴婦人)

Dictionaries interpret the term *kikooshi* ('a young noble') as depicting a man of distinguished looks and air. However, there are many descriptions among examples from literary works that refer more to a sense of humanity. In the term *kifujin* ('a lady'), however, the criterion for this expression relates more to everyday behavior, suggesting the characteristics of grace, refinement and elegance.

⑦ TASHINAMI (嗜み)

This term refers especially to one's understanding of accomplishments. The term itself does not specify male or female, but dictionary examples, such as *Tashinami no nai onna da na*. ('She has no feminine decency at all.') clearly reveal that this expression is used with women and define it as the 'qualities that a woman should seek to attain.' When it comes to men, a different kind of etiquette is suggested, depending upon the occupation of the person concerned—for instance, the image of a clean-shaven man, dressed in his suit and tie, ready for the office.

⑧ TAMA NO KOSHI / GYAKUTAMA (玉の輿・逆玉)

Tama no koshi refers to when a woman gains a position of wealth and rank in society through marriage. In the work *Gyokufuki*, mentioned in the biographical records of the Shogun's wives and concubines, up until the ninth Shogun of Tokugawa, in the Edo period, a process is described whereby a woman of low birth rides the *tama no koshi* ('bejeweled palanquin,' literally) by becoming a concubine of the Shogun. She then lives in a special area of the castle known as *Ooku*.

The expression *gyakutama*, referring to a man marrying into a wealthy family, and deriving from the term *tama no koshi*, began to be frequently used in women's weekly magazines from about 1989. The term also regularly appears in men's comic books. Whereas the prospect of *tama no koshi* is something that is coveted by women, *gyakutama* has the shameful connotation of a man with no capacity for earning a living, having no choice in his course of action.

⑨ CHUUNEN ONNA / CHUUNEN OTOKO (中年女・中年男)

Chuunen ('middle age') is the transitional period leading into the latter half of human life, and since it marks the beginning of the time when the symptoms of aging begin to appear, the term often has a negative connotation. Among other things, what is biting about referring to a female as *chuunen onna* ('a middle-aged woman') is that in our competitive society, a great number of 'middle-aged men' enjoy high income, status and reputation, while such things are beyond the reach of most women.

In his work *Chuunenki To Wa?* ('What does it mean to be middle-aged?'), Jun Katada makes the following comments about reaching middle age in the United States. 'People in middle age enjoy good physical health, when family responsibilities are not as much a burden as they once were. Women return to work.' Japan, modeling itself after the United States, has become democratized and has achieved economic growth, however, it can be said that middle-aged women are still lagging far behind in terms of their 'return to society.'

Character Traits Desirable in Women and Children Versus those which Invite Criticism

① AIKYOO (愛嬌) ('charm')

Aikyoo is a quality acquired over time in response to the demands of society. Dictionaries contain numerous examples where this expression refers to women and children.

② EREGANTO (エレガント) ('elegant')

This word suggests being of refined and graceful appearance. It is an expression used when referring to both men and women, however, in Japanese, this expression is almost exclusively used with women. Thus, the meaning in Japanese diverges from that in the original Latin.

③ OKYAN (おきやん) ('a tomboy, hussy')

This slang expression was frequently employed during the Edo period to teasingly refer to a lively woman and when you examine literary references, you find that its usage is indeed limited to the subject of young women.

④ OSHABERI (おしゃべり) ('a chatterbox')

Dictionaries tend to state that *oshaberi* is an innate quality that women possess, as can be seen in the example *oshaberi na onna no ko* ('a chatterbox of a girl'). However, it is the fact that men's topics of conversation differ from those of women which produces the mentality of equating women with talkativeness. These days, a perusal of any newspaper reveals that society's perception of what is meant by *oshaberi* is changing.

⑤ OTEMBA (お転婆) (a tomboy')

Examples of the term *otemba* date from the time of *Meiji*. The word originates from the Dutch expression *ontembaar*, meaning 'unable to be domesticated or tamed,' a convincing theory; there is also the further perspective of the perception of society that 'young girls and daughters should listen to what grown-ups have to say.'

⑥ KAREN (可憐) ('pretty, lovely')

This expression refers to a girl of gentle and beautiful appearance and is mainly used with young girls. It is rarely used when describing men and may be thought of as being the kind of typical characteristic that men desire in the female gender role.

⑦ KAWAII (可愛い) ('sweet, cute')

This word depicts something of small and lovely appearance and is often used with women and children. Recently, however, the usage has become more diversified as is revealed in the way that high-school girls are using this expression—*Ano ojisan kawaii* ('That man is so cute!'). It can be construed that such usage is a result of men, especially older men, no longer enjoying a position of authority in society.

⑧ KIJOO (気丈) ('brave, courageous')

This expression suggests 'strong-minded' or 'stouthearted' and is frequently used to refer to women. If you consider the expression in *Josei ni shite wa kijoo na seikaku de...* ('She has a strong-minded personality for a woman') the other way round, it implies that the fact that men are *kijoo* ('courageous') is something to be accepted as a matter of course.

⑨ KYASHA (華奢) ('slightly-built, slender')

This word is used to refer to people or things that give one the impression of being 'refined' and yet 'feeble-looking.' In his novel *Gubijinsoo* ('Red Poppy'), *Natsume Sooseki* describes a man's fingernails, saying *Tsume no katachi sae onna no yoo ni kyasha ni dekite iru* ('Even his fingernails are delicately formed, like those of a woman') and yet, in present-day Japan, we find the numbers of 'delicate-looking' men on the increase. Why is it that young men, particularly those in their teens and twenties might wish to become 'slender' and 'delicate-looking'? Even in feature articles found in magazines, male models appear as *kyasha na dansei* (slightly-built men'), exerting a strong influence on the fashion preferences of young people. Japanese society no longer seems to demand 'strength' or 'power' of its men. Perhaps it is time to consider the social context of such a trend.

⑩ SAIEN (才媛) ('an accomplished woman')

This term refers to an intelligent, cultured woman who excels in scholarship. When you try to single out the distinguishing characteristics of this expression by examining examples of usage from newspapers and novels, you find that it does not merely refer to being distinguished in culture and learning, but it seems that a further element is included in such a description. The historical figures typically described as being representative of *saien*, such as *Takeko Kujoo*, with her captivating looks, Yayoi Yoshida, the kind of beautiful young girl one might see in an old colored woodblock print and Gin, with her perfect skin, reveal that the term *saien*, also includes a reference to physical appearance or body shape, an important element of the meaning.

The term *shuusai*, referring to a 'talented man' does not include this aspect of meaning.

⑪ SAIJO (才女) ('a talented woman')

This word describes a highly intelligent woman. When you compare the term *saijo* with examples of usage of *saien*, you find that it does not include the 'extra' element of meaning. For example, the girl *Ogie* in the work *Hanaumi* ('Buried in Flowers') is simply described as *gakumon no aru saiyo* ('an educated woman'). One might think that the meaning of *saijo* were synonymous with the term *shuusai*, used when referring to a talented man, however, the term *saijo* has the added sense of an 'odd character, an object of social contempt.' When a man is described as having the same nature, far from being criticized, he is actually praised.

⑫ TAOYAKA (たおやか) ('graceful, svelte')

This word describes something which is graceful in shape or form, possessing a gently disposition or nature. It is recorded in the *Nihon Shoki* ('Chronicles of Japan') in the term *taoyame*, meaning 'a graceful maiden.' This term is assigned the Chinese characters, meaning 'a delicate woman' and conveys the impression of 'requiring the assistance of a man' or 'a frail woman.' In the modern Japanese language, however, this term is used to convey the greatest possible compliment to a woman. Akiko Baba states that 'the aesthetic disposition referred to as *taoyaka* suggests flexibility—not weakness, but rather reflects the strength of a slender plant stem which is not snapped by even the strongest wind and connects with the idea of possessing a spirit which has boundless reserves of latitude when called upon to accept something.'

Character Traits Desirable in Men (Versus those which Invite Criticism)

① OOSHII (雄雄しい) ('manly, brave')

This term describes a situation where a man assumes a brave front when confronted with danger, or is threatened in some way, and is the direct antithesis of the expression *memeshii* ('cowardly, effeminate'). As the written form of the word suggests, this is an adjective which expresses the difference between the sexes in a most clear-cut way. The term *ooshii* can only be used with men who have reached adulthood.

② OTOKOGI (男気) ('manly, masculine')

This word indicates a manly disposition and conveys a positive connotation. Other words that this term brings to mind are 'magnanimous,' 'responsible,' 'stalwart' and even at times reckless or audacious. There is no corresponding term with a positive connotation which to describe a woman of the same character.

③ OTOKODATE (男伊達) ('chivalrous, gallant')

Otokodate refers to a man who thinks highly of his reputation and sticks fast to his principles. This expression has appeared in recent times which have seen the emergence of the regulation of authority over individual thinking and behavior.

④ OTOKONAKI (男泣き) ('weep in spite of one's manhood')

The tacit rule that 'men can control their emotions, but women cannot' has given rise to this expression. It is certainly an extraordinary thing when a man who is expected not to cry, unable to suppress strong feelings, does in fact cry. Accordingly, there is no expression *omnanaki*, which might apply to women.

⑤ KATABUTSU (堅物) ('strait-laced person')

This word describes an earnest, unadaptable man. Examples from literary sources reveal that this expression is used when 'men are sincere in their dealings with women' and from this it can be considered that cultural rules exist in society, which decree that it is 'instinctive' or 'natural' for men to harbor sexual feelings for members of the opposite sex.

⑥ KIZA (キザ) ('affected, priggish')

This expression refers to a man who is affected in his manner of dress, action and speech, making people feel uncomfortable. It has a negative connotation.

⑦ KISAI (鬼才) ('a remarkable talent, genius')

A term which describes a man of outstanding talent—remarkable for a human being. Examples of this expression used exclusively with men are commonly found in newspapers and periodicals.

⑧ KOOKOOYA (好々爺) ('a good-natured old man')

Men who have worked in companies and even in their old age, assume positions such as chairman of the neighborhood association or delegate for an old people's home, often find that a sense of social responsibility clings to them. When at last they are able to be free of such responsibility, they appear in society as fine, kindly, good-natured old men. The fact that there is no equivalent form for a 'pleasant old lady,' reveals that people take it for granted that all women become kindly, good-natured old women. There is a generally accepted notion in society that it would be strange for any woman to be otherwise. In such a case, the term *onibaba* ('an old hag, witch'), an

extremely derogatory one, would be used to describe such a person. Even in their twilight years, men and women carry their allotted gender roles with them to the grave.

⑨ TAKUMASHII (逞しい) ('strong, powerful')

This describes a man of sturdy build. Such expressions highlight the physical differences between men and women that they have from birth. Commercial messages, such as 'It's the chest that makes the man!' or 'Be a man—be macho!' reinforce the idea that 'men should be powerful!' In modern-day Japan, where there is no shortage of *moyashikko* or 'spineless town-bred children' it is surprising that the never-ending succession of such commercials meets with such little public opposition.

Ichiroo Yasuda, in his work *Jidoo Shinri* ('Child Psychology') makes the following comments about the topic of *takumashii*—'When I was a young lad, it was a given that men should go to war and so, *takumashisa* ('strength') was regarded as a virtue. In these times of peace, however, I doubt whether the possession of strength really is regarded as being a virtue.

⑩ DATEOTOKO (伊達男) ('a dandy, a fop')

This expression refers to a man who is flamboyant, striking and expresses himself in a showy way. It contrasts with the term *otokodate* ('a chivalrous man'), which was used when speaking of 'inner' things, rather than external appearances. One particular theory of the etymology of the word *date* relates of a feudal lord from the *Toohoku* region during the age of civil strife who went by the name of *Masamune Date*. He was a man in adversity and yet, had the habit of dressing in showy attire and even had his vassals wear flamboyant dress, as well. From this, the term *date* has the association of a dandy or a flamboyant man and the word *date* eventually became the expression *dateotoko* ('a dandy').

At any rate, when this term is used to describe a man worrying about what he wears, there is a certain sense of ridiculing associated with its use.

⑪ DANDII (ダンディー) ('a dandy')

The philosopher Michel Foucault and Beau Brummel, the pioneering dandy of his day, share the common characteristics of 'dandyism,' which speaks of things such as male behavior, the way one carries oneself, one's wit and one's mentality. In Japanese, however, the expression *dandii* merely refers to a male who devotes himself wholeheartedly to dressing in a refined, stylish fashion and is often used flippantly.

When words of foreign origin are converted into Japanese, frequently only a part of the original meaning is actually borrowed. This term is a good example of this phenomenon.

Conclusion

Language has continued to change throughout the ages. I consider the changes experienced by the Japanese language, with the period of rapid economic growth acting as a kind of demarcation line, to have been truly remarkable. It is my hope that, through examining changes in the Japanese language, concurring with Japan's period of rapid economic growth, in particular from the viewpoint of the 'expression of respect,' I may be able to contribute towards further study in the field of socio-linguistics.

Notes:

1. Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. <http://www.stat.go.jp/data/nihon/02.htm>.
2. The system of the 'ie' or 'household' is evident in the system of family registration made part of the civil law by proclamation in 1898. The law stated that the head of the household must register all births, marriages deaths and any other matters related with the local government. In this way, the state attempted to unify and standardize information about the population.
3. The influential studies on the Japanese language and gender:

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These five publications on women and discriminating language came out between 1985 and 1998 after the period of high economic growth and show how the status of women had changed.

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