

JAPANESE AND THE EXPRESSION OF IDENTITY THROUGH LANGUAGE,
POLITENESS, AND TACT

by

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Japanese and the Expression of Identity through Language, Politeness, and Tact

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ABSTRACT

JAPANESE AND THE EXPRESSION OF IDENTITY THROUGH LANGUAGE,
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There is a notion among many people, familiar and unfamiliar with Japanese, that it is an inherently polite language, as if it were built wholly around the concept of politeness. The Japanese language does have impressive capabilities in terms of denoting status, respect, and humbleness, offering many different linguistic levels on which people can interact. However, this is not for the sole or simple purpose of “politeness.” Instead, those capabilities permit a more complex interweaving of identities, social relationships, and physical contexts. As language both constructs and describes the complex social and environmental matrix in which speakers find themselves, it allows them a range of expression beyond mere politeness. This study undertakes an analysis of how Japanese is used for such purposes in a broad set of linguistics contexts, ranging from television shows, to the all-female Takarazuka theatre, and the public yet private space of cosplay

cafés. In these settings, both the structure and flexibility of the Japanese language are illuminated.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Japanese is a complex and multi-faceted language, one which can cause consternation to native speakers as well as foreigners. Without studying it intensively, it is hard to have even an inkling of the social cues and responses interwoven so thoroughly and subtly throughout the entire language. Instead, people often describe it as simply a “polite” language, ignoring the ways that politeness -- however defined -- intersects with such other dimensions as formality and emotion. The effects of social variation, especially of gender, also tend to be ignored in an overall emphasis on politeness. To better illuminate these intricate relations in this thesis, I analyze a range of popular media and public social activities. In doing so, I hope to provide a better understanding of the structures, ideologies, and popular usage of Japanese.

This study covers two different television shows, the popular Takarazuka theatre, and *kospure* cafés. In this introductory chapter, the context for that analysis is laid out by discussing “politeness” and the many theories that attempt to account for it in one way or another, including universal and culturally specific explanations. In doing so, the complicated nature of polite language will become apparent. From there, some of the grammatical structures employed in polite speech will be explored as well as the varying levels of politeness in Japanese speech and the role that emotional expression can play. Next, the connection between identity and language, polite or otherwise, will be explored.

Then the discussion will move on to critiques from feminist scholars in the study of Japanese. Last of all, the methods utilized in the investigation of this topic will be outlined.

Politeness, Tact, and Friendliness

The basic notion of politeness itself turns out to be quite complex. Terming something “polite” leads into a discussion of how exactly politeness is achieved or understood by different cultures. Richard Janney and Horst Arndt, for example, suggest that politeness is paired with something they call tact, which they see as a partner to social politeness. They define social politeness as the forms and rules that provide a basic foundation for human interaction in a society, somewhat like a framework for a building. Tact, on the other hand, is less related to formal rules and “is a matter of behaving in an interpersonally supportive way” (1992:23). Put in another way, “the difference between tact and social politeness is that whereas the function of social politeness is essentially to coordinate social interaction... the function of tact is... to preserve face and regulate interpersonal relationships” (1992:24). The authors believe that aggression and confrontation are part and parcel of basic human biology, but tact can counteract them. Tact, for them, is a culture-bound concept and generally learned through interacting with others in a given society. Though Janney and Arndt offer suggestions to lessen the tension when two conflicting notions of cultural tact come into contact, they imply that there are no over-arching guidelines for intercultural tact.

Arndt and Janney, even if they see tact as decidedly culture-bound, are careful not to imply that there is no universal theory for politeness and actually appear to borrow from the work of Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson: *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Use*. Brown and Levinson do not distinguish between tact and politeness and posit that every adult human has something known as “face,” which is “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (1987:61). This has two dimensions, negative and positive:

negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction – i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition

positive face: the positive consistent self-image or “personality” (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants

(Brown and Levinson 1987:61)

In Brown and Levinson’s conception, these two types of face are positioned as desires that tend to oppose one another, that in order to gain ground for one type of face one generally has to lose ground in the other. In perhaps too simple a distillation, Brown and Levinson imply that the personal desires of individuals will necessarily conflict with their image or place in the wider social situation.

According to their view, all actors in a social situation have positive and negative face, with a desire to maintain both. In numerous cases, what a person wants can only be fulfilled by another individual, so both must engage and attempt to maintain face, for themselves and their partner. Many situations require what they refer to as “face-threatening acts” (abbreviated as FTAs) and individuals involved in such a situation attempt to lessen the potential to lose face. To meet this end, the people involved will

employ some type of politeness strategy; Brown and Levinson cover a large number of potential circumstances and investigate the manner in which they could be handled. The authors describe the rules or constrictions that society places on these encounters and when discussing them assign a high degree of personal choice to the actors involved, setting them up as rational agents who make choices in order for the situation to conclude to their benefit.

To the ears of a Western individual, this universal theory of politeness seems to make good common sense: you want things; you want a good self-image; in order to get both of these you must act in a polite and respectful manner toward whomever you are dealing with. However, a few Japanese scholars have taken issue with this formula, as they believe it does not accurately apply to their own culture. Shoji Azuma performs his own sociolinguistic survey to question the applicability of Brown and Levinson's formula to Japanese culture and makes a good case that the theory could benefit from modification. Azuma builds on a previous argument made by Ide who claimed that the framework of Brown and Levinson "is inappropriate when languages with honorifics like Japanese are examined" (Azuma 1997:84). According to both Ide and Azuma, certain terms of politeness, such as a honorific attached to an individual's name, are *sociopragmatically obligatory*, even when grammar would allow the honorific to be avoided. In their view, Japanese linguistic behavior is strongly guided by conventions, termed *wakimae* or "discernment" by Ide, and does not comfortably fit within the framework of Brown and Levinson, who strongly emphasize *volitional* strategies on the part of the speaker (1997:84-85).

Brown and Levinson, for example, suggested that a speaker will treat a request they are making in a different manner if it is in a high-imposition situation rather than when the question would not interrupt or impose on the addressee, i.e., a low-imposition situation. The speaker would thus phrase his or her question differently (in general, more politely) if the addressee is in the midst of performing a task. As both Azuma and Ide point out, this assumes a high degree of personal choice in linguistic forms. According to Azuma, if the theory regarding *wakimae* is true, there should be negligible change between low and high imposition requests. In order to test the hypothesis, Azuma created a questionnaire with four different hypothetical situations: making a request of a teacher (low imposition), making a request of a teacher who is in the midst of another project (high imposition), making a request of a student (low imposition), and making a request of a student engaged in another activity (high imposition). According to Brown and Levinson's theory, the high imposition situations would naturally yield more respectful or polite requests, whether teacher or student. As it turned out, in the case of a high imposition request to a teacher, there were both instances of more polite forms being used as well as polite apologies. However, when surveying the results of the high imposition request toward students, there was almost no change in responses when compared to the low imposition request. Azuma's analysis of these findings claims that while the volitional aspect does still exist, *wakimae*/discernment plays a much more important role, even when serious FTAs are considered.

Another interesting study conducted by Richard Watts, Sachiko Ide, and Konrad Ehlich maps the differing conceptions that Japanese and U.S. students had about various

social situations. There is much that can be said about this study, but there is one particularly striking issue that Ide raises. The US students tended to equate friendliness with politeness and unfriendliness with rudeness. On the other hand, the Japanese students evaluated the conversations treating friendliness and politeness as discrete concepts, not necessarily feeling that a polite sentence was inherently a friendly one (1992: 284, 289). For the Japanese students, it would not be uncommon to hear a statement that contained lower levels of politeness but also qualified to be considered friendly. Without considering such differing notions of the correlation between politeness and friendliness, a universal theory on polite language would necessarily be incomplete.

The Grammatical Durability of Politeness

In most languages, pronouns and terms of address carry substantial importance in conversation. Many European languages make the distinction between formal and informal, or polite and familiar, pronouns: for example, the difference between *tu* and *Vous*. These are key when speaking to another person and, thus key to any analysis of politeness. Some researchers have become interested in these pronouns, their emergence, and their change over time. If these pronouns are so crucial to politeness, one might expect them to be quite durable in a supposedly “polite” Japanese language. Satoshi Uehara and Andrew Barke, however, suggest that is not the case (2005). In comparison to European languages, Japanese pronouns and terms of address are both greater in number and tend to change more rapidly. While European languages have had two relatively stable terms, Japanese never has had less than five and in the Edo period contained more

than thirty. In the years between the Edo period and today, the number declined to five or six terms (depending on whether one considers *temee*), which means that terms have disappeared at a quick pace. In less than 200 years, there has in this respect been more change in Japanese than happened in European languages over more than 500 years.

A key aspect of these Japanese pronouns of address is the varying level of politeness they express. There are several gradations of familiarity or respect that can be tailored to any situation. However, the specific pronouns used often have a relatively short life span before they fall out of use or change in their implications. Indeed, a word such as *kisama* (which roughly translates to *an honorable person*) was considered to be in the upper levels of polite terms of address during the Edo period but today is one of the rudest ways to address someone. Uehara and Barke note that terms only decline in politeness level over the years, never rise, and then disappear from use for the most part. They attribute this phenomenon to there being a taboo in Japanese on pronominal address (comparing it to the frequently shifting terms in English to refer to defecation or places in which defecation takes place). It is taboo to refer directly to someone and “as euphemistic expressions become more widely used and more closely associated with the tabooed referents, their politeness value drops, which in turn leads to a need for new polite/indirect expressions” (Barke and Uehara 2005:307).

Barke and Uehara note two ways polite terms of pronominal address develop: direct and indirect. A pronoun derived from the direct strategy usually incorporates a term for respect (especially *ki*) into the pronoun itself (e.g. *kisama*, *kiden*, *kihen*). It is

significant that only one of these terms is still in use today and happens to be one of the less polite pronouns. Judging from the data then, direct terms tend to lose politeness quite quickly when compared to their more indirect counterparts (Barke and Uehara 2005:310). As for the terms based in indirect reference, they tend to be derived from locational or directional words, a way of noting someone without referring explicitly to them. More of this type (four out of six, to be precise) are found in contemporary pronouns, including the most polite version, *anata*. This would seem to concur with the pattern of the pronominal taboo; the more blatantly a term refers to or interacts with a tabooed subject, the less polite it becomes, thus the direct terms tend to become less acceptable more quickly (2005: 303-310). Another intriguing point that the authors raise is that the more polite and long lasting, as well as indirect, terms tend to originate from women and they speculate that this may be based on the expectation that women are farther removed from the taboo subject than men. This is indeed an interesting conclusion, particularly because there is a common belief that women speak using more honorifics and greater levels of politeness.

Therefore, it is clear that Japanese changes and shifts over time based on the needs and sensibilities of its speakers. Pronominal address appears to be frequently changing, especially in comparison with European language, and is fluid enough that even the number of terms can decrease or increase based on changes in society at the time. For example, the Japanese feudal system utilized more pronouns than other periods in Japanese history, speaking to the society at the time and its varied positions. Additionally, over the last century the use of English has filtered into the Japanese

language, another change based on their contact with the U.S. and their society over the years. The language, however, remains capable of expressing the complex identities and social situations necessary at any given time. The language is not a “polite” one but one that grows and enables expression of self and relationships, uniquely linked to its cultural and physical surroundings.

Politeness Levels, Speaking Styles, and Emotional Expression

Whether durable or changing, simple or complex, politeness is usually described in terms of levels: higher or lower politeness. Unlike many writers, Senko Maynard distinguishes between such politeness *levels* and speaking *styles*. She identifies two politeness levels: supra-polite and polite. Supra-polite uses respectful and humble forms, the prefixes *go-* and *o-*, as well as other polite strategies; polite employs the use of more moderately polite strategies; and both use [V/Adj formal] forms. Maynard is careful to note as well that just because a speaker does not use polite expressions does not necessarily mean they are impolite; this would only be the case if the situation called for polite forms and the speaker did not use them. As with most authors, she also covers the topic of distance and intimacy, noting that using an overly polite form with a close friend or someone seeking intimacy is actually considered impolite, rude, or cold. Thus, politeness (or perhaps appropriateness is a better term) cannot be judged simply based on what verb ending or prefix a person uses.

In addition to politeness levels, however, Maynard also identifies four different styles in Japanese: formal, casual, blunt, and vulgar. Formal style is, in some sense, a

default way to speak: unless there is a reason to do otherwise, a speaker would use the formal style. Additionally, this is generally the chosen style for public and official situations. This, for her, is not simply an issue of politeness. Casual style, for example, is often used in private situations, though it can be extended to public situations if there is a high degree of familiarity. When the formal style does not seem appropriate and the circumstances encourage a familiar or casual attitude, then this style comes into play. Blunt style, according to Maynard, tends to be used when the speakers pay little attention to how they are speaking and often this based out of an emotional response, such as anger or rejection. Additionally, in certain situations, as this is a straightforward manner of speaking, this can signify closeness. Vulgar speech, on the other hand, is generally associated with youth languages and slang terms; therefore there are few situations, unless among youth, where this style would be considered friendly and appropriate.

Maynard's counter-balancing of politeness levels and speaking styles suggests that the key issue may not be "politeness" as a way to contain emotion but as a framework for expressing emotion. Indeed, Maynard focuses explicitly on this issue of expressive Japanese. In a book to help students of the Japanese language navigate the complex waters of Japanese language and society, she provides guidance on how to express thoughts, opinions, and feelings. She covers many topics from expressing anger, to breaking off a relationship, to speculating about someone else's thoughts. While this is incredibly useful practical knowledge -- essential for anyone studying the language -- some of the most intriguing points are found in the introduction when she discusses

general issues such as gendered speech, dialect, and speech level shifts, thus laying the conceptual groundwork for someone attempting to speak Japanese.

Maynard devotes one section to historical perspectives on expressive Japanese, on the capability of Japanese to properly convey emotion. Maynard suggests the historical context is important because the study of language with “a focus on emotion and empathy has tended to be slighted... in the West” (2005:10). It has not been an overwhelmingly popular topic of inquiry in Japan either, but there have been a few scholars who have approached the study of Japanese as “an expressive means for sharing emotion” (2005:10). For example, Maynard notes Akira Suzuki (1764-1837) who identified four parts of speech: nouns, adjectives, verbs, and particles; the first three were “referential words” while particles were an entirely different category of words which he called “voices from the heart.” Seemingly meaningless and empty, they nevertheless “fulfill the important functions of connecting words, identifying the speaker, and expressing the speaker’s heart” (2005:10). More recently, Yoshio Yamada (1873-1958) has discussed in detail *kantai no ku* (vocative-emotive phrases), and how grammar may change for expressive Japanese (2005: 10-11). This small group of scholars represents an important tradition of recognizing Japanese as not only a tool for practical discussion or rational thinking, but also a vehicle for expressing emotion.

Along similar lines, Maynard discusses her notion of “the Rhetoric of *Pathos*.” This notion derives from Aristotelian rhetoric in which *pathos* is an appeal to the feelings of the audience. Maynard uses this because often in Japanese there is an emphasis placed

on the play of emotions in the speech partner's feelings. The dominant English pattern used to describe events and form sentences is referred to as the [agent-does] structure, the purpose of which is to capture the event as action. In Japanese, by contrast, the two highly preferred structures are [topic-comment] or [something-becomes]. Both of these contrast with the dominant form found in English. Borrowing Maynard's example, in English one would say "Tanaka has two children." In Japanese, however, this statement would generally be phrased "*Tanaka-san ni wa kodomo ga futari iru*" (As for Tanaka, there are two children): Tanaka is introduced as a topic and the existence of two children is a comment about that topic. As for the second prevalent Japanese structure, if someone were to report that "We will get married in June," in Japanese the sentence would be something like "*Rokugatsu ni kekkon suru koto ni narimashita*" (It has become that we will be getting married in June). This is a clear use of the [something-becomes] structure. In Maynard's estimation, this ability to avoid the [agent-does] structure can lead to "sentences [which] are often constructed with relatively fluid and shifting points of view, which ultimately foreground shared emotion and empathy" (2005:35). It is important to note, however, that this does not mean that the [agent-does] structure is absent from Japanese entirely; in fact, it can be found in use frequently throughout news reports, research papers, and the like -- situations in which emotion tends to be excluded.

Maynard highlights the Rhetoric of *Pathos* particularly when discussing how someone persuades or works out a disagreement with another individual. According to her, there is a tendency in Japanese culture to "mistrust the persuasive potential of words" (2005:35). Therefore, language itself is not enough for communication or persuasion and

emotions must be present. Rather than simply piecing together a persuasive argument based only on logic and conveyed by non-emotional language, a person would be more apt to introduce a topic or thought into the discussion as a target of emotion. In Maynard's words, the point is that "speaker and partner, by sharing the emotional target from the same perspective, co-experience the feelings" (2005:35). Thus, arguments are generally not exchanged in a dialogue and one does not usually assert outright a position that is in opposition to their speech partner. Instead, the speaker delivers their thoughts in a manner that resembles a confession of feelings, a bit like a monologue, and uses emotion and empathy to put forth their understanding of a subject. This is all summed up nicely in one sentence: "For Japanese speakers, language serves to facilitate this co-experience of the world" (2005:36). Overall, this makes for an interesting argument: the Japanese speaker has a "sense of self [that] is anchored privately, as if in a monologic world," but strives to share this and co-experience the world with other individuals.

Japan, the Japanese, and the Japanese Language

In practice, language and speech provide for more than simple communication. One can denote an affiliation with a specific gender, thanks to the use of distinctive pronouns, particularly in Japanese. Additionally, one can establish and demonstrate social connections, assess the distance or difference felt between two or more individuals, display respect, and create solidarity. Language is thus inevitably a tool for people to establish identities in various situations; those identities are multiple and vary as

circumstances change. Language is a prime medium for people to evoke their individual identity.

In addition, language can also form a key part of people's collective identity. Japanese scholars may even place more emphasis on the connection between the Japanese language and Japanese identity than scholars of other nations. In her discussion of *fudo* and *kotodama*, Ann Wehmeyer notes the connection some scholars of the past centuries have posited between the climate of Japan, the Japanese language, and how these figure into who the Japanese people are or feel themselves to be. *Fudo* refers to climate and *kotodama* refers to "word spirit" and the two concepts are tightly entwined in some perspectives. Scholars have contemplated *kotodama* for many years, trying to explain how words in the Japanese language came to be. More recently, both concepts have been incorporated into *Nihonjinron*, a branch of scholarship that attempts to explain how and why the Japanese culture and civilization are different from (and frequently construed to be special or superior to) other civilizations across the world. Essentially, a connection has been posited between the rare climate of Japan, which is often called the "land of four seasons," and Japanese: "the particular climatic conditions of Japan have allowed for the essence of things to be expressed in their purest form" (1997:104). Here, there is a belief clearly displayed that the climate, language, and culture of Japan are all tied together and all play a role in the overall identity of all Japanese.

The implication, then, is that the linguistic usages are intertwined with both physical and social context. Perspective, placement, and setting are all crucial when

speaking Japanese. Sachiko Ide discusses this in terms of honorifics: “How and why honorifics can signify dignity and elegance.” She expands the conceptions of what honorifics are for and what they can accomplish, as follows. Generally, most people refer to honorifics, citing only one purpose, that of politeness, but Ide works to explain other functions of honorifics, such as dignity and elegance in speech, a way to demonstrate to speaking partners one’s nuanced command of Japanese. Before delving into the complexities of honorifics, Ide discusses the differences in worldviews between languages, Japanese and English specifically. The foundation upon which the English language rests is a perspective that sets the speaker apart from his or her surroundings. This viewpoint has been compared to an eagle “soaring in the sky, alone, unfettered by its surroundings, with a perspective that spans all that is beneath it” (Ide 2005:49). Clearly, with this as a starting position, statements in English would be unlikely to necessitate focusing on the relative placement of things or people in a society. On the other hand, the perspective, called “thinking in the forest,” attributed to Japanese speakers and individuals of the Eastern world more widely, is that of a tree in a forest, standing among other trees, unable to see outside of the vicinity. According to Ide, this engenders a cautious and humble approach.

Along the same lines, Ide describes the different positions the speaker takes in a speech event, according to what language they are speaking. In English, when a person forms a sentence, they talk about a past event as if they are narrating something that is happening on a stage. They discuss the event as if they were entirely removed, even if they were key actors in the situation. Ide conceptualizes this as two versions of the

speaker, one narrating while the other is on stage, a past version of the speaker. This position can be related to the worldviews discussed above: the Western speaker can stand outside of an event and discuss it from a birds-eye view. This is, in at least one way, conveyed by sentence structure in English: a proper sentence must always have a subject, whether or not the listener already knows who the subject is. As for Japanese, Ide places the speaker in the event as well as close to the audience to whom they are describing the event. Here the speaker must discuss the event in relation to the audience, to him or herself, and to the others who were involved in the event; therefore there is the ability to drop certain words that are unnecessary when talking in this manner. In addition, it is also necessary to have a thorough understanding of the context and relations in order to use the appropriate wording in the description. Naturally, this has some relation to the “thinking in the forest” worldview discussed previously. In both cases, the language reflects, expresses, and maintains a general cultural understanding of self and the world (Ide 2005: 51-53).

The use of Japanese to express and create identity is furthermore conditioned by gender, age, and regional variations. Gender is by far the most important. In Japanese, speech and language are understood to relate to a person’s gender, based on particular conventions and understanding. Traditionally, in Japanese culture, masculine speech is presumed to be direct and straightforward and certain forms and words are associated with males, particularly abrupt forms, particular nouns (such as *meshi*), and particular sentence endings (2005:22-23). As for feminine speech, essentially the opposite is assumed: less assertive and softer or gentler. Certain forms are associated directly with

this: for example, feminine speech is said to contain more polite prefixes, fewer abrupt questions or commands, particular pronouns such as *atakushi*, and particles such as *kashira* (2005:23-24). Today there is a lessening degree of distinction between these two types of speech, as females and males use either type as they feel the need. For example, if a woman is in a managerial position, it is unlikely that she will use strictly feminine speech. Since she may want to be seen as powerful, she is more likely to use parts of the more assertive, traditionally masculine speech. As Maynard points out, both males and females will use both types of language, depending on the desired effect, and often consciously decide which is for the best.

Divides between male and female speech can be traced back through history. The conception of “women’s language,” how women should speak, is tied to a specific identity or social role that is promulgated as a desirable version of femininity, rather than an essential feminine nature that followed directly from their sex. Particularly with the many reforms of the Meiji period, a specific type of femininity was promoted and language, as it was key to a national identity, was also imperative to the type of womanhood the leaders of the country desired to see. With Japan’s modernization, most notably the ascendancy of the military, the “good wife, wise mother” notion of femininity was the most highly praised ideal of womanhood (Gottlieb 2005; Okamoto 2004; Yukawa and Saito 2004). It emphasized gentleness of speech and manner, but also a certain level of education, as in order to be a proper mother, a woman had to have the knowledge and wisdom to pass on to her children. Indeed, this legacy is alive and well in today’s world, as the honorific expressions that are posited to represent femininity are

also considered to demonstrate a fine education. Women's language plays a role in the dominant ideology and encourages a particular type of femininity above others.

The generational influence on speech is more limited and mainly due to the slang that develops among youth. This is a style of speech designed to foster camaraderie between people in the same age group and is seldom used outside of this circle. In formal situations, naturally, youths are expected to use more traditional adult speech patterns and if they fail to do so and use youth language instead, they are considered to show "a lack of education, humbleness, and grace" (Maynard 2005:27). Most of the patterns present in youth language generally fade over time, although some elements, such as expressions like *maji* or *mitaina* or some additions to the causative form, are more permanent and are beginning to have wider application outside of the younger age groups.

There are also numerous dialects within the Japanese language, especially in the Ryukyuan dialects of Okinawa, but also on the main islands. Mainland dialects are generally split into three types: eastern, western, and Kyushu. The most widely recognized (and stereotyped) dialect is that of the Kansai area, which often uses different words and endings for verbs. Interestingly, most Japanese citizens, wherever they happened to be raised, can switch to Tokyo speech, which is thought to be the most common and is the one generally used by the media, the exception being the entertainment business which will incorporate the Kansai dialect. This would appear to be different from dialects or accents in the United States, as the only individuals who tend to learn accents outside of their regional variety are involved in the media or another high

profile career. However, it also would seem that the Kansai dialect is generally used in the entertainment business as a comical sort and understood to represent the stereotype of a “talkative, joking, flighty, yet practical and materialistic person” (2005:33).

The connection between language and identity is also seen in Megumi Yoshida’s and Chikako Sakurai’s discussion of the use of honorifics as a “marker of sociocultural identity.” To them, honorifics “express a role-oriented identity” and “index sociocultural meaning” (2005:197). They are particularly interested in speech level shifts – situations in which people generally use plain form or informal language among themselves but switch briefly to a more formal or polite level. Previous studies had looked at cases wherein people switched to informal speech and the authors had usually cited a change in psychological or social distance (e.g. when TV hosts change to informal language to talk with their guests in order to show empathy regarding an event the guest discussed). The conversations and speech shifts Yoshida and Sakurai studied are decidedly different and, according to their analysis, have nothing to do with a change in psychological or social distance.

Two examples they discuss are drawn from conversations between a husband and wife. In the first example, the husband and wife speak to one another using informal language, but while the wife is preparing dinner (and using informal language), she informs her husband that his dinner is ready by saying “*Gohan desu yo.*” For apparently no reason, the wife begins speaking in formal terms (2005:202). The second example is similar. When the husband has finished making the bed, he announces it to his wife by

saying “*Futon shikimashita yo*”, which is a change from the plain forms of speech he had just been using (2005:203). Yoshida and Sakurai note that in the past Japanese wives were expected to address their husbands using polite, formal language and this is something of which most Japanese individuals are aware. In the examples, first the wife and then the husband were involved in an activity that would be traditionally performed by the wife and when doing this, were reminded of the traditional role they were currently performing. Therefore, they switched their language to emphasize that they were acting in a traditional wifely manner, the role dominating their actions -- and their gender -- at least for the moment.

Underlying this analysis is the understanding that the Japanese sense of self is highly role-oriented and interdependent with others in their lives, such as friends, family, and co-workers. If this is the case, then what the person is doing and with whom they are interacting will shift their language to match the situation. In this scenario, the speakers understand themselves to hold many roles at the same time: a daughter, a wife, a mother, a sister, a businesswoman, etc. No one of these is necessarily the “true self,” but rather all of them combine to create an identity and, depending on the context, one will be emphasized more than the other. As noted in the previous examples, that focus can change in the course of one conversation. Yoshida and Sakurai also deliberately make the distinction between this role-emphasis and the use of registers. When changing registers, the speaker is making an attempt to conform to the rules for proper language use in a given situation. While registers are certainly present in Japanese, this case is different because technically polite and plain form could both be appropriate for the given

situation, but the speech level shift occurs based on the “speaker’s idea about the particular role performance” (2005:211). This demonstrates the ability of the Japanese language, and more specifically its honorifics, to anchor the speaker in relation to both the circumstances and individuals with which they are interacting -- to help establish their situational identity. With this in mind, we can begin to understand the Japanese language in terms of appropriateness rather than general linguistic “politeness.” The appropriate speech hinges on specific relationships, identities, and circumstances so “politeness” as we know it does not offer a flexible enough framework to understand language choices.

A Feminist Perspective

In the past, discussions of the Japanese language have had certain traditional assumptions that have found their way into Japanese society and influenced foreign perceptions of the country and its culture. Most of these were taken to be self-evident and writers of such articles rarely had to explicitly relate why they held these to be fact. A number of these traditional assumptions have been questioned, particularly by Japanese feminist scholars, in the last few decades. In laying out the underlying ideas regarding language, notably the dichotomy between male and female speakers, new ways of thinking about Japanese speech patterns are possible, including new insights into what “politeness” might mean in Japanese language and society.

One common complaint -- whether feminist or not -- is that many studies have tied together language ideology and language practice, treating them as if they were

indistinguishable. But actual speech often deviates from the prescribed norms that speakers claim their language follows. Many early sociolinguistic studies began their research without considering how speech might, in practice, differ from the norms that people reported, the way they believed they should speak. Sumiyuki Yukawa and Masami Saito refer to Sachiko Ide as an example of this, saying that Ide and her contemporaries “surveyed speakers’ knowledge of and attitudes toward normative usage of language, that is, their language ideologies” (2004:29). No doubt that is completely useful knowledge, an understanding of how people feel they are expected to speak, but it does leave out the important element of how they actually speak, not to mention the varying situations in which their speech takes place.

Indeed, the entire collection of essays in the book *Japanese Language, Gender, and Ideology* makes note of this distinction and, either directly or indirectly, criticizes previous scholars who never took note of it, either by discussing the path of Japanese sociolinguistic studies or in focusing their own research projects on actual spoken language (Okamoto and Shibamoto Smith: 2004). In her own article in that volume, Shigeko Okamoto highlights three assumptions in the many writings regarding “women’s language” that she finds highly problematic and offers her own “counterproposals” to them. The first assumption she tackles is that “most women, if not all, share the same attributes... and therefore (should) use language in the same way” (2004:48). This touches on an issue that has farther reaching relevance than simply in the field of Japanese sociolinguistics, namely that women are generally an internally homogeneous group, and thus can be characterized in broad sweeping generalizations. A corollary to

this is that men constitute an entirely separate, possibly equally homogeneous group, can be easily distinguished or divided from women, and lack any significant overlapping characteristics with them. Naturally, there are other factors that these characterizations do not account for, such as age, social status, and education. Because of this, anything that speaks in only terms of male versus female lacks the depth and analytical power of work that attends to other factors.

Another assumption Okamoto criticizes is the notion that “certain linguistic expressions, such as honorifics and other formal or indirect expressions, are inherently polite” (2004:49). If this were necessarily true, then anyone who consistently spoke using honorific forms would be automatically considered the more polite individual. Naturally, in many circumstances this is the case, by referring to someone in a respectful or deferential manner you are seen as being polite. However, as Okamoto’s research with actual spoken language shows, given certain situations honorifics may imply a high degree of social distance or formality, which is not always the preferred approach. For example, department store employees use highly polite forms when speaking to customers, as their job requires. Marketplace vendors (in Okamoto’s example a female market vendor) employ more direct, less formal expressions lacking in honorifics when interacting with their potential customers. Even so, they may be seen not as speaking rudely but rather attempting to foster a sense of camaraderie and friendliness (2004:46, 49). Additionally, Okamoto makes note of two differing opinions on the subject of what terms teachers should use to speak with their students. An older gentleman believed that teachers should use honorifics when speaking with their students, as he thought it would

denote respect for them, despite the difference in status and age. On the other hand, a younger individual felt that when teachers spoke to her without using honorifics like *-san* it made her feel as if they were closer (2004:50). What constitutes politeness is thus a tricky subject, as it becomes difficult to attribute inherent politeness to any given linguistic form.

The last assumption Okamoto questions is that “speaking politely, or showing deference and refinement through the use of honorifics and other formal or indirect expressions, indexes femininity or the female gender” (2004:51). This assumption connects strongly back to the two previous ones and can be countered with similar logic. As with the first one discussed, there is the possibility that women from different classes or backgrounds might have differing notions of what femininity means and how it can be achieved, so if one does not assume that women are an undifferentiated group, then it is quite difficult to attach only one variety of femininity to them. Okamoto demonstrates the cultural nature of these constructions of femininity as well, noting the fact that a few Korean students had said that in their country, formal speech was thought to be cold and distant and was associated with males, while less formal speech was thought to be feminine. Okamoto also notes that this may not be a representative opinion held by everyone in the culture, but it does reveal a different opinion on the construction of femininity. Another example Okamoto presents to show the differences that characteristics such as age or situation can create involves two letters written by an older woman and a younger one. The older woman, writing to her sister, uses honorifics and other formal expressions, in contrast to the younger woman who writes to her colleague

without using such expressions. The recipient of the latter's letter would not outright define her as unfeminine because of the lack of honorific forms. However if "politeness" or honorifics were the markers for femininity, that would necessarily be the case (2004:45-46, 52).

Another inherent assumption that runs through some work on Japanese sociolinguistics is that a characteristic of an individual can be linked directly to a specific type of speech. The most obvious example of this is the conventionally uncontested connection between gender and the notion of polite speech. As noted earlier, there are other influences in an individual's life that may impact the form of speech as much as or more than gender. In such situations, it may be difficult, or even impossible, to designate primacy to just one characteristic. Obviously, as many scholars have pointed out, gender norms can and do heavily affect people and offer a framework in which to develop their speech patterns, but this is just one of the many possible sources shaping their conception of what type of speech they should utilize. The broader point is that this same criticism can be applied to other characteristics as well: age, class, hometown, etc. All of them have their place in creating an individual's speech patterns and it would be unfair to ascribe primacy to any one over the others, at least in any overarching way.

Another oversight in much previous research, which a number of scholars (notably those in Okamoto and Shibamoto Smith's collection) are working to correct, is the lack of study performed with less powerful groups or subcultures. Much previous work was done focusing mainly on middle-class heterosexual individuals who often live

in urban or suburban environments, rather than groups that may be less likely to adhere to the normative view of language. Thus, alternative uses of languages are not present in many sociolinguistic studies, not allowing the diversity of dialects and differentially valorized speech forms to shine through. In an attempt to fill this gap, some researchers have looked to understudied groups such as farm women, lesbian and gay individuals, and those speaking regional dialects, rather than looking strictly at “standard” Japanese, which is considered to be that of Tokyo. Such attempts, while largely feminist in origin, have thus expanded into a full scale critique of the assumptions about the Japanese language, including the complexities of what politeness might mean and its variability. Nevertheless they have also indicated that gender may be an especially effective focus in looking at these more general sociolinguistic issues.

Methods

When dealing with a topic as complex as this, a broad range of media and settings are necessary to give depth to the discussion. I utilized various methods to gain a better rounded and more thorough understanding of the issues of “politeness” in Japanese language and society, including both media analysis and participant observation. I looked at television shows, theatrical performances, and *kosupure/cosplay* (also known as costume play, the act of dressing up as characters unlike oneself) club behavior. In each case, language plays an important role, doing everything from creating a specific characterization to expressing an individual’s identity to creating a welcoming

environment. The three together provide a variety of data on the various aspects of discussion in Japanese and insight into the intersections between politeness, formality, emotion, and gender.

As in the United States, there are numerous shows on television at any given time in Japan and all of them reflect the society from which they emerged. In order to obtain a sample that included both scripted and partially scripted language as well as strongly emotional and light-hearted discussions, I investigated two types of TV shows, drama and variety shows. From here, I selected specific shows and episodes, then analyzed the language in both. The bulk of my analysis in both cases focuses on verb endings and terms of address, taking note of the social situations presented including levels of familiarity and personalities. Knowing that these are well-received shows, they provide an idea of what kinds of language and personalities resonate with Japanese viewers.

Takarazuka, a popular all-female revue, is difficult to study outside of Japan, partially because access to videos of performances is limited. Additionally, watching only a video creates an experience that is lacking in depth when compared to actually visiting the theatre, because it does not include the audience and theatre staff who impact the experience. Therefore my analysis of Takarazuka was completed during my fieldwork in Japan, so I could gain a better understanding of the show and its fanbase. Based on the timeframe and location, mid- to late October and Tokyo, there was only one show playing. I was limited in my choices. The play was a retelling of the well-known French novel by Alexandre Dumas “The Man in the Iron Mask”, the title of the Takarazuka

performance being *Kamen no Otoko*. I saw the play twice on two different days so I could gain a better understanding of the story and language. My analysis looks at the language used in the show, by theatre employees, and by fans. It focuses on verb endings, polite prefixes and suffixes, and terms of address.

The final research setting was *kosupure* (cosplay or costume play) cafés, which I also visited in Fall 2011. During my fieldwork, I visited six different *kosupure* cafés, most them at least twice. In *kosupure* cafés, one can see how language helps to build a specific atmosphere and is used to provide patrons with a personalized experience. There was a basic pattern I followed that applies to every café. I entered the café, was greeted by a girl in a *kosupure* outfit, and was shown to my table. Once seated, the menu was explained to me and my order taken. From here, I could not only converse with employees myself, but also observe conversations of other guests. In these scenarios, the environment, personalities, body language, and tone played a crucial part in the interactions between customers and employees, thus I analyzed these as well as the usual linguistic pieces. As for language, I again focused my analysis on verb endings and terms of address. The combination of these factors creates a particular image and atmosphere, much of which relies on the speech and behavior of the girls working at the cafés.

All three of these areas utilize language, more specifically speech, as a part of creating scenarios, defining images, and crafting atmospheres. All three have both scripted and unscripted language, each in varying degrees. Though the effect they are aiming for is different from case to case, people involved in each of them must carefully

craft the language used, either for themselves or for other individuals via scripts. By analyzing television shows, Takarazuka performances, and *kosupure* cafés, I reveal the complex and varied nature of the Japanese language, highlighting the ways in which it can be used and the various effects even simple phrases can have, and overall how the generic issues of politeness and appropriateness might be better understood.

CHAPTER 2: JAPANESE TELEVISION SHOWS

Scholars often overlook the investigation of popular culture in favor of other seemingly more serious or longstanding forms of artistic expression. It would, however, be a mistake to ignore it in academic pursuits because it provides important clues to the whole picture of human life and culture. Indeed, the very fact that it is “popular” is significant since that means it strikes a chord with a large number of people in a given society. While the content of many popular television shows may seem light or fluffy, analyzing these shows can give some insight into how a society sees or wants to see itself. If the shows resonate with their intended audience there is clearly something to be gained from studying the content and asking what part of the wider culture it reflects and why it is engaging to its viewers. Television shows, and popular culture in general, can be thought of as being connected to their audience in a loop: a television show utilizes knowledge about popular culture in hopes to appeal to its audience and if it succeeds, then the audience incorporates the show’s version of popular culture back into their own lives and culture. There is an implicit interaction with the audience on many levels and this will become clearer in the analysis of the Japanese variety show. The analysis of television shows can add an important dimension to research, including the analysis of “politeness” in Japanese.

Japanese Drama

Many of the television channels in Japan air numerous dramas, or *terebi drama*, throughout the year. Judging by the ratings and sheer number of *terebi drama*, this genre of television show is highly popular with the Japanese public, filling up both morning and evening slots. The morning dramas are probably closest in equivalence to daytime soap operas in the United States, as they usually air a new episode every weekday. The evening dramas, on the other hand, could probably be compared to some of the dramatic shows filling prime time slots on U.S. television and cover topics ranging from crime scene investigations to the personal lives of fictional television families. Unlike in the U.S., there are four television seasons in Japan -- Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter-- each technically lasting about three months, though there are a few series that start in one season and end in the next. Ongoing series tend to air in the same season each year, often in similar time slots. For most evening *terebi drama*, a season of any given series will usually include between eight and eleven episodes broadcast on a weekly basis.

Terebi drama are a good choice for analysis, considering their popularity. In order to pick one series to analyze, I created a list of criteria that would identify which would be the most appropriate for study. First, availability and access were crucial, since not every show would be available to me living in the United States and my time in-country was limited and thus devoted to the succeeding chapters' discussion of Takarazuka and *kosupure* cafés. In addition, a recent air date would also be preferable as it would more likely reflect contemporary thought and culture. The popularity of a given

show needed to be such that it completed its intended run as well as received at least an acceptable rating (if ratings or viewership could be discovered). The setting was not overly important, but it needed to have elements of everyday life in it, so nothing overly fantastical or outrageous would be selected. The last criterion was that the series be a short enough story arc to allow me to watch the entire plot play, thus eliminating the morning dramas for the most part.

The drama I ultimately chose was *Tsuki no Koibito*, which translates roughly into *Moon Lovers*. It met all the criteria. It first aired in May 2010, making it a part of that year's summer line-up, received a viewership rating of 16.8 percent (even higher for the first two episodes), and was aired on Fuji TV, well-known for its variety of dramas. Unfortunately, since it was not filmed in front of a studio audience, there is no ability to analyze on-the-spot reactions from viewers. In addition, the star of the show is the well-known and popular singer and actor, Kimura Takuya, who stars in at least one drama every year and is known to pull in a significant number of fans. The show was readily available (found for viewing on many websites) and consisted of eight episodes which completed the story arc. The storyline was neither fantastical nor out of the realm of believability, though it did follow a character who was the president of a successful company, which does make him unusual in comparison to most average Japanese citizens. For reference, throughout this paper, I will be referring to characters by whichever name was most prevalent in the series, whether it was their family or given name. However, all names will be written in standard Japanese format, family name first.

The main character, Hazuki Rensuke, is comparatively young, somewhere in his thirties, and runs a furniture company, Regolith, that he founded with a group of friends. The focus in the show is on his interactions with his friends, rivals, family, and employees as well as the relationships among those other characters. The main plot follows his dealings with other people and companies as he attempts to make Regolith Japan's top furniture company and spread its influence internationally. The show begins with Regolith buying out a factory in Shanghai and displays the Chinese workers' protests against the move. Throughout the rest of the season, Rensuke attempts to bring his company greater fame and profit through a number of legal but harsh business practices. Indeed, his characterization relies in part on his use of language. Throughout the course of the series, Rensuke prefers to be direct and to the point, making most of his sentences rather short since he forgoes the respectful prefixes and suffixes as well as the longer forms of verbs (typically the more "polite" option). In order to calm the workers in China, he employs one of their own, Liu Xiu Mei, to be the new advertising image for the company, so they all have something familiar and admirable to relate to Regolith. However, he convinces her to join his company by making one of her friends steal money from her, leaving her with no other option but to become Regolith's new model. When she agrees to this, one of her stipulations is that everyone in the factory gets to keep their job, so they will not have to fear unemployment. Rensuke agrees to this, but is quick to downsize the factory when he thinks it would increase his profit. Liu Xiu Mei also tends to speak in plain form with shorter sentences, but rather than giving her a rough or callous air, she is presented as a more immediately likable and friendly character than

Rensuke. Though her extensive use of short sentences is also a reminder that she is not a native Japanese speaker, her selfless actions combined with her speech patterns have the effect of making her appear more open and approachable.

Rensuke's unsavory actions and cool demeanor are appropriately rewarded with employees betraying him in one fashion or another. One employee shares secrets with a rival company, thus hurting the one thing most important to Rensuke, Regolith. Another employee turns the board against Rensuke and calls a vote to remove him from the presidency. This, however, is almost easier for Rensuke to handle since everyone seemed to believe it was for the good of the company, so he stepped down. Despite his penchant for being blunt and uncaring, his language actually shifts to something more "polite" as he resigns, opting to speak with more respectful terms than usual. This could reflect the effect of his new station, no longer a company president thus no longer entitled to speak roughly with the board members. Additionally, it allows him to convey his respect for the company despite being removed from its head and makes it clear that he holds no ill will toward the board. Afterward, he begins working with one of his friends and former subcontractors, content to never return to the world of owning a massive company.

In addition to the business world, the other half of this show focuses on three main female characters and their feelings for Rensuke. There is something of a competition for his affections among the Chinese model, Xiu Mei, the daughter of his rival, Onuki Yuzuki, and his longtime friend and subcontractor, Ninomiya Maemi. Aside from the troubles with the company, the emotions and problems that these individuals

face push the story forward. They each have a unique way of expressing themselves and their emotions throughout the show, making them interesting to study. Xiu Mei appears to live by her emotions, to let them guide her and sway her, and to be prone to outbursts of anger when Rensuke upsets her. Her emotional outbursts usually contain rough language, such as rude or disrespectful terms of address. Onuki Yuzuki adopts a persona that uses her familiarity with Rensuke, having first met him when she was twelve and he was in college, and tries to extend that familiarity into a new, romantic relationship. When dealing with Rensuke, she uses familiar language, particularly plain form and uses variations of his given name rather than surname. Ninomiya Maemi is reserved, never giving away her feelings for Rensuke until the end of the show, and instead keeps a bantering, playful relationship. To this end, she generally speaks casually with him, preferring not to use the *-masu* forms of verbs or respectful suffixes like *-san* unless it is specifically to poke fun at him. In Yuzuki's situation, there is a familial connection, one that will not allow for anything else, so despite her attempts to woo him, she is ultimately unsuccessful. Though both of the other female characters have a romantic connection with Rensuke, Xiu Mei's is short term whereas his relationship with Maemi is portrayed as if it will last for a long period of time.

Considering all of the different situations and relationships the characters find themselves in, and the different personalities and qualities they have, this series provides numerous opportunities to study the use of the Japanese language. An interesting general trend to note in the series, especially in connection to much of what Maynard has written regarding expressive Japanese, is that most of the Japanese characters are portrayed as

individuals who constantly grapple with their emotions, as these emotions run deep and are central to their existence, but can only display them in very specific and constrained ways. The most obvious example is Hazuki Rensuke. In most of his business dealings, his decisions are made, justified, and executed in a way that makes others view them as poorly thought-out and incredibly cold. However, he has a conversation later in the series with an employee and old friend, Kijihata Togo, who is handing in his resignation and taking the blame for an accident within the company, though the fault likely rested with Rensuke. Both characters are struggling with strong feelings about the company and each other, trying to weigh them and decide which is most important. Despite his apparent callousness, Rensuke has a difficult time accepting Kijihata's resignation because he cares for the other's well-being and realizes what an asset he is to the company, but Kijihata makes his argument in terms of the company, saying that for Regolith to endure it needs Rensuke at the helm. Though this conversation is heavy with emotion and conflicting wishes, every word spoken is done so in polite form, using verbs with *-masu* endings, as a way to regulate and express what they were feeling.

A similar issue can be found with both of the Japanese women who show interest in Rensuke. It may be surprising to consider Onuki Yuzuki in this group, because it would appear that all of her emotions are on display constantly with nothing directing or guiding them. Her first few appearances on the show make her seem to be a spoiled brat, constantly whining and prone to emotional reactions when Rensuke does not comply, and her feelings for him are an important part of those publicly displayed emotions. However, through the course of the show, even though her personality and emotions seem to

whirling about for everyone to see, they disguise a more serious devotion to both her family and Rensuke. Her feelings, rather than being superficial, turn out to have deep roots. For example, although she spends most of the first few episodes selfishly chasing Rensuke around and encouraging rumors about their relationship, when the company is in trouble thanks to an accident, she takes it upon herself to attempt to rectify the situation with her own ideas. It becomes clear that all of her actions, whether or not they seemed appropriate, came from a place of deep and honest care for Rensuke.

Ninomiya Maemi, on the other hand, tends to take a different approach: all of her interactions are carried out in a friendly, joking, and ultimately non-invasive manner. The other characters in the show attribute her tireless efforts on behalf of Regolith to her impressive work ethic and desire to create a good product. However, as viewers slowly find out, despite her casual friendliness with Rensuke, all the work she does with his company and her devotion to the company's projects come from a place of love for Rensuke. Most often she addresses him in playful manner, keeping her tone light, and is even straightforward enough with him to scold him when he does something wrong or foolish. There is a break from this lighthearted approach when she confesses that she loves him as he leaves to return home one day. Later, when he returns and kisses her, she still continues with her usual joking, though flustered, and uses the relaxed, fun way of speaking to channel her emotions for Rensuke, serious though they may be. Her language choices, though apparently informal, are not inappropriate based on her personality, relationships, and situations.

An intriguing foil to these Japanese characters, whose outward displays convey only a fraction of the emotion they feel, are the Chinese characters. Both Xiu Mei and her friend Ming seem to be more prone to excessive emotional displays and conflicting feelings. Their emotions seem to pour out at any moment and everything that they feel inside appears to be visible to everyone on the outside. While it often took time to pick through the emotions and intentions of the Japanese characters, both Xiu Mei and Ming's motives are relatively easy to discern, thanks to their constant, exact outward expression of their inner emotions. For example, viewers know immediately that Xiu Mei's world centers around her parents, even her father who left her family to live in Japan, and they can expect her actions to always reflect that. When she hears about Rensuke's betrayals, first of his ploy to hire her and second of his plans to deport her father to China, her reactions are to run away, to cry, to scream, and to otherwise express her feelings in a straightforward manner. The audience is never left wondering why she is doing something or what her words mean. Ming is quite similar in this respect, though his motivations are more political than familial. After his run-in with Rensuke and taking Xiu Mei's money, his sole concern becomes the factory and its workers, doing everything in his power to protect them, so every step he makes reflects that motivation and all the other characters in the drama realize that as well. His anger and rage come at predictable moments and are never a surprise, because once one understands what his motivations are, they can be easily applied to figure out what move he will make next. Both of these characters stand in stark contrast to the main Japanese characters and emphasize the

hidden and deep nature of the emotions and thoughts of the Japanese characters in a way they may not have been highlighted otherwise.

There are two exceptions to this trend. The first is Rensuke's assistant or second-in-command, Sai Kazami. He is a Chinese character who spent his childhood being raised in Japan. For the most part, he handles his emotions much like Rensuke, which means that he has a deep attachment to both people and the company, but rarely makes that attachment clear through emotional outbursts, as Xiu Mei or Min likely would in his situation. Instead, he takes actions that make him look insincere or cold-hearted, since he was the one who moved to have Rensuke fired from his position. When he talks about the initiative with his fellow co-workers, his reasoning rests on his feelings for the company and his desire for it to succeed. It is clear that he will do whatever he can to achieve this goal. Again, in this sense, he is much like Rensuke, having to choose between loyalty to a friend and loyalty to the company that he wishes to succeed. Kazami's father had told him while he was growing up that Japanese workers had no loyalty to their company and had no problem switching jobs, so Kazami picks the company over personal considerations. In the end that makes him more akin to many of the Japanese characters in this show rather than the Chinese characters. His words, though not saturated with emotion the way an American might expect them to be, display his true emotions and his deep love for the company, even though he speaks in distant, formal language. In a scene in the final episode, after Rensuke has left Regolith and lost a project to that same company, Kazami and Rensuke have a conversation outdoors, one that is laden with feelings and regrets about the past, but they use language that makes them sound as if

they are strangers to the ears of someone unfamiliar with the situation or expression of emotion in Japanese.

The second exception, which poses an even more puzzling piece for analysis, is a pair of older Japanese men who run a restaurant and allow Xiu Mei to move into a bedroom upstairs. Both gentlemen react to situations much like Xiu Mei herself, without thinking what the consequences might be, such as chastising and warning away the president of a powerful company when they are worried for their friends' wellbeing. Only rarely do either one of them appear to withhold a single thought or emotion, usually when another character steps in to warn them. Often their speech is informal, as if they are trying to make any customer feel like family, and they welcome Xiu Mei to live with them the first day they meet her. Unlike Kazami, who is a Chinese character raised and enculturated in a Japanese society, both of these characters do not seem to have a background that explains their emotional transparency. The restaurant they own and operate is a Chinese restaurant and one of the two stayed in China for a time while he learned to cook Chinese food, so there are connections with China but neither one is Chinese. Additionally, when compared to Onuki Yuzuki's father, they are dissimilar though close in age. While all three can claim to own a business, Onuki Shogen's is more lucrative and allows him to interact with a society of wealthy Japanese and international businessmen. The owners of the restaurant, on the other hand, appear to spend most of their time with the female characters of the story and interact with them more easily than with others. Also, although the narrative never states it, there is the possibility that they

are a couple, as they are exceptionally close and live together, which could provide a reason for the writers to treat them differently.

One way to analyze *Tsuki no Koibito* is to look at specific characters, their personalities, and speech patterns to see how they tie together. As an example, consider the first episode of the series. Hazuki Rensuke, the president of Regolith, has the wealth, employment, and social status that make him the social superior of most other characters in the show. He is usually brusque in his speech, callous, and shows very little understanding toward most people, particularly when they may compromise the future of his beloved company. In everyday life, he rarely uses polite forms, instead preferring to speak in plain form. For example, when he visits the new display room for his company to inspect the work being done, all of his orders are abrupt and spoken in plain command forms. He says things in a peremptory fashion such as “*isu o dashite*” (bring out chairs). When in a meeting with the senior members of Regolith, his language switches to the more formal *-masu* endings and while technically this is considered a polite manner of speaking, he speaks in a tone that is dismissive and condescending. In this situation, the “polite” form actually manages to sound impolite and creates distance between himself and the employees offering ideas or critiques. However, he also frequently uses plain form when speaking with Xiu Mei and, by the end of the first episode, it is clear that he uses this form in a friendly manner, hoping to make her feel more at home and close the social distance between them, a Chinese ex-factory worker and a Japanese company president. In all of the above circumstances, one can see that both his personality and the situations play a role in how he chooses to speak and what those choices imply.

Ninomiya Maemi, on the other hand, has a distinctly different way of acting and speaking. She is the head of a small company, consisting of three people, to which Regolith contracts out a portion of its projects. In one of the earliest scenes in the first episode, Maemi can be seen directing numerous Regolith workers in putting together the first Regolith store in China. In this work environment, she treats everyone in a friendly manner and the two directly in her employ like family, using plain form and often patting them encouragingly. Even though Rensuke is technically her boss, she still treats him in much the same way that she does her employees, using plain form and speaking casually with him. It is established that they were friends in college and have known each other for years, so their relationship would not be one requiring formal speech. The only time she does use formal speech and titles with him is when she wants to come across as mocking. In the show, a minor character is told that Rensuke hates being called *shachou* (president), so they should refrain from referring to him in that way. In the aforementioned scene, Maemi shouts out orders to everyone, directing them to make changes that Rensuke requested. In response, he tells her that if she yells like that no man will ever approach her. After she tells one of her employees to move the chair Rensuke was sitting on, she turns to him and says “*Ano, koko orite moraimasuka, shachou?*” (Excuse me, would you mind stepping down from here, president?). *Moraimasu* means “to receive” and is an extremely humble way to ask for a favor placing oneself below the person being asked, as if she was asking to receive the important favor of Rensuke moving from his seat. Since the audience knows that he dislikes the title and that Maemi rarely uses polite language with him in addition to the tone she used, it is clear that she

only uses that sort of speech as a way to gently mock her friend. Also, unlike most of the characters, Maemi often elongates her vowels in a sentence, dragging them out and making the words sound more playful. Frequently she can be seen using this in potentially awkward or tense situations, defusing them somewhat. For example, when she is faced with a romantic advance that she is not interested in, she uses language in a way to decline his advance playfully and not offend him, saying in a cheerful voice that she would pick a more attractive guy, elongating the final sentence particle *yo*.

While the two aforementioned characters use plain form frequently in their dealings with other people, Kazami is quite the opposite as he prefers more formal language. In every meeting he attends, he unfailingly uses respectful language with everybody. Even in informal settings when he is with Rensuke, his language is consistently on the respectful side (for example, preferring to use *-masu* form while Rensuke speaks in plain form with him). When he asks Maemi if she would like to go out to eat with him, he speaks only using formal language with verbs ending in *-masu* despite the fact that his position within Regolith would appear to put him at a higher rank within the company than Maemi. Yet she responds to him with jokes, mostly using plain form. The only character with whom he uses plain speech is Xiu Mei, and there are a few conclusions that may be drawn from this. One might assume that he was displaying his position as a leader within the company, but since he rarely if ever does that with anyone and later in the series he actually goes out of his way to help her it is not the most likely conclusion. It may be then that he feels a closer bond to her based on their common Chinese background paired with the fact that she is in a strange, uncomfortable place.

Thus he speaks to her in a friendly manner in Japanese when they cannot use Chinese. Considering the help he offers her in relation to her career, this does seem to be a likely conclusion, particularly at the end of the series when his helpful impulses toward her are displayed more fully.

Xiu Mei, being a recent learner of Japanese, is in a completely different category from these other characters. Considering that she has recently acquired her Japanese, she uses it in a somewhat less purposeful fashion, as a rough tool to convey her thoughts. Often when speaking she switches from polite to plain form with no clear change in situation. For example, while she is sitting at the remains of her old factory's worksite, she meets Rensuke for the first time. Once she realizes he is Japanese, she begins to use her somewhat awkward Japanese, using verbs ending in *-masu* for a few sentences. However, in her first question to Rensuke she asks "*Oi. Kisama nihonjin arimasune.*" Technically, this could be translated as "Hey. You're Japanese, aren't you?" However, the implications contained within the pronoun *kisama* lead most people to translate it as "bastard", as it is one of the rudest forms of address in Japanese. As such, it is strange in this context for two reasons. First, it would be highly unusual to pair *kisama* with the formal form of *aru*, *arimasu*, as these two are at very different places on the scale of respectfulness. Similarly, a person probably would never address someone they had just met using *kisama*. It would be outright rude, whatever their social standing was. As such, Rensuke is perplexed during their first meeting, echoing "*Kisama?*" in confusion. This is a situation that a number of the characters encounter when dealing with Xiu Mei, but the reaction is always the same, a confounded sort of amusement. Additionally, somewhat

later during her first conversation with Rensuke, she stops using verbs with *-masu* endings and instead begins using plain form. The situation does not seem warrant changing politeness levels in the middle of the conversation, as nothing changes between the two speakers. One has to assume that this change is strictly based on her lack of skill with Japanese. Additionally, during a scene which flashes back to her days learning Japanese, her teacher appears to first give her the plain form version of verbs and drill her on those before introducing her to the *-masu* forms. Thus using plain form is likely more comfortable for her, so when she switches to it during conversations it could signify that she feels more at ease.

Scripted television shows, such as *terebi dorama*, require a significant amount of time used for the writing and storytelling, in order to make the characters believable and interesting. Therefore much of the language is carefully constructed to be intentionally revealing about these characters and written with a well-defined personality in mind. *Tsuki no Koibito* demonstrates how appropriateness can be achieved through different linguistic devices as well as how great a role personality and relationships can play in determining appropriateness. Some television shows, however, utilize scripts substantially less and rely on more spontaneous speech from those involved. This offers a glance at the ways language can express identity and social relationships in a more unrehearsed fashion, allowing people to intentionally and unintentionally express themselves through language use. A good example of this is the Japanese variety show, a medium wherein audience reaction is included within the show, allowing us to draw additional conclusions.

Japanese Variety Shows

There are numerous talk shows on Japanese television that draw in large audiences. Much like on American television, these shows air during the day and evening, filling many different time slots. A number of the talk shows are on air in the morning, before people are at work. For example, the relatively new morning show called *Sukkiri!!* airs at 8:00AM, when people are likely getting ready for work or school. There is a relatively simple standard format wherein famous guests are invited onto the show so the hosts can interview them and, if the guests are music stars, they often do a performance as well. In many cases, these talk shows might be more accurately termed variety shows. While a substantial portion of the show is devoted to interviews, there are often games filling part of the show's time slot. While the standard for talk shows in the United States is to have one or at most two hosts, Japanese variety shows appear to live by the rule that more is better, because it is rare to see one with less than three hosts. These different hosts usually project distinctive personalities that play against each other, often for comedic effect. However, many of the topics of conversation are similar to what one would find on an American talk show: questions about a star's music or movies, teasing questions about girlfriends or boyfriends, and the like.

When trying to decide which talk show or variety show to analyze, the list of criteria was somewhat shorter than that for the Japanese drama. First of all, since there is no overarching storyline, there was no need to consider how manageable the size of a season was as there would be no need to watch all of it. However, the other criteria

remain relevant. The biggest constraint was, again, availability because, since this portion of the study was conducted in the United States, many Japanese shows were unavailable. Popularity was another consideration, given that it would measure how much the Japanese audience enjoyed and connected to the show. Finally, a potential show should have somewhat recently aired episodes, perhaps even from an ongoing season, to fully indicate its contemporary relevance.

Luckily, a well-known television show, SMAPxSMAP, fits all of the criteria very well. The show began in 1995 and has been airing new episodes every year since then. Since its creation, it has consistently received higher ratings than most other shows in its genre: the average rating for a show of this type falls between 10 and 20, while SMAPxSMAP's viewership rating is generally above 20. (The rating is calculated by analyzing the amount of data transmitted and how many households tune in and receive that data, making a higher number indicative of greater popularity.) Japan's viewing audience is obviously fond of the show. As a result, most episodes are easily accessed. Some episodes over the years are not readily available, but this comes as no surprise since there were so many and the show thrived for years before the equipment to upload it onto the internet was available. However, a substantial number were available, including episodes from 2011.

SMAPxSMAP would probably be best explained as a variety show. The show has a cooking section, a musical section, an interview, and often a skit or two parodying something recent in pop culture. At the start of the show in 1996, the hosts were what we

would consider a boy band: five young males who sang and danced their own catchy music and choreography. This means that now, fifteen years later, the “boy band” is a group of men nearly into their forties, though they still have a large fanbase. In addition, each member of SMAP is well-known in Japan for his acting career and each also appears in at least one drama every year. Over the years, the format has shifted slightly, but still follows a generally consistent format. To the sound of much applause, the celebrity guest appears on a stage that is designed to look like a restaurant set up for an Iron Chef competition. Nakai Masahiro, one of the members of SMAP walks onto stage, dressed like a waiter and gestures the guest to a table. After they make a bit of small talk, Nakai asks what sort of food they like or what they want to order for the day. When the guest answers, Nakai rings his bell and shouts out the order, which the other four members, split into two rival cooking teams, begin to cook. Nakai then returns to interviewing the guest for a few moments. This is usually followed either by a game that SMAP and their guest participate in or the guest being taken down to the kitchen to talk with everyone else. Once the food is done, the guest and SMAP return upstairs where the guest tries the two different meals. This is only accomplished with some interruption, usually in the form of Shingo (another SMAP member) appearing on stage dressed in a costume parodying one of the guest’s movies. When done eating, the guest must choose the winning team of cooks, who then receive a prize, accompanied by a kiss on the cheek if the guest is female. From here, the show can vary a bit, but there is always a musical number that allows SMAP to perform with the guest. Before that, there are sometimes comedic parodies or other skits.

In SMAPxSMAP, unlike *Tsuki no Koibito* or other Japanese dramas, the situations and individuals are more limited. There are not as many different relationships and settings to be played out. Furthermore, most of SMAP's guests have, more or less, the same social status as the band members, so status differences are not invoked. However, alongside a few consistent lines or catch-phrases, there is a greater element of choice or spontaneity in speaking compared to a fully scripted drama. Additionally, there is an audience present for SMAPxSMAP, which was not true for the drama, and that adds another dimension to interaction. The audience, as far as the quick camera shots reveal, consists solely of females and each seems to be wearing a *yukata*. For the most part, the audience is used for occasional reaction shots, panning through the crowd when something unusual, amusing, or exciting happens, as well as cheering or vocalizing emotional reactions to the scene. However, SMAP and their guest star sometimes talk to the audience. When a member of SMAP does so, it is usually in a jovial, joking manner using plain form and looking for confirmation that what they just said or suggested on stage. This fits the atmosphere of the show perfectly, since it is created to be a fun, entertaining television program. It is also appropriate when considering the personas of the individuals talking to the crowd: the members of SMAP who address the crowd most frequently are the ones who are more outgoing, make jokes, and laugh frequently. For example, Katori Shingo is usually portrayed as being fun and light-hearted, always in the midst of silly antics, so it is not a surprise that he turns to the audience frequently and speaks with them or asks their opinion or makes faces at them. In one specific instance, after a successful round in a game they played with their guest star when he makes a

difficult shot, he turns to the audience to say “*Iti jane!*” (not bad!) to which they respond with an affirmative noise. When another member of SMAP moves to display his own skill at the game, he says “*Ganbarou!*” (“Let’s do our best!”) and the audience responds with “*Ganbare!*” (“*Do your best!*”) as a form of encouragement. Picking this over “*Ganbatte!*” may be significant since the former is more forceful and generally not something a person would use when speaking to a superior. All this could be contributed to a desire to make the audience feel closer, like they are a part of the show.

Their interactions with the guest, while still full of jokes and friendly laughs, is conducted on a more formal level. SMAP always talks to guests using respectful language and verbs with *-masu* endings, even when they’re clearly speaking on a friendly level. Although they are spending the day together and are all famous, there is still a social distance between the guest star and SMAP. In fact, when the guest is foreign and does not speak Japanese, the translator translates their words in the same fashion, using formal language rather than plain forms of verbs or the like. When talking to one another, on the other hand, SMAP members speak using very casual language, such as straightforward commands without softening by adding “*kudasai*” to the end -- thus equivalent to an English request without “please.”

At the end of one episode, an older Japanese female singing duo, Pink Lady, appears on the show to sing and dance a few numbers with SMAP. Coming on at the end of the episode meant that they were not present for the earlier section of the show when SMAP interviewed and cooked for a different guest. However, after their musical number

they did answer a few questions from the band members. In this short exchange, there are some noticeable differences between their and SMAP's style of speaking. Generally, when the members SMAP speak to one another they end up talking over each other and waving off what another one might have been saying. When Pink Lady is interviewed, on the other hand, the two women never speak over one another, allowing the one speaking to finish her thought before speaking up with her own opinion. If they intend to interrupt, they touch the other's shoulder to let them know that they have something to say. There are a few potential reasons for this; the members of Pink Lady, while female, are also substantially older than the members of SMAP; most of SMAP have birthdates in the early 1970s whereas Pink Lady was singing as a group in 1973, the members at least in their teens at this time. There is the obvious difference of gender as well. Last of all, they are guests on the show, so they may be acting more formally than the hosts of the show would, even with each other. Likely, the difference in their speaking styles can be attributed to a combination of all of these facts.

In another episode, SMAP and their guests play a game called "Three Letter Horseback Archery" wherein they split into two teams and attempt to spell a word by hitting a Japanese character on a board with an arrow. As the name implies, it is a word consisting of three characters from the hiragana syllabary. The only stipulations are that the syllables must be in the proper order to form the word and the word must fall into the given category. Throughout this portion of the episode, the players are referred to as shoguns, for example Katori-shogun or Oguri-shogun. The two announcers stick to this form of address as well as the subtitles that appear with the player's name when it is their

turn. Obviously none of them are shoguns (Japanese generals of the feudal era), but this creates a character that plays along with the game, something which their elaborate outfits support as well. The two guests, Ikuta Toma and Oguri Shun, initially respond to comments and questions in *-masu* form. There could be a number of reasons for this, such as being guests, the hosts being older, or just nervousness. (Both of the guests admit to feeling very nervous before the game.) It would be reasonable to believe that they would default to the standard respectful form used for unfamiliar situations if they were feeling a twinge of nervousness. Indeed, as they relax throughout the course of the game, they tend to shift between *-masu* form and plain form, often preferring the latter when in casual conversation.

As for the members of SMAP, whether they use *-masu* or plain form seems to be highly situational. Generally speaking, in other episodes or segments such as Bistro SMAP, they tend to use plain form when speaking, but there are a few exceptions. When speaking directly to other SMAP members or their guests, Nakai (playing the games announcer) tends to use plain form, assuming a casual and joking relationship between them. However, when referring to the score or announcing whose turn is next, he speaks using *-masu* form and generally more “polite” language. For example, when telling Kimura to start his turn, he says “*Kimura-shogun, onegaishimasu.*” Literally this translates into “do a favor,” but here it can be understood as a respectful way to ask him to begin. Another instance occurs when one group is trying to spell the word *moyashi*, but the second player hits the “*ra*” button with his arrow. Nakai says “*Mo-ra-shi desune?*” (“Mo-ra-shi, right?”). There is some teasing here, since *morashi* is not the word they

were trying to spell and neither is it a fruit or vegetable, the given category. *Desu* is usually translated as “is”, but it mainly is a marker used to make a sentence more respectful or polite. Here Nakai is playing his part as a friendly, playful announcer rather than friend or fellow band member. Interestingly, the voiceover used to explain the rules and recount the game solely uses plain form.

This shifting between formal and plain forms can also be seen when some of the other band members speak. Shingo, who is well-established as a playful person and very rarely serious, tends to speak in plain form. However, when talking about Oguri Shun, he tells the audience “He is very nervous today, so please take care of him” and uses the well-known phrase “*Yoroshiku onegaishimasu.*” This is likely an example of him using a traditional phrase because it is so prevalently utilized when asking for favors. As he clapped Oguri on the shoulder, he says this, looking at the audience and laughing, so it is not a particularly serious request though it uses polite forms. Later during the game, Ikuta Toma, tells everyone that Goro took him out for a meal, *motsu-nabe*. Nakai then pokes fun at Goro by saying that he must have been waiting all day for Ikuta to mention that. A few minutes after this, Nakai calls his fellow SMAP member to take his turn but instead of using *-shogun*, *-san*, or *-kun* he refers to him as *Goro-chan*. This is particularly amusing since *-chan* is a diminutive suffix usually used for children or females, providing a dash of humor and apparently opening him up for other teasing. This is noticeable because immediately after referring to him this way, Nakai calls him Motsugoro. Based on Goro’s expression of confusion, this is a brand new nickname created on the spot, seemingly spurred on by the use of *Goro-chan*. Everyone, audience included, picks up the

nickname immediately, chanting Motsugoro and Ikuta calls him *Motsu-niisan* (Motsu-brother). The nicknaming occurred within a minute or two, demonstrating the playfulness of Japanese and the ability to bend rules (using *-chan* for a middle-aged man, for instance).

In a different episode, the guest is the popular singing group from Japan, Morning Musume (often translated as “Morning Girls” or “Good Morning Girls”). This setting is slightly different because rather than demonstrating their regular personalities the members of SMAP play characters in a skit who interact with Morning Musume. In this case, Goro plays the father, Shingo the son, and Kimura (dressed in pink) as their pet dog, P-chan, for whom the segment is named, *Petto no P-chan* (P-chan the Pet). In the first scene, Shingo and Goro speak to each other and P-chan, both using plain form and Goro often adds *yo* (“you know”) to the end of his sentences. When they realize the singing group is eating nearby, the father tells Shingo to go get his camera, “*Kamera o totte,*” which is one of the simplest ways to make a request, with no pleasantry softening the end. Between friends and especially family members, this is not an uncommon way to ask someone to do something and underlines the closeness of the two characters, particularly since Shingo obviously does not think twice about acquiescing to the request.

Once the three find their way into the next section of the room, they begin talking with Morning Musume. P-chan makes his appearance first and the girls tend to murmur things like “*Kawaii!*” (“Cute!”) or “*Demo, me ga kowai, ne?*” (“But the eyes are a little scary, aren’t they?”). They are talking amongst themselves, not to anyone in particular,

using casual language. Shingo and Papa join soon and they speak to Morning Musume using respectful language (“*Ano, Morning Musume desuka?*”/ “Excuse me, are you Morning Musume?”). Based on the social status of the girls as famous singers and the imagined social status of Shingo and Goro as average people this would be the natural way to speak to them. P-chan begins hopping around and gesturing, which leads Shingo to translate for him: “*Hitotsu dake onegai ga arimasu. ‘Love Machine’ o utate kudasai onegaishimasu.*” (“I have just one favor! Could you please sing ‘Love Machine’?”). This is respectful language and functions like a polite request in English. First, he uses *-masu* form to announce that he will ask for a favor. Then in the next sentence, *utate* is the command form of *uta*, “to sing” and *kudasai* provides the “please.” The addition of *onegaishimasu* adds another level of respect, making the request more earnest and humble, conveying how much of a favor this is for the asker. The girls hesitate in saying no, before one stands up and apologizes saying that this is a time for resting, but still using plain form.

After agreeing to a table tennis match, they head into another room and two members of Morning Musume begin a match against P-chan and Shingo. Morning Musume wins the first match, so Shingo turns to P-chan and asks “*Dou suru, P-chan?*” (“What should we do, P-chan?”). As usual, this is plain form between family members, but the human asking their pet dog what to do is an amusing twist. In response, P-chan hops onto the table, kneeling and bowing to the girls. Shingo catches on quickly, making the same motions, and says “*Mou ichido dake onegaishimasu!*” (“Just one more chance, please!”). Naturally the girls agree, sighing that there is nothing else they can do. In this

round, P-chan scores a point, then the girls do, after which P-chan falls down to slump over the table. In reaction, the girls murmur back and forth calling P-chan weak: “*P-chan yowai na...*” This is very informal and directed toward each other rather than the character himself. At this point, Shingo breaks character and walks up to the camera, addressing the audience, especially those watching the scene on television. He tells us that he has never seen Kimura (P-chan’s actor) like this before, using plain form (“*Hajimete mita!*”/“First time I’ve seen this!”). *Mita* is the plain past tense form of *miru* (to see), so when Shingo uses it to speak with the audience he is speaking on a friendly level with no attempt to distance himself from them.

The use of Japanese heavily depends on the situation and TV shows are no exception. Each individual’s speech combines with their actions to create a personality or identity. In the *terebi dorama*, Rensuke’s actions alone would paint an incomplete picture of him as a person, so his words reveal more of his inner self, both the content and the form. Characters like Maemi display the ease with which sarcasm can be used in the Japanese language, simply by being polite or impolite at unexpected times. In the variety show context, SMAP use their speech to connect to each other, to their celebrity guests, and, possibly most importantly, to their audience. Combine their words with their antics and they create endearing TV personalities, like the outrageous and friendly Shingo or the quietly intense yet approachable Kimura. Everyone has a distinct style of speaking that plays into their unique selves without which there would only be an incomplete picture. These examples make it clear that linguistic “politeness” is an unpredictable guide to the

appropriateness of Japanese speech. “Polite” forms can be utilized for both polite and impolite purposes.

CHAPTER 3: TAKARAZUKA THEATRE

The shows of the Takarazuka Revue Company, as Reiko a girl working at a hostel I visited emphasized, “are very very popular.” When advising me on the best way to buy tickets, her single best recommendation was that I not wait until the day of the show to buy them. They are often sold out by then because “people really like the show.” Indeed, over the last century Takarazuka has become *the* all-female revue of Japan, eclipsing in popularity the other troupes that existed alongside them throughout the 20th century. In more recent history, entire runs of tickets have been sold out even before opening night. Fans can be found throughout the globe, even fans who have never been to a live performance but have joined online communities to keep up with all the news and be able to buy souvenirs for a show they have never even been to.

In some way, Takarazuka has a uniquely Japanese feel to it that theatre fans also experience when watching Noh or Kabuki. Granted, both of the latter have enjoyed a much longer history than Takarazuka and generally find wider acclaim on an international scale. However, all of them have qualities that mark them as distinctly Japanese, yet distinct from each other as well. One trait they share is that every role is performed by only one sex: male in the case of Kabuki and Noh; female in the case of

Takarazuka. As with all types of acting, these individuals must adopt another persona, an alternate identity on the stage. When it comes to these three theatre traditions, this alternate persona can be a much longer lasting one with wider effects on the actors or actresses. Often actors in Hollywood fear being typecast, put into the same roles again and again, not being able to try something new. Yet Noh, Kabuki, and Takarazuka performers must submit to some typecasting. Once actors or actresses are given a male or female role, it is unlikely if not impossible to switch to the other later in their careers. Thus, they must become familiar with their assigned or chosen gender roles (*musumeyaku* versus *otokoyaku*) for the stage and must be able to portray them perfectly, or their careers are in jeopardy.

How well a Takarasienne fills the expected role is influenced by many different factors. Some basic aspects of appearance cannot be changed or tweaked in order to make them a better candidate for one type of role or the other, so the taller and more “masculine” looking females tend to be put into the *otokoyaku* role. Other things, however, are well within the scope of the actresses to toy with to make them more or less appropriate for the gender role they are assigned. Things such as tone of voice, style of dress, and use of language can make them a better or worse *musumeyaku* (female role) or *otokoyaku* (male role) in the eyes of their fans and employers. In this chapter, these more malleable aspects are considered, particularly the use of language as it affects reactions and interactions. In order to make this investigation more orderly, the chapter is divided into three parts: one which deals with the language and scripts within the show, another discussing language and its uses in interactions outside the show, and the final part

discussing an after-show procession known as *demachi* (which might be appropriately translated into “exit ceremony”).

The Show

Language is a useful tool, not only in everyday life but also in plays and other make-believe situations. The speech of characters can provide clues to details that would otherwise be impossible to convey. While setting and acting play a major role in making the play enjoyable and interesting, they cannot carry all of the weight when it comes to storytelling. Just as on television, the grammar and speech styles of characters give insight into their personalities. This process, one in which language gives viewers a more nuanced view of characters, is particularly interesting and subtle in Japanese. With so many varying ways to say things and so many different types of honorifics, there is a myriad of ways to give additional insight to the audience about the characters individually, the settings, and how everyone in the play fits together.

Since “The Man in the Iron Mask” is the third story in a trilogy and relies on historical detail, there is much that needs to be explained to the audience before they can dive into the main plot. Because of this, the show includes a narrator to provide that background. The narrator is male (though played by a female) and his clothing and tone are foppish, indeed more so than any character involved in the play’s plot. This provides a challenge for both the writers and the actress who is playing him, making a male character played by a female actress effeminate yet masculine at the same time. His

clothes were in the style of other male characters in the show, but with added frills. The actress playing him also used a deep voice similar to the deeper tones adopted by *otokoyaku* playing other men, however with a slightly effeminate touch. Being the narrator, this character was the only one who spoke directly with the audience and never interacted with the other characters, though he was on stage with them at the same time. Likely because of this, he used more formal speech than anyone else, as he was speaking to individuals in the audience who were not characters but more like guests. After all, when speaking with a group of people one is unfamiliar with, erring on the side of formality is preferred by the Japanese. For example, the narrator often makes requests of the audience to listen or watch at particular points in the show. Whenever he does this, he uses verb forms that emphasize the social distance between himself and the audience, preferring to go with request forms such as *kudasaimasu* instead of the commonly used *kudasai*. Additionally, he uses the phrase *~de gozaimasu* rather than *arimasu*, which fits his character on more than one level. In modern Japan, *gozaimasu* is only regularly used in standard phrases like “*ohayou gozaimasu*” (good morning) but rarely as a standard verb. However, it has its roots as a humble form of *arimasu*, something a servant might use when speaking to a master, thus putting the speaker in a lower social position. By humbling himself, the narrator acknowledges that he is there to serve the audience but also displays his place in a historical drama, harking back to a time when the use of this verb on a daily basis was most prevalent.

Additionally, depending on the situation and the characters involved, language can be particularly revealing regarding how characters deal with each other. In one scene,

the three musketeers, (Aramis, Athos, and Porthos) are in a tavern, dashing here and there, interacting with the customers and servers, planning to snatch free food. During this frenzied routine, it is clear that the accepted style of speech in this establishment is completely informal, using plain form in every circumstance. However, when d'Artagnan enters the scene, a servant of the king, he addresses everyone with formal speech, preferring to use *-masu* forms. One would be tempted to say that he is simply being polite to the tavern-goers. However, since plain form is the standard in the tavern, by using *-masu* form verbs he is actually making himself stand out from the crowd, holding himself apart from them and not allowing them any familiarity. In fact, even when confronted with his old friends, the musketeers, he refuses to use any informal speech, even though that is how they speak with him. They welcome him as a friend but his refusal to share in their familiarity is, rather than being polite, a cold dismissal of their friendship and attachment to him. Once again, politeness is impolite.

During the same scene, another character, a high-ranking military man but one whose rank falls below d'Artagnan, uses plain form and one might expect it to have the opposite effect of d'Artagnan's style of speech. If he enters the tavern and uses plain form, then it would signify his acceptance of their norms. However, based on his interactions, this is not the case at all. While d'Artagnan is distant and unreachable with his cool dismissal of the tavern-goers, this man joins in with their style of speech, but it is understood that he does so because he is a rough man, unable to use language to separate himself from them. Indeed, he shows himself to be nothing more than a rough-and-tumble bully, invading personal space, shouting at innocent workers, and ruining meals

by toppling them to the ground. He is seemingly unable to separate himself from these people by refined language, so he demonstrates his dominance in another way, using cruelty to place himself above them. Even when d'Artagnan speaks with him formally, the man obeys his order, but refuses to speak with him in anything but plain form. The meaning behind a particular style of speech can shift when accompanied by different actions. Therefore, even though two characters may speak similarly, it can have very different effects based on their dissimilar actions and reactions.

Throughout the show, nearly all of the main characters shift their style of speaking depending on circumstance and relationships, having to decide when to be more or less familiar, more or less distant. There is, however, one exception to this rule: King Louis. Without exception, he speaks to everyone in plain form, refusing to change the way he acts based on another person or new situation. Any character interacting with him is expected to, and generally does, speak using humble and respectful terms, making sure to lower themselves and elevate him. His refusal to shift his speech can be attributed, at least in part, to his position as the king of France. To his mind, everyone is below him, they all know it, and it is unnecessary for him to change any of his language or mannerisms for them. It is their responsibility to do so for him; the weight of verbally recognizing difference falls onto everyone but himself. Even his mother is expected to speak in respectful terms to him. However, not everything can be related directly to his status as king, because his twin brother, Phillippe, reacts differently in his position. Generally, Phillippe does speak with others in plain form, as a king would be expected to, but he is more than willing to speak respectfully given a formal circumstance.

During the course of the play, Raoul, Louise's love interest, is wrongfully imprisoned because King Louis wants to possess Louise for his own. While in prison, a cardinal meets with him to discuss his presence in the prison and his fate in the long term, including the fact that Louise has been employed by the king. During this conversation, one might expect that Raoul, being in a low and unfavorable position, would speak to the cardinal in respectful terms. By the same token, it seems sensible to expect the cardinal to speak in plain form to him, cardinal being such an important rank within society. However, just the opposite is true. Raoul's distaste for the man and his complicity in the plot is demonstrated perfectly by his refusal to afford the cardinal the linguistic respect his position commands. All precedents and cultural logic dictate that a man of God, particularly one who wields such power, should be spoken to with respect or even reverence. The hopelessness Raoul feels for his situation is also conveyed, because he does not try to curry favor with this man in order to gain release or even just a chance to see his Louise again, so he throws caution to the wind and speaks with him however he wishes. The cardinal, on the other hand, is the perfect picture of control, knowing full well that he has the upper hand in this situation. Thus his careful use of respectful language is almost a slap to Raoul's face, a reminder of how much control he, the cardinal, has. He chooses to use carefully constructed language rather than converse with Raoul on his level. Additionally, as in previous circumstances, this ensures that he maintains the social distance between them, a reminder that Raoul is not and never will be his equal.

Early in the play, d'Artagnan recalls a scene with his beloved Constance, his lover who has perished before the play began. It is a simple scene as they talk to one another, during which he gives her a necklace, a symbol of his enduring love for her. They speak to one another in plain form, discussing their love and plans for the future. In doing so, they demonstrate their closeness; a more formal style of speech would imply distance and lack of affection. However, after he gives her the locket, she informs him that she must leave in order to go into hiding with the younger royal twin, Phillippe (at this point in time still an infant). She must care for him away from the palace because he represents both a potential future threat to Louis' rule and also a potential replacement should anything happen to the crown prince. This clearly brings the two of them deep pain and d'Artagnan tells her that he will wait for her and continue to love her even while she is away. In response, Constance asks for a promise, but when doing so she switches to the *-masu* form of the verb, making it sound as if it were a formal request. He responds in kind, promising to wait for her using the form *yakusoku shimasu* rather than the plain form version *yakusoku suru* (make a promise). Initially this may seem puzzling: why would two lovers as close as Constance and d'Artagnan change to formal language? The affection between them is clearly not diminished, so it is not a case of cold feelings or attempts at distance. Instead, the shift demonstrates the serious nature of this promise. They use formal and respectful language when talking about the promise, because it shows to one another how highly they think of it and their intention to treat the promise as if it were an official one, between high-ranking individuals. While a promise in plain

language might be kept just as well, this is a symbolic gesture, putting their future together in a place of honor and respect.

The style of speech between Louise and Louis versus that of Louise and Phillippe is a perfect example of how language can convey and characterize relationships between people. In the face of Raoul's capture, Louise comes to King Louis to beg and plead for his life and potential release. When he shows reluctance, she plays right into his plans for her, saying that she will become his servant, perfect for him since he desires to have her for a lover eventually. In their conversations, Louise stays respectful, as would be entirely appropriate for someone talking to a king. However, there is another layer to this in that Louise rightfully blames him for Raoul's arrest, so she refuses to allow any emotional closeness between the two of them, even if the king intends to take her for a lover. While he may succeed in a physical relationship (though the audience is never told one way or the other), she will always remain mentally and emotionally distant, even in her manner of speaking. This is in direct contrast to her relationship with Phillippe when he replaces Louis, demonstrating the impact that a friendship can have on language even when status differences are present. Phillippe first meets Louise during his charade as Louis when she makes an attempt on his life. Shock, confusion, and depression are his first reactions, keenly feeling the rejection he faces from her, but he informs her immediately of his true identity. Through the rest of the play, Louise comes to feel affection for him, spending time with him as a friend and not a servant, eventually falling in love with him after Raoul's death. During this process, she adopts a familiar manner with him, speaking in plain form to demonstrate the closeness she feels to him, despite their differences in

status. Clearly simple social standing is not enough to determine how people will talk to one another. If it were, Louise would speak to both Louis and Phillipe with respectful terms and consistently use *-masu* endings in their conversations. This instance illustrates the impact and importance a relationship has on speech as well as the role that language plays in performing and demonstrating a relationship.

Speech and Behavior Before and During the Show

Since a writer carefully plans out dialogue, speech within a play can reveal something about the crafting of language to convey specific characterizations. However, it is equally as important to study language in other contexts, such as its use in everyday life. Granted, many interactions in day-to-day activities have a certain formulaic nature to them. Still the importance of language outside the scripted world of Takarazuka performances cannot be ignored. Speech is the principle way people communicate and express themselves, the easiest way for people to know who you are and what you think. Thus, the speech context surrounding the show comprised of the language exchanges of guests and employees also deserves attention.

The composition of the crowd at the performances I witnessed was much like one would expect, from reading publications about Takarazuka. The overwhelming majority of attendees were older women, generally middle-aged. Additionally, there were some younger women as well, probably in their early twenties. Overall, there were few children, but this was partly because school was in session during the weekdays, making

it more difficult for parents to bring their children along, should they have wished to. There were a few men at both performances, though a greater number at the second one I attended, thanks to a rather large tour group. Additionally it appeared that the men in attendance were generally there as a part of a group or couple, very rarely visiting on their own. Based on my seating arrangements, however, I was limited to the upper floor, which is some distance from the most expensive seats, so I was unable to assess that portion of the crowd as completely.

Before the play began, there was discussion among the attendees, making for a lively atmosphere in the theatre. One of the earliest guests, an older woman, took her seat a few spaces away from mine, initially quiet after asking the theatre employees for help to her seat. Another woman of similar age entered the theatre and the two women waved at each other, clearly acquainted, if not friends. From here one might expect either woman to walk up or down the stairs to visit with the other, to share their thoughts in a conversation, as the stereotype is that Japanese people are quiet and inherently polite. However, the older woman close to me immediately began shouting at her friend, at least ten rows away, in a scene that would not look out of place in an American movie theatre before previews. They carried on a brief conversation in this manner, speaking in plain form with one another about their seats and expectations for the show. If their status as friends was unknown before, this exchange clearly demonstrated it. Not only did they forego honorifics and the formal *-masu* ending on verbs, but they also felt comfortable enough with each other to shout conversations across a theatre. None of the other guests in the theatre seemed to think anything of it and none of the theatre employees felt it

necessary to ask them to quiet down. Considering the reactions of other individuals, this was perfectly acceptable behavior.

Before during and after the show, there is a gift shop open and connected to the lobby. Here fans can buy any number of things from pictures to CDs and DVDs to specially-themed Takarazuka snacks. As the theatre began to fill with people, two young women sat down next to me, possibly in their late teens or early twenties, friends and both of which had bought a number of items in the shop before the show started. They spoke excitedly about the souvenirs they had just purchased, using plain form with one another and not bothering to use respectful forms of words. Most of their purchases were photos of their favorite Takarasiennes or books covered with pictures and information on various past plays. When referring to specific actresses, they often used suffixes such as *-san* to denote respect and status difference. However, in some cases, fans referred to their favorite *musumeyaku* using the diminutive suffix *-chan*. However in no case did these two girls (or anyone else) ever refer to the *otokoyaku* with that same terminology. Yes, they are understood to be women playing men's parts, but the cutesy quality of the term *-chan* precludes it from being used for *otokoyaku*. Female they may be, but never small and adorable as *-chan* would imply. When flipping through their newly acquired pictures, these two young women produced what can only be described as squeals of delight. When seeing a picture they particularly enjoyed, they were quick to shout "Oh my God!" in English. In no other part of their conversation was English spoken at all, yet when surprised and pleased these young women used this phrase. They had perhaps picked it up from their days spent learning English and it did seem to express their

sentiment perfectly, as there is no quite equivalent phrase in Japanese. Overall it marked them as individuals who both knew English and appropriate ways to use colloquial English exclamations, thus representing them as both knowledgeable and trendy.

During the second performance of the play, the women sitting near me were substantially different. The older woman sitting next to me had attended the show wearing a complete kimono, a comparatively rare style of dress at these performances. She did not appear to have come to the show with anyone and kept mostly to herself. While many people in the theatre spoke to people nearby (especially when their friends were seated elsewhere), she preferred to stay quiet. There were a few instances though when she spoke to someone nearby and whether it was one of the employees of another member of the audience she unfailingly used formal language, preferring the *-masu* forms of verbs to plain form. She never used any additional honorifics, such as adding the *o-* or *go-* prefixes to any words that could potentially adopt them. Overall, her language appeared to be that of a quiet, polite woman who aimed to emphasize the respect she had for the entire production as well as for those around her. At the same time, however, both her demeanor and language also gave the impression that she considered herself apart from the other people attending the performance, thus making it more difficult for people to strike up conversation with her.

Once the announcement was made that the show would be starting soon, conversations immediately stopped. As the actors took their places on the stage, all attention was drawn directly to them. In fact, throughout the entire show, there was

hardly a whisper to be heard. Looking around confirmed that no one was engaging in conversation. There was one notable exception to this trend: the teenaged girls sitting next to me for the first performance. Indeed they both started out the performance in silence, as everyone else did, but throughout the show every so often a giggle and short whispered conversation could be heard. It was never at the times when the rest of the audience chuckled at an amusing situation and instead at times that appeared to have no reason for such a reaction. However, as soon as I made it a point to try to figure out why they reacted in such a manner, it became clear that they were most likely chattering about the entrance of a favorite star onto the stage or when another one of their favorite stars did something out of the ordinary or perhaps heroic. While the rest of the audience clapped at the very first entrance of big stars on the stage or at the end of songs, the girls did the same but also added commentary during favorite parts of the show. As soon as intermission was announced, the room burst into conversation, so it was likely that other people had also had similar interests but were waiting until a more appropriate time for conversation.

The announcements made over the loud speaker before and after the show provide additional information. The announcements were all in highly formal speech, meant to be both respectful and indeed, in the traditional understanding of the term, “polite.” Similar to the play’s narrator, when informing guests of the time and reminding them that they should take their seats soon, the announcer used the terms *kudasaimasu* and *kudasaimase*, both of which are highly respectful ways to make a request. When in formal situations, especially relating to business and customers, this is not an uncommon form to use,

allowing people to ask for a favor or desired outcome without appearing rude or disrespectful. The announcers also used polite prefixes and suffixes on nouns, for instance using *okyakusama* to refer to their customers in announcements, both *o-* and *-sama* adding a sentiment of respect. Additionally, they also referred to souvenirs as *omiyage*. Technically, *miyage* itself means “souvenir,” but in most contexts people refer to them as *omiyage*, adding the respectful *o-* to the beginning. Here the announcers were simply following common “polite” usage.

Along the same lines, the announcers also used highly humble forms to refer to the theatre and its staff, thereby indirectly showing respect for their customers. For example, the most common verb used with living creatures to describe a state of being (usually roughly translating into “to be” or “is”), is *iru*, or in *-masu* form, *imasu*. In day to day conversation, this is used frequently when wanting to say that someone has or owns something or exists in a place. Instead of using this common verb, the announcements used *oru* in its *-masu* form, *orimasu*. Its core meaning is still the same, but its implications are different. When referring to yourself or your in-group and desiring to appear humble, *orimasu* is a term that will allow you to do just that (and therefore should never be applied to anyone outside of your in-group). The announcer thus informed customers of the existence of beverages, snacks, and gifts on the different levels throughout the building using *orimasu* to indicate that the theatre staff were humbling themselves in the presence of their guests. Another form used was *moshiagemasu*. *Agemasu* (*ageru* in plain form) technically means “to give” and *moshi*, used on its own generally projects hypothetical situations, much like the English word “if.” However, the

two combined are most often used in a phrase on traditional New Year's postcards, which roughly translates into "I give you my best wishes for the new year." In this situation, the announcer used the terms to wish the customers an enjoyable evening and show. Formal language permitted the establishment to convey their respect for the customers with their sincere -- yet humble -- wish that they enjoy their visit.

Other theatre staff adhere to similar standards in their interaction with customers. At the entrance, there are a man and woman at each pair of double doors who open the door, take the customers' tickets, and direct them to the floor where their seats are located. Unless prompted by unusual questions, they use the same basic greetings. As staff hold the door open, they always say "*Irasshaimase!*" to entering customers. The employees manning the ticket collection stations have a standard speech in which they welcome the customers and tell them to enjoy their evenings, as well as pointing to the stairs and informing them how they can reach the theatre doors. All of this is done using the *-masu* form of verbs as well as referring to the theatre in humble terms, as in the use of *orimasu*. Similarly, the attendants within the theatre all use the same style of speaking, being humble and respectful, thus maintaining the social distance between customers and employees. For example, when asking for customers to wait before the doors open, the attendants first humbly apologize for the inconvenience and ask them to wait just a little bit longer. Rather than using the relatively common wording "*Chotto matte kudasai*," they instead used the more respectful phrase "*Shosho omachi kudasaimase*." In either case, this translates into "Please wait a moment" in English, but in the case of the latter,

they are indicating deeper respect for the customers. It is much like trying to word a request in such a way that people do not see it as a demand.

Overall, then, based on both the style of dress and language used, all of the employees are expressing a role-oriented identity. Despite age, gender, and possible class differences, all of the attendants use the same basic language and speech patterns when dealing with customers, as is expected of them by their employers. In doing so, they are presenting themselves as upstanding employees of the Takarazuka establishment, a competent yet humble organization, one whose politeness is based on an understanding of its reciprocal -- not simply hierarchical -- relationship with its customers.

Demachi

Takarazuka has well-defined entrance and exit procedures that follow very specific rules. The entrance procedure is known as *irimachi*, though a literal translation would be something like “waiting for the entrance or arrival” or “entrance waiting.” These are difficult to attend because the actresses arrive for the show anytime from an hour before opening to as much as six hours beforehand. Unless one knows the actresses’ exact schedules, one could wait for hours and still miss the entrance of their favorite Takarasienne. As it so happens, the only people who are familiar with the estimated arrival times are the fan clubs of each particular actress. Therefore *irimachi* tends to be attended mostly by fan club members.

Fan clubs play a pivotal role in *irimachi* and in the corresponding *demachi* after the performance. The most famous actresses find themselves the object of a fan club that is devoted her and wishes to see her succeed -- and indeed wants to help her succeed. Joining these clubs brings with it both privilege and responsibility and often the privilege becomes a responsibility itself. Fan clubs have access to knowledge about the estimated time of their actress's arrival and also have first priority (after the actresses themselves) when buying tickets. As a result, many of the best seats are bought before the general public even has a chance to purchase them. However, this is also a responsibility in that club members are expected to buy at least one ticket for each run of a particular show in order to support their favorite actress and her troupe.

During *demachi*, the fan club members also have specific privileges and responsibilities. *Demachi* is the after-show counterpart to *irimachi*. Fans wait for their favorite actresses to exit the building. It too is a formalized procedure to which fans must adhere, and is best translated as "waiting for the departure." *Demachi* is, however, much more compact and predictable in time, thus permitting a larger group of fans to congregate. *Demachi* takes place about an hour after the end of the show, sometimes a little earlier and sometimes a little later, depending on how long it takes the actresses to change and get ready to leave the theatre. There is no established exit order, as the actresses leave whenever they are ready, but since they all finish the show at roughly the same time, their exits are closer together than are their entrances.

The first rule for *demachi* is that the fans line up on either side of the street at the entrance to the theatre. The lines are organized in terms of club involvement. The sections of the sidewalk nearest the street are understood to be reserved for fan club members, where they line up in rows two or three people deep. This, unfortunately for newcomers and non-club members, is never explicitly stated, so the rules must be learned by trial and error. The space behind the club members, however, is open to anyone who would like to stand and watch, including people who are just stopping by for *demachi* and did not even attend the show. Anyone in this back row of individuals can take pictures of the Takarasiennes, sit or stand as they please, and leave whenever they see fit. On the other hand, they are not allowed to speak with the actresses or give them gifts or letters of any sort: this privilege is reserved solely for fan club members. The rules for the fan club members are essentially the opposite. Once they have committed to attending *demachi*, they are required to stay until all of the actresses with fan clubs have left. Sitting closest to the street is a privilege, then, but it has responsibilities. Fan club members, in addition, are required to kneel whenever *any* actress leaves the building and stay kneeling until she has walked out to the end of the street (Figure 3.1). Despite having the opportunity to give their actress gifts and speak with her, they are not allowed to take pictures of their actress, or any other actress, during *demachi*. Furthermore, having this guaranteed opportunity to interact with their favorite stars on such a personal level also entails another obligation: they must not approach the actresses in any other public setting, even giving them a gift outside of these times is frowned upon.

Based on the two *demachi* I attended, the fan clubs begin lining up along the side of the street about thirty minutes after the show has ended. Each club stands together and is identifiable by their club wear, usually a specific color or print scarf. Once every one has settled into place, there is initially very little talking. Individuals not associated with a club usually hang back by themselves and are silent, often there to take pictures of their favorite actresses rather than engage in any social activities. The longer it takes for the stars to emerge, however, the more often people strike up conversations with one another. The club members, who know each other outside of *demachi*, are the most likely to engage in conversation. Their conversations tend to be friendly and familiar, engaging in jokes and discussing the play they have just seen. Since most of these individuals tend to see a given show numerous times over the course of its run, they often compare them and speak about their favorite parts of the performance that night. They all speak in plain form, showing that they are comfortable enough with one another to express familiarity, demonstrating the longevity of club memberships and the ties of friendship they can provide.

On the two nights that I was there, the fan club members consistently referred to the Takarasiennes using the honorific *-san* in order to demonstrate the respect they had for them, based on their quite separate statuses as fans and actresses. This was the case whether it was the actress whose club they were a member of or other actresses. On both nights that I attended, the only fan clubs present were those of the more well-known *otokoyaku*. Yet even with no fan clubs for the *musumeyaku*, they were still afforded the gesture of fan clubs kneeling during their exit. Both sets of actresses thus received respect

in both action and language. However, as most observers have noted, the *otokoyaku* generate more interest and attention than the *musumeyaku*. The *musumeyaku* do not seem to capture the imagination in the same way that *otokoyaku* do. It would seem this has something to do with the masculine yet slightly feminine persona the *otokoyaku* bring to their roles, since it offers the audience an unusual and unique character to watch: a man that embodies the good and the bad of both genders and blends them into a character that is male but without the distance and coldness that many Japanese women attribute to the male persona.

There was one instance in which a non-fan club member edged up to the fan club members standing at the edge of the sidewalk to engage them in conversation. Rather than attempt to engage immediately in the familiar banter of the other women, she approached the conversation hesitantly, interrupting with a soft “*Ano, sumimasen...*” (“Um, please excuse me...”). Her tone was deferential when speaking with the other women, as they were official fan club members, all of one group, and she was neither a group member in general nor a member of this specific group, thus doubly an outsider. She carried on conversation with them using the *-masu* form of verbs, thus not putting an exceptional amount of distance between them by humbling herself, but respectful enough to acknowledge she was an outsider to their group. She proceeded to ask questions regarding their fan club. Throughout the conversation, she never dropped the formality of speech, and the club members happily and excitedly answered her questions, responding in kind to her use of the *-masu* verb form. In fact, when their actress arrived, they did not even question the proximity of this outsider. She had all but attached herself to the group

and thus was properly in the front rows. In this scenario, the perceived level of distance was reduced enough that they did not mind her continued presence and conversation as they might have otherwise. On the other hand, no one sought to include her in a more familiar conversation using plain form. She therefore remained an outsider.

As the Takarasiennes exited the theatre and walked down the street, there was little conversation. Everyone stared expectantly in their direction. No one even talked when another fan club's actress was making her way down the street, suggesting respect and an attempt to keep the noise level down. As they walked down the street, the actresses generally ignored the waiting crowd, keeping to themselves until they reached their own fan club, which they could easily discern by their colorful scarves. (The exception to this was when they exited with another actress, when they did tend to talk to one another.) Once an actress located her fan club, she stopped in front of them, waving hello and often greeting them with the standard "*Konbanwa*" (Good evening), since it was inevitably evening by the time of *demachi*, even if the show was an afternoon one. The actresses then accepted gifts and letters from their fan club, thanking them profusely (Figure 3.2). In most cases, the actress stopped to talk to any member of the fan club that wished to speak with her. There appeared to be an understanding of how long is too long, so no club member ever took more than a minute or two. Much of the conversation was nearly inaudible to the non-fan club members despite the relative lack of noise and chatter in the area. However, the hand motions and body language of the actress were uniformly friendly and casual; they neither held themselves at a too-formal distance nor with any of the stiffness of a formal setting. The parts of conversations that could be

heard had both the actress and fans speak using *-masu* verb forms. So while there is a familiarity among the club members by virtue of their connection to an actress, they did not presume to apply that same kind of familiarity to the actress herself.

Language is carefully threaded through everyday life, expressing current relationships and future desires and intents. It can be revelatory in unexpected ways, for often the format and inflections made are not immediately recognized even by those who use them, and can evoke aspects of people's identities that they were not anticipating to reveal in a simple conversation. Writers can weave these into characters' speech with careful precision and, with the human voices of the actors, consciously and unconsciously influence the way viewers understand the scene. Businesses and guests adopt styles of speaking that describe the relationship between them and mark any changes that occur. Language tells a story greater than the simple meanings of words and often describes more than what people desire. In order to hear these quiet meanings and underlying descriptions, careful attention to detail can bring to light explicitly things they only assumed previously. All these different aspects of language collide in this greater Takarazuka performance, not only in the play itself, but the social webs that extended beyond, particularly through the formal structures of the fan clubs. After seeing a Takarazuka performance and participating in the ceremony surrounding it, a few things become clear. It reiterates the ability of grammatical politeness to be "polite" or "impolite;" formal speech varies in appropriateness depending on the context, depending

both on the setting and individuals involved. Additionally, gender plays a crucial dimension, both in determining the language used as well as the way said language is received. Speech can be played with in regards to gender, shifted and tweaked, leaving people many options when conveying who they are or who they are pretending to be.



Figure 3.1: Fan clubs kneeling as an actress leaves the theatre.
Non-fan club members can be see standing in the background.



Figure 3.2: An *otokoyaku* meets her fan club during *demachi*

CHAPTER 4: COSPLAY CAFÉS

During any visit to Japan there are all manner of interesting sites to see, shops to visit, and restaurants at which to eat. Many of the eating establishments in Japan look quite familiar in one way or another: the fancy dress restaurants, the ever-present McDonalds, or the casual dining restaurants like Denny's. They invoke a feeling of distant familiarity, as if they are places you may have been somewhere else but seem slightly unusual in this new environment. This happens in many foreign countries all across the globe, places evoking the "same but different" feeling in visitors, but it seems to happen with particular intensity in Japan. There are vending machines offering beverages much like those back home, but all of the bottles and cans bear a logo that is alien or a logo that is recognizable yet just unusual enough to give pause, such as the Coca-Cola and Mountain Dew cans present in so many of these machines.

However, there are also moments when a traveler enters an establishment in Japan and all that strikes them is the differences as they are bombarded with strangeness. *Kosupure* (costume play or "cosplay") cafés tend to fall in the latter group, showing foreign visitors a setting that does not seem to quite make sense, in which things seem entirely too unfamiliar. Indeed, aside from some deep underground subcultures in the

United States, there are few analogous establishments that come to mind. *Kosupure* usually involves individuals dressing up as their favorite characters from a particular *anime* (technically just an animated show, but now generally used in the West to describe the particular Japanese form of “comics” or animated features). *Kosupure* is not entirely unknown in the United States but is generally only found in conventions for fans of Japanese animation. However, it is not limited to just *anime* characters. In Japan, the term can be more broadly applied to people who are dressing up as something they are not: maids, butlers, women as men, etc. This type of phenomenon is not unheard of in other parts of the world, but usually it is an event that occurs once a year (e.g. Carnival) rather than being a frequent, routinized practice. There is a small amount of stigma attached to *kosupure* even in Japan, many involved in it often being declared an *otaku* (roughly equivalent to “nerd” in the U.S., but with substantially more derogatory undertones). Practice is thus limited to certain entertainment areas of Japanese cities, such as Akihabara and Ikebukuro in Tokyo.

A *kosupure* café, then, would consist of people dressing up as something other than what they are. There are all kinds of *kosupure* cafés with their employees dressing up as all manner of characters or people. By far the most widespread type of café is known as a *meido* café, or in English, a maid café. This both is and is not what it sounds like. Indeed, the employees wear maid outfits when they serve their customers. The typical French maid costume is one option, but there are many variants and many bear only a passing resemblance to real world maid clothing. In fact, one favored style of maid clothing tends to emphasize cute (or *kawaii*) rather than sexy, as the French maid often

would connote to Americans. The variations range from simple pink dresses with layers of crinoline underneath, to long historical maid skirts, and even short samurai-inspired kimonos. However, it should be noted that the customers usually visit these cafés in everyday clothing rather than cosplaying as well.

Another type of *kosupure* café somewhat less well-known (and less heavily advertised) is called a *dansou* café. *Dansou* is often translated as “disguising oneself as a man.” Again, the nature of these cafés might seem to be relatively straightforward, and certainly they do employ young women to dress as young men and then serve the customers. The question most Western people ask about this phenomenon is “why?” The general answer is that, just as at the Takarazuka theatre, having a female dress as a male softens the perceived harshness natural to men, thus offering the best of both genders and a comfortable environment for a female clientele. Generally the staff of *dansou* cafés dress in slightly formal clothing: button-down shirts, dress pants, and often a vest. Additionally, they all wear their hair cut relatively short (always falling somewhere above their jawline). The employees here are quite dedicated to their roles as butlers and perhaps males in general, since they are even willing to change their everyday appearance (e.g. the length and color of their hair) to reflect the role they play. Indeed, I found that many of the butlers at *dansou* cafés had been employed at their respective workplaces for two years or more. Though the employees of a *dansou* café are biologically female, I will refer to them by the pronoun “he” since that is the gender they are displaying in the workplace.

There are other *kosupure* cafés throughout Tokyo but the only ones that vary substantially from the previously mentioned establishments in gender and/or sex of their employees are known as butler cafés. Rather than the *dansou* cafés where females dress as male butlers, these cafés hire males to dress as butlers and serve their customers. These tend to be more formal than either the *meido* or *dansou* cafés and tend to be incredibly busy. Unfortunately these are few and far between, possibly because the demand is not comparable to that of *meido* cafés so the area can only support a few. However, the ones in existence are incredibly popular, to the point that they often require reservations a month in advance. This is one area that I was unable to investigate personally because of the difficulty inherent in even making a reservation.

These cafés, *meido* cafés in particular, flourish in Akihabara and it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that one could find them on every corner within a three block radius from the Akihabara rail station (Figure 4.1). Some cafés have experienced enough popularity and good fortune that they have been able to open various branches in the area -- at latest count one had seven branches. If visiting on a weekend or a particularly busy evening, it is not uncommon for customers to wait in line for over an hour. Many of the cafés even impose a time limit on their customers, especially during busy hours.

Generally, the rule is a person receives an hour for each entrée they order. Similarly numerous cafés implement a table charge, whereby a customer must pay a fee, usually somewhere between ¥500 and ¥1500, in order to be seated at all. In addition, the food served at maid cafés, while often tasty, is priced much higher than comparable dishes at other restaurants. For example, a curry and rice dish without meat at a maid café called

Maidreamin' runs about ¥1500 whereas a similar meal, including meat, at a nearby restaurant only costs ¥750.

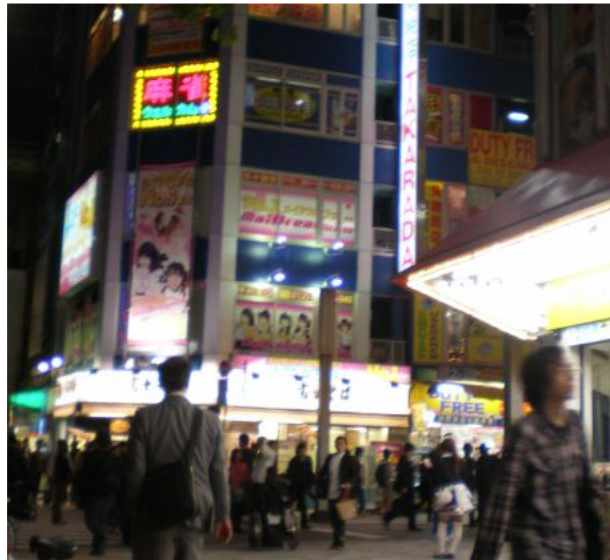


Figure 4.1: Advertisements for a maid café on one corner with advertisements for another maid café directly to the left.

Long waits, crowded restaurants, and an expensive meal suggest that there is something special about the experience itself in these *meido* cafés. That becomes quite clear upon visiting these establishments. The customers come for the experience, the atmosphere and social interactions inherent in a visit to a maid café. These places strive to integrate two seemingly opposite qualities: providing their customers with something unusual outside of their everyday life but at the same time something welcoming and familiar. The cafés provide a safe place where customers can “be themselves” and are welcomed by smiling faces and impeccable service. They are also a step removed from their day-to-day experience as they are, served by young women dressed in out-of-the-

ordinary attire and in a very different setting. The cafés names themselves often reflect these competing impulses. One string of cafés is called *@home*. The phrase suggests a level of comfort like one's home, but the way it is written adds a dash of foreignness, both in the use of English (a common feature in Japanese clubs generally) and the substitution of "@" for "at." It is home but with enough difference to be exciting.

How do the clubs accomplish this difficult balance? The bulk of the responsibility falls on the atmosphere and the maids. The atmosphere must set the stage on which the maids will do all of their hard work, providing something eye-catching and atypical while still being familiar and friendly. The work set out for the maids requires impressive social prowess. They must utilize the required prompts the café lays out for them while at the same time personalizing interaction with each customer. They must perform a general role but also create an individual relationship. This is no simple restaurant where a smile and quick "Hi, how are you?" will suffice. The maids (and butlers in the case of *dansou* cafés) must be capable of role-playing, utilizing body language, tone of voice, familiarity, and conversational prowess in order to meet the expectations of their customers. The popularity of these cafés indicates just how well they mesh the general atmosphere and the particular customer. There is an issue of power at work here as well, but potentially a different kind than one would expect, one that is less about domination and subordination. In the case of *kospure* cafés, there appears to be subtle and complex flow of power, one that shifts back and forth between the employee and patron. The

assumption that one person's power must come at the detriment to another individual's power is not necessarily the rule here.

Atmosphere

The atmosphere of the cafés plays an important role in establishing the image the clubs wish to project. This includes numerous aspects such as the décor, layout, music, and lighting. All of the above comes into play to lay the foundation of appearance for the feel of the cafés that is integral to the initial customer reaction and becomes the setting in which the maids and butlers can accomplish their work.

From café to café the décor can vary substantially in content and in the “vibe” or feeling it evokes. But each has in common the basic principle of being “familiar yet strange.” One familiar feature is that, like many other Japanese restaurants and clubs, the cafés I visited had both a table area and a counter area, with the counter areas often for single guests (of whom there are a substantial number). Those at the counters often received more interaction from the employees, since the employees necessarily provided more of their social interaction. In terms of “strange,” the appearance of *Maidreamin*’ was probably the most unusual of the cafés that I visited: the floor lamps were shaped like mushrooms and the walls were painted with scenes of what might be a forest and field, with lots of green and blue, and the chairs were brightly colored. Yet again, the counters and tables were quite normal in color, an average off-white or tan. Thus even

when the decorations were loud and attention-grabbing, the area from which customers ate was unsurprising.

Another *meido* café, *Pinafore* had a decidedly more average feel to it, though on the walls there were occasional painted butterflies and an overabundance of pink. The *dansou* café, *Queen Dolce*, was substantially more subdued, preferring a color scheme of silver and black, with a TV in the background for distraction. These two cases suggest that while the cafés may have similar purposes -- providing their customers with a unique yet comfortable experience -- they could achieve those purposes in rather different ways. Overall, the *meido* cafés tended to rely on a carefully concocted *kawaii* image in pinks and with pretty objects, such as flowers or butterflies. Pink is perhaps the one thing visitors can trust to find at a *meido* café, unless they are specifically catering to historical or other themes. The *dansou* cafés take a different route, preferring to have sleek and subdued colors dominate the scene. In both categories, the colors tend to reflect the styles of dress, speech, and body language that the employees at the respective cafés adopt, aspects I will discuss in later sections.

For music and lighting, much variation can be found. In *Maidreamin'* the lighting was dim and the music a bit louder than what you might find in other restaurants. However, it became even louder and special lighting effects were activated when one of the maids was scheduled to do her song and dance routine, thus discouraging talking between customers and maids, allowing the maids to prepare for the main event rather

than tie up their time with a patron. In *Pinafore*, a generally more subdued *meido* café, the lighting was bright and music was at a low level, allowing for easy reading and conversations. Another *meido* café, *Heart to Heart*, had a small stage for karaoke, thus the potential for the music to be loud. The lights were dim much like *Maidreamin'*, though the setting otherwise was more casual, like that of *Pinafore*, with no outrageous neon pink -- though it had its fair share of regular pink. *@home* was similar to *Maidreamin'* in many ways. While it was not as big as *Maidreamin'*, it gave the same impression of being well-funded, and these cafés do have multiple locations. Like both *Pinafore* and *Maidreamin'*, *@home* had a stage that, though not regularly used, could be used for karaoke or plays as well as taking pictures with customers. For all these places, then, there was a blend of the comfort of regular café layouts and tables combined with a quirky décor. The lighting and music also worked to shift the mood in terms of general atmosphere or to highlight such special activities as a maid performance.

The *dansou* cafés did have some distinct differences. *Queen Dolce* included a flat screen TV which, during my visits, played “The Nightmare before Christmas.” Unusual in that fact alone, the TV was actually muted while the soundtrack from the movie, in English, played in the background. Both the movie and the inclusion of English music were unusual, but again the music added something foreign yet familiar, since the movie has gained a following of its own in Japan. *80 + 1* (also known as *Eighty Plus One*) was unusual in a different way: it lacked any music at all. Not relying on music to set the atmosphere is not only strange for *kosupure* cafés but also for restaurants more generally.

This, in some way, added to the responsibilities of the butlers since the music was not available as a distraction.

An important part of the setting is the food that these cafés serve, particularly the *meido* cafés. In *meido* cafés, the trend is to make the food *kawaii* or at least personalize it in some manner, thus demonstrating how much care went into its creation. One entrée from *Maidreamin'*, for example, was a curry, pork, and rice dinner (Figure 4.2) in the shape of a bear (complete with a cheese nose, *nori* eyes, and egg ears). Additionally, when I actually ordered this meal, the maid asked me how to spell my name in English. Then with a bottle of ketchup, she wrote my name on the curry dish and encircled it with a heart. Drawing or writing on an entrée in ketchup is common at maid cafés. Every circumstance in which I ordered a full meal this occurred, and most maids asked what I wanted to have drawn on my meal. At *Pinafore*, when I ordered only a dessert, even that was crafted to a specific detailed design: a cute parfait that was made to look like a little elephant (Figure 4.3).

The food provides a point of departure between the *meido* and *dansou* cafés. In the two cases I know, the *dansou* cafés did not offer the same kind of cute, specialized meals. However, they still added their own unique flair. For example, *Queen Dolce* served the usual drinks, but also offered special drinks that individual staff members had invented, with creative names and additional quirks, like adding umbrellas. *80 + 1* served a wide variety of foods, but none of them with the *kawaii* aspects of *meido* cafés.

However, their food was also unique, offering bagel sandwiches, which are not the usual fare at *kosupure* cafés. They also provided a list of the café employees, including personal information such as blood type, favorite café dish, and ideal date. Again, there was that desire to make the individual customer feel appreciated and special, somehow important to the café staff. In the maid cafés this was accomplished by the unusual and carefully crafted food as well as the extra “flavor” of the maids’ drawings. In the *dansou* cafés, the desired close connection between customers and employees was fostered by personal knowledge freely given to the customers, the personal recommendations, and creations by the staff.



Figure 4.2: Bear Curry from Maidreamin’



Figure 4.3: Elephant Parfait from Pinafore

Conversation

Despite the time invested in the décor, music, lighting, layout, and food in *kosupure* cafés, what seems to be the real draw at these cafés is the conversation and interaction with the maids and butlers. In many restaurants, even when the décor and food are interesting or even unique, the service falls into relatively standard categories based on the price range of the establishment. As a rule, in-depth conversations are not taken for granted as a requirement for being a waitress or waiter. Rather they are understood as being responsible for a customer's order and a generally cordial attitude, as well as making sure the customer's food-related needs are cared for. At *kosupure* cafés, the food is the simpler part of the equation. The number one job is engaging the patrons. These conversations are crafted in order to make the customer feel special, even if they may

have just recently met. The balance, making the customer feel just special enough, is not automatic and requires skillful social maneuvering by the maids and butlers. In order to achieve the perfect level of familiarity, the employees must utilize personality, body language, tone, grammar, and diction.

It would be unfair to say that maids or butlers adopt truly different personas when they wait on customers. It would be more accurate to say that they are encouraged to cultivate or display a particular part of their own personalities that would best fit their role in the restaurant. Indeed, in some sense, all Japanese retail establishments ask this of their employees. Smiles, pleasantries, and conversational skills are capabilities that many people possess, but most stores and restaurants require that their employees display these characteristics more frequently than they might in their personal lives. Thus it should come as no surprise that *kosupure* cafés have similar requirements for their employees but on a somewhat grander scale.

The net result is that *kosupure* cafés have employees with varied and distinct personalities, making them easily distinguishable from one another. *Maidreamin'* provides some examples. One maid was quiet and soft-spoken as she went around the room, selling trinkets. Her appearance left customers with the impression of elegance. Her hair was long, reaching down to the middle of her back, and a deep shade of black. She wore the required frilly maid headband but, aside from that, a section of her hair was pulled back in a simple ponytail. Another was a “*genki*” type, which means she displayed

a healthy amount of energy and enthusiasm in every situation. Her appearance had the air of a tomboy. She was taller than the other maids, less dainty, and she wore her hair much shorter than her coworkers. Additionally, she lacked the typical overabundance of cute items on her person: there were no bold, attention-grabbing clips in her hair and the purse she carried lacked extra decorations. The goofy, wacky persona also showed up, a maid with a personality reminiscent of some of the leading females in comedic *anime*. Like the *genki* maid, she was animated and could be found bouncing around the café, from customer to customer. Most notable about her was the variety of amusing and strange expressions she displayed and the consistently loud voice she used. Her clothing was like most of the other maids, but her hair was pulled up in an unusual and busy style with various small ponytails at different angles. The result of employing these multiple types is both interesting and comforting to patrons, since the personality traits so boldly displayed can be readily found in everyday life but rarely in such full force.

There appears to be a similar trend with the *dansou* cafés, though the stereotypes are different. At *Queen Dolce*, one of the butlers was on the small side with a round face; he was expected to play out the stereotype of the little brother. He called the other employees *nii-san* (older brother) and consistently had a boyish demeanor and playful nature. Also at *Queen Dolce*, there was a butler who fit the standard image of a bad boy, as evidenced by heavily dyed hair and multiple piercings. Though he was certainly cordial and friendly, the intent to make him more edgy than his coworkers was evident. The last example comes from *80 + 1*. One of the butlers on staff fell into a “beautiful

boy” stereotype (a concept in Japanese comics called *bishounen*), with a princely carriage and subdued manner, as well as the expectation that he will be a relatively effeminate male, more pretty than handsome. All these stereotypes are, by and large, in both the *meido* and *dansou* cafés, drawn from manga. This makes perfect sense as many of the customers are manga fans. The cafés allow these fans to see some pieces of their fantasy world come to life.

Tied closely to personality, is the use of body language by employees to better express themselves and more quickly establish a friendly relationship with customers. Body language works in combination with words and tone to create a more complex and layered message. Much of the body language is something that the employees are trained and required to do. There is, however, a marked difference between the *meido* cafés and the *dansou* cafés. In most of the maid cafés I visited, when a maid brought an order to my table, she would perform a chant over the food (ostensibly to make it more tasty or full of love). (*Pinafore* is the only exception I found in my visits.) First, the maid would demonstrate the chant and hand motions to the customer and then ask them to do it along with them. Usually this involved making heart shapes with your hands (or something similarly *kawaii*) and pointing at the food. The chants all bore a strong resemblance to each other, often some variation of “*oishiku nare*,” essentially telling the food to “become delicious.” The *dansou* cafés, on the other hand, did nothing of the sort and served food as would any regular restaurant. The decision to include such hand motions reflects the image and experience that the cafés are looking to provide for their customers. In line

with the usual *meido* café atmosphere, the chants and hand motions are cute, unique, and extra energetic. Similarly, the calmer atmosphere of the *dansou* cafés and the relaxed, collected attitudes of the butlers would make a loud, bouncy chant over each meal quite incongruous.

The arrival and departure of guests, on the other hand, is something that both types of café deal with quite similarly. As anyone who has entered a store or restaurant in Japan knows, customers are, almost without exception, greeted by the employees. It is often just a shout from the counter or wherever employees are working, but it still acknowledges the entrance of people into the shop or restaurant. The simplest traditional greeting is “*Irasshaimase!*” Its general purpose is to convey a respectful, honorific “welcome”; technically it is an honorific form of the verb “come in.”

Meido cafés, however, take this one step further and stand out from other businesses, preferring not to do the average or expected. There are a number of variations that can be found, but they all have the same goal in mind: to draw special attention to the customers, both when they arrive and when they leave, to make them feel important and cared for. In every *meido* café, with no exception that I have seen or heard of, when a customer enters the main dining area, the maid at the entrance shouts to let her coworkers know that a customer has arrived and in return all of the other maids shout a welcome to the customer. There are variations on the theme, of course. Sometimes they inform the other maids that their “master” (*gosshujinsama*) or “mistress” (*ojousama*) has returned

home while at other times they will simply say that an honored customer has entered. However, the exchanges always follow that general pattern. When a customer leaves, the process is much the same, one maid telling the others that the customer is leaving and then everyone shouting the standard good-bye phrase, which can happen before or after payment.

Dansou cafés generally follow a similar pattern but more subdued. There always seems to be a butler to greet customers, but they do not engage in the shout and reply that maid cafés do. This supports the more subdued atmosphere of *dansou* cafés in general as it is less disruptive to customers already in the restaurant. However, the *dansou* cafés that I visited were substantially smaller than the *meido* cafés, so there was less need to shout to inform the other one or two workers of a customer's arrival. Still, in this way the patrons receive only one greeting and goodbye from a single butler, rather than having everyone chime in. In both the *meido* and *dansou* cafés, after the customers are finished, one of the employees walks them to the door or elevator, carrying on a conversation until the customers actually exit the building.

Two other aspects of body language are the amount of eye contact and the proximity of employees to their guests. That is particularly clear in the extent to which both maids and butlers will kneel at a table to put themselves at the same or lower level than the customers. Eye contact is a must. Maids, while frequently animated and willing to bounce around happily, still make frequent eye contact with their customers, particularly when they are holding a one-on-one conversation with them rather than

taking their orders or delivering food. The same goes for butlers at *dansou* cafés, but rather than a tendency to be energetic and bouncy, they tend to keep steady and constant eye contact. (Being one of the few foreigners to enter these cafés, the maids appeared to have a harder time keeping eye contact with me, likely because they were wary that they might not be able to communicate successfully.) The rules for physical closeness seem more complex. In all *meido* cafés (with no known exceptions), the rules clearly state that customers are not allowed to touch the maids. However, there must also be some amount of physical closeness since part of the cafés' draw is to create a bond between the customers and maids. To this end, they frequently stand very close to the tables and if they are involved in taking a picture with a customer (the cost of which is usually around ¥500) maids usually ask what faces they should make and lean in to take the picture. Rather than touching, maids usually make a *kawaii* gesture with their hands, such as mimicking a cat, and ask customers to imitate them. The *dansou* cafés do not appear to have such a prohibition against touching. In *Queen Dolce*, one of the male customers had a picture taken in which all of the butlers working that day crowded around him, one even pretending to sit on his knee. When taking a picture with a female customer, one of the butlers at *80 + I* seemed happy to have her to put her arm around him. The difference here may be one of projected gender. The prohibition against touching is seen as protecting the maids, who are cute and feminine and might need protection from male customers. The butlers in *dansou* cafés are female but the persona they project is male. There is no need to ban touching, since they hardly need protection from the bulk of their admirers who are female.

Finally, tone is an essential part of any conversation and quite noticeably so in *kosupure* cafés. Most maids speak in a stereotypically feminine, girlish voice, with a high pitch. They also tend to sound excitable. There does seem to be a difference when maids talk to a male customer versus a female customer, however. For example, when talking with a middle-aged male customer to my left, the maid at *@home* adopted a giggly high-pitched tone to indicate interest in the conversation he struck up, along with other actions such as clapping. However, when talking to the young female customer to my other side, the maid spoke in a much more conversational tone, keeping it light and friendly, but omitting the giggling and high pitch. This seems to be a case of adapting to perceived wants. The male customer appeared to want a girl to be excited about his tales and to meet that need, she adopted that particular tone and attitude. In contrast, the young female customer was probably closer to being the maid's peer and seemed content to carry on an average conversation about school, without any added excitement.

The *dansou* cafés, on the other hand, wish to project a different tone. The butlers' voices never reach the high pitch of the maids, but neither do they attempt to talk in a very low tone. Instead they find something that is a "middle of the road" voice, generally a rather androgynous one that might make it difficult for a person who was unsure of their sex to determine whether they were female or male. The butlers never giggle at customers' jokes, but rather aim toward the more controlled sound of something like a chuckle. The butlers at both *Queen Dolce* and *80 + 1* adopted playful tones, likely to make them approachable, but never going to the lengths that maids did to convey

excitement or amusement. Indeed, their tones projected a sort of relaxed nature that appeared to make it very comfortable for their customers to chat with them, particularly shy female patrons. They showed their interest not by physical gestures but by being observant and perhaps raising a topic that they believed to be of interest to the customer. For example, I had my notebook out, writing down notes, when a butler at 80 + 1 wandered over to ask questions about what it was, and then made low subdued sounds to indicate amazement at the sheer amount of writing contained in the notebook. Both of these contrasted greatly with the maids who never asked me about my notes.

All of these conversational techniques play into the carefully crafted images of *kosupure* cafés. Though there are differences among these cafés, the employees all make use of personality, body language, and tone to create an effective interaction with customers. The maids and butlers serving the customers are role-playing to some extent and must constantly monitor and regulate the “face” they are showing to their customers. However, it would be unfair to say that these employees manipulate these factors without showing anything of their real selves. Their work selves are related to their personal selves and, indeed, would be impossible to display without drawing on those personal selves.

Grammar and Diction

Grammar and diction are inextricably linked. This is especially the case when discussing familiarity and respect in the Japanese language. Both diction and an

understanding of grammar come into play when forming sentences and when dealing in the Japanese language one must be very aware of what words they choose and what endings they use. This naturally plays out in the speech of *kosupure* café employees. What can make this particularly difficult is that the maids and butlers have few scripts that they are required to follow, with a few exceptions (such as greetings and goodbyes). Each customer requires a different level of attention and familiarity and since the goal of these cafés is to draw in the customers with the interactions they can experience with the employees, these employees must be able to “read” their patrons in order to give them the service and conversations they seek. To read and respond effectively, they must be adept in the crucial linguistic forms that together constitute “politeness” in the Japanese language, and the complex interplay of respect and familiarity to both people and places that underlies such “politeness.”

Meido Cafés

Of all the crucial linguistic aspects of *kosupure* cafés, perhaps the most fundamental are terms of address. They can be quite variable, though they usually begin with highly respectful terms and moderate toward more familiar forms. The most common of these terms is *goshujin*, or even more formally, *goshujinsama*. *Shujin* has two possible translations, master and husband. In everyday life, *shujin* is generally used to refer to one’s husband. By affixing *go-* to the beginning of the word, the level of respectfulness is increased. By the same token, when *-sama* is added to the end of the

word, that highly respectful suffix connotes some social distance between the speaker and the listener. In contemporary times, this combination is rarely used, yet is common in *meido* cafés. In this context, the better translation is “master,” a more liberal translation into English might be something more like “respected” or “honorable master.”

Goshujin (or *goshujinsama*) can only be used to address male customers. The term used for female customers is *ojousama* and as with *goshujinsama* it is actually a three piece word, consisting of the base word *jou* (lady), the respectful prefix *o-*, and the respectful suffix *-sama*. (The prefixes *o-* and *go-* have the same function but one or the other is used based on the linguistic origin of the base word.) *Ojousan* is a convenient way for someone to address a young female whose social standing and age are not yet known. Using *-sama* instead of *-san* bumps up the level of respect, so it is used in the setting of maid cafés as the female equivalent of *goshujinsama*. There is an additional option that is used at *Pinafore*, a gender neutral term that saves them the trouble of trying to determine which gender the individual identifies as -- and this can be a problem in *meido* and *dansou* cafés. In this case, the preferred term of address is *okyakusama*. The prefix and suffix work the same but the core word is *kyaku* which means guest or customer. This is not to say that the staff at *Pinafore* use nothing else, but it does mean that their greetings and goodbyes can be the same for each customer, reducing some of the initial social burden for the maids.

The full greeting the maids use when a customer enters the restaurant is “*Okaerinasaimase, goshujinsama (ojousama)*!” When translating it somewhat colloquially, this means “Welcome home, master!” or “Welcome home, mistress!” As usual, the *o-* prefix is an honorific, working the same effect as in *ojousama*. Here the root verb is *kaeru* (to return), implying that there is already a relationship between customer and café even if this is a first visit. The verb ending, *-nasaimase*, is a particularly respectful way to word a request, so at its most literal this would be translated as “Please return home, master!” Unfortunately, the literal translation does not quite convey the welcoming nature of the phrase, which is better understood with the first translation. This greeting establishes the baseline for the relationship between the maids and the customers, the humble maids who respect and seek to entertain the customer who has returned to his or her proper place at the center of their own home. It has much the same effect as the fans kneeling before the Takarazuka actresses at *demachi*.

After the initial welcome, the language can shift in various ways. When I arrived at *Heart to Heart* and spoke with the maid at the entrance, she greeted me in the usual way, referring to me as *ojousama*. When she called out to inform the other maids that I had arrived she used both *ojousama* and *Chelsea-san* (or rather the Japanese pronunciation, *Cherushii-san*). However, during my time there I was referred to by at least two other titles, depending on the maid with whom I was speaking. One maid, a girl who projected a shy, sweet personality consistently uses *ohimesama* when speaking with me. The difference here is with the core word *hime*, which translates into “princess.” This

had the effect of granting me all the same respect that *ojousama* would have afforded me, but with a tinge of royalty and perhaps even a dash of cuteness, since *hime* in Japanese popular culture are often quite strong as characters but nevertheless quite diminutive. At another point in that visit, a maid (perhaps the most energetic and outgoing on the staff) came by to talk with me. Unlike all of the other maids, she referred to me only by my given name (Cherushii), adding no honorifics. Two factors likely fed into that decision. First of all, she was indeed the friendliest maid in the café, which gave her some leeway in terms of address since being a bit familiar was quite consistent with her persona. Additionally, and this may be the more important factor, she had some knowledge of English from her previous high school coursework, so in some sense she and I already had a connection. We had an alternative linguistic framework we could use and thus more flexible options, something the other maids and I lacked. Clearly then the terms of address used in a *kosupure* café are always up for revision, depending on a great number of factors, not the least of which happens to be the emphasized persona of a maid and her links to the guests.

The determination of what verb form to use is much like the decision on which form of address to use. At every café I visited, initially all of the maids used the formal *-masu* endings with customers (myself included) as they first entered the building. In my case, the maids generally kept to the formal endings rather than shift to plain form as they did with many other customers. The most memorable exception occurred during my second visit to *Maidreamin'*. After I was seated and requested a meal package that

included a photo, one maid ventured over to ask me which maid I would like to have my picture taken with, using the verb *torimasu* (to take, as in a photo), still speaking formally. My response was “*Kaoru wa...*”, referring to a maid I had met previously, but instead of completing the sentence with “*imasu ka?*” to ask if she was present, I left it unfinished with only Kaoru’s name and the subject marker. Instead of replying with the *-masu* form, her response was “*Kaoruchan wa inai*” (in a decidedly depressed tone of voice). In this situation, she allowed my responses to influence the level of formality and familiarity that existed between us. Had I not opted to forgo the *-masu* form, it is likely that she would have continued using it too. In my situation, the implication that the formal structure of *-masu* was unnecessary came across quite clearly, since I did not use it myself. In conjunction with the relative closeness of our ages, it was easy for her to come to that conclusion and revise her style of speech.

There are some instances, though, when the clues to what the customer wants are more subtle and take extra time to determine. Returning to an earlier example, during a visit to @home, a middle-aged gentleman sat at the same counter where I was sitting, just a few seats to my left. He and a maid chatted about the menu options for a moment, both using *-masu* form while he ordered. Later when she stopped by a second time to make conversation, he had pulled out his collection of newly acquired toys -- all build-it-yourself items from a *gatcha* (toy-vending) machine. The conversation was relatively standard to begin with, both parties using *-masu* form, but as the customer became more enthusiastic and more insistent on showing her how his prizes worked, she too adopted

the same attitude. As it became clear that he was looking for approval and attention, she shifted her reactions so they became progressively more demonstrative, elongating her words and inserting gasps and giggles into the conversation. By the end of their conversation, which had slowly gained the feel of two friends talking, the maid had ended up dropping the *-masu* form and using plain form instead. Interestingly, this man seemed to be a regular at the café, because another maid popped over when they were done talking and initiated a conversation entirely in plain form. Not only do the maids shift their speech patterns based on their conversations, but they also must make a habit of remembering their regulars and adopting a consistent style of speech for them.

The maids in these cafés are also quite adept at finding a comfortable linguistic middle ground for customers, one that reflects a friendly connection without requiring the familiarity that plain form may imply. One case illustrates this. At *Pinafore* one evening, a young man (probably in his early twenties) entered and the maid at the door directed him to a chair near mine. This appeared to be his first visit to this particular location, and possibly to *meido* cafés in general. The maid who escorted him to the table noticed his anxiousness and rather than trying to force familiarity on him, she kept a respectful distance and began her conversation with a somewhat distant tone to match the formal speech she was using, including *-masu* forms and honorifics. Once she had finished explaining the nature of the café, she and the customer fell into regular conversation and as he began to relax, she followed his lead, here and there tossing in the common surprised and impressed utterance “ehh?!” However, neither she nor the young man ever

slipped into plain form and she made an effort to display a calm personality rather than the excitable, bouncy persona that is the norm for maids. This is an interesting case in which the social distance created by the maid actually increased as she tried to put him at ease. Here the maid gauged the social tension present and adjusted her speech accordingly. Indeed, between the various examples provided it is clear that both familiarity and distance can provoke the same response: a sense of comfort and well-being. Depending on the circumstances, distance or familiarity can be the proper “polite” or appropriate choice

Dansou Cafés

The terms of address used in *dansou* cafés are much the same as those used in maid cafés, though *dansou* staff tend to avoid the term *goshujinsama*, which makes sense in their situation considering an overwhelming number of their customers are female. During my visits, I never heard the staff use the term, though it is conceivable that they could use it in reference to male customers. They seem to prefer *okyakusama*, but since they do not engage in the loud, boisterous group greetings that maid cafés do, the terms of address are less noticeable and usually only come out in one-on-one conversations between the customers and butlers. However, it was not uncommon to hear the butlers at 80 + 1 refer to their customers as *ojousama*, particularly during the afternoon when the café strictly served females. In a scenario such as this, the terms of address end up carrying less weight since they are not advertised so widely and used so frequently. Once

an individual has met the butlers they are less likely than the maids to use those terms frequently when talking to a customer.

In fact, in a marked contrast to the patterns at maid cafés, the names the butlers use in reference to each other actually seem more noticeable and noteworthy than the titles they use to refer to customers. While at a maid café the understanding is that everyone will add *-chan* to the end of the maids' names, well-acquainted or not, it is not quite so obvious with the butlers. The interaction between the butlers is presented as a form of entertainment for customers. The relationships between them give the appearance of being strong and playful ones and the customers begin to feel like they are a part of the big, happy *dansou* café family. Overall, the most common way they addressed one another was by using their first name and attaching the suffix *-kun* to it. This suffix is established as being a masculine one; both boys and girls can call their male friends by it, but it is unlikely that anyone would use it in reference to a female. Since it is a suffix well-known for being tossed around between school-age boys, it brings a sense of playfulness and youth that none of the other terms could accomplish. Additionally as mentioned earlier, the smallest of the group at *Queen Dolce* referred to one of the taller and ostensibly older butlers as *nii-san*, basically calling him his big brother. This close-knit group of butlers certainly has something to offer the customers. Rather than having their employees all focus their efforts into one-on-one conversations with customers they also spent time cultivating their relationships with each other. Since the butlers are

playing around and acting natural, the patrons can feel like a part of this family while they are in the café.

The process of determining what language to speak with customers is rather similar to that in a maid café. In most instances, a member of the staff greets guests at the door and then shows them to their table. Once there, as with maid cafés, if the customer has never been to the establishment, they explain the details of their café, including the rules. While doing so, they initially start with the *-masu* form of verbs, indicating both distance and respect for the customer. From there, they will shift forms if the customer somehow indicates that is their preference. For example, after spending over an hour in *Queen Dolce*, I became well-acquainted with the playful routines of the three butlers working that night, how they teased each other and chimed in on each other's conversations. All evening when I spoke with the butlers I continued to use *-masu* form, since it felt the most natural and they followed my lead. However, during one discussion of favorite movies with one of the butlers, I found myself slip into plain form without even realizing I was doing so, possibly due to the comfortable and friendly nature of the discussion. After a few more exchanges, the butler adopted the same casual style of speech with me, so without even being aware of it, I set a new precedent for our conversations.

A similar but more tentative change in verb forms occurred one afternoon during a visit to *80 + 1*. On this particular day, only two butlers were waiting on the entire café,

so customers tended to see only one of them, usually the one who first greeted them at the door. In this case, I spoke with Yuki who explained the rules, offered a menu, and a page listing all of the butlers who held a position with the café. We carried on a decidedly average waiter-customer conversation, wherein I ordered my food and a picture (which I choose to take with him). Again, Yuki was the one to bring both my drink and food, but we kept up the use of *-masu* form verbs, so there was still that social distance that usually exists between customers and employees. After the picture however, Yuki came over to discuss my notebook, my time in Japan, and where I was from. During this conversation, when referring to my pages of notes, he stated “*Sugoku ippai...*” then after a brief pause remembered to add “*desu*” to the end of the phrase. In either case, the phrase means “very full” or “so full”, but without the inclusion of *desu* the sentence is somewhat familiar, having no word to indicate or express the social distance between the individuals. This appears to be an example of Yuki slipping into familiar speech without even realizing it initially and correcting what seemed to be an accident on his part. One possibility is that after carrying on so many conversations with fellow butlers and regular customers, he simply began slipping into the form that was most prevalent in the café. However, since it only occurred during a lengthy discussion prior to which he consistently and easily used *-masu* form, it may be that he slipped into a discussion that felt friendly enough to use plain form and began doing so without thinking. Since I answered in plain form as well, adopting his inadvertent shift in form, from then on we fell into that pattern, forgoing *-masu* form entirely.

One item in *dansou* cafés stands out in distinct contrast to the norm found in maid cafés. There were instances at both *Queen Dolce* and *80 + 1* when a butler engaged me in conversation, using plain form immediately, without testing the waters to see if it was appropriate. At *Queen Dolce*, it was an off-duty butler Kira who, upon finding out that I was from the United States, made a beeline for me and struck up a conversation. Kira jumped directly in, not using *-masu* form or the respectful *desu*, instead preferring plain form with an occasional dash of English. Initially, I assumed that he used the plain form because I was a foreigner and he believed my Japanese was not adequate for polite speech, or because he felt a bond of friendship through his working knowledge of English. However, at *80 + 1*, a similar encounter occurred as well. In this case, the butler, Shirou, had no knowledge of English, at least not that he was willing to display. However, Shirou walked up to me at my table and without any effort to see where we stood socially, began to speak in plain form. From these encounters, I began to question why these butlers immediately used the plain form when their coworkers hesitated to do so and went through the usual process of testing the waters. The two waiters, I realized, were similar in their work personas, which in turn reflected some personal similarities. They were of the same mold, or close to it. Both were older-looking and more stereotypically masculine. They were among the tallest butlers in the café and spoke in relatively deep voices. Based on this, it may be entirely likely that the particular form of masculinity they were imitating or projecting was one that tended to be somewhat rougher, less prone to observing “polite” forms. Considering that many Japanese people believe men are inherently less polite and less prone to use respectful terms, the adoption

of that particular persona could have easily encouraged them to continually utilize plain form.

For the *dansou* café employees, their own conversations often held fun, playful qualities that were nevertheless for the customers. While most conversations the maids had together were done off to the side, not necessarily meant for customers to hear, the butlers often made their discussions public, loud enough for anyone in the area to hear. As such, these conversations could be considered a form of entertainment for their customers. They always used a casual and familiar style, never straying from plain form. For example, when one butler spoke about the mess behind the bar, the other at one point during the conversation said “*Nani yattandaro*”, which would translate roughly as “What happened, I wonder.” Based on the playful back and forth they were engaging in this may have sounded something like “Oh, I wonder why that is” in slightly dubious, sarcastic tone, as if they both knew the answer. If the customers were regulars, these conversations allowed easy places for them to slip in and join the butlers in playful banter. Additionally, the butlers at Queen Dolce appeared to have no compunction about throwing out the occasional curse while they were talking. This was never done at a customer, but it was substantially different and more relaxed than anything I found in the maid cafés.

As noted, each café tends to have its own distinct style that marks it as separate from others. They define themselves as a group (*kosupure* cafés), but also institute small differences to make them stand out from one another. Often during the course of one’s daily life language is used without much thought aside from the desire to communicate an

idea. However, language has more varied capabilities than basic communication: setting a tone or atmosphere, displaying an identity, negotiating social position, and more fall within the purview of speech and language. In the case of the cafés, the employees use language to perform all of these different acts. While creating distinct personalities and atmospheres, they all still strive for the same goal, making their customers feel as if they are among friends in an unusual place. It is a situational “politeness” that seeks appropriateness through a fluid use of familiarity but also distance, “polite” language but also very informal language.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Though many people have claimed that the Japanese language at its core is a “polite” language, upon closer inspection it becomes clear that such a blanket statement understates its versatility and complexity. Indeed, in order to use the language to its greatest potential one must be aware of subtle differences in status, as there are levels of respect and social distance built into the language. This is not merely a question of politeness, but rather of variables that have little to do with being strictly “polite.” The various verb forms and terms of address can show respect, friendliness, comfort level, and even particular sides of a person’s identity. Even the common assertions about gender and politeness seem questionable.

While there may be some truth to the notion that women use *-masu* forms and other respectful terms more frequently, it is more complex than women simply being “more polite” than men. For example, Maemi’s character in *Tsuki no Koibito* rarely used anything but plain form and seldom used terms of address denoting respect or higher social status, even when speaking to her company’s president. However, when she did opt for something other than the plain form, it was often done as a joke to tease the other individual, thus making her use of *-masu* form and terms like *shachou* or *-sama* sarcastic,

potentially even rude, rather than “polite.” Additionally, for most individuals, such as SMAPxSMAP’s guests, Pink Lady, there is more at work than just gender, so their constant use of *-masu* form verbs could be related to their age or their social status (being guests on someone else’s show). Similarly, though the maids at most cafés used “polite” language extensively this was not something strictly linked to gender. Their careful use of language was more likely due to the roles that they were playing as employees rather than the fact that they were female.

Though to an outsider, the Japanese language may seem stiff and “polite”, perhaps lacking in emotion, it is more than capable of expressing deep emotion. However, its manner of emotional expression may subvert the expectations of an American listener. When dealing with an emotional topic, many Americans may expect tears or short ill-conceived sentences, because such emotional distress is thought to make a person less capable of eloquent speech. However, in Japanese there is an understanding that emotion can be expressed on many different levels, including the use of respectful or familiar language. For example, the discussion between Rensuke and Kazami regarding the company after Rensuke has been removed from the presidency shows the capability of the language to express intense emotion without trespassing social boundaries. To someone unfamiliar with the language, it might appear as if they have few strong feelings on the topic. In reality, they are affording the topic the gravity and respect they believe it is due by opting for a more level, respectful conversation. This can be seen again in *Kamen no Otoko* when d’Artagnan makes his promise to Constance. In this scene, they switch from familiar language to *-masu* forms. Using respectful language may seem cold

or detached to someone who does not understand Japanese, but it is often quite the opposite.

Naturally, emotions can be expressed when using plain form as well, which may make the emotion easier to identify with for an American listener. Maemi's conversations with Rensuke are of this nature. On a daily basis, they use plain form with each other, but when they reveal their romantic feelings they continue to use familiar language. This emphasizes their friendship and the idea that a new level is being added to it as well as new emotions to enhance it. Additionally, a degree of emotional expression can be found in the *meido* cafés as well. Though some may question the sincerity of the feelings displayed, that is not the issue in question. When dealing with regular customers, maids frequently used familiar language. If they were expressing excitement or dismay, they always continued in the plain form rather than switching to *-masu* forms. Few deeply emotional subjects were covered, since the cafés are generally "feel-good" places, but the emotion that was displayed tended to stay in the same form of speech used regularly.

What becomes obvious in this study is how language can be used to emphasize, craft, and display identities in certain situations. In the case of Takarazuka and *kosupure* cafés, in order to perform their job, employees must emphasize particular aspects of their identities. In addition to items like clothing or make-up, language and speech help the women in these positions do just that. The *otokoyaku* of Takarazuka first have to adopt what are considered to be masculine qualities, such as a particular tone of voice, a specific walk, and certain outfits. When on stage, they must add another layer to this, that of the personality of their character. However, when off-stage they are expected to juggle

their identity as *otokoyaku* as well as their identity as females. Therefore they must exhibit both masculine and feminine qualities so as not to disappoint their fans. Again this is accomplished both by appearance and language.

As for *kospure* cafés, there is a similar dual identity at work, though without the expectation for the employees to balance those identities off the clock as well. At *meido* cafés, the maids must express the fun and friendly persona that the establishment wishes to project, which calls for smiles, standard greetings, and a particular (initially polite or respectful) type of speech. In addition to that, the girls are all acting within the personalities mentioned earlier, such as the *genki* maid or the shy quiet maid. While creating a friendly environment for customers, maids must also work to emphasize a particular personality at the same time. The same is certainly true of the *dansou* cafés as well. The employees are expected to make the idea that they are males believable to some extent as well as display a particular personality, like the little brother or *bishounen* stereotypes. In conjunction with their appearance, speech is perhaps their greatest asset, so they use terms like *nii-chan* or use language that is considered coarse, such as curse words to help express their identities *dansou* staff.

One of the most important uses of language is to connect to, or disconnect from, personal relationships, to create social distance or closeness. SMAP members frequently speak to their audience using plain form. Rather than being seen as rude, this draws in viewers and creates a bond of friendship, even though they may never have met personally. While the viewers may not see themselves as being of the same social status, it makes them feel like a part of a celebrity's world. Similarly, the employees of *kosupure*

cafés adjust levels of familiarity in their speech to create the same effect: lessening social distance. On the other hand, using respectful forms can increase the social distance which might make someone more comfortable with the situation at hand. For example, the nervous young gentleman that a maid spoke to without using an overly excited voice or unduly familiar speech represents a case where the increase of social distance serves to help put a person at ease. All of the above are cases where language is used to navigate social relationships to make them as comfortable as possible.

As the preceding chapters show, the distinction made between tact and politeness can be both a useful and important one. Tact is how individuals to regulate personal relationships and interactions, whether or not they are adhering to strictly “polite” speech. Individuals analyze situations and apply different types of language and actions in an effort to interact appropriately with others, whether that means teasing, showing respect, or asking a question. In order to be tactful, various factors must be considered to achieve this goal such as close relationships, setting, tone, and other considerations. Without an appreciation of tact, the notion that “politeness” can be impolite is difficult to understand, but being able to view these as discrete (but often intersecting) concepts adds an important dimension to any analysis.

The Japanese language is full of complexities that speakers can exploit to convey emotion, form or emphasize an identity, and form relationships. Clearly it is not so simple as being just a “polite” language. While the nuances can often be lost on outsiders, there is great depth and complication wrapped up in even just the appearance of politeness. Situations and circumstances can shift the meaning of statements in ways that

might be unexpected or surprising. Writers can use it to carefully craft interesting characters, like the quiet but intense Rensuke or the excitable and friendly Yuzuki. Language can also be used to make believable male characters who are played by the women of Takarazuka, such as Phillipe or d'Artagnan. Just as difficult, people can use it unrehearsed when employed as maids or butlers, conveying identities and adjusting familiarity levels. Then in shows like SMAPxSMAP, the hosts and guest stars use both scripted and unscripted language to project their own personalities to the viewers and make themselves memorable and entertaining. With a good grasp of the Japanese language and some understanding of the culture, speech can be used in a number of ways, often complicated and complex, to create a number of effects.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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