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Odjel za anglistiku

Diplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti; smjer: nastavnički (dvopredmetni)

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Diplomski rad

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Zadar, 2016.

Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

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1. Introduction

"Women's language" has been recognized as a notion related to the Japanese culture, tradition and social knowledge. Throughout history, the language has been considered a reflection of the essential qualities of Japanese womanhood and thus related to gender-appropriate behavior. The female gender viewed as a social category has been encoded through the language's grammar. In other words, its linguistic features have revealed the existence of social stereotypes related to gender. Language as such has become relevant in determining women's social roles, values, responsibilities and status. As language is used as a cover to express other, non-linguistic values, the existence of a particular language ideology needs to be subject to analysis.

From a more general point of view, the aim of the thesis is to analyze the interaction between language and gender. On a more precise note, the thesis observes and interprets the relationship between gender identities and language ideologies in the Japanese context, considering as focus the notion of "women's language". First, the thesis provides a theoretical background on the studies on language, gender and ideology in Anglophone contexts, only to later apply these phenomena to the Japanese context. The thesis is concerned with how the concept of ideology applies to the relationship between language and gender, being the object of study of many prominent scholars in sociolinguistics. Secondly, a historical background of the social and linguistic changes in Japan is briefly recounted, in order to gain a better comprehension of the origin and development of "women's language". Considerable attention is also given to the overview of features recognized as a property of the female gender that have become known as indices of "women's language". These particular gendered linguistic features are linked to their social meanings, as they are interpreted taking into consideration the Japanese social context, values and norms. Finally,

"women's language" is discussed as a particular language ideology present in the Japanese society.

2. Theoretical background

Before discussing Japanese "women's language", it is necessary to provide a brief review of key theoretical features on language, gender and ideology in the field of Anglophone sociolinguistics. The first subchapter focuses on the relationship between language and gender and on the emergence of the notion known as "women's language". The second subchapter is devoted to the concept of language ideology and its relation to gender roles and identities.

2.1. Performing gender through language and the development of "women's language"

This chapter focuses on the notion of gender and different interpretations it gained throughout time, especially regarding the sex/gender distinction. In this regard, feminists' work in the field of sociolinguistics will be used as a primary reference. Moreover, it is necessary to observe how language became a crucial instrument of expressing gender-specific meanings and, therefore, how these two separate concepts became relevant to each other. The relationship between language and gender led to the identification of a "women's language", whose covered meanings will be analyzed in this chapter.

Firstly, it is important to say that research on language and gender in the field of Anglophone sociolinguistics has been carried out for decades and has led to numerous findings not only in the area of gender studies, but it has contributed to general language and social studies as well. The interest for the research of this kind does not cease and, despite it being a long-lasting matter of concern, new questions keep on appearing. In the same fashion, methods and approaches of researchers with the aim of answering questions concerning the relationship between language and gender continue to change, bringing along new ways of conceptualizing these fields of interests.

First, the very concept "gender" has acquired different senses throughout time. For instance, Pavlidou states that "grammatical gender" in Indo-European languages, dating back to the fifth century BC, has been closely related to "natural gender", defined as "the sex of animate beings denoted by those words" (412). However, it was not until the seventeenth century that first references to the concept known as "women's language" appeared (Pavlidou 412). Pavlidou explains that the need for introducing the term derived from the desire to identify and individualize the variety of language used exclusively or preferentially by women as opposed to the variety considered as the "norm", which was men's speech (412). Finally, in modern linguistics, sociolinguistics has introduced "sex" as an independent variable that could account for variation and change in language (Pavlidou 412).

However, feminist movements in the late 1960s following The Women's Liberation Movement, which started in the US and spread to Europe, have provided a new interpretation of the covered meanings and stereotypes that the language in question might express (Pavlidou 412). Initially, Robin Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place*, published in 1975, provoked the first discussions on the relationship between gender and language as objects of linguistic study (Abe 648). Her work presents the first mention of a "women's language", "meaning both language restricted in use to women and language descriptive of women alone" (Lakoff 48). She identified "women's language" in all levels of English grammar (Lakoff 51). Language as such reflects women's inferior position in society, as Lakoff explicitly states that through language women are denied access to power (48). Therefore, she refuses the existence of any biological basis that would account for the gender differences in language and emphasizes cultural and social bias as the roots of differences.

Lakoff's speculations on "women's language" have been revisited and reinterpreted in terms of stereotypes in operation (Talbot 477). Language can thus be interpreted as a powerful social construct of what are perceived to be ideal feminine speech patterns,

including “feminine” lexis, high pitch and wide-ranging intonation patterns (Talbot 478). The issue revolving around the notion of “women’s language” is not merely the claim that it is a separate language, but the fact that it has often been described as a deficient language, thus creating the image of women being “linguistically inferior to men” (Cameron 453). Since women were supposedly not allowed access to certain linguistic structures, they were also denied access to valuable social opportunities (Cameron 454). Therefore, feminists claimed that women were not naturally weak speakers, but they acquired what was recognized as feminine linguistic behavior, which was imposed by the society to maintain the power order. Lakoff’s work has brought the question of how language and/or interaction can produce or reflect unequal power relationships between men and women (Pavlidou 412).

Feminist approaches to gender have first focused on the distinction between the concepts of *sex* and *gender* (Pavlidou 413). Simone de Beauvoir in 1949 was the first one to propose that “sex” is biologically determined, while “gender” is a social and cultural construct (Pavlidou 413). In her treatise *The Second Sex*, she claims that “the division of the sexes is a biological given, not a moment in human history” since there is no identified moment in time or a historical event that would account for the duality (Beauvoir 27). However, belonging to the female sex does not necessarily imply being a woman. Beauvoir explains that being a woman requires an active role and adherence to the roles and duties assigned by the society, much different from the passive and innate feature such as the female sex (45). Given the difference between sex and gender, the latter is neither fixed nor casual, but a matter of a conscious choice on the part of an individual. In other words, the fact that women are different from men is not biologically determined, but gender identities are socially constructed. The roles, properties and attributes considered to be associated with women are not given by birth, but are acquired and performed by women, as they are taught by the society what is gender-appropriate.

Two approaches in the late 1980s have influenced the view of gender as different from an individual's innate quality or a stable aspect of one's identity. The first approach was introduced by West and Zimmerman as "doing gender". According to the approach, the concept of gender implies a performance, an activity on the part of individuals that would identify them as male or female, based on society's conceptualization of what kind of behavior is female or male appropriate (Pavlidou 414). Although gender is performed by individuals, West and Zimmerman refuse to define it as "a property of individuals", but as "an emergent feature of social situations" (126). Therefore, "doing gender" is always socially guided, based on society's arrangements of roles and identities that underlie its essence. These gender-specific roles and identities are most evident on the level of interaction in which individuals participate (Pavlidou 414). Indeed, West and Zimmerman define "doing gender" as "an ongoing activity embedded in everyday conversation" (130). Gender is displayed and reinforced through interaction and thus requires a conscious activity on the part of an individual. As such, gender is not given, but it needs to be accomplished through interaction. Therefore, what matters is that gender necessarily involves agency and intentionality, thus being a matter of choice, not imposed by birth.

Judith Butler provided a similar yet even more radical approach to gender studies, claiming that not only "gender", but also the concept of "sex" requires a particular performance (Pavlidou 415). Butler claimed that neither concepts are stable and defined them as troublesome terms, as they cannot constitute a common identity (3). In other words, the term "woman" is not exhaustive enough to explain the entire identity of women as a group, because the notion has different implications in various historical contexts and is combined with one's "racial, religious, sexual, ethnic and other identities" (Butler 3). Moreover, she states that "sex" might be "as culturally constructed as gender", meaning that the feminists' distinction between the two concepts in terms of nature/culture opposition is not valid (Butler

7). Similar to Beauvoir's notion of "constructing gender", Butler claims that gender is a "stylized repetition of acts" (140). In this regard, she coined the notion of "performing gender", as something that is produced and reproduced to express the various meanings underlying the very concept of gender (Butler 138). To claim that something is a performance implies that it is not a natural, internal reality, but rather a conscious adoption of a role and an enactment. It also implies that gender is not definite, but constantly subject to evaluation, hence the importance of repetition or reproduction of the acts.

As mentioned previously, performance that would reveal and affect gender identities can be most easily visible in interaction. Research dedicated to gender studies has not been limited to system-oriented studies, but has eventually shifted to empirical research, focusing on interaction around the 1990s (Pavlidou 413). The focus on interaction created the concept of "gendering interaction", which refers to the linguistic and sociocultural constraints that inform interaction and reveal gender ideologies, defined as "representations of reality that are the product of asymmetrical power relations between the genders and in which gender differences and heteronormativity are taken for granted" (Pavlidou 415). Therefore, another significant part of the relationship between language and gender worth considering is the notion of their respective ideologies.

2.2. Language ideologies as a means of creating gender differences and stereotypes

This subchapter is devoted to the analysis of the notion of language ideology and how this concept applies to the interaction between language and gender. In this regard, the emphasis is on gender differences and stereotypes that are produced through the pronouncement of female/male appropriate linguistic forms. It is important to say that these practices, although apparently having a purely linguistic nature, carry strong social meanings and have social consequences, as it is discussed in this subchapter. Moreover, these social

practices are culture-specific and thus this subchapter examines how language and gender ideologies take different forms in Anglophone and Japanese contexts.

Ideologies have often been said to denote mental constructs; yet, by contrast ideologies are social constructs, as they necessarily involve an examination of the social setting in which languages are represented (Cameron 448). Language ideology pronounces the "proper" use of language, with the aim to impose order on spheres other than language alone (Cameron 449). Indeed, linguistic constraints have had often been used to create, maintain and reinforce gender differences and thus denying women and men the access to certain kind of discourses, including talk and silence, speech genres, speech events or acts (Pavlidou 414-415). In other words, to make statements about "women's language" means not only to instruct in what counts as a desirable language, but also in a gender-appropriate behavior. Therefore, language ideologies are necessarily linked to gender ideologies, as "these representations of gender and language are part of a society's apparatus for maintaining gender distinctions in general" (Cameron 452). Therefore, language is one of the primary source of gender ideologies.

Lexical and/or grammatical gender are often used to categorize someone or something as male or female, which produces gender stereotypes (Pavlidou 416). Talbot defines stereotyping as a social practice that involves reduction and simplification, in order to make sense of the world (471). She claims that the process leads to the split between what is considered socially normal and acceptable and what is abnormal and unacceptable (471). Stereotyping can have serious consequences, as people often accept them as natural and commonsensical (Talbot 468). According to Talbot, in that way, power can easily be established without having to use force and social control is achieved by consent (471). Naturally, stereotyping is directed at subordinate groups, in this case women, and "naturalized norms and expectations about verbal behavior" are imposed upon them (Talbot

468). Therefore, some gender stereotypes refer to the presumed linguistic behavior of men and women, although they might not be an accurate reflection of real behavior, but, as Talbot claims, a tool "to sustain hegemonic male dominance and female subordination" (470).

One particular stereotype related to "women's language" concerns women's volubility and tendency to gossip (Pavlidou 416). However, although neither characteristics have proven to be sex-exclusive, the stereotypes continue to persist. This can be explained by the fact that the way linguistic behavior is shaped and perceived depends largely on the social power exercised on the members of the community (Pavlidou 417). Talbot states that gender stereotypes are thus viewed as "ideological prescriptions for behavior", and individuals are expected to obey them and acquire the stereotypical role assigned to them (472). She also claims that the consent leads to manifestation of patriarchal social order (474).

When it comes to gendered interaction, another sociolinguist, Janet Holmes, contributed to its conceptualization (Pavlidou 417). She identified four main areas of analysis when it comes to gender generalizations, which she refers to as "sociolinguistic universal tendencies" (qtd. in Wardaugh 322). The first area draws upon the main functions of interaction that are gender-specific, which are reminiscent of Tannen's distinction between "rapport-talk" and "report-talk" (Pavlidou 417). According to these two clearly separated functions, when women engage in interaction their talk resembles affection, while men exchange information or report facts (Wardaugh 322). Moreover, women employ more linguistic items that index solidarity, politeness and closeness (Wardaugh 322). For example, along with using supportive feedback, they ask more questions and facilitative tags to encourage the speaker to participate in the conversation (Pavlidou 418). On the other hand, men's way of interaction often indexes power or status, as they are found to be more dominant in interaction and interrupt more often than women (Wardaugh 422). Moreover, women use more standard forms than men belonging to the same social group in the same

social setting, as shown by a social dialectal research across different social groups (Pavlidou 418). It is important to state that such generalizations appear adequate on a descriptive level, but the observed differences have not yet been adequately explained (Pavlidou 418).

Until the early 1990s, the *dominance* and the *difference* models served as main references for explanation of different gender verbal behavior (Pavlidou 418). The first model explains the different linguistic behavior of men and women as correlated to their unequal power relations in society. The social inequality is thus reflected in and carried over to interaction. The findings that women act in interaction as a subordinate group could be explained by the fact that women are often expected to be more polite and considerate than men (Pavlidou 418). In the same fashion, women might feel obliged to use the standard to maintain or increase their social status, while men are allowed more flexibility (Pavlidou 418). Moreover, West and Zimmerman considered men's tendency to interrupt more frequently than women as a form of dominance (Litosseliti 34). Other signals of dominance in interaction were found to be topic initiation and control (Litosseliti 33). However, an identified weakness of the dominance model is that it does not take into consideration the nature of these interaction strategies. For example, rather than as an expression of dominance, Litosseliti states that interruptions can be seen as "supportive speech acts" (36). On the other hand, the difference model accounts for the differences in interaction as natural gender difference (Pavlidou 418). Litosseliti made reference to Maltz and Borker, who related the interaction difference to different sub-cultures men and women belong to (37). In other words, there are different conversational expectations imposed on them even from a very young age, which produces the differences. One of the main weaknesses of both models is that they rely on the understanding of gender as a stable social and biological binary, where women and men belong to two clearly determined and separate, heterogeneous categories (Pavlidou 419).

Much of Anglophone feminist sociolinguistic work has been primarily concerned with the argument that there is no such a thing as "women's language" and that any mention of such language is a clear evidence of attempts to create gender stereotypes and impose male dominance (Abe 449). It is important to point out that the issues of language regarding its ideological concepts and the approach to the relationship between language and gender has not been a priority of Japanese sociolinguistic research, differently from the Anglophone sociolinguistic work. This might be a reflection of different socially determined attitudes in these respective societies. In this regard, Abe claims that "female speech" in Japan has been recognized and widely adopted as a social category, promoted by the elite women (654). Therefore, the existence of "women's language" is socially accepted in Japan and it is not believed to be used as means of exercising power, unlike feminists in Anglophone context claimed. Consequently, Japanese "women's language" should be carefully evaluated before making any preconceived notions about the idea behind it and this can only be done by examining culture-specific features and contexts.

As mentioned previously, Lakoff viewed "women's language" as a defective model of speech, which denies women certain social positions and status. However, Abe claims that Japanese linguists have not referred to the language in terms of inferiority, but uniqueness and beauty (450). Therefore, findings of Anglophone studies on language and gender should be applied to the Japanese context with great caution since certain notions might acquire different cultural meanings and values. For example, silence in Japanese is not associated with powerlessness, but may indicate speakers' "disagreement, discomfort, refusal or even power itself" (Abe 450).

One of the main differences between Japanese and Anglophone research on language and gender since the 1960s is that the former was not developed or encouraged by women's liberation movement, while the latter maintained a strong connection with feminism (Abe

451). This reveals different approaches and ideologies being considered when studying "women's language". Although the situation has changed, for a long time no one questioned the notion of "women's language" in terms of gender stereotyping and power inequity (Abe 451).

However, in recent years Japanese feminist movements have had a major impact on the critical reading of "women's language", observing how influential and restrictive a language can be to women's ways of dealing with a world (Abe 659). Therefore, feminists have provided their interpretation of the covered meanings and stereotypes that the language in question might express. Their work stimulated a variety of new studies concerning "women's language" that challenged the established ideologies of language (Cameron 448).

This subchapter has revealed how sociolinguists' work, especially feminist theorizing, on language and gender has led to greater insights into how gender is constructed in language and interaction. It has been discussed that researchers strongly opposed the view of "gender" as a deterministic quality of any human being, based on which preconceived notions about individuals' verbal behavior could be made. However, changing available possibilities in a language takes time since, as mentioned previously, the problem of gender stereotyping does not lie in language alone, but is rooted in and created by the existing power distribution in interaction and society in general. Moreover, it has been argued that gender ideologies take different forms, carry various meanings in different sociocultural systems, and thus require different approaches to interpretation and analysis. Therefore, before applying the discussed theoretical features present in Anglophone literature to Japanese "women's language", it is necessary to consider the history and development of "women's language" in the Japanese context.

3. Japanese "women's language" — a historical background

A historical analysis of Japanese "women's language" is provided in order to reflect on the historical development of "women's language" and investigate whether and to what extent it has contributed to current female speech. A revision of the historical background provides not only an overview of social and political changes that Japan underwent, but considers the correspondent transformation of gender roles, as well as the emergence and development of "women's language".

Ide claims that due to the lack of sources on spoken language, it is difficult to estimate the beginning of the notion known as "women's language" in Japan ("Language of Inferior I" 216). A collection of essays, under the name of *Makura no Soshi*, written by Sei Shonagon[1], in the early 11th century, is often considered as the first written indication of "women's language" in Japan (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 216). It contained second person pronouns that indicated speaker's and addressee's gender (Ide, "Group Identity" 224).

The period of the emergence of this distinction between men's and women's speech is known as *Heian period*[2], when women of noble class had to reflect their refined court lives in language (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 216). In the 11th century, women used the phonetic writing system called *hiragana*, on which the present Japanese language is based (Ide, "Group Identity" 224). On the other hand, men used Chinese, the essential language for an educated Japanese (Ide, "Group Identity" 224). Therefore, women were allowed to write in a language much closer to their usual way of expressing themselves (Ide, "Group Identity" 224). Moreover, the distinction was found in oral speech in terms of voice pitch and frequency of use, as women were expected to talk little and speak quietly (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 216). Ide claims that although there were some prior indications of differentiation,

[1] Sei Shonagon is a famous woman writer of the Heian period (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 216).
[2] Heian period lasted from the 9th to the 12th century.

it was generally believed that women enjoyed a much higher social status before the Heian period, so the differences were often considered trivial ("Language of Inferior I" 216).

The identification of "women's language" became even more evident in the *Muromachi period*[3], when the feudalistic principles brought a greater distance between men and women, socially and linguistically speaking (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 217). This period evidenced the birth of *nyōbō kotoba*, language of court ladies (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 217). Court ladies were members of the noble class, who served the emperor and had an important role in court life, managing daily affairs and educating royal children (Ide, "Group Identity" 230). Even though the official rank of "court lady" had existed since the 8th century, it was not until the 14th century that they developed a special language that they used among them (Ide, "Group Identity" 230). As the power of the emperor began to decline, *nyōbō kotoba* was used as a secret language of court ladies to hide difficult conditions and protect the emperor and nobles (Ide, "Group Identity" 231). This particular type of "women's language" functioned as a "communicative code, useful among in-group members, and useful in excluding others" (Ide, "Group Identity" 231). *Nyōbō kotoba* differed from ordinary language only in the lexicon, creating new lexical items in the field of daily life (Ide, "Group Identity" 231). However, there was another reason for the emergence of the language (Ide, "Group Identity" 232). Court ladies were very powerful and influential, yet they had to appear gentle, charming and non-threatening (Ide, "Group Identity" 232). Therefore, they would use a language of their own to express weakness and innocence (Ide, "Group Identity" 232). *Nyōbō kotoba* soon became a language used by ordinary people and the language to which everyone should aspire. The language resulted to be one of the major "women's languages" in the history of Japan (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 217). This explains the existence of some of its distinctive vocabulary in contemporary Japanese.

[3] Muromachi period lasted from the 14th to the 16th century.

The fixed division of society in social classes, brought by the *Edo Period*[4], placed a great burden on women, who were expected to behave according to the rules appointed by men (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 217). The oppression of women was enforced by *onnaidagaku*, etiquette books consisting of prescriptions on what is considered to be desired women behavior and speech (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 217). *Nyōbō kotoba*, once the language of court ladies, was the prescribed and most prestigious language (Ide, "Group Identity" 233). The two other identified languages were *nimonseki-go*, language of Buddhist nuns, and *yuri-go*, language of geisha and prostitutes (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 217). In this period, courtesans came into existence as respected professionals who had to master the art of writing poems, such as *haiku*, as well as the art of dancing, singing, playing music, and reading Chinese (Ide, "Group Identity" 234). They used their sophisticated knowledge and artistic talent to entertain clients (Ide, "Group Identity" 234). In this special world, a special language had to be created to ensure comprehension between people from different regions and social backgrounds (Ide, "Group Identity" 234). The language was called *yuujogo*, which comes from *yuujo*, which means "courtesan" (Ide, "Group Identity" 234). This "special language of the night" was also aimed at concealing the courtesans' accent, which could reveal her provenance (Ide, "Group Identity" 234). Similar to the case of the language of court ladies, ordinary women started to use *yuujogo* as well, and after some time, its vocabulary items were no longer seen as an exclusive property of courtesans' language (Ide, "Group Identity" 235). They became used by both genders and are still traceable in contemporary Japanese (Ide, "Group Identity" 234).

From the *Meiji Restoration*[5] in 1868, Japan's culture was open to western influence, but the social changes did not include the social position of women (Inoue, "Gender, Language" 60). Women were still expected to be in the service of the stronger gender and to

[4] Edo period lasted from the 17th to the 19th century.
[5] The aim of the restoration was to bring back the power to the emperor, but it resulted in the formation of the Japanese nation.

obey to the etiquettes, which seemed to be even more specific (Inoue, "Gender, Language" 60).

The late 19th and the early 20th centuries witnessed state formation, nationalism, capitalist accumulation, industrialization, radical class reconfiguration, colonialism, and foreign military adventurism. In this context, both language and women resulted to be national issues. The Meiji elite recognized language as an instrument for building a nation-state and considered it crucial to modernize it. The necessity for a language reform derived from the perceived diversity in writing and speech across Japan and it was directed to forming new modern institutions, such as education, academia, government service, the print media, and the literary community. The result of the reform would be a standard language, which would help institutional developments. Moreover, "women" as a social category underwent radical changes and "modern Japanese women emerged as an articulable social category burdened with new cultural meanings pertinent to its relationship with the nation-state". Japan's linguistic modernity—language standardization, the rise of the novel, and print capitalism, gave rise to emergence of a particular Japanese women's language. The main area of concern was women's public education. The government actively launched a project to nationalize women and shape their roles within their secondary education. In the Meiji era, the Japanese government standardized the Japanese language and emphasized the use of feminine speech according to the ideal of *ryoosai kenbo* — "good wife, good mother". The project advocated traditional values, based on the idea of ideal womanhood and undisputable obedience to the opposite gender. Moreover, their speech had to be adjusted to reflect "proper" gender meanings (Inoue, "Gender, Language" 60-78).

Indexing gender in early 20th-century Japan involved imagining the voice of a Japanese modern woman in the making. The language that ought to be consider a "women's

language" was known as a property of an ideal middle class woman (Inoue, "Gender, Language" 78).

After the Second World War, Japan's emergent democracy and equality principles lead to an improved women's social status. Nevertheless, the prewar period left a seemingly inerasable mark, evident in the remaining presence of traditional values. Many Japanese women continue to adhere to previously imposed conventions even to the present day, either consciously or otherwise. Language norms continued to be promoted through popular media, language policy and linguists' intervention. Covert media messages influenced the way in which men and women should be represented and which social roles they should assume. Overall, linguistic features evaluated as women-specific might still be traceable in contemporary Japanese (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 218).

The overview of Japan's history provided an insight into social and linguistic changes that women were exposed to. It is intended to serve as basis for a greater comprehension of "women's language" and to offer a new perspective for its analysis. The resulting gendered linguistic features and their respective ideology will be discussed in continuation.

4. Japanese "women's language"

This chapter consists of two subchapters, which are devoted to the analysis of "women's language", as a notion that has become a recognized cultural category and an unavoidable part of practical social knowledge in contemporary Japan. The first subchapter focuses on its linguistic features; more precisely, it discusses gender differences identified at different linguistic levels. The second subchapter observes how these linguistic features refer to gender roles and identities; in other words, it argues that the language in questions determines, maintains and reveals women's position in the Japanese society. The analysis of social meanings behind the language is carried out by referring to the findings of Anglophone scholars.

4.1. Linguistic features of Japanese "women's language"

Before discussing the linguistic features, it is necessary to provide the definition of the notion known as "woman's language". The phrase "women's language" implies the existence of particular speech forms recognized as a property of a particular gender; in other words, it implies that women speak differently from men and claims the existence of a prototypical female speech. Inoue defines a Japanese "women's language" as "a space of discourse in which the Japanese woman is objectified, evaluated, studied, staged, and normalized through her imputed language use and is thus rendered a knowable and unified object" ("Gender, Language" 57). Therefore, Inoue claims the existences of a clear set of linguistic features that indexes female gender as a recognizable object. The aim is to present the particular linguistic forms that have come to be identified as "women's language" or *joseego* in contemporary Japan.

Scholars identified gender differences at all levels of language- phonology, semantics, morphology, syntax, speech acts, discourse, as well as extralinguistic features such as pitch

(Inoue, "Gender, Language" 57). Sachiko Ide identified some of the linguistic features considered to be differently used by each gender, including personal pronouns, honorifics, sentence-final particles, imperative sentences, expletives, modifiers, conjunctions, aspects of vocabulary and voice pitch level.

One of the most evident gender distinctions in Japanese are personal pronouns. There are fewer personal pronouns in Japanese than English and the choice depends on many factors, including the sex of the speaker and the addressee, the formality of the situation and topic. Therefore, gender is only one variable that affects the usage of personal pronouns since it interacts with pragmatic factors, mainly the aspect of politeness. When it comes to the use of first person pronouns, men have four varieties of "I", depending on the level of formality[6] — *watakushi* being the most formal, then come *watashi*, *boku* and *ore*, the most informal form. If a man were to use *boku* when speaking to another man, he would reveal his social status as superior to the other, as he is allowed some degree of informality. However, if a socially inferior man would use *boku* in the same situation, he would be deemed inappropriate. Women also have four varieties of "I". The most formal form is *watakushi*, the one that is also used by men, but women use it in a much wider range of situations. Women use *watashi* in much more informal situations, where men would use *boku.* Upper class women use *ataskushi* in place of *watakushi* and *watashi*. *Atashi* is usually used by little girls and it is less formal than *watashi* (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 218- 220).

Second person pronouns are used only when the addressee is of the same status as the speaker or his or her inferior. Women in all levels of the formality of the situation mostly use the most formal form, *anata*. *Anta* is the only alternative form, but it sounds derogatory and it is not part of educated women's speech. On the other hand, men, apart from *anata*, have on their disposal less formal varieties, such as *kimi*, *omae* and *kisama*, which are tolerated in

[6] A formal situation occurs when it involves one of the following factors: a formal setting, talking to a superior or an unfamiliar person (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 219).

situations where men want to express anger towards the addressee. Moreover, there are rules of usage of second person pronouns between husband and wife. Women are expected to use *anata* with their husbands. On the other hand, men use their wife's first name, indicating themselves as superior to their wife. The use of personal pronouns is taught as early as in kindergarten, to make sure children behave politely and appropriately in a wide range of situations. Mothers use *boku*[7] when they refer to their sons to teach them to use it when referring to themselves. Young boys also learn to use the most informal form of "I", *ore,* and *omae* for "you", when they want to express superiority. On the other hand, little girls use formal forms such as *watashi* and *atashi* to refer to themselves and *anata* to refer to others (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 222-224). This shows that children are taught to associate personal pronouns with sex and status consciousness at a very young age. The use of personal pronouns can strongly imply gender based on the inherent levels of politeness and formality, as well as a hierarchical connotation.

Irvine stated that grammaticalized honorifics are "expressions of deference or of differential status-marking incorporated into the language's grammatical rules" (52). In other words, there are distinct forms to express respect, evident in a language's grammar. In Japanese, the honorific prefix *o-* or *go-* are placed before nouns, adjectives and adverbs to signal respect and politeness, as in *Sensei wa o-hayai desu ne*[8], which means *Teacher, you are early, aren't you?* (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 23-24). Ide states that honorifics can be used by both male and female speakers, but their use is obligatory for women, otherwise the utterance produced by a woman would sound inappropriate and impolite ("Language of Inferior II" 24). Therefore, there are no honorifics that are exclusively used by either gender; it is the frequency of use that differs among them. In other words, both men and women can use honorifics, yet women are required to use them more frequently.

[7] *Boku* is a semi-formal form for "I" (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 224).
[8] The honorific -o is used before the adjective *hayai* ("early") (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 23).

When it comes to sentence-final particles, they are words that do not carry much meaning on their own, but placing them at the end of an utterance the speaker can express a feeling or emotion in an informal setting. As opposed to honorifics, there are sentence-final particles associated with a particular gender. Japanese men use *ze*, *zo, yo*, *desu* and *da. Ze* and *zo* are used to get the attention of the speaker and they sound very strong and derogatory, as in *Omoshiroi ze*[9]*,* which means *Shit, it's interesting*. *Yo* can also be used to draw attention, but it does not carry a derogatory connotation. *Da* and *desu*[10] are used to sound more definite and confident, as in *Kore wa hon da*, which means *This is a book*. On the other hand, women avoid using *ze* and *zo*. They can use *yo* when they want to draw attention of the speaker, but accompanied with *wa* in order to soften a statement, as in *Omoshiroi wa-yo*, which means *See, it's interesting.* Therefore, *wa* and *wayo* are particles exclusively used by women. Since it is formal, *desu* can be used by both sexes, while *da* produced by a woman needs to be also accompanied by *wa,* as in *Kore wa hon da-wa*, which means *This is a book* (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 19-21). The use of sentence-final particles *wa* and *wayo* in Japanese has the same effect of tag-questions, as they require a response and sound more polite than statements through which speakers impose their view (Neuliep 265).

Imperative forms are only used when talking to persons of the same or inferior status. Formal imperatives, which function as polite requests, are used by both sexes, but are obligatory for women. When the imperative form *kudasai* of the verb *kudasaru*[11] is used as a verbal compound, it adds a polite connotation to the preceding verb, as in *Tabe-te kudasai*, which means *Would you please eat*?. *Ro* is a straightforward imperative used only by men in informal situations talking to an inferior, as in *Tabe ro*, which means *Eat.* The informal forms such as *ro* and *ro-yo* are used by men, but are not allowed for women. Rather, women use an

[9] *Omoshiroi* means interesting; subject and verb are deleted in this utterance (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 19).
[10] *Da* and *desu* function as the copula "be"; *da* is used in formal, while *desu* in informal settings (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 21).
[11] *Kudasaru* means "to give" (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 22).

elliptic expression, which creates the effect that the sentence is not complete and thus not decisive, as in *Tabe-te*, which means *Please eat* (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 21-22).

Another feature of "women's language" is the scarcity or even absence of words of Chinese origin, commonly called *kango*. Throughout history, the Japanese language borrowed many Chinese words, as it was an essential language to study, similarly to Latin in Europe in the Middle Ages. The use of *kango* is associated with complex concepts that are employed in a serious conversation. A research showed that men use fewer Chinese words and that these words are rarely used in relaxed situations (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 25-26). Shonagon wrote that "the sound Chinese words was unbecoming to a woman" and the view continues to persist to this day (qtd. in Ide, "Broken Silence" 58).

Japanese women use softer expletives, such as *arah* ("Oh, dear"), *maah* ("Oh, my") and *uwa* ("Oh"). Men's expletives are much more derogatory, such as *hyee* ("Damn it"). In addition, women use more modifiers to emphasize what they are saying. Degree adverbs such as *tottemo* ("awfully) and *sugoku* ("very much") are considered to be female-specific. Moreover, the study of students' compositions found that girls used more conjunctions like *demo* ("but"), while boys used *soshite* ("and") and dakara ("and therefore") (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 26-27).

A very brief mention of vocabulary provides the example of areas of which women are expected to have great knowledge — sewing and dress fashion. Elderly Japanese women know a hundred different vocabulary terms regarding different types of colors and textiles of kimono, such as *moegi-iro* ("young green"), while men would recognize only a few (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 27).

"Women's language" also specifies certain extralinguistic features. Women should be aware of not just what they are saying, but also how they are speaking, as their tone of voice should be low and soft. In addition, there are many greeting formulas in Japanese, especially

those referring to welcoming appropriately one's guest or expressing gratitude when receiving gifts. Women are expected to pay more attention to the usage of greeting formulas, while men's failure to use them properly is tolerated (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 28).

Together with politeness and softness as major aspects of "women's language", there is a particular type of speech that gained enough prominence to be considered separately. *Asobase Kotoba*[12] is used by women to emphasize their femininity. It is a dialect used by women of upper social classes and Ide associates the decline of its usage with the diminishing of class distinctions in Japan ("Language of Inferior II" 28). The *asobase* form is created by placing it after the honorific form of verb, which refers to the action of the second or third person. Ide provides an example of usage by presenting the difference between two statements with generally the same meaning, yet the one with *asobase* in it creates a specific polite connotation. The first one, *Sensei ga oide-ni-naru*, which means "The teacher comes", has the same meaning and it is as polite as the one containing *asobase*, as in *Sensei ga oide-asobasu*[13]. However, the second one creates a sense of refinement and softness, which can be attributed to the sociolinguistic features of the word (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 28). *Asobase* means "to play" and has the connotation of the leisured life of the elite. Adding "to play" to action verbs in second and third person means elevating the addressee's status by implying the nuance with the sophisticated life of the upper classes (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 28).

The discussed linguistic features are considered much more than simple markers of gender; they reflect social stereotypes and expectations directed at both men and women, regarding their social status, social roles and positions. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the social meaning behind each of the gendered linguistic forms and to identify an ideology of language present in the Japanese soci

[12] *Asobase Kotoba* is literally translated as "play language" (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 28).
[13] *Oide* is a polite form of "to come", *ni* is a particle and *naru* means "to become, present" (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 28).

4.2. Gender roles and identities in Japan

After discussing women-specific linguistic features, it is necessary to consider the social role that Japanese women perform using the language in question. The reference to the social context is necessary, as any study on language requires an insight into the social context of its use.

One notion that is present in the Japanese society is the notion that men and women are created differently. The physical difference implies different social roles and expectations for each gender and since these differences constitute a natural, inherent feature, it is only natural that their language is different (Abe 652). According to this belief, "the culturally accepted psychological differences of Japanese women must be reflected in their speech" (Abe 652). The perceived psychological traits can be traced in the linguistic features discussed previously.

The choice of personal pronouns is, just like in Anglophone contexts, associated with sex consciousness, except that in the Japanese context it also becomes an important indicator of social status. The notion that women should use more formal forms of personal pronouns follows their perceived need to identify themselves in more formal ways than men do, because they are supposed to be lower in status (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 221). Ide claims that due to their higher social status, men are allowed more varied and relaxed speech ("Language of Inferior I" 222). This claim can be related to Trudgills's statement about double standards in Anglophone societies. Namely, he claims, "women are very sensitive to linguistic norms because of their insecure social position" (qtd. in Gordon 47). Therefore, it can be concluded that women's tendency to use formal forms more frequently and in a wider range of situations can be explained by their higher consciousness of their social status. Similarly, women are expected to use more formal forms of second person pronouns because they are required to be more polite and they are not permitted to express anger by using

informal forms like those that men sometimes use. A parallel can be drawn with Lakoff's claim that women, even from a very young age, are taught to speak like "little ladies"; in other words, they are encouraged to be polite and refrain from outbursts of anger and from swearing (qtd. in Gordon 50). Therefore, society places much more pressure on women's verbal behavior as an indicator of status and proper upbringing.

The existence of honorifics in the Japanese language reveals the relationship between gender, politeness and language. The notion that women are expected to use honorifics more frequently than men reflects a stereotype according to which women should be politer than men. In other words, the fact that women are required to meet higher standards of politeness implies their lower social status than men's status. When men use honorifics in certain situations, they are considered too polite. In other words, the use of honorifics is completely unnecessary since their status is verified and stable. Moreover, since the use of honorifics often reflects sophistication and high breeding, middle class women tend to overuse them because of the desire for upward social mobility (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 23-25). Irvine also studied the presence of honorifics in different languages. When studying one particular Asian language, Javanese, Irvine identifies that honorifics carry two separate meanings – they are used to express deference, but also the speaker's status and power (256). Although Japanese men are not required to use honorifics to express their status and authority, women are expected to use them, as a way of expressing politeness, but also their subordinate role. This confirms Irvine statement that "honorifics are embedded in an ideology in which a low-affect style can be other-elevating" (261).

Sentence-final particles are used when a speaker wants to express a certain emotion in informal speech. Women are not allowed to use the same particles as men, as they sound strong and sometimes derogatory (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 19). Women's particles are used for softening because "women do not want to be considered opinionated or pushy"

(Neuliep 268). The use of sentence-final particles that are female-specific in Japanese seems to have the same effect of tag questions in English. Lakoff claims that tag questions are used to make a polite statement and that they reveal unassertiveness on the part of the speaker (Lakoff 56). On that note, she stated that "women's speech sounds much more 'polite' than men's. One aspect of politeness is as we have just described: leaving a decision open, not imposing your mind, or views, or claims, on anyone else" (56). Therefore, she identified it as part of women's speech, as women often tend to request for approval and avoid making decisive statements, which is a clear indication of lack of strength and power.

The informal forms of the imperative are not allowed for women, as they sound strict and derogatory. In informal situations, women could use an elliptical expression, because it creates uncertainty and softness (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 22). A parallel can be drawn with Lakoff's distinction between a request and an imperative. When using an imperative, a person commands obedience and expresses superiority to the addressee (Lakoff 56). On the other hand, a request is a polite command, often used in the form of tag questions, giving the addressee the power to decide (Lakoff 56). In this sense, the formal forms of imperatives used by Japanese women are requests rather than true imperatives. This analysis consequently stimulates again the question of power, as women have to attend to the way they form commands.

Women use soft expletives to convey an elegant expression of surprise and delight, while only men are allowed to use the stronger ones (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 26). Lakoff discussed the issue of these particles as they carry a profound social meaning, hence the classification "soft" versus "weak" (50). According to Lakoff, what these expletives do is convey emotions, and men are allowed to express themselves more strongly than women, who are expected to be more well-mannered: "In appropriate women's speech, strong expression of feeling is avoided, and means of expression in regard to subject-matter deemed

'trivial' to the 'real' world are elaborated" (50). Lakoff's claim that women react emotionally and thus linguistically in different ways, reveals associations between gender and affect. Anthropologist Don Kulick stated on this matter that "[…] both emotion and gender are indexed and expressed in large measure through language" and thus engaged with language ideologies (281).

It has been previously discussed that a feature of Japanese "women's language" is a greater tendency to use modifiers and fewer content words, such as nouns and verbs. A Danish Linguist Jespersen referred to this tendency in his book *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin*[14], claiming it universal for all women (Coates 12). He stated that women use fewer adverbs of intensity because they tend to exaggerate their speech (Coates 12). A similar claim was made by Lakoff in terms of "empty adjectives" that women use, such as "lovely" and "divine", defining them as trivial and unimportant (53). Therefore, modifiers are not considered important for communication in terms of exchange of information, as they do not express any content. In this way, it could be assumed that women do not contribute to communication and are not taken seriously.

The fact that girls tend to use the conjunction meaning "but" more frequently than boys do, reveals that they are uncertain about their statements, following the idea that "women who are articulate and assertive are not preferred by many men" (Ide 27). This can again be related to Lakoff's study of women's language, where "uncertainty is favored" (45). Moreover, women are judged more harshly if they do not pronounce correctly greeting formulas, as they are required to show their proper upbringing.

Women's vocabulary repertory reveals the fields where their interests lie, such as cooking, sewing, cosmetics, dress fashion and child care. Therefore, it is an indication of women's domain and world. Moreover, women's failure to use a proper greeting formula is

[14] The book includes the chapter entitled *The Woman*, in which Jespersen identifies male/female differences in a language, based on a research on different "women's languages" around the world (Coates 12).

socially not tolerated. Their tone of voice should show softness, as they are expected to speak gently (Ide, "Language of Inferior II" 27-28).

When using the discussed linguistic features, women consciously adopt and perform particular roles. This can be related to Beauvoir's claim that being a woman requires an active role and adherence to the roles and duties assigned by the society (45). It can also be applied to Butler's notion of "performing gender" (138). In this regard, it seems that it is not enough to be a woman, but act like one; more precisely, to behave in a way that is socially acceptable and gender-appropriate. Language has an evident role in this case, because, as West and Zimmerman claim, gender is accomplished and reinforced through interaction (130). Therefore, not conforming to the prescribed linguistic features implies not conforming to ideal gender norms.

Based on the discussed linguistic features, it is possible to analyze how the Japanese society is reflected in the language itself. West and Zimmerman claim that "doing gender" is socially guided and it is a consequence of social situations (126). This statement can be applied to the Japanese context since, according to Smith, "gender is a pervasive, highly salient category in Japanese society" and the saliency is imprinted on language (221). This means that gender is used as an important variable in terms of language and behavior. Unlike many Japanese scholars, Lakoff rejects any biological explanation for the way men and women express themselves and claims that the linguistic usage is a learned trait imposed by society, which reveals an "inequity that exists between the treatment of men, and society's expectations of them, and the treatment of women" (51). She states that the power in verbal self-expression reveals the social power (51). Indeed, in the Japanese society there are rigorous expectations placed on conforming to prescribed gender roles. "Women's language" is much more than a linguistic ideal; it determines desirable behavior and qualities, such as

modesty, politeness, softness, deference, indecisiveness and alike. As such, it determines, maintains and reveals the role and identity of women in society.

With regard to the status of women in society, ”women’s language” has generally been interpreted as an indication of deference and has been equated with an indication of women’s powerless status” (Ide, “Group Identity” 227). However, this view has been challenged by many Japanese scholars, as the language can be interpreted as a difference in role and social conditions, rather than a matter of women’s vulnerable status. Ide states that women are occupied with different things and pursue much different roles than men (“Women’s Language” 63). She also claims that their different social function is maintained in their language, in which they perform their gendered roles (“Women’s Language” 63).

The relationship between linguistic features and its social meanings, in terms of roles and identities, is identified in what Ochs calls “theory of indexicality”. Ochs defines indexicality as “a property of speech through which cultural contexts such as social identities and social activities are constituted by particular stances and acts” (335). Therefore, the relationship between language and gender is not straightforward, but it requires the speaker’s knowledge of the pragmatic functions of the language (stances and acts) in a particular sociocultural context. Ochs claims that only few linguistic features directly index gender (340). As an example, she mentions personal pronouns in the English language, in which “he” and “she” directly index the male and female gender (339). However, gender is often related to language through “other social meanings indexed” (Ochs 343). For example, tag questions indicate uncertainty, which later indirectly index the female gender. Similarly, the Japanese particle *wa* directly indexes delicacy, which only later indirectly indexes the female gender (Ochs 341). Therefore, it is necessary to identify the social meanings of the linguistic features in order to subsequently constitute gender.

Moreover, the linguistic indexing of social roles and behavior is mentioned by Kroskrity in terms of an ideology, "the belief that speech behavior, in general expresses important information about the speakers identity" (119). He went further saying that one's speech could be used to locate an individual within a sociocultural space (Kroskrity 119). It results easy to draw a parallel between his claims and "women's language", as the language clearly aims at defining women's role and position in society. Kroskrity conducted a research on Arizona Tewa kiva speech choices and identified them as identity markers. Namely, the Arizona Tewa maintained their indigenous language despite migrating to the Hopi territory, intermarriage with Hopi and widespread multilingualism (Kroskrity 112). In addition, Kroskrity stated that ritual speech used by Arizona Tewa kiva speakers "foregrounds the importance of positional, rather than personal, identities and the use of appropriate role-specific speech" (119). This can also be discussed in the context of Japanese society. One thing that needs to be mentioned is that "Japanese characteristically give greater importance to their identity within the group than their independent or individual identity" (Ide, "Women's Language" 63). Therefore, they identify themselves by the role in their respective groups rather than as individuals and take pride in performing duties assigned to their role. "Women's language" is thus a group language or, in other words, the language of a group identity (Ide, "Group Identity" 235). By using the language, women identify themselves as members of the group and behave as models of appropriate feminine behavior. Moreover, this lack of individuality might also imply a lack of linguistic self-expression. Silverstein identifies the most important function of a language to be socially purposive (Woolard 12). This might explain why Japanese women decide to conform to the group and accept the group language in order to attain social goals.

All of the linguistic features discussed previously are indices of femininity or of the female gender. They reflect female-specific values, attributes and social roles (Inoue,

"Gender, Language" 57). Based on the identified linguistic features, women are expected to be soft, elegant, polite, uncertain, trivial and weak, and these desirable traits should be reflected in their linguistic behavior. On the other hand, Lakoff states, "allowing men stronger means of expression than are open to women further reinforces men's position of strength in the real world" (51). Therefore, men are allowed to linguistically express themselves in a much more varied way, as they are stronger, biologically speaking, and more powerful, socially speaking.

This subchapter has revealed that the notion of a "women's language" is rooted in Japan's social forms. It reflects a particular social position based on the notion that men and women are biologically and socially different. These social meanings behind linguistic usages clearly invite a consideration of a language ideology. In continuation, "women's language" will be considered as a language ideology present in the Japanese society.

5. Language ideology

This chapter is devoted to language ideology identified behind the notion of "women's language". As mentioned previously, gender differences in language do not occur independently of the social context of use. Following this logic, language structures cannot exist on their own – they are bound by the circumstances of their use, such as the social setting and its speakers. The first subchapter discusses this bond between language and social structure and reveals the existence of a particular language ideology present in the Japanese society. The second subchapter identifies issues that pose challenge to empirical research of the language and thus contest reality.

5.1. Challenging "women's language"

It has been discussed previously that Japanese "woman's language" is used as a cover to express non-linguistic values, such as gender-related stereotypes. In other words, the linguistic forms in question are a reflection of something greater than language, as "ideologies of language are not about language alone" (Woolard 3). As Inoue points out, "Japanese women's language is a socially powerful truth" ("Gender, Language" 57). As such, the language is not barely a set of linguistic structures, but a notion closely related with culture, tradition and social knowledge in Japan (Inoue, "Gender, Language" 57). Therefore, one could say that "women's language" is an important part of cultural and social knowledge a Japanese should have. From that, it can be concluded that language ideologies and cultural ideologies condition each other, as language is a cultural construct, "a sensitive index of the status and values of its speakers; woman's language in Japanese reflects the values and position in society" (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 215).

When taking into consideration Silverstein's definition of language ideology, it becomes evident how the notion can be applied to the Japanese context. He defines language

ideologies as "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization and justification of the perceived language structures and use" (qtd. in Woolard 4). Silverstein refers explicitly to the difference between language structures as reflection of the real linguistic practices and the speakers' ideas of what counts as an "appropriate" language. In short, linguistic structures cannot be equated with language ideologies, although they bare importance. This claim can be easily reflected in the Japanese notion of a "woman's language", as the linguistic features identified as part of the language might not reflect women's actual linguistic practices.

In this respect, Inoue explicitly states that "the majority of women do not speak ''women's language" and, yet, they recognize it as their own language" ("Gender, Language" 57). Following this logic, Japanese women recognize particular language forms as part of the socially constructed "women's language", but they do not conform to these normative usages in real-life communication. Inoue goes as far as saying that "one 'hears' Japanese women's language not so much from living bodies of Japanese women, as from imaginary voices" ("Speech" 315). The "imaginary voices" to which Inoue refers are female characters in novels, TV shows, movies, drama scripts, not voices of the actual Japanese women (Inoue, "Speech" 315). Therefore, this language remained heard within the limits of newly available representational genres and media (Inoue, "Gender, Language" 79). In other words, it might be a utopian speech, not used by actual (female) speakers.

A similar claim is made by Shikego Okamoto and Janet S. Shibamoto Smith:

"…we argue that "women's language" and "men's language" characterized as such are cultural constructs informed by the hegemonic ideology of language and gender – constructs that have been widely disseminated as linguistic norms in Japanese society not only through popular media but also by language policy makers and linguists like ourselves" (4).

Therefore, they also recognize the existence of a "woman's language" in fictional settings, confirming the claim that particular usages related to the language in question are reinforced by social institutions.

Furthermore, Neuliep describes "women's language" as "the ideal form of female communication" (365). As such, the language is imposed by the society as a cultural model for women; yet, "women's language" remains an idealization, not an objective reality, as it continuously encounters exceptions in the Japanese community.

The notion of "women's language" can be interpreted as a language of unity and at the same time a discriminatory experience. Whether it is seen as an instrument for exclusion or a valuable resource, as in the case of court ladies, depends on considering aspects of the two perspectives. As a group identity marker, language can create a sense of belonging, security, solidarity, intimacy and uniqueness. In the context of the Japanese society, "roles in the group are compartmentalized and individuals seem to feel happy and secure in their roles" (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 60). However, being recognized as a member of a particular group can also imply rejection, inferiority or opposition to other groups, which can increase tensions and lead to linguistic and social distance. A parallel can be drawn with the functions of linguistic purism, namely the solidarity and separating function. Although language can ease the communication between members of the group, it can also exclude non-members from communication (Thomas 53). Accordingly, "women's language" has the power to perform similar social functions and create a divide between the two genders, contributing to linguistic and consequently social discrimination. Anthropologist Kulick conducted a research on a language shift that occurred in a Papua New Guinean village. Namely, male villagers initiated the linguistic shift from the village vernacular Taiap to Tok Pisin (280). Kulick discusses the phenomenon in which men distanced themselves from women's

linguistic practices in terms of gender division and distance in the village (280). The linguistic discrimination is a consequence of a negative gender stereotype, as Kulick states: "[…]it becomes important for people who do not wish to be identified with that group (non-Quakers in Britain, men in Gapun, as well as individual women who do not wish to be negatively labeled by others) to begin avoiding that type of verbal behavior that is seen as indexical of the group" (283).

Indeed, the notion of "women's language" implies two things simultaneously — that it is a property of the female gender, used by women only and that it should be avoided by men. By avoiding using the language in question, men also avoid being associated with everything female-specific: values, behavior, roles. In other words, they distance themselves from what is considered the opposite group. In this regard, it is important to reflect on the meaning of the notion of a "group". Namely, if one considers a group, one also might immediately assume that there is another or the opposite group. Indeed, along with the group identified as "women" is the group of the opposite gender or in other words, "men", yet there are no "men's languages". One immediately poses the question: Why only women have their identified language? Simone de Beauvoir explained this phenomenon when she identified women as belonging to the category of the "Other". She states that a woman "is determined and differentiated in relation to man, while he is not in relation to her; she is the inessential in front of the essential. He is the Subject; he is the Absolute. She is the Other" (26). Her claim might also be applied to the question of language. Therefore, there is no need for an identification of a "men's language", because women and their language are defined in relation to men. Men represent the "Subject", the primary source and reference and so does their language.

Furthermore, it is important to mention the opposing views of the notion of "woman's language", which corresponds to Eagleton's opposing view of language ideologies. Eagleton

provides a neutral definition of language ideology as "responsive to the experiences or interests of a particular social position" (qtd. in Woolard 6). Similarly, "women's language" as language ideology can be seen as simple indication of the natural difference of social positions between men and women, as "women's language differs from men's as much as women's lives differ from men's" (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 215). According to this explanation, there is nothing negative in these categorizations, as they simply reflect the social reality. Given this explanation, women have a separate but equal status. This interpretation can also correspond to the *difference* model, according to which men and women have different interactional styles because they socialize in different cultural settings (Talbot 474). Although one might claim the existence of "women's language" a luxury and privilege, the belief that there is a different language can also be a façade in order to ensure consent to male dominance. Similar to the difference model, it "fails to recognize how difference has been historically invoked to justify dominance" (Pavlidou 419). Therefore, duality often expresses conflict. Furthermore, to claim that the difference is natural is a way of trying to impose it as undeniable and justifiable. Although women may try to conform to ideals of feminine behavior, "the effort and calculation this often demands makes clear that the behavior in question is not simply 'natural'" (Cameron 450).

Furthermore, Eagleton also provides a negative viewpoint of ideology as "ideas, discourse, or signifying practices in the service of the struggle to acquire or maintain power" (qtd. in Woolard 7). According to this definition, language is used as a tool of the dominant social group to attain power over the subordinate ones (Woolard 7). Again, this can be applied to "women's language" as the language can be said to benefit a particular group, in this case Japanese men. The language as such implies two things simultaneously: male dominance and female subordination. In other words, men can manipulate language to keep women obedient and to maintain their disadvantaged status. This interpretation can

correspond to the *dominance* model, according to which different language patterns between men and women are manifestations of a patriarchal social order (Talbot 474). Indeed, the view of many feminist perspectives is that a "women's language" represents "symbolic images of women as inferior and powerless" (Abe 657).

Moreover, the third and the traditional viewpoint of language ideology in question is provided by Ide, claiming that "women are the blessed sex, free from mundane working life concerned only with what is charming, endearing and aesthetic" ("Language of Inferior I" 215). As such, they are not oppressed but they have a natural tendency to beautify their linguistic expression to satisfy and preserve their role of the more attractive gender (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 215). Lakoff identified "women's language" with power inequity and lower status. However, if one takes into consideration the historical function of "women's language", one would notice positive aspects such as group solidarity and ease of communication. Accordingly, "women's language" might reflect the positive aspects of the lives of Japanese women.

It is evident that language does not create, but reproduces and reinforces social stereotypes. In other words, language is not a primary source, but a reflection of gender stereotypes and the social idea of feminine. With regard to the opposition to stereotypes, Lakoff asked a simple question: "Does one correct a social inequity by changing linguistic disparities?" (46). Changing language would not be enough to change or negate gender stereotypes since it is the society that produced them in the first place. However, it might also be true that language can influence social attitudes and individual thinking. Lakoff explains the relationship between language and thought by saying "Language uses us as much as we use language. As much as our choice of forms of expression is guided by the thoughts we want to express, to the same extent the way we feel about the things in the real world governs the way we express ourselves about these things" (45). Therefore, although one might claim

that “women’s language” is not a legitimate means of expression and that is imposed on women by society, this language can eventually affect thoughts and behaviors. A parallel can be drawn with the claims of the American linguist Edward Sapir within the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis: “Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society” (Sapir 69). Although Sapir might have underestimated the role of society in the lives of individuals, it might be true that language to a certain degree affects reality. Language is part of the reality and its role should not be underestimated. Therefore, “women’s language” with all of its prescribed rules and restrictions might pose limits to women’s thought and behavior.

This subchapter has exposed some of the beliefs, views and notions about “women’s language” and has identified the presence of language ideology, based on the Japanese and Anglophone scholars’ findings and interpretation of the way language operates in society. The second subchapter approaches more closely the central beliefs and cultural representations of Japanese “women’s language” and tries to examine their validity.

5.2. Representation versus reality

As mentioned previously, research problems regarding “women’s language” are mostly concerned with the lack of consideration on part of researchers of real-life context of use. In this regard, it needs to be taken into consideration that actual language behavior can be quite remote from cultural representations of it (Cameron 463).

It has already been discussed that interaction has become the central locus for the conceptualization of gender, in order to observe and analyze gender-specific language behavior and notice potential gender and language ideologies in action. In Japan, there is a lack of evidence for “women’s language” in observed reality since no major research has

been conducted on gendered interaction. The need for a research on cultural representations on language and gender becomes obvious because, as Cameron says, "the better we understand them — where they 'come from' and how they work— the more control we will have over what we do with them" (465).

Since there is a lack of empirical evidence, the reality becomes questionable and the possibility of illusion or distortion must be regarded. This again suggests a social nature of ideology, as "such distortion can arrive from the defense of interest and power" (Woolard 7). In other words, the dominant group, in this case men, has the tendency to distort reality or create an illusion, in which the right state of affairs results vague and unclear.

However, representations and realities might not be mutually exclusive. In other words, although representations or ideological statements about what is female-appropriate linguistic behavior might not be an accurate reflection of the real state of affairs, they still might affect it (Cameron 463). Therefore, the study of gender stereotypes and ideologies should be approached with caution, as they might have an opposite effect of the one desired, causing people to accept it as models for behavior (Cameron 463). This was certainly the case of Japanese "women's language" throughout centuries and it might be the case up to this day. According to Cameron, human beings are not passive imitators of what they hear and see, yet society's influence cannot be denied (464).

Central to the "women's language" ideology is the belief that the language in question is an inherent feature of the Japanese language, based on the previously mentioned natural differences between genders (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 218). However, Japanese immigrants in Hawaii and Brazil and their descendants do not possess such a language, as both genders share the same Japanese language (Ide, "Language of Inferior I" 218). This is another proof that language ideologies are linked with cultural ideologies since it is the society that influences such ideologies in the first place.

Another reason that opposes the argument of a "natural language" is the consideration of other alleged "women's languages" in various cultures. The belief that "women's language" reflects all women's nature and that gender is a stable, clear-cut and homogenous category becomes questionable when considering other languages that are marked for gender, as *kros* in Papua New Guinea. This female genre is a form of a monologue used to publicly express anger and it possesses many vulgar expressions. This language derives from and reflects women's nature as quarrelsome and not as "more reticent, delicate or verbally cooperative than men" (Cameron 450). *Kros*, except being identified as "women's language", bears no resemblance to Japanese "women's language", as the values and nature of women differ from those of the ideal Japanese women. This clearly implies that language is culture-specific and has nothing to do with gender as a whole. Therefore, "women's language" is not a natural construct, but a consequence of socially and historically determined attitudes which distinct it from men's language.

6. Conclusion

The aim of the thesis was to provide a critical reading of non-linguistic values underlying the notion of Japanese "women's language", as a reflection of language and gender stereotypes in the Japanese society. The thesis provided an overview of the language's gendered linguistic features and analyzed the way language, social values and stereotypes condition each other. The critical analysis was done by analyzing and evaluating different scholars' interpretations and often opposing views of the way language ideologies operate in the Japanese society and condition cultural ideologies.

Based on Anglophone and Japanese sociolinguistic research on language, gender and ideology, it can be concluded that "women's language" reveals specific women's domains, values, behavior and a women's world. Many of the qualities assigned to the Japanese women's language can be interpreted by using the findings of Anglophone scholars as valuable resources. However, these interpretations and evaluations need to be taken with caution, since phenomena such as language, gender and ideology are culture-specific and sensitive.

The analysis of corpus identified Japanese "women's language" as a cultural heritage, a sensitive sociocultural and linguistic index, and revealed association between gender and affect, in terms of politeness, softness and femininity, as well as between language and power. The relationship between these notions revealed the presence of a language ideology with a great cultural significance in Japan.

The identified issues of the notion of "women's language" are mostly reflected in the lack of consideration of real-life context of use. Namely, the irony that women themselves in actual communication might not speak the language recognized as a property of the female gender is an evident contradiction in itself. As such, this language can exist only as an

ideology constructed and promoted by the public and academic discourse, not an actual linguistic practice.

The claim that there is a biological basis that can account for the gender differences in language is still questionable, as there is very little gender difference in linguistic practices of actual speakers. Namely, the belief that men and women each belong to homogenous groups, linguistically, biologically and socially speaking, is a rather radical statement, as there are diversities within both groups. Instead of condemning in-group individuality and diversity as indicators of non-membership or disobedience, one should acknowledge them in order to gain a new perspective and understanding of group dynamics.

It would be advisable to challenge the binary opposition in terms of feminine/unmasculine and vice versa, in order to be able to challenge the overwhelming stereotypes and question their relevance, rather than to accept them as absolute truths. Another issue worth considering is that researchers have focused mostly on the alleged differences and have neglected similarities between male and female speech. It would be useful to capture the previously obscured similarities in order to enable a more profound analysis.

If one should claim that "women's language" as an inherent feature is only true for the Japanese, one should also consider the lack of such a language among the Japanese outside the Japanese social setting. Moreover, the equation of Japanese "women's language" with a socially powerful truth reveals that what is regarded as the indisputable truth might be disputed by the speakers and imposed by the society. Overall, if ideology is to be considered as the truth, than the majority of women fail to reach its pronouncements.

What seems to be true is that women accept the linguistic treatment imposed by the language ideology, as they recognize the existence of a "women's language". Whether the language is to be considered from a negative, neutral or positive viewpoint, it remains that

women accept such linguistic treatment, if not linguistic discrimination, because they accept the social treatment and/or discrimination in the first place. The linguistic end of the problem, which has been a primary concern of much of the sociolinguist feminist research, cannot be solved without considering the social aspect. Language is only part of the problem, although its role should not be underestimated. Therefore, it would take much more than denying the validity of "women's language" to change the society's perception of women.

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8. Abstract

The aim of the MA thesis is to critically analyze the notion of the Japanese "women's language" from a sociolinguistic perspective. The critical analysis has been carried out by discussing and evaluating different Anglophone and Japanese scholars' interpretations and often opposing views of the way language, gender and ideologies operate in society. Although the findings of Anglophone scholars have been used in the analysis as valuable resources and primary references, the thesis emphasizes that the studied notions are culture-specific and thus need to be considered with caution. The thesis exposes gender differences identified at different linguistic levels and examines how they refer to gender roles and identities. The main argument is that "women's language" determines, maintains and reveals women's position in the Japanese society. The analysis of the corpus has identified Japanese women's language as a sensitive sociocultural and linguistic index, in which linguistic features operate as an index of femininity and the female gender and as a reflection of female-specific values, attributes and social roles. The relationship between different notions, such as gender, language, power, politeness, affect and identity has revealed the presence of a language ideology with a great cultural significance in Japan. The analysis has revealed issues of empirical research on "women's language" and thus expressed the need for future consideration of real-life context of use.

Key words: *women's language, Japan, Anglophone contexts, gender roles and identities, language ideologies, indexing femininity and the female gender*

9. Sažetak: *„Ženski jezik“: Rodni identiteti i jezične ideologije u Japanu i anglofonim kontekstima*

Cilj rada je kritički analizirati pojam japanskog „ženskog jezika“ sa sociolingvističkog gledišta. Kritička analiza je provedena kroz raspravu i razmatranje interpretacija i često suprotnih stajališta različitih anglofonih i japanskih znanstvenika o načinu na koji jezik, rod i ideologija djeluju u društvu. Iako su rezultati istraživanja anglofonih znanstvenika poslužili u analizi kao vrijedni izvori i osnovne reference, u radu je naglašeno da su proučavani pojmovi kulturno-specifični te ih se zato treba razmotriti. Rad izlaže rodne razlike prepoznate na različitim jezičnim razinama te ispituje kako se one odnose na rodne uloge i identitete. Glavni argument je da „ženski jezik“ određuje, održava i otkriva položaj žena u japanskom društvu. Analiza korpusa je prepoznala japanski „ženski jezik“ kao osjetljiv sociokulturni i jezični indeks, u kojem jezične značajke djeluju kao indeks ženstvenosti i ženskog spola te kao odraz ženskih vrijednosti, karakteristika i društvenih uloga. Odnos između različitih pojmova, kao što su rod, jezik, moć, pristojnost, afekt i identitet, otkrio je prisutnost jezične ideologije koja ima veliki kulturni značaj u Japanu. Analiza je pokazala probleme empirijskog istraživanja „ženskog jezika“ i na taj način izrazila potrebu za buduće razmatranje uporabe istog u kontekstu stvarnog života.

Ključne riječi: *ženski jezik, Japan, anglofoni konteksti, rodne uloge i identiteti, jezične ideologije, indeksiranje ženstvenosti i ženskog spola*