

# Effects of Gender Transition on Language Use in Second Language Acquisition of Japanese

Dylan Williams  
EALL442 Final Project

## Background

- ❖ Variables that influence learning process:
  - Cognitive and social factors.
  - Social environment.
  - Linguistic environment.
  - Native tongue.
  - Identity, and more.
- ❖ Identity influences everyday encounters and is impacted by social construction, which differs between languages.
- ❖ Trans gender students whose identity is in transition can be particularly impacted by social environment and anxiety.

## Research Questions

- ❖ What will be the impact of environment, identity, and learner differences on the journal writings of an intermediate level trans student?
- ❖ Will heightened anxiety impact the use of gendered language?

## Methods: Autoethnography

- I. **Collected** six writing samples from journals from previous Japanese classes here at the UO.
- II. **Examined** frequency of gendered/neutral pronoun use.
- III. **Examined** frequency of gendered/neutral sentence ending particles.
- IV. **Compared** usage frequency with affect content written in journal.
- V. **Analyzed** correlation between gendered language use and heightened affective filter.

## Results

### Features of Japanese

	Male	Neutral	Female
Pronoun	僕 [-boku] 俺 [-ore]	私 [-watashi]	私 [-atashi]
End Particle	-な [-na] -ぜ [-ze] -ぞ [-zo]	-ね [-ne] -よ [-yo] -よね [-yo ne]	-わ [-wa] -かしら [-kashira]

### Usage found in Journals

	Male	Neutral	Female
Pronoun	0	2	0
End Particle	0	4	0

- ❖ Zero Anaphora:
  - Pronouns not often used in Japanese.
  - Some differences only found in speech.
  - ❖ Pronouns avoided or kept neutral in journals.
- ❖ Sentence Ending Particles:
  - Gender marked through Ideology, not embedded in morphology (Hasegawa, 2015)(Okamoto, & Shibamoto, 2004).
  - Can be used to index affective stances 30% of the time (Maynard, 1997).
  - ❖ Ending particles avoided or neutral forms used.
- ❖ Environment:
  - Anxiety can cause: freezing up, lower grades, slower learning/processing speed, speaking less, attempting less complex forms (Ortega, 2009).
  - ❖ Stress, anxiety, depression discussed in journals.

## Conclusion

- ❖ Explicit declaration of gender can be difficult for trans students with a heightened affective filter or anxiety levels.
- ❖ Languages with no gender embedded in morphology could allow trans students to engage more freely or easily in production activities.
- ❖ Explanations for gender language usage could lead to increased gender euphoria for trans students, and therefore higher frequency of classroom involvement and risk taking.

## Significance

- ❖ More research into the impact and effects of Second Language Acquisition theories on trans learners is needed in the field.
- ❖ Gender language ideology could be a tool or an obstacle for some learners, and understanding this relation could shed more light on classroom dynamics and cognitive learning processes.

## References

- Hasegawa, Y. (2015). *Japanese: a linguistic introduction*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Maynard, S. K. (1997). Japanese communication : language and thought in context. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>
- Okamoto, S., & Shibamoto, S. J. S. (2004). Japanese language, gender, and ideology : cultural models and real people. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>
- Ortega, L. (2009). *Understanding second language acquisition*. London: Hodder Education. Retrieved from <http://swbplus.bsz-bw.de/bsz285134248inh.htm>

