gender, language, and modernity: toward an effective history of Japanese women's language

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"Women's language" is a critical cultural category and an unavoidable part of practical social knowledge in contemporary Japan. In this article, I examine the genealogy of Japanese women's language by locating its emergence in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when state formation, capitalist accumulation, industrialization, and radical class reconfiguration were taking off. I show how particular speech forms were carved out as women's language in a network of diverse modernization practices. I theorize the historical relationship between Japan's linguistic modernity—language standardization, the rise of the novel, and print capitalism—and the emergence of Japanese women's language. [gender and language, modernity, language ideology, metapragmatics, reported speech, Japan, Japanese women, effective history]

Japanese women's language is a socially powerful truth.[1] By this, I do not mean that the phrase refers to the empirical speech patterns of women but that Japanese women's language is a critical cultural category and an unavoidable part of practical social knowledge in contemporary Japan. By using the phrase "Japanese women's language," I refer to 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. Doxic statements, such as "Women speak more politely than men" or "Women are not capable of speaking logically," are commonly heard in daily conversation. Scholars, too, have produced a highly reflexive and abstract—and therefore privileged—knowledge of how women speak differently from men. They have systematically located male–female differentiation at all levels of language—phonology, semantics, morphology, syntax, speech acts, and discourse (in the technical linguistic sense), as well as extralinguistic features such as pitch; they have explained how female-specific values, attributes, and social roles are registered in speech forms and in the management of conversation.[2]

Women's language also is a national issue, a reflexive parameter of civil order and social change. Nationwide opinion polls are regularly conducted on whether women's language is becoming corrupted, and, if so, how corrupted. National sentiments over the perceived disappearance of women's language are thereby crystallized and circulated in the form of numbers and statistics.[3] This linguistic consciousness of how women speak is closely connected with notions of culture and tradition in the assumption that women's language is uniquely Japanese, with unbroken historical roots in an archetypical Japanese past, and inescapably linked to an equally traditional and archetypical Japanese womanhood. Kindaichi Kyosuke, one of the founders of modern Japanese linguistics, noted in his discussion of women's language:

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"Japanese womanhood is now being recognized as beautiful and excellent beyond compare with the other womanhoods of the world. Likewise, Japanese women's language is so fine that it seems to me that it is, along with Japanese womanhood, unique in the world" (1942:293).[4] Kikuzawa Sueo, who is noted as one of the first modern linguists to bring attention to women's language, observed: "Women's speech is characterized by elegance, that is, gentleness and beauty. Moreover, such characteristics correspond with our unique national language" (1929:75). Women's language also is viewed as cultural heritage, on the brink of vanishing and in urgent need of preservation.[5] As Mashimo Saburo, another scholar of Japanese women's language, puts it, "We cannot hope for contemporary Japanese women to be as witty and tactful as were those in the past, but, at least, I would like them to have a sincere and humble attitude and to preserve the cultural heritage passed down from the ancestors without destroying it" (1969:81). Talk of women's language implicates the perceived continuing contradiction between Japanese tradition and modernity.

Japanese women's language also is a transnational social fact. An article appeared in 1995 in *The New York Times* (Kristof 1995) titled "Japan's Feminine Falsetto Falls Right out of Favor." The subtitle reads: "Traditionally, women have spoken in a falsetto pitch, but now they're beginning to find their own deeper sounds" (1995: 1). In this article, Japanese women's voices are described as being "as sweet as syrup, and as high as a dog whistle. Any higher, and it would shatter the crystal on the seventh floor," and "they are not speaking, but squeaking" (1995: 1). Based on a Japanese male sociolinguist's research, the article compares the pitch of Japanese women's voices and that of American women's voices and reports that Japanese women's voices have significantly dropped these days because of the change in women's status in Japan. Japanese women's speech—as if another disassembled and fetishized part of a woman's body—now draws intensive international attention as indexical of how far Japan has progressed or caught up with America.

The questions to be answered are: How and why did some speech forms and functions come to be identified as women's language? How and why have these speech forms and functions become promoted from unselfconscious sound to a universalized, national symbol that is both a socioculturally and linguistically discrete index? Most importantly, how did such an indexical practice—a linkage of speech with social structure and cultural meaning—come to be possible to begin with? Scholars of National Language Studies *(kokugogaku)* often date the origin of women's language as early as the fourth century, and they commonly construct a seamless narrative of Japanese women's language passed down to the present.[6] Evidence of women's language is traced in premodern literary works and in records of terminology used by sequestered groups of feudal women such as court ladies, Buddhist nuns, and women in the pleasure quarters (geisha and prostitutes).[7]

This primordialist discourse, however, does not provide an adequate historical linguistic account of the development of contemporary women's language or of a continuous descent from ancient origins. Rather, this discourse merely assumes an essence of Japanese women's language that originated at some ancient time and teleologically descended without interruption or transformation down to the present. The isolated and discontinuous examples are meant to illustrate the continuous essence assumed to lie behind them. For present purposes, I make the point that because it denies historical contingency and ignores emergent phenomena this discourse paradoxically erases the material traces of women's diverse linguistic experience and affirms the transcendental national narrative of culture and tradition. It hides *histories* by articulating (teleological) *History*.

This teleological History often is insinuated into the way we conceptualize semiotic processes. Ochs's (1990, 1992) concept of indexing, for example, accounts for how final particles in Japanese—a set of verb-ending forms—came to mark the gender of the speaker. Ochs's (1990, 1992) model postulates a two-tier semiotic process, namely, *direct* indexing and *indirect* indexing. Accordingly, certain contextual dimensions of speech, namely, affective and epistemological dispositions (or stances) of participants "are directly indexed in all languages, are central dimensions of all communicative events, and are central constituents of other dimensions of communicative events" (Ochs 1990:296). Although these contextual dimensions of speech are thus *directly* indexed in speech, according to Ochs's framework, other contextual dimensions, such as the social identities of participants and the social relationships among participants, are less likely to be directly indexed. Rather, they are marked indirectly through the mediation of the direct indexing of affective and epistemological dispositions (or stances). In this two-tier semiotic process, Ochs thus observes, "certain social meanings are more central than others. These meanings however help to constitute other domains of social reality. That is, a domain such as stance helps to constitute the image of gender" (1992:343). In the case of Japanese language, the final particle is an affective and evidential marker with which speakers signal their social attitudes or stances toward the statements that they make. Certain final particles index assertiveness and intensity, while others index uncertainty and hesitancy. Ochs observes that because of the culturally preferred symbolic association between gender and affect in Japan—women are associated with softness and men with assertiveness—use of those particles *indirectly* indexes the speaker's gender. For example, use of the particle *wa,* which directly indexes the affective disposition of softness, in turn, indirectly indexes the female identity of the speaker. Ochs thus explains, "Because of the strong conventional and constitutive relations between affect and gender, the direct indexing of affect evokes gender identities or gender voices of participants as well" (1990:295).

This widespread theoretical account of indexical processes entails what one could usefully call a "history effect." The account creates a simulated temporal order in which a direct index (affect) is assumed to have temporally preceded an indirect one (gender). The particle *wa* is recognized as the marker of female gender, and the tacit assumption is that this indexical linkage followed naturally from concrete speech situations in which women socialized themselves to speak softly by complying with the cultural expectation of female behavior. Over time, the account assumes, *wa* came to index softness, through women's longstanding cumulative and collective use of it—a mechanical, indeed, evolutionary, process of repetition out of individual choice, convention, or social conditioning. But this is a history with neither a beginning nor an ending. Barthes would call it a "myth" that "deprives the object of which it speaks of all History. In it history evaporates. It is a kind of ideal servant: it prepares all things, brings them, lays them out, the master arrives, it silently disappears: all that is left for one to do is to enjoy this beautiful object without wondering where it comes from" (1982:141).

This seemingly stable indexical order of affect and gender on the one hand, and of gender and speech forms, on the other hand, did not exist until the late 19th century. Prior to that time, the particle *wa*, for example, could be associated neither with softness nor femininity. Quite the contrary, educators and intellectuals considered it a vulgar speech form. The lesson to be drawn from this history is that the symbolic connection between softness and femininity, assumed today to be a natural outcome of repetitive practice, emerged at a specific point—a historical threshold in the recent

past. Bringing this historical threshold into focus requires a critical method that allows theoretical appreciation of discontinuity in history, a goal Foucault (1977b:153–155) calls "effective history," the method of which is genealogy. This would permit location not of the origin of a transhistorical essence but of the *emergence* of a complex ensemble. To subscribe to the concept of emergence is to presuppose neither teleological continuity nor recalcitrant relativism; it requires seeking the history of the present not in the ideal but in the material and embodied context that entails multiple social forces in conjunction—in this case, Japan's unprecedented capitalist take off.

In this article, I examine the genealogy of Japanese women's language by locating the critical moment of its arising at the threshold of Japan's modernity during the late 19th and the early 20th centuries when state formation, nationalism, capitalist accumulation, industrialization, radical class reconfiguration, colonialism, and foreign military adventurism were in full efflorescence. It was in this context that both language and women came to be problematized as national issues, and, thus, became political and cultural targets of state authorities and of intellectuals and entrepreneurs representing the progressive classes. I show how particular speech forms were carved out, selected, and (re)constructed as Japanese women's language and how that process was critically linked to a network of diverse institutional and individual practices of modernization, and the particular form Japanese women's language took in its complex mimicry of, and resistance to, the West.

The significance of this history lies not so much in the emergence of specific speech forms associated with women's language, as in the conditions of modernization and modernity that, to begin with, made possible and thinkable the practice of the indexical signaling of "women" as a nationally regimented category. In other words, in this case, history involved the opening of a new cultural space where women became objectified through their language use, and thus their language use became the productive site of knowledge of Japanese women, a knowledge that was overdetermined by the production of knowledge of nation, race, and class. Using Hanks's insightful terminology, I take as my subject the historical construction of a "metalinguistic gaze" over women (1996:278).

In order to focus on the emergence of women's language, I concentrate on the linguistic modernization movements variously pursued for different goals by government agencies, the literary community, the print media, and linguists and educators from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. These independent initiatives eventually converged, and at the forefront was a literary movement called *gembun'itchi* (speech and writing unification), which involved creating a colloquial written Japanese language and developing modern narrative prose (the novel form or *shôsetsu).* The novel is a distinctively modern institution, shaping and shaped by the advent of industrial capitalism, the rise of the middle class, and the development of mass print capitalism (Anderson 1983; Lukács 1971; Watt 1957). Most importantly, however, the critical linkage between the novel and modernity lies in the latter's epistemological commitment to realism and referentiality, or a modernist certitude that language is a transparent medium that can faithfully and truthfully represent reality. Followers of the gembun'itchi movement thus engendered a new "language ideology" (Schieffelin et al. 1998; Silverstein 1979; Woolard and Schieffelin 1994) regarding what language is and how language works. In this article, I argue that such a newly developed linguistic consciousness was both the instrument and the critical location of the birth of Japanese women's language at a time when the subject of "modern Japanese women" was emerging in the discourses of the state, civil society, and the market.

nationalizing women, modernizing women

In 1868, Japanese political and administrative power became centralized in the claimed sovereignty of the Emperor Meiji. Although the fiction was of a restoration of power to the emperor after the hiatus of the Tokugawa Shogunate, in fact the Meiji Restoration founded a spatially continuous national sovereignty unprecedented in Japanese history. The Japanese nation was an emergent social formation. In the years following the Restoration, a centralized state would replace the feudal Tokugawa government that had been composed of relatively autonomous regional spheres (headed by samurai-vassals), and industrial capitalism would replace the tributary mode of the Tokugawa period.

The late Meiji period, the two decades from 1888 to 1910, was critical for Japan's modern nation-state formation. This period saw the development of heavy and textile industries, mass communication and transportation systems, a legal apparatus organized through the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution and Civil Code, representative democracy established with the opening of the Diet (legislative), and the creation of a direct administrative channel between local and central government. The development of print capitalism (in the form of mass-circulation newspapers and magazines) and the instituting of compulsory education further created a sense of the population as not only an administrative and political body, but a nation-state where people came to identify themselves as Japanese and to imagine Japan as more than an arbitrary unit. Individuals also came to be directly—but unevenly—connected to the state through education, censuses, taxation, and new (liberal–democratic) legal rights. At the same time, citizens were differentially positioned, in terms of class, power, and culture, in the newly emerging mosaic of a capitalist society. Modern power, as Foucault suggests, is both totalizing and individuating (1982:208–226). These channels of power converged in the reorganization of the person as a modern (and imperial) subject in the late Meiji period. It was in this context of modern social power in the form of capitalist development and state centralization that "women" as a social category became radically renewed, and "modern Japanese women" emerged as an articulable social category burdened with new cultural meanings pertinent to its relationship with the nation-state.

Of particular importance to such a new configuration of gender in the late Meiji period were the political, economic, and cultural ramifications of Japan's first modern, industrialized wars—with China in 1894–95 and Russia in 1904–05. These both fostered and drew on nationalistic sentiments, which complicated the trajectory of the Meiji Enlightenment project: Those wars occasioned a shift in political climate toward a more reactionary position, skeptical of rapid Westernization, and people sought a "return" to Japanese tradition, including imperial absolutism and Confucianism. At the same time, economic developments fueled by the wars and facilitated by the opening of new overseas markets resulted in massive urban migration and increased labor struggle (Garon 1987). It was to address both the ideological demand for Japanese modernization and the practical demand for social control that the state returned to the (supposedly uniquely) Japanese principles of Confucianism, the emperor system, and an agrarian utopian ideology (Gluck 1985). The trajectory of Japan's modernization process thus entailed a complexly bifurcated construction of the traditional (or cultural) and the modern. This contradictory conjuncture, inherent in but not unique to Japan's experience of modernity, was the overdetermined context in which women increasingly became targeted as a national and social issue and were thereby rendered visible and articulable. As Ueno declares, women are "the very work the modern-civil-nation-state created" (1998:95).[8]

One concrete terrain on which "women" became consolidated as a social category in conjunction with the historical and cultural complexity of Japan's modernity was women's public education. In 1899, women's secondary education was incorporated for the first time with the state-regulated public education system, and the government actively launched a project to nationalize women and shape their roles vis-à-vis the state. Central to this endeavor was the idea of "a good wife and wise mother" *(ryôsai kenbo)*. The project advocated the traditional virtues and values of ideal womanhood, such as obedience to father, husband, and, later, eldest male child. Far from primordial, this ideology derived from the Confucianism espoused by the ex-samurai class and from the imported Western cult of domesticity. Eclectic yet decisively Japanese modern, the teaching of "good wife and wise mother" prepared women to take on a critical gendered role in an anticipated modern capitalist society, which included an emphasis on motherhood, rational and scientific house management (including hygiene and efficient home economy), and saving.[9]

Women, here as elsewhere, came to embody the shifting boundary between tradition and modernity, and the woman's body (and sexuality) became a concrete site where this irrevocable binary was negotiated and policed (Chatterjee 1990; Mani 1987; Stoler 1991). "Women's language" was one powerful effect of cultural work in the realms of politics, the market, civil society, and personal life—cultural work through which people sought to give the nascent signifier, the modern Japanese woman, her voice.

"write as you speak": gembun'itchi and the discursive space of the nation-state

The Meiji elite considered it critical to modernize language, which they recognized as an instrument for building a nation-state—for importing and simulating Western science and technology and achieving national integration.[10] In this section, I trace the historical process and various practices of language modernization in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries that resulted in a linguistic consciousness intimately connected with the exercise of modern forms of power. The emergence of the metapragmatic category of women's language is predicated on such a modern linguistic consciousness, both as a technique with which new knowledge about (modern Japanese) women was produced and as an epistemological ground on which such new knowledge was made intelligible.

Language was one of the first symbolic terrains on which Japan was directly brought into concrete and invidious (self-critical) comparison with the (undifferentiated) West. Through translation as a sustained political institution, whose condition of equivalence was already set by the terms of the Western languages, any linguistic discrepancy between Japanese and Western languages—for example, the absence of a third person pronoun in Japanese—was perceived by Japanese intellectuals as a lack, defect, or form of backwardness in their language. The call for language reform came from diverse elite communities intent on forging new modern institutions, such as education, academia, government service, the print media, and the literary community.[11] These communities commonly identified as problems the divergence between the written and the spoken, as well as the diversity across Japan—in a word, disorder—in writing and speech. At the time, there were divergent writing systems and literary styles, monopolized by diverse elite blocs. Spoken Japanese was characterized by a great diversity of mutually unintelligible dialects. All of this, from the reformers' points of view, was a barrier to national integration. In instrumentalist terms, education, communication, national culture building, and the spiritual bond of the nation,

would be hindered by these gaps.[12] A new metalinguistic vocabulary—well anticipated by capitalist logic—came to frame the public debate on language reform: Modern Japanese language should be simple, accessible, and efficient.[14] Language reform was meant to eliminate the gaps and to create a standard language, which would help the press gain a wider readership, the literary community pursue aesthetic production, and the government disseminate formal education, standardize the military, and execute successful colonial education in Japan's new and anticipated overseas acquisitions.

Gembun'itchi (unifying speech and writing) was the major language modernization movement initiated originally by the literary community.[14] Gembun'itchi developed out of progressive Meiji writers' concern with the lack of a literary style adequate for modern narrative prose as found in the Western realist novel they saw as a model. They developed the new colloquial written Japanese called *gembun'itchi-tai* (gembun'itchi style). It is not a coincidence that practitioners of gembun'itchi took the lead in language modernization. The novel—with its distinct origin in late-18th- and the early-19th-century Europe—was a technology that was as constitutive of the modern nation-state as were legislatures, laws, citizenship, policed borders, and standing armies. Its generic framing demands truth telling about the realities of ordinary people and their daily lives. Thus, writers of novels attempted to put on public exhibition the Japanese citizenry—composed of individual, ordinary people. This realist metanarrative condition was inseparably mediated by, and inescapably linked with, forces emerging with capitalism in Europe, which involved the rise of a middle class, the articulation of possessive individualism, the precipitation of nationalism, and the birth of print capitalism. Through a culturally contingent reworking of the Western realist novel, the Meiji progressive writers encountered a new idea of language that enabled, and was enabled by, such elements of Western modernity.

In 1885, the writer and critic Tsubouchi Shoyo (1859–1935) wrote what is often considered the first book of modern Japanese literary criticism, *Shôsetsu Shinzui* (The Essence of the Novel) (Tsubouchi 1886). In it, he called for a radical reform of the prevailing literary form. The subjects of traditional Japanese narrative prose were mythic figures and heroes and their dramatic adventures. This literature was directed to a readership of largely women and children. Inspired by 18th-century British novels (such as those by Fielding and Defoe), Tsubouchi saw traditional Japanese prose as frivolous and superficial and advocated a form of serious aesthetic fiction that could be for male adults. For Tsubouchi, *shôsetsu* (the novel) was just such an aesthetic form. Writers of novels depicted an unprecedented Japanese subject—*modern* individuals and their quotidian but complex and deep human experiences and emotions. For Tsubouchi and other early Meiji writers, the urgent task was to create a literary style that was truthful and faithful to reality. Their approach was to "write as you speak" *(hanasu yôni kaku)*: "to write a passage as if it were actually spoken, even if the words that are used are somewhat obsolete, or even if the syntactic structure of the passage entails some difficulties and complexities" (Sakakura 1964:25–26). Tsubouchi and other writers turned to colloquial-based genres. Of particular significance here were orally transmitted written texts such as *rakugo* (storytelling performance)—some of which was only recently committed to writing as a result of the introduction of stenography from the United States in 1872—and *gesaku* (popular literature from the Edo period).[15] Following Tsubouchi's advice, Futabatei Shimei (1864–1909) drew on Encho's rakugo as a model and wrote what is often considered the first Japanese modern novel, *Ukigumo* (Drifting Clouds) (published serially between 1886–89).

The central problem was how to create a new colloquial style without the vulgarity and frivolity traditionally associated with non-elite forms of literature (Japan had its own forms of emerging bourgeois civility and distinction), while at the same time retaining "the spirit of vernacularism" (Futabatei 1906:12) that made the novel form modern and, I might add, that made the novel form directly useful in producing a *national* imaginary. "Write as you speak" was thus the formal strategy used to bring into writing the immediacy and the presentness of spoken sound. For the first time, it allowed writers to identify the voice of the narrator ("I") with themselves—as if they were talking directly to the reader. "Write as you speak" signals a remarkable reconfiguration of writing as a signification system. For speech communities like Japan, where a hieroglyphic script system was the basis of written language, sound was not necessarily privileged as the carrier of truth. The idea that written language can and should faithfully represent and reconstruct the sounds of spoken language signaled a profound epistemological break in the discourse on language toward phonocentrism.[16] Speech became privileged as the repository of truth and reality, and speech and writing became hierarchically linked, with the latter being reduced to a mere supplement to—and derivative of—speech.

In their efforts to create a new colloquial style, practitioners of gembun'itchi faced the stylistic question of how to entextualize linguistic excess, the sheer physicality and materiality of the human voice.[17] In an actual face-to-face interaction, people not only exchange the semantic or referential meaning of what they utter, but, at the same time, they communicate pragmatic meaning, by how they speak, with respect to elements of the immediate context of the interaction, including the social setting of the interaction and the social attributes of the participants (such as their gender, social rank and roles, age, and so on). The gembun'ichi writers sought to deal with this linguistic excess in the text by devising verb-ending forms. For the writers, verb-ending forms were the metapragmatically salient sites where such linguistic excess could be encoded because verb endings function indexically to mark an author's social and psychological position vis-à-vis the characters in the text and the readers in the context. In other words, verb-ending forms are regimented into an indexical order of "different ways of saying the same thing" (Silverstein 1996:280). Depending on the verb-ending form one chooses, different pragmatic effects, with the same referential value, are produced regarding how the narrator (speaker) narrates (talks) to the reader (listener) about the characters and events.

The writers experimented with various verb endings. For example, verb endings, such as *gozaru, gozarimasu,* and *gozaimasu* were understood as honorifics and conveyed the speaker's (the narrator's) deference to the interlocutor (the reader).[18] Likewise, *desu* and *de-arimasu* were perceived to be "polite" verb endings.[19] *Da* and *de-aru,* on the other hand, were construed as "plain style," which indexes the absence of (or potentially the willful disregard for) the reader.[20] Use of the honorific and polite forms presupposes the immediate presence of the reader, creating an illusion that the author–narrator and the reader–listener are sharing time and space. The plain style does not presuppose the presence of the reader and therefore it can sound (read as) impersonal, distant, or potentially impolite.[21]

During the time between the Sino–Japanese War (1894–95) and the Russo–Japanese War (1904–05), the literary gembun'itchi movement was appropriated by the state's nationalist effort to create a national language *(kokugo)*—and more precisely, a standard national language. For state intellectuals in the early Meiji, gembun'itchi was not a primary concern in language reform.[22] They were concerned mainly with writing or script reforms, for example, whether or not Chinese characters should be

used—for modernization meant Westernization and the break with China. When the idea of a national language was introduced, however, the terms of the debate on national language policy shifted from questions of writing to speech matters. One of the central figures in this effort was Ueda Kazutoshi (1867–1937), a linguist trained in Germany and France who taught at Tokyo Imperial University and later became head of the Special Education Bureau of the Ministry of Education. In his multiple capacities as an academic, a government official, and an educator, Ueda managed to integrate the various local language reform movements (including the literary gembun'itchi movement) into a unified mission promising to achieve a national language suitable for a modern nation-state. In 1894, the year the Sino–Japanese War broke out, Ueda (1968) delivered a lecture titled "National Language and the Nation State" (kokugo to *kokka to)* in which he introduced the concept of "national language" and emphasized its importance for uniting the populace, arguing that "the Japanese language is the spiritual blood of the Japanese people." The following year, Ueda (1895) called for the creation of a *hyôjungo*—his translation of the English phrase *standard language* and the German *Gemeinsprache.* What Ueda brought home from Europe was a new way of producing knowledge of language. Having studied at the University of Leipzig where he was exposed to the Neogrammarians' linguistic theory, Ueda focused on speech—as opposed to written language—in imagining a national language.[23] He also was aware that new (scientific) production of knowledge about language needed a new set of institutional apparatuses, including professional associations (of linguistics), scientific survey methods, and codification, as in the form of dictionaries and grammars.

The following ten years saw various institutional developments that applied the principles of the gembun'itchi movement to the government's language reform project. In 1898, Ueda organized *the Gengo Gakkai* (Linguistic Society), and in 1899 the government established the National Language Inquiry Board *(Kokugo Chôsakai),* by which, for the first time, language became officially an articulable national issue in which the state should intervene. In 1900, members of the Imperial Society for Education *(Teikoku Kyôiku Kai),* the government-sponsored assembly for educators, formed a branch organization called *Gembun'itchi-kai* (Gembun'itchi Club) to promote the extended use of the gembun'itchi style beyond literary practice. The members were drawn from a wide range of intellectual communities, including linguists, educators, journalists, editors and publishers, and writers—many of whom also were actively involved with the Linguistic Society. The Gembun'itchi Club represented and lobbied for the increasingly prevailing nationalist view that the achievement of linguistic unity and linguistic purification was a prerequisite for the advancement of the country as a modern state in parity with Western nations. A series of lobbying activities in 1902 by Gembun'itchi Club members resulted in the establishment of the National Language Research Council *(Kokugo Chôsa Iinkai),* headed by Ueda under the control of the Ministry of Education. The Council members assigned themselves the following tasks regarding language reform in the same year:

1. On the assumption that a phonogrammatic system would be adopted as the official script system, an investigation was to be made into the relative merits of *kana* (the Japanese alphabet) and *rômaji* (the Western alphabet).
2. On the assumption that gembun'itchi-tai (the colloquial style) would be adopted as the official writing style, an investigation was to be made into to the ways in which gembun'itchi could be put into more general and extended use.
3. The phonetic system of the national language *(kokugo)* would be examined.

4. A survey of the dialects would be conducted, and one would be selected to serve as "standard Japanese" *(hyôjungo)*. [Kokugo Chôsa Iinkai 1949:59, my translation]

The decisions that were made as to the adoption of colloquial Japanese had immediate effects on the policies of formal education. In 1900, the Ministry of Education issued "Rules for the Enforcement of Elementary School Regulations" *(Shôgakkôrei Shikô Kisoku)* in which colloquial Japanese was recognized as part of formal language education. In the following years, the colloquial style was officially recognized as standard in government-designated textbooks.[24] The ascendance of the gembun'itchi style into the national language (kokugo) was completed with its codification as the state-authorized grammar of colloquial Japanese. In 1916, based on a series of surveys with a view toward the creation of standard Japanese, *Kôgohô* (The Grammar of Spoken Language)—the first state-authorized grammar book—was compiled and published by the National Language Research Council. The gembun'itchi movement reached its maturity during the first decade of the 20th century when more than 90 percent of major literary works were written in the colloquial style (Miyajima 1988; Yamamoto 1965:51). Around the same time, the print media also began adopting the colloquial style.

The gembun'itchi movement itself underwent significant transformation as it became mobilized as a technology of the modern nation-state. Against the original advocacy of a "spirit of vernacularism," by the 1910s plain verb-ending forms such as the *da*-copula had won out as the established literary style. Polite and honorific verb-ending forms, which formally indexed context-bound relationships between the author and the reader and the author and the characters, eventually lost their status in serious literary style.[25] Concurrent with the predominance of the plain style, the first-person narrative was superceded by that of the third person.[26] In third person, the narrator's presence vanishes from the narrated event and the text ceases to acknowledge the context. Instead, standing outside the narrated event and commanding a God's-eye view, the third-person narrator rationally, objectively, and truthfully represents the scene. This is the linguistic version of Bentham's panopticon (Foucault 1977a:195–228). Practitioners of "write as you speak" faced a contradictory task: creating the speechlike effect of immediacy, transparency, and physicality obtained with the plain style while retaining the pragmatic meaning (evacuated by the plain style) that would have given the speech realist context, polysemy, and undesirability. For this new narrative style, context and audience were no longer time–space bound but became the abstracted and imagined "Japan" and "the Japanese." Thus the linguistic technology of gembun'itchi semiotically helped to make an imagined community not only possible but also epistemically necessary, even if it did not really exist. The speaking subject of the gembun'itchi style literally necessitates and embodies the modern Japanese citizen, and makes him imaginable.

I say "him" because this narrator, this citizen, was presumed to be (the middle-class) male, and he alone had full and legitimate access to the newly emerging liberal–democratic public sphere (Calhoun 1992, Fraser 1990, Habermas 1989, Warner 1990).[27] In fact, state language policy designated the speech of "educated Tokyo middle-class males" as the basis of standard language (Okano 1902).[28] The phrase "educated Tokyo middle-class males" alluded to the newly emerging petite bourgeoisie of salaried workers in Yamanote, the plateau section of the city of Tokyo. This class fraction was solidified during the process of rapid urbanization, the development of mass culture, and modern education. It included government officials, military officers, and other intellectual and white-collar workers. It was, however, neither an established

community nor a sociolinguistically homogeneous group. Rather, these people were newcomers who had migrated from various regional domains and were the cultural and linguistic Other for the natives of the city of Tokyo who had a speech dialect rooted in the premodern city of Edo.[29] Although philologists often point out that the speech of the Tokyo middle class in the late Meiji period was considered to be the direct descendant of *oyashiki kotoba,* a kind of lingua franca used among the samurai from outlying regions in late Edo (e.g., see Hida 1988:34), a continuous descent from oyashiki kotoba to the speech of Tokyo middle class (standard language) is hardly clear given the linguistic elements authorized as standard. The modern colloquial verb endings were assembled from heterogeneous sources and, yet, were attributed to the speech of the educated Tokyo middle class. What was represented as the speech of the educated Tokyo middle class, and the basis of standard language, was pieced together from a variety of sources and is not reducible to the speech of any tangible individual speaker. This heterogeneous origin of standard Japanese and the cultural and linguistic tension and disjuncture between the natives of the city of Tokyo and modernist newcomers from outlying regions was forgotten in the origin myth of standard Japanese language (Isoda 1979). "The speech of the educated Tokyo middle class" served as an empty metapragmatic category in which disembodied and dislocated voices were integrated and assimilated into the voice of the modern subject, governed by state-mediated linguistic rules and principles. The origin myth served to naturalize the standard as an authentic voice by drawing on the authority of a hegemonic—if fractionated—social class. In other words, it was only after the speech of the educated Tokyo middle class was imagined that the social category of the educated Tokyo middle class developed. And such a semiotic inversion was instrumental in enforcing dialect reform at home and colonial education abroad.

In short, the gembun'itchi style has come to narrate the nation (Bhabha 1990; Lynch and Warner 1996). Developed during the gembun'itchi movement, this narrating voice introduced a new linguistic consciousness: Language is a transparent medium, purely and exclusively referential in its function, according to which nothing comes between language and the world; that is, there is an exclusive and context free, one-to-one correspondence between sound and word, word and meaning, and language and the world. Language reflects what is already out there—always one step behind the world, docilely ratifying and confirming it. Such a realist conception of language is inherently ideological because it effaces the semiotic work of language in actively mediating and producing what is seemingly merely given, reversing the order of things as if the world existed as it is without the mediation of language. Linked up with the regime of modern power, language serves to turn things, categories, events, and ideas into a fait accompli.

In more concrete terms, the new narrating voice functioned at the metalinguistic level to signal that whatever it narrates, reports, describes, represents, and states is true, real, serious, and credible, and that it speaks not from a particular individual's point of view, but from the point of view of the modern rational and national (male) citizen—an omniscient point of view that purports not to be a point of view at all. This metalinguistic function was facilitated by formal (and diacritic) devices that separate the narrating voice and the narrated—whether it be people, events, or things (Komori 1988). Translating and appropriating the Western realist novel required gembun'itchi writers to develop subordinated linguistic space in the form of dialogue and reported speech. This is a formal space where *alterity* is constructed, highlighted, and neatly kept apart from the self. The novel, thus, formally created a hierarchical relationship in which the narrated is always already objectified by, represented through, and

subjected to the male gaze of the narrating subject or of the modern Japanese citizen. And it is precisely this metalinguistic effect that various Japanese institutions and projects intent on their own modernization ultimately adopted from the literary gembun'itchi movement. Whether in school textbooks, newspapers, magazines, fiction, scholarly essays, public speeches, legal statements, military orders, advertisement, or colonial education, the new narrating voice not only provided semantico-referential information but also functioned simultaneously as "performative" (Lee 1997; Silverstein 1979) to authenticate and factualize that which is enunciated.[30] It is in this linguistic space, a "quoted" space, objectified, reified, and re-presented by the imbricated gaze of the male, the national, and the modern, that women's language was pieced together from heterogeneous origins.

quoting women's language: producing the Japanese woman

Dialogues and reported speech became the new linguistic space where the maximum degree of verisimilitude was logically implied. And it was in this space that people "heard" modern Japanese women "speak" for the first time. The women's voice was, as mentioned above, centered on the use of final particles (or particular verb-ending forms). Table 1 compares a particular form of final particle employed in the popular fiction *Ukiyoburo* (The Bathhouse of the Floating World) (1952), written in 1813 by Shikitei Sanba, and the narrative prose titled *Sanshiro* (1985), written in 1909 by Natsume Soseki.

Shikitei Sanba was one of the traditional popular fiction *(gesaku)* writers of the late Edo period before the Meiji Restoration. *Ukiyoburo* is about people coming to the bathhouse and their frivolous interactions with each other. It consists of dialogues in which the characters tease, argue, compliment, gossip about, and comment on each other. The characters in *Ukiyoburo* are diverse in terms of age, gender, social class, region, and occupation, according to which Sanba carefully differentiates and characterizes individual speech styles. What is glaringly absent in Table 1 is anything that looks remotely like what contemporary women's language is believed to be.

Natsume Soseki was one of the best-known Meiji writers, and *Sanshiro* was published at the culmination of the literary gembun'itchi movement. By then, whether Soseki intended to or not, he and other early 20th-century Japanese writers had inescapably become deeply involved with narrating the nation and its modern subject. *Sanshiro* depicts the lives of young male and female intellectuals (school students)—new types of characters that did not exist prior to Meiji. Soseki was also one of the first modern writers to depict the modern urban space and the accompanying new types of linguistic sociality by constructing dialogues that could take place in contexts such as a train, where anonymous modern Japanese citizens engage in conversations (Hirata 1998:137). The significance of *Sanshiro* is that the voices assigned to these young intellectuals contain both male- and female-exclusive final particles, identical to those of contemporary Japanese. Table 1 compares the final particles attached to the verb-ending form *da* in *Ukiyoburo* and in *Sanshiro* (Komatsu 1988). First, note that the gender-neutral final particles in *Ukiyoburo* have become gendered into either male- or female-exclusive final particles in *Sanshiro*. Second, the final particles in *Ukiyoburo* are idiosyncratic rather than gendered: There is a plurality of individual voices in terms of final particles. Sanba's commitment to the faithful reconstruction of people's voices in his stories is not regulated by the national discourse of language. He simply represents the unmediated physicality of people's speech as would a tape recorder. In *Sanshiro,* on the other hand, final particles have become systematized and standardized so that they index gender in the modern nation. By this

Table 1. The comparison of final particles attached to verb-ending form, da.

Ukiyoburo (1813)		Sanshiro (1909)	
da-naa	M		
da-te	M		
da-te-na	M		
da-te-ne	M		
da-wa-i	M		
da-wa-su	M		
da-yoo	M		
da-ze-e	M		
da-e	F		
da-ne-nee	F		
da-no-ya	F		
da-yo-nee	F		
da-yo-noo	F		
da-mono-o	B		
da-na	B	da-na	M
da-ne	B	da-ne	M
da-nee	B		
da-no	B		
da-noo	B		
da-su	B		
da-wa	B	da-wa	F
da-wa-e	B		
da-wa-na	B		
da-wa-sa	B		
da-yo	B	da-yo	M
da-ze	B	da-ze	M
da-zo	B	da-zo	M
		da	M
		da-koto	F

M used by male characters only
F used by female characters only
B used by both male and female characters

[The data are drawn from Komatsu (1988). The reader should note that I have rearranged Komatsu's data to make my own argument.]

time male and female Japanese subjects are imaginable—indeed, inescapable—components within the nation, and the modern Japanese novel significantly flattens out the individual "grain of the voice"(Barthes 1977) so that one Japanese woman is interchangeable with another.

Table 2 compares another set of final particles in *Ukiyoburo* and *Sanshiro* (Komatsu 1988). The left-hand column lists the male- and female-exclusive final particles appearing in *Sanshiro,* and the right-hand column is drawn from *Ukiyoburo.* The final particles marked with asterisks are identified today as quintessentially female-exclusive final particles. Although the final particle *wa* appeared in *Ukiyoburo,* the other female-exclusive final particles of contemporary Japanese women's language—*na-no, no-ne,* nominal plus *ne, wa-ne,* and *wa-yo*—did not appear at all in pre-Meiji work. The next two asterisked final particles, *da-wa* and *no-yo,* are particularly salient feminine particles in the present but are not assigned to the female characters in the elite (samurai) class. *Da-wa* and *no-yo* were in fact considered to be vulgar and low class through as late as the late 19th century, and educators and others strongly advised parents and teachers not to let their daughters use them. This is hardly a seamless history of a traditional Japanese woman's voice.

My point is not that *Sanshiro* represented women's language as it had come to be spoken by 1909.[31] The modern narrating voice may metalinguistically tell readers that

Table 2. The comparison of final particles between *Ukiyoburo* and *Sanshiro.*

SanshiroUkiyoburo (1909)		Ukiyoburo (1813)	
da-koto	F	B	
no	F	B	
NOM.+yo	F	B	
*wa	F	B	
da(COP.)	M	B	
da-ne	M	B	
da-yo	M	B	
na	M	B	
sa	M	B	
zo	M	B	
*na-no	F	/	no example
*no-ne	F	/	no example
*NOM.+nee	F	/	no example
*wa-ne	F	/	no example
*wa-yo	F	/	no example
*da-wa	F	B	not used by samurai-class females
*no-yo	F	B	not used by samurai-class females
da-na	M	B	not used by samurai-class females
da-ze	M	B	not used by samurai-class females
da-zo	M	B	not used by samurai-class females
ze	M	B	not used by samurai-class females
zee	M	B	not used by samurai-class females
*NOM.+ne	F	B	only few examples seen
ya	M	B	various usages

M used by male characters only
F used by female characters only
B used by both male and female characters

COP. = copula
NOM. = nominal

[The data are drawn from Komatsu (1988). The reader should note that I have rearranged Komatsu's data to make my own argument.]

what is being reported is merely that which is actually spoken in the real world, but they should not be deceived by this metalinguistic whispering. Reported speech (Bakhtin 1981; Volosinov 1973) entails the authorial (and social) act of (re)creating the women's voice within a socially-produced—and self-reproducing—knowledge of how women speak. As Volosinov (1973:82) argues, reported speech "is a social phenomenon"—a historical product welling up from a complex social field in ideological and political flux.[32]

The degree to which the speech of female characters in the modern novel was not, in fact, naturalistically represented during the early stage of the gembun'itchi movement is evidenced by the recollections of the Meiji writers themselves. For example, writer Sato Haruo notes: "In those days, regarding women's speech in daily conversation such as *teyo* and *dawa,* a certain writer's invention came into general use (though I do not remember who he was)" (1998:173). Tsubouchi Shoyo also recalled the difficulties of writing the speech of female characters: "In those days, the language used by women in the middle class and above was filled with so many honorifics that one could not possibly manage to use it for translation" (1930:7). Many gembun'itchi writers developed their modern narrative prose by using *translated* Japanese—Japanese that had been translated (and thus filtered) from Western languages. Futabatei Shimei (1941), for example, wrote his first novel, *Ukigumo* (The Drifting Cloud), while translating Turgenev's (1992) *A Sportsman's Notebook* into Japanese. Tsubouchi also translated into Japanese a large body of Shakespeare's

work. The irony is that the early gembun'itchi writers such as Futabatei and Tsubouchi needed the authentic speech voice of modern Japanese women in order to represent the (translated) voice of Western white women.

To solve their problem with women's reported speech, these writers turned to the speech of schoolgirls *(jogakusei)* that they overheard on the street. Tsubouchi exclaimed: "There were unimaginable obstacles and difficulties [during the early years of gembun'itchi] that today's writers who have been used to hearing *jogakusei-kotoba* [the speech of schoolgirls] since the end of Meiji could not have even imagined of. Oh, how blessed contemporary writers are!" (1930:7). "Schoolgirls" referred to the daughters of elite families who could afford to go to secondary schools, the highest education for girls, which were founded after the Meiji Restoration. Jogakusei, therefore, represented a new social category of female: These females were neither producers (workers) nor reproducers (mothers).[33]As the cultural construct of jogakusei became increasingly recognized, objectified, and imagined as a metonymy of Japan's modernization, their speech became the object of social imaginaries. In other words, the question of how schoolgirls speak no longer belonged to an innocent empirical curiosity, but to the discursive formation of Japan's modernity whose regularity allowed such a question to make sense. Schoolgirls were reported to use a set of distinctive final particles, including *teyo, dawa,* and *noyo,* many of which are the essential linguistic features identified today as women's language.[34]

According to Ishikawa (1972), the final particle *teyo* first appeared in a novel in 1888 (used by a young girl speaking to a man and to her friend), *noyo* in 1885 (used by a young girl speaking to a man), and *dawa* in 1886 (used by a young girl speaking to her maid and in her monologue). Final particles such as *teyo, dawa,* and *noyo* were thus initially restricted to the speech of young women or schoolgirl characters. Later, however, they came to be used in a wider variety of dialogues, for example, those between wife and husband or between daughter and father (Ishikawa 1972). In early-20th-century writing, these particles were resignified and elevated to women's language, through the process of writers actively indexicalizing the speech of female characters as generic and universal yet increasingly feminized. The elevation of schoolgirls' speech to the generic women's language, the voice of the modern gendered subject, was thus far from a natural history. Schoolgirls' speech was originally considered vulgar and low class by intellectuals and educators. For example, writer Ozaki Koyo (1994:4–5) warned in 1888 that a certain speech style with strange verb endings, such as *teyo, noyo,* and *dawa,* occurred among elementary schoolgirls between close friends and seemed to be spreading among high school girls and even adult women. He insisted that sensible ladies would never use these verb endings because the endings were originally part of the vulgar speech used by daughters of low-rank samurai families. Intellectuals and educators also developed this origin narrative by locating the original speakers of these verb-ending forms in pleasure quarters and teahouses. They claimed that the speech was adopted by daughters from the low-rank samurai families and later by the middle class and elites.

Indexicalization involved not only the active linking of signs to referents, but, more importantly, it entailed the active construction of the referents themselves. In other words, the speech of schoolgirls—as always already a constructed voice—could not be (re)signified as women's language unless the discursive and disciplinary space of "the modern Japanese woman" existed. This critical move took place in the discursive space where the state's intended surveillance of women, print capitalism's interest in women as a market, and women themselves as new consumers intersected at a particular conjunction in Japanese history. This discursive space was also largely

without a "head." Although it could be argued that the state "had power" because of its power to censor, this discursive space of the modern Japanese woman was, as Foucault said of disciplinary power, "multiple, automatic and anonymous power" that functioned from "top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from bottom to top and laterally" (1977a:176). In fact, it is the very lack of a clear actor "in control" within this field of discursive–space production that helps to erase the extent to which the Japanese woman was not found by language, but socially produced by it.

This process is most visible in the production and consumption of *kateishôsetsu* (the domestic novel). The domestic novel was originally serialized in newspapers as a technique to expand readership and to create a mass market for both newspapers and their advertisers (Ragsdale 1998). The intended readership included a growing body of wage workers and women.[35] Female characters in the domestic novel were women of the (imagined) new middle and upper classes emerging from capitalist modernization. Schoolgirls frequently were featured as protagonists, and what were to become female final particles were extensively employed in their dialogues (Morino 1991:247–248). Placed outside the novel considered as a serious art form, the claimed value of the domestic novel was its explicit sentimentalism and didacticism restoring wholesome taste and morality to the novelistic genre. The goal of the domestic novel is best explained by Kikuchi Yuho, one of the most successful male domestic novel writers:

> I wanted to write a story which would be a little more secular than the regular novel, not pretentious, but sophisticated, with good taste. I wanted to write it in such a way that it could be read in the family circle, that anyone could understand it, and that no one would blush. I intended to write a novel which would contribute to the joy of home and help to develop good taste. [Kikuchi 1971:89]

Kikuchi further emphasized that a good female character in his novel represented the ideal Japanese woman (Kikuchi 1971:90).

Contradictorily enough, however, the domestic novel covers a wide variety of seductive plots involving, for example, extra- and premarital affairs, elopement, suicide, murder, lust for money and power, deception and betrayal, and so on. This paradox has been often pointed out and discussed by Japanese literary critics. For example, Shindo (2000:118) argues that the actual domestic novel, which was increasingly diverting from what it claimed to be, simply exposes the fundamental contradiction that the family as a modern institution was experiencing in the real world at the Turn of the Century. But this paradox was what guaranteed the domestic novel would, while serving as didactic material, also sell successfully as a commodity. The domestic novel framed stories as didactic, according to which readers were expected to learn moral lessons, albeit juicy stories about immoral behavior and desires.

As the contemporary literary critic Komori Yoichi (1992) rightly argues, the domestic novel was clearly in a position to advance the nationalizing interests of the state apparatus by narrativizing and aestheticizing the state's ideal of modern Japanese women's role of "good wife and wise mother." The domestic novel was addressed precisely to women who were educated to aspire to fill that role. The novel's various themes developed around conjugal love, family happiness, women's self-sacrifice, virtue, and dedication to husband and children. *Family* no longer meant the traditional *ie* system, but, *hômu* and *katei*, or the urban bourgeois nuclear family, and *love* alluded to the Western liberal notion of romantic love. The plots of the domestic novel involved events and relationships strictly confined to domestic space, and thus inscribed the capitalist gendered division of labor through the details of imagined new

middle- and upper-class sociality, dispositions, sensibility, and material goods. In a nutshell, the domestic novel textually displayed the bourgeois gender ideology, in which class and gender differentiation are channeled and normalized through the politics of sentiment. By the early 20th century, final particles such as *teyo, dawa, noyo,* and others, which were once viewed as vulgar, had thus come to be increasingly attributed to new middle- and upper-class women in the novels. In combination with elaborate honorifics, these final particles were thus instituted as the voice of those who were depicted as *haikara* (lit., "high-collar," meaning modern, Western, and stylish).

This resignification process was linked to the specific ways in which the gembun'itchi style in popular novels was consumed. Unlike the elite literary circle—for whom gembun'itchi meant a serious aesthetic pursuit of Japanese modern subjectivity—in popular culture the gembun'itch style, precisely because of the premise that the narrative faithfully recorded the real speech (lives) of real people, took on a more explicit commodity value as a device to stage the modern spectacle of the realist representation of reality. For example, the following advertisement for Kosugi Tengai's *Makazekoikaze* (1951) (Magic Wind Love Wind), one of the best-selling domestic novels published in 1903, appeared in a women's magazine:

> *Magic Wind Love Wind* (henceforth, MK) is a realist novel, a romance novel, and an un-heard-of masterpiece in the literary world. MK is a sketch of the world of the schoolgirls, and a life-like description of the Meiji period. The writing of MK is excellent word for word, and is a model of the *gembun'ichi* style. The dialogues in MK are *the phonograph of the new, modern language,* and it is a reference book for those who pay attention to language. MK is infinitely poetical and allegorical of profound ideals, and is extremely suitable for family reading. [Makazekoikaze 1905:3]

Note the analogy made between the phonograph and dialogue. Just as the phonograph provided a spectacular reality of sound and a new mode of perceptual experience, the dialogue in the gembun'itchi novel was also showcased and advertised as a spectacle—the experience of a dislocated and yet realistic reality. The realistic representation of reality was thus commodified and accrued market value. Readers enjoyed the pleasures of textual voyeurism and consuming the (realistic) image of women of the new urban middle and upper classes, ideas such as "romantic love," and (Western) commodity goods, such as bicycles, English dictionaries, violins, and cosmetics, which the female characters consumed in their imagined lives. The image, however, was interchangeable with the real for many readers, particularly those in the rural peripheries, who "knew" the urban modern elite women only in their (altered) *copies* through representations in novels. Like all commodity forms removed from the concrete situations of determinate social relations, "the modern Japanese woman" was susceptible as an evacuated signifier to any meaning ascribed to it in indexical practice. It is in this reifying, and therefore emptying, process that *teyo-dawa* speech became fundamentally re-indexicalized. This indexical process was in no way developmental or natural.

The fact that the novels were consumed and not simply imposed as an elite or state-articulated project is critical because of the normalizing power of consumption. This consumption was central in dissemination. It was not long before the female final particles were not just reproduced in novels but also circulated in some of the commercially successful girls' and young women's magazines in the form of letters from real Japanese women.[36] The Directive on Girls' High Schools issued in 1899, by which girls' higher education officially came to be incorporated into the state education policy, stipulated the mandatory establishment of a girls' high school in each prefecture.

As enrollment burgeoned, girls' magazines targeted the growing number of schoolgirls. These magazines embodied a gender-specific public sphere; they constituted a virtual speech community where virtual friends communicated with each other through letter writing. Using female final particles, they wrote to friends as if they were speaking to each other. Thus, they practiced their own version of "write as you speak."[37] "Women's language" was no longer merely a "quoted" voice—a process in which the active voice lies with "he" who "quotes"—but a "quoting" voice as young women claimed their new modern Japanese identity and constructed their virtual-speech community. Letters came from areas all over Japan (and even from its overseas colonies) where actual dialectal differences might have fatally fractured any sense of common (gendered) Japanese modernity. But in this unified virtual speech community, women spoke the speech style of modern Japanese women. Thus, they claimed—and were allowed to perform—the subjectivity of "modern Japanese women." In the emerging young women's (counter) public sphere, made possible by print capitalism (and thus disciplined by both the market and the state), young women staked claims to a new identity for women.[38]

Various surveys on reading and readership (Nagamine 1997) indicate that by the 1920s, these girls' and young women's magazines had expanded their readership to include factory girls (Tsurumi 1990) and young women in peasant families (Smith and Wiswell 1982; Tamanoi 1998). These women were not, in fact, speakers of the *haikara* speech style. In 1902 the National Language Research Council (Kokugo Chôsa Iinkai 1986) administered the first nationwide dialect survey. The council wanted to know how speech forms were used differently according to gender and position in the local social class hierarchy. The assumption made by the elite members of the National Language Research Council was that there would be as sharp a social difference, including that of gender, in speech in outlying regions as there was in the city of Tokyo. It was their understanding that men and women spoke differently in terms of honorifics usage in the (ex-)samurai class. Such sociolinguistic differentiation was hardly reported by survey takers in outlying areas, however. Obviously disappointed, the National Language Research Council planned a second survey, and its instruction specifically directed the survey takers to pay attention to sociolinguistic differentiations including gender (Kokugo Chôsa Iinkai 1908:5; the results on the second survey were never published as an official document). By this, I do not mean to suggest that there were no gender differences in speech in local communities or to say that that there was no way of indexing women in the peripheries. On the contrary, one could imagine the existence of sociolinguistic differences that were locally meaningful. My point is that, in the socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic peripheries, there was no universal discursive space where gender was talked about, explained, understood, and articulated through its relationship with language. To put it differently, the gendered regimentation of the linguistic, and the linguistic regimentation of gender in Turn of the Century Japan (which was metapragmatically glossed as "women's language"), made sense and became articulable only in the formation of the discourse of modernity and modernization.

The critical point is that the only place that people in Japan's periphery heard or perhaps spoke women's language in the late Meiji Period was in print media—serialized novels and letters in girls' and young women's magazines. In other words, the copy was "the original" for them. And the way that they experienced women's language was by consuming it as metonymy of the modern, the urban, the national—everything that they were not. It was through the consumption of women's language that people in Japan's periphery were enabled to participate in the imagined national (speech)

community. The dissemination of women's language, for these women, had less to do with gender and everything to do with class and region, as these elements became punctuated within the nationalist and capitalist project.

This act of consumption also facilitated internalization of the emerging gendered disciplines. Reading newspapers and magazines and writing letters to the editor necessarily involved imbibing a capitalist temporality bifurcated into leisure and labor. Women as efficient homemakers and reproducers learned that reading was leisure (something consumed, not produced), and they learned when to read and how to find time to read. This new economy of time often was exhibited in the readers' letters in the magazines. Many women wrote about taking care of housework efficiently, so they would have time to read magazines. Letters to the editor functioned as an "exhibitionary complex" (Bennett 1994) that helped produce a self-conscious national culture, much as museums and department store showcases also have functioned.

Consumption is critical here in another way. Speech forms referred to as "Japanese women's language" and those used in the letters simultaneously came to index gendered commodities in print advertisements, for perfumes, ointments, menstrual garments, skin whitening creams, and other similar items. Also indexed were photographs of the young daughters of aristocrats and illustrations of beautiful, modern—somehow Western looking, but also Japanese—young women. In other words, making the (gendered) Japanese nation also involved making the Japanese consumer (Silverberg 1991). What is remarkable here anthropologically is the extent to which the constitution of the metapragmatic category of "women's language" is linked up not only with gender and nation-making but with consumption and market-making.[39]

toward an effective history of language, gender, and modernity

In this article, I have sought to account for the genealogy of Japanese women's language and to examine the historical process by which the practice of representing gender meanings through speech was brought into being in the early 20th century in Japan. I also have argued that the social genesis of the metapragmatic category of women's language is not so much a natural or evolutionary outcome of indexing gender by women repeatedly and spontaneously using certain speech forms, as it is a hazardous effect of modernity in which, far from being relics from feudal Japan, both gender and language became problematized as targets of national and capitalist interest and social reform. Both gender and language were significantly reconfigured as various domains of the society responded to the project of modernity and as its attendant social formations—capitalism, nationalism, and colonialism—profoundly transformed the contours of all social relations. Historical beginnings are "derisive and ironic" (Foucault 1984:79). Precisely the same new modern conception of language that enabled and was enabled by the development of rational bureaucracy, the universal education system, nationalism, the military, the print media, colonial education, science and technology, and modern mimetic apparatuses (such as the stenography, photograph, and phonograph) made possible the emergence of women's language—one critical sign of Japanese culture and tradition. The representational technique of "write as you speak," which was instrumental in creating the speech forms of women's language, was made necessary by nothing less than Japan's engagement with the Western realist novel.

The emergence of women's language was and has been intensely modern and national. Indexing gender in early 20th-century Japan involved imagining the voice of (the yet to be imagined) modern Japanese women. It was in the "vulgar" speech of schoolgirls that the Meiji writers discovered the linguistic forms to represent the voice

of modern women. This type of speech became elevated to the rank of "Japanese women's language" only after it was displaced, grafted, quoted, recycled, and circulated in the network of newly available representational genres and media. In this sense, there is no original or authentic speaking body that uttered women's language. It is *no one's language*; indeed, it is disembodied language. It emerges from a series of entextualization processes (Bauman and Briggs 1990) in which the empty signifier of "the modern Japanese woman" became (imaginatively) fleshed out and given her voice. The rise of women's language is, thus, inescapably connected with the development of consumer culture. In short, the majority of women experienced women's language not so much as its producers but as its (gendered) consumers.[40] They "heard" modern women speaking in novels, magazines, letters from readers, and recipes for exotic Western dishes; and they "saw" modern women on magazine cover pictures and in advertisements for cosmetics and perfumes. This consumption by no means indicated passivity or lack of agency on their part. Consumption, which de Certeau (1984:31–32) translates into the notion of use, is a powerful act of claiming and making. Women, here as everywhere, made their own history, even if they may not have done it exactly as they pleased.

More importantly, however, the process of constructing women's language—in its critical articulation with the emergent discourses of nation, race, and class, as well as with those of culture and tradition—opened up a new discursive space (a metapragmatic discursive space) where the cultural meanings of women are produced, processed, and turned into a concrete object that is knowable, transparent, and readily available for social—not to mention self—control. This is precisely the condition under which indexing gender itself is possible and thinkable and under which statements such as "women speak more politely than men" or ontological questions, such as "why do men and women speak differently?" make sense. Paradoxically, however, this new space also simultaneously allows for strategic appropriation and subversion of dominant projects. A utopian speech community constructed in the readers' column in girls' and young women's magazines is proof of this point.

By outlining the genealogy of Japanese women's language, I aim at a historical narrative that problematizes what is claimed to be natural and obvious in the present. The stability of Japanese women's language as a discourse is commonly believed to derive precisely from its supposedly ancient origin and its continuity and linearity up to the present. The method here puts that historical narrative into methodological question. The search here is not for the evolutionary origins of an essence with a natural history. The method here is, rather, genealogy. A genealogy historicizes the past, and by doing so, the present is problematized (Scott 1996) in a way that makes visible the potential existence of heterogeneous temporalities, spaces, and experiences. By locating the emergence of what has been essentialized as women's language in real historical context, and by treating it as one of the historically contingent (yet powerful) events that objectify the relationship between femaleness and language, I recognize diverse linguistic experiences as they are situated in and refracted by class and other parameters of social force. The point is not, however, simply to celebrate subaltern voices and resistance. The point is to recognize the ways in which women's linguistic experiences are shaped by the larger processes of the real social and historical social world, in which access to women's language is as unevenly distributed as other forms of capital—of both the cultural and the more familiar kind (Bourdieu 1977, 1991). A focus on indexing, forces the analyst to think historically. It is in this sense that historicizing the practice of indexing, as I have outlined here, echoes a larger and growing

concern in linguistic anthropology to bring political economy (social power and its orchestrating and organizing potentialities) into linguistic analysis (Friedrich 1989; Gal 1989; Irvine 1989). A metapragmatic category such as "women's language" is never pregiven, but is contingent on historically specific social arrangements in which linguistic forms are motivated and regimented to become indexes as they are mediated through the broader political and economic processes of things bringing themselves into being.

In this article, my aim also has been to demonstrate the social power of the indexicality of language. Often, language does not wait until the category it refers to or indexes is "out there." In addressing the case of the development of women's language, I show that indexical practice was involved with the construction of modern Japanese women right from its inception. Indexicality constitutes reality not by naming and pointing to a preexisting object but by inverting the order of the indexed and indexing as if the indexed preceded the indexing. Finally, a focus on indexing forces one to think critically and counter factually because the process by which a particular speech form is selected or negotiated out of multiple competing voices and interpretations to become an institutionally discrete index of femaleness is an inescapably political process. The index is inherently unstable and more a process than a thing, and its reproduction is a perennially political matter of self-naturalization. It is, however, precisely this processual and productive nature of indexicality that allows one to see how much any established structure of linguistic rules in a rule-governed context is in fact saturated with individual strategizing, cultural remaking, politics, and historicity.

notes

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1. The indigenous terms are *onna-kotoba* (onna = women, kotoba = speech/language) or *josei-go* (*josei* = women, *go* = language). Although neither of the Japanese phrases include the term referring to "Japan" or "Japanese," I affix the term *Japanese* in my English translation in order to highlight the tacit linkages of the ideological construct of women's language with race and nation. To speak of women's language in context is necessarily to speak of Japan and Japaneseness as unique cultural things-in-the-world.

2. See Ide 1982 and Shibamoto 1985 for classic sociolinguistic studies of Japanese women's language.

3. NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) and The Agency for Cultural Affairs (Bunka-chô) in the Ministry of Education, for example, regularly conduct surveys on language awareness.

4. All Japanese names in the text are in the order of last name first and first name second.

5. See Ivy's (1995) important analysis of the reflexive projection of an unsullied essence into the past. Contradictorily, in the case of women's language, any statement about perceived corruption functions to affirm the ontology of the essence by implying that there was once a pure women's language.

6. National Language Studies (kokugogaku) refers to a domestic scholarly circle for the study of Japanese language. It is aligned institutionally and conceptually with the government's national language policies.

7. See Ide 1994 and Ide and Terada 1998 for a concise introduction to the study of women's language in National Language Studies.

8. Ueno 1998:95 also astutely observes the fundamental contradiction of women participating in the nation-state:

> *The nation state entails gender.* Making women into the subject of the nation state embodies the irrationality the modern nation state imposed on women. Total mobilization exposed such irrationality in an ultimately grotesque manner, and that, in turn, proved that women's liberation is impossible within the framework of the modern nation state. And this shows women the reason why we need to go beyond "the nation state." [Ueno 1998:95, my translation]

9. See Koyama's (1991, 1999) excellent discussion on the historical transformation of the idea of "a good wife and wise mother," particularly in its linkage with modernity and modernization. Koyama (1991) shows, for example, that the emphasis on motherhood is relatively absent in premodern primers. Taking a similarly critical standpoint, Muta (1996) compellingly argues that the notion of the family *(ie)* and women's roles in it became qualitatively discontinuous from analogous notions in premodern Japan. Both authors represent the increasing body of recent critical history that challenges the idea that institutions, such as family and gender continuously and linearly evolve.

See Nolte and Hastings 1991 on the importance of savings as part of women's domestic duties. See Smith and Wiswell 1982 for a rich ethnographic account of the ways in which women in isolated villages became nationalized in the mid 1930s.

10. What I am dealing with here under the name of *language* is neither a system nor an object. Language here can best be understood as an assemblage of various statements, practices, and activities to produce knowledge about what counts as language and what does not. In discussing language modernization, therefore, I do not mean that some kind of structured object, premodern language, underwent a structural or systematic transformation into modern language. Here, I follow Sakai's approach: "I look for various differentiations and oppositions and their interactions, which, when put together, circumscribe an area in human activities called language" (1992:8). Unless otherwise indicated, the reader should assume that the term *language* as used in this article carries the meaning specified here.

11. Although the members of each community or agency envisioned a language reform specific to their own immediate goals and interests, by as early as the 1870s some public space had been made available by newspapers and magazines such as *Meirokuzasshi* to debate language modernization as a universal national issue of the Japanese enlightenment—to which intellectuals were drawn from various constituencies.

12. For the purposes of this article, it is important to recognize in terms beyond those of the reformers precisely what reform did and did not do. To begin with, it did not eliminate the separation between the spoken and the written, a separation that continues to exist today. Furthermore, diversity between speech communities continues to exist in modern Japan. What has changed is not the existence of diversity but rather the emergence of an identifiable norm instituted through the complex actions of the state apparatus and the mass market—a norm that may serve (ideologically) to make the (real) gaps seem to disappear or at least become muted, go unheard, or be dismissed as (nonstandard) dialect in the popular, official, and scholarly representations of speech. The language reform under the state-building process needs to be critically examined in terms outside the instrumentalist framework of the reformers; it needs to be examined in terms that seek the genealogy of the modern subject in the project of modernization, a point increasingly recognized by recent literary critics (Fujii 1993; Karatani 1993; Komori 2000).

13. Proposals for language reform included the simplification of lexicons, the abolition of Chinese characters (made by Maejima Hisoka [1835–1919], the first Postmaster General who wrote a petition to the shogun for dispensing with Chinese characters), and the exclusive use of the hiragana phonetic script system (as opposed to the mixed use of multiple systems). Mori Arinori [1847–89], the first minister of education, also proposed the use of English instead of Japanese and the use of the Roman alphabet instead of Japanese script systems. He wrote to William D. Whitney, a linguist at Yale University, characterizing the Japanese sociolinguistic situation as "chaotic" and asking for his opinion about the possibility of replacing Japanese with English.

14. See Twine 1991 for the general history of the gembun'itchi movement, which includes the comprehensive introduction to the massive philological work on gembun'itchi done single handedly by Yamamoto Masahide (1971, 1978, 1979, 1981).

15. The significance of stenography is that it made available for the first time transcriptions of spoken language (Miller 1984). Massive records of oral proceedings in the Diet as well as storytelling performance were transcribed and published.

16. Here is Derrida on phonocentrism:

> When I speak, I am conscious of being present for what I think, but also of keeping as close as possible to my thought a signifying substance, a sound carried by my breath . . . I hear this as soon as I emit it. It seems to depend only on my pure and free spontaneity, requiring the use of no instrument, no accessory, no force taken from the world. This signifying substance, this sound, seems to unite with my thought . . . so that the sound seems to erase itself, become transparent . . . allowing the concept to present itself as what it is, referring to nothing other than its presence. [1982:22]

See also Ivy 1995:77 for an important discussion of the relationship between gembun'itchi and phonocentrism.

17. See Bauman and Briggs 1990; Briggs and Bauman 1992; Hanks 1989; and Silverstein and Urban 1996 for further theoretical discussions of the concept of entextualization.

18. Philological studies show that this group of verb endings originated in the Chinese characters *(go + za)*. Later *aru* (to be or to exist) was added to it, making *gozaru*. This group of verb endings is considered to have been used by the samurai class as *oyashiki kotoba* (lingua franca among the samurai elite) in the Tokugawa period. *Gozarimasu* and *gozaimasu* also are considered to have been used as polite forms by subordinates in interclass address (Twine 1991:71). In the early phase of the language reform movement, because of its origin in the elite class, *gozaru* was viewed as a strong candidate for standard verb endings and was extensively used, particularly in translation from Dutch and English to Japanese and in school readers in the 1880s (Yamamoto 1971:522–535).

19. Neither *desu* nor *arimasu,* however, derive from the speech of the elite class in the Tokugawa period. Various works in National Language Studies show that both *desu* and *de-arimasu* were reconstructed to become the speech forms of women in the pleasure quarters such as geisha, waitresses in teahouses, hairdressers, and courtesans in the Tokugawa period of popular literature (Twine 1991:71). *Kôgohô Bekki,* or *Supplement to the Grammar of Colloquial Japanese* (Otsuki 1917), the supplement to the first state-authorized grammar, *Kôgohô* (Kokugo Chôsa Iinkai 1916), explains the origin of *de-arimasu* as a false invention by samurai from provincial areas. It maintains that on first arriving in the city of Tokyo and hearing women in the pleasure quarters use it, samurai misrecognized *de-arimasu* as standard, and that is how *de-arimasu* spread. Although today one hears *de-arimasu* only in political speech in the Diet or in election campaigns, *desu* is one of the most standard forms of verb endings both in written and spoken Japanese.

20. Yamamoto (1971:451–468) maintains that *da* and *de-aru* derived not from the speech of the samurai elite, but from the script of orally conveyed Buddhist lectures around the 15th century. As in the case of *de-gozaru, de-aru* also was actively employed in translating the English *to be* and the Dutch *zijn* into Japanese in the mid–19th century (see also Twine 1991:72).

21. For example, Futabatei (1941) wrote *The Drifting Cloud* using *da*-copula, a plain verb-ending form, for the narrative voice. He later recollected how he came to choose *da* (plain form) for the narrator's voice:

> [The problem is] whether I should opt for *"watashi-ga . . . de-gozaimasu"*-style [honorific verb ending], or *"ore-wa-iya-da"*-style [plain verb ending]. Tsubouchi-sensei believes that it is better without honorifics. I do not say that I did not have any dissatisfaction with it, but . . . anyway I tried it without honorifics. This is how I started off my own practice of *gembun'itchi.* [Futabatei 1906:11]

He further notes that he originally intended to adopt desu-style (a polite verb-ending) and ultimately changed into da-style (a plain verb-ending). Yamada Bimyo (1868–1910), another gembun'itchi writer used desu-copula, a polite verb-ending form. Unlike Futabatei, Yamada

tried da-style first but later switched to desu-style because the former sounded "rude" (Yamamoto 1965:552).

22. I use the term *state intellectuals,* in contrast with Gramsci's (1971) *organic intellectuals,* to refer to credentialed writers, educators, academics, and others whose roles and functions cut across the state and the nonstate boundaries, but whose intellectual work served and reflected state and modernizing interests.

23. For the detail of Ueda's linguistic theory, see I 1996.

24. Between 1903 and 1904, the first series of government designated textbooks, *Jinjô shôgaku tokuhon* (Elementary Primers) (Monbushô 1904), were published, and *Jinjô shôgakkô tokuhon hensan shuisho* (The Guiding Principle for Reading Books in Elementary School [instruction for primers]) stated that the colloquial style should be extensively used and that students should be informed of the standard of Japanese language (Yoshida and Inokuchi 1972:477).

25. The rise of the naturalist school and the Shaseibun (sketches in prose) school during the first two decades of the 20th century, in a way marked the culmination of gembun'itchi as a literary movement. Both schools shared the centrality of realist writing, the goal of which was to capture *aru ga mama* (reality just as it is) or to depict the nature and quality of the ordinariness of objects and people's lives using simplicity and objectivity, which necessitated a subdued colloquial style.

26. Noguchi (1994) argues how the third person pronoun (or the grammatical concept of it) had been absent in traditional Japanese literary genres up until the gembun'itchi movement.

27. This, of course, is the gender of the genre and not that of the author insofar as the modern Japanese people interpellate their subjects as male. Warner's (1990) studies of the development of the public sphere in 18th-century America present a similar situation in which writing was integrated into a mode of being as male, bourgeois, and white. Exclusion of women is not simply a matter of access but of cognitive split; as Warner notes, "Women could only write with a certain cognitive dissonance" (1990:15).

28. The speech of the educated Tokyo middle class officially was designated as standard during the early 20th century. *Jinjô-shôgakkô dokuhon hensan shuisho* (The Guiding Principle for Reading Books in Elementary School), issued by the government in 1904, states that "words that were adopted in the reading books were derived mainly from those used in Tokyo middle-class society or *chûryû shakai"* (Yoshida and Inokuchi 1972:477). The speech of the educated Tokyo middle class as a standard became a linguistic fact with the publication of *Kôgohô* (The Grammar of Colloquial Language) (Kokugo Chôsa Iinkai 1916), the first state authorized grammar.

29. For example, in 1911, 45 percent of the City of Tokyo population had been born elsewhere (Tokyo Tôkei Kyôkai 1912).

30. See Lee 1997 for an insightful discussion of the metalinguistic construction of publicity, as well as the semiotic explication of Habermas's and Anderson's notions of community (the public sphere and imagined community, respectively).

31. It was socially possible for the author and the reader at that time to imagine that women spoke, ordinarily spoke, or should have spoken in a particular gendered way. My point about the emergence of women's language is similar to Foucault's point about the emergence of disciplinary power—that it could be socially imagined: "The [actual] automatic functioning of power, mechanical operation, is absolutely not the thesis of *Discipline and Punish.* Rather it is the idea, in the eighteenth century, that such a form of power is possible and desirable" (Foucault 1980:20).

32. See also Hill and Irvine 1993; Lucy 1993; Philips 1986; and Tannen 1989.

33. See Honda 1990 and Kawamura 1993 for recent social and cultural studies of jogakusei. See also Inoue 1996 for a discussion of how Japanese modern art came to embrace jogakusei as a visual aesthetic object.

34. Here, of course, one should not assume that real schoolgirls spoke the way they were cited and reported to speak by the writers. The moment the schoolgirls' voices were cited (and therefore dislocated), the voices not only changed in Butler's (1990) and Derrida's (1982) senses

of iterability, but also took on their own lives. In this sense, the copy becomes the original, apart from the living bodies of the schoolgirls.

35. Iida (1998) argues that the kateishôsetsu as a literary genre was originally viewed as a nongendered genre. It simply referred to novels with wholesome taste and morality that could be read at home. With the assumption, however, that those who read and ought to read wholesome novels at home were women, the kateishôsetsu quickly came to be associated with the women's genre. More importantly, it was the perceived fundamental incompatibility between art and morality that eventually dislodged the domestic novel from mainstream Japanese literary history, so that it came to be feminized as popular literature. See Huyssen 1986 for discussion of the ways in which femaleness came to be associated with popular culture against the rise of (male) modernism.

36. One of the first magazines to print letters of this sort was *Jogaku Sekai* (The World of School Girls) in 1909 (Kawamura 1993).

37. See Kawamura 1993 and Honda 1990 for more detailed sociolinguistic analyses of the letters and the letters column.

38. Hansen 1993 recognizes "counter public spheres" (composed of marginalized citizens excluded by the mainstream bourgeois male public sphere from participation) in places such as movie theaters, where disenfranchised citizens such as women had access as citizens-as-consumers.

The readers' letters also included metacommunicative comments and discussions on how to maintain their virtual community by, for example, not including plagiarized poetry or letters from men or boys (Sato 1996). These metacommunicative comments created a sense—a well-calculated effect sought by the producers of the magazines—that the community was autonomous and self-governed by the girls.

39. See Inoue in press for an analysis of the semiotic process by which Japanese women's language was constructed in its indexical relationships with the graphic and textual organizations of girls' and young women's magazines in the early 20th century.

40. See Silverberg's (1991) insightful discussion of the relationship of class, gender, and mass culture in 1920s and 1930s Japan. Consumption is particularly critical in the case of working class women. As Haug (1986) points out, capitalism harnesses working-class people not only as sellers of labor power, but also as buyers and consumers, which he (1986:103) calls "secondary exploitation" (see also Marx 1981:745; and Mouffe 1988).

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