De-Feminising Translation:

To Make Women Visible in Japanese Translation

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1. Introduction

Western feminist translation

= feminising Translation

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However,

in the Japanese context, feminising translation connotes women's underprivileged position in society.

1. Introduction

e.g.

The Japanese translation of *The Edible Woman*

(Atwood 1969)

While the protagonist, Marian is a contemporary working woman, described as independent and with feminist ideas, she sometimes speaks with the kind of perfectly feminine language used by young women from good families between the late 19th century and the middle of the 20th century in Japan.

(Furukawa 2012)

1. Introduction

e.g.
The Japanese translations of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* (Austen 1813 & 1815)

The male translators are more likely to over-feminise female characters' speech than a female translator.
(Furukawa 2010)

De-feminising Translation

2. Over-Feminising in Japanese Literature

Japanese = a gender-marking language

e.g.
English-Japanese translation of 'it's hot today'

1. Strongly feminine: '*kyo ha atsui wa*' (it's hot + particle)
2. Moderately feminine: '*kyo ha atsui ne*' (it's hot + particle)
3. Neutral: '*kyo ha atsui*'
4. Moderately masculine: '*kyo ha atsui yo*' (it's hot + particle)
5. Strongly masculine: '*kyo ha atsui zo*' (it's hot + particle)

‘Women’s Language’ in Literature

v.s.

Real Women’s Language

2. Over-Feminising in Japanese Literature

Women's Language

=

'Culturally salient category and knowledge' (Inoue 2006: 13)

3. Gender Influence on Over-Feminising

The three Japanese translations of *Wuthering Heights* (Brontë 1847)

Translated Texts

WH1: Yukiko Kōnosu (2003, female)
WH2: Hiromi Kawashima (2004, female)
WH3: Takeshi Onodera (2010, male)

Methodology

All of the sentence-final particles of the protagonist Catherine are collected, identified by their levels of femininity or masculinity according to Okamoto and Sato's classification (1992, 480-482), and then compared to these in other translations.

3. Gender Influence on Over-Feminising

Table 1
Use of Gendered Sentence-final Forms (*WH1*, *WH2* and *WH3*)

Sentence-final Forms	Total Instances Used (%)		
	WH1 (F 2003)	*WH2* (F 2004)	*WH3* (M 2010)
Feminine forms	**56.63%**	**60.15%**	**68.71%**
Strongly feminine forms	33.47%	44.09%	52.28%
Moderately feminine forms	23.16%	16.06%	16.43%
Masculine forms	**0.13%**	**0.30%**	**0.26%**
Strongly masculine forms	0.13%	0.15%	0.00%
Moderately masculine forms	0.00%	0.15%	0.26%
Neutral forms	**43.24%**	**39.56%**	**31.03%**

Note (1): Total number of instances = 747 (WH1), 685 (WH2) and 767 (WH3).
Note (2): The year of publication employed is the date that the novel was translated for the first time.
Note (3): M and F in brackets indicates that the gender of the translator: M = male; F = female.
Note (4): As all figures are rounded off to two decimal places, there is a systematic error when they are totalled.

3. Gender Influence on Over-Feminising

The four Japanese translations *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* (Austen 1813 & 1815)

Translated Texts

PP: Koji Nakano (2003, male)
—the least feminised version of the three currently on the market
EM1: Shoko Harding (1997, female)
EM2: Masashi Kudo (2000, male)
EM3: Koji Nakano (2005, male)

Methodology

All of the sentence-final particles of the protagonist Catherine are collected, identified by their levels of femininity or masculinity according to Okamoto and Sato's classification (1992, 480-482), and then compared to these in other translations.

3. Gender Influence on Over-Feminising

Table 2 Use of Gendered Sentence-final Forms

(WH1, WH2, WH3, PP, EM1, EM2 and EM3)

Sentence-final Forms	Total Instances Used (%)						
	WH1 (F 2003)	*WH2* (F 2004)	*WH3* (M 2010)	*PP* (M 2003)	*EM1* (F 1997)	*EM2* (M 2000)	*EM3* (M2005)
Feminine forms	**56.63%**	**60.15%**	**68.71%**	**75.52%**	**60.68%**	**79.28%**	**64.29%**
Strongly feminine forms	33.47%	44.09%	52.28%	52.70%	46.07%	62.14%	43.41%
Moderately feminine forms	23.16%	16.06%	16.43%	22.82%	14.61%	17.14%	20.88%
Masculine forms	**0.13%**	**0.30%**	**0.26%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**
Strongly masculine forms	0.13%	0.15%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Moderately masculine forms	0.00%	0.15%	0.26%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Neutral forms	**43.24%**	**39.56%**	**31.03%**	**28.48%**	**39.33%**	**20.71%**	**35.71%**

Note (1): Total number of instances = 747 (WH1), 685 (WH2) and 767 (WH3), 241 (PP), 178 (EM1), 140 (EM2) and 182 (EM3).
Note (2): The year of publication employed is the date that the novel was translated for the first time.
Note (3): M and F in brackets indicates that the gender of the translator: M = male; F = female.
Note (4): FF = feminine forms, SFF = strong feminine forms, MFF = moderately feminine forms, MF = masculine forms, SMF = strongly masculine forms, MMF = moderately masculine forms, NF = neutral forms.
Note (5): As all figures are rounded off to two decimal places, there is a systematic error when they are totalled.

3. Gender Influence on Over-Feminising

Table 3 Use of Gendered Sentence-Final Forms
(Real Japanese Women, Okamoto 2010: 133)

	Aged 18-20	Aged 43-57
Feminine forms	12.3%	36.3%
Masculine forms	18.9%	12.3%
Neutral forms	68.8%	51.4%

Total number of instances = 750 for each category.

This survey is based on five tape-recorded informal two-person conversations between ten university students aged 18-20 and five conversations between ten married middle-aged women aged 43-57. The sentence-final particles of 150 sentences each are collected and classified into feminine, masculine and neutral forms.

3. Gender Influence on Over-Feminising

Table 4 Use of Gendered Sentence-final Forms

(*WH1*, *WH2*, *WH3* and Real Japanese Women, Okamoto 2010: 133)

Sentence-final Forms	Total Instances Used (%)				
	WH1 (F 2003)	*WH2* (F 2004)	*WH3* (M 2010)	18-20	43-57
Feminine forms	**56.63%**	**60.15%**	**68.71%**	**12.3%**	**36.3%**
Strongly feminine forms	33.47%	44.09%	52.28%		
Moderately feminine forms	23.16%	16.06%	16.43%		
Masculine forms	**0.13%**	**0.30%**	**0.26%**	**18.9%**	**12.3%**
Strongly masculine forms	0.13%	0.15%	0.00%		
Moderately masculine forms	0.00%	0.15%	0.26%		
Neutral forms	**43.24%**	**39.56%**	**31.03%**	**68.8%**	**51.4%**

Note (1): Total number of instances = 747 (WH1), 685 (WH2) , 767 (WH3) and 750 (Okamoto).
Note (2): The year of publication employed is the date that the novel was translated for the first time.
Note (3): M and F in brackets indicates that the gender of the translator: M = male; F = female.
Note (4): As all figures are rounded off to two decimal places, there is a systematic error when they are totalled.

4. Towards De-feminising Translation

Western feminist translation

‘[M]aking the feminine visible in language means making women seen and heard in the real world. Which is what feminism is all about’

(de Lotbinière-Harwood in von Flotow 1997: 29)

Japanese feminist translation

‘Making the feminine visible in language means making women *unseen* and *unheard* in the real world’

3. Gender Influence on Over-Feminising

The reasons why radical feminist theory is not simply applied in this strategy:

1. The target audience for radical feminist translation is likely to be small.
2. Japanese society is arguably not yet ready to accept such radical translations.
3. There is sometimes a clash between the norms of authorities and non-authorities even in the same target culture.

3. Gender Influence on Over-Feminising

It is proposed to neutralise the ideologically fabricated figure of female speech in Japanese translation, and to make female characters relevant to the original character in the translation.

5. Conclusion

1. Japanese literature has worked as a vehicle for gendered linguistic norms and as a mediator of gender ideology.
2. Male translators are likely to use feminine forms more than female translators.
3. Even female translators obey the convention of over-feminising translation.
4. De-feminising translation is needed to mitigate the over-feminising convention prevalent in the Japanese literary world.

Thank you!

A paper based on this presentation is going to be published *in Translating Women from Anywhere but 'Here'.* eds. Luise von Flotow and Farzanah Farahzad. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press.

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