

# Speech Patterns of Japanese Girls or Gals: Symbol of Identity & Opposition to Power

Kazuko Tanabe  
Queen Mary, University of London

October 2005

---

## Abstract

This paper attempts to describe Japanese Gal's language mainly in cyberspace and to analyze its formation as a social dialect. Gal's language has been fully elaborated in all of the linguistic fields. Applying the theory of Le Page, the research proposes that Gal's language has been created by a passion to assert a distinct identity of belonging under the circumstances of very dense everyday communication in a cyberspace community and heavy pressure from a rigidly gender-oriented social environment.

**Keywords** community, identity, socio-dialect, the Gal's language; Japanese

---

Queen Mary's OPAL #3  
Occasional Papers Advancing Linguistics

## 1 Introduction

Since the middle of the 1990's, a new trend in Japanese women's speech was cultivated by girls. The Japanese slang word/expression for girls is best translated as 'Gal'; therefore this paper is concerned with the patterns of Japanese Gal's language. The Gal's language appears to bear characteristics similar to those found in the speech patterns of other young peer groups. Features in common are: rising intonation, a variety of shortenings, pragmaticalized discourse markers or fillers and incomplete speech endings. We should bear in mind that the cyber-spaced characteristic orthography is quite particular to the Gal's language. The aim of this paper is to illustrate the cause and process of the formation of this gender-oriented social dialect, Japanese Gal's language, in terms of the construction of identity and the opposition against power.

It is quite difficult to define the category of 'gal'; however, it is commonly taken to refer to high school girls who are often tempted to buy branded goods and frequent Shibuya where is one of the most famous downtown areas of Tokyo. As a result of these behavioral practices, some girls seem to be associated with amateur prostitution or unusual business of selling unwashed underwear. What is the most common practice among these girls is the prominent use of the mobile phones.

In 1999, NTT DoCoMo (a Japanese telecommunications company) began their business of i-Mode, which has functioned internet on mobile phones in Japan. This innovation has completely captured the attention of young people by offering a desirable opportunity to construct cyber-communities. As a result of this, the mobile phone has become an essential tool for networking among young people. The methodology of this study includes an examination of young Japanese girls' use of the Internet and of the speech patterns usually created and employed to communicate there.

This study demonstrates how certain universal factors are commonly found throughout the history of Japanese Women's group languages, and how present-day girls use technology in a highly developed environment of consumption. The resulting Gal's language can be attributed to both advances in technology and the increasingly consumption-oriented character of society, yet reflects many of the traditional factors that have always been common in the speech of Japanese girls of this age group.

## 2 Inner-Linguistic Features

Inner-linguistic features refer to features of the Gal's language which have been formed mainly by a cyber-community of young women. These include morphological and semantic features, syntactical and discourse change and the orthography. In short, the style of speaking features made-up words or combined words that sometimes include English syllables. Since this is often a written "cyber" language, there is also a whole unique writing system that helps to create a bond among the women involved.

### 2.1 Morphological and semantic features

Morphological and semantic features, which are full of jargon, refer to the Gal's creation of words that are made up of single syllables from Japanese words and occasionally follow regulations which can be observed through the use of jargon.

---

\* I thank Professor Jenny Cheshire for her generous support.

### 2.1.1 The creation of jargon

The Gal's speech is full of jargon. Most of these irregular expressions are created by shortening standard, everyday words. The words sound Japanese but are completely unintelligible to the average Japanese person. These can be observed as follows:

<i>cho-beri-ba</i>	A mixture of Japanese and English: <i>cho</i> 'extremely', <i>beri</i> 'very', <i>ba</i> 'bad' 'extremely bad'
<i>cho-beri-gu</i>	<i>gu</i> 'good' 'extremely good'
<i>cho-beri-bu</i>	<i>bu</i> 'blue' 'very blue'
<i>cho mm</i>	A shortening of Japanese words <i>cho majide mukatsuku</i> 'extremely disgusting in a serious sense'
<i>cho mmc</i>	<i>cho majide mukatsuku kara gorosu</i> 'Because it is extremely disgusting, I will kill him.'
<i>Inobeddo</i>	Japanese and English <i>Inokashira</i> line <i>Ino</i> + <i>kashira</i> ( <i>Kashira</i> means 'head' in Japanese.) <i>Heddo</i> is a phonologically modified form of the English word 'head' in English.
<i>Yamahando</i>	<i>Yamanote</i> line <i>Te</i> means 'hands' in English <i>Hando</i> means 'hands' in English
<i>ike-men</i>	Japanese and English <i>Ike-teru</i> means 'cool' in English. <i>Ike-men</i> means 'a cool man'.
<i>shingulu</i>	English 'single' 'You do not have a boyfriend'.
<i>lonnge</i>	English and Japanese 'long hair' <i>ke</i> (~ <i>ge</i> ) means hair.
<i>makuru</i>	English and Japanese This means to go to McDonald's hamburger shop. <i>Maku</i> (Mc)+ <i>ru</i> (a sort of suffix making a form of verb)
<i>bowaito kikeku</i>	English 'white' + 'kick' This means to be sober, or a wet blanket, or to make dull. This is almost equivalent to <i>shirakeru</i> in Japanese. Gals divide <i>shirakeru</i> into the two parts: <i>shira</i> + <i>keru</i> and try to translate each part into English; <i>shira</i> directly means to become 'white' and <i>keru</i> means to 'kick'.
<i>ooru</i>	This is almost equivalent to 'all /'ɔ:l/' in English. It means to sit up all the night.
<i>naruraa</i>	English a narcissist
<i>amuraa</i>	the fans of the famous singer Namie Amuro to follow her ways
<i>yarikonn</i>	Japanese a sort of party aiming at sexual intercourse

*yari* ‘doing’, *kon* ‘companionship’

These examples of jargon cited above are mainly composed by shortening other words. The examples below show some of the morphological and semantic features of these shortenings.

- 1) Many combinations by adding a word to *cho* ‘super’.
- 2) The linking of the initial syllables of a word to a phrase in order to make the phrase shorter. Most of these morphological words or phrases consist of four syllables.  
ex. *onaji chyuugaku* (graduate from the same junior high school) = *ona chyuuu*
- 3) The combination of the initial semantic segment remaining in Japanese and the latter segment translated into English in one word.  
ex. Yamanote (line): *yama hando*
- 4) Making use of English suffix. Some words are combined with Japanese words with English suffix.  
ex. Amuraa: Amuro fan(-er)
- 5) Making verbs by combining an English noun with Japanese verb ending syllable *-ru*.  
ex. *Maku-ru* means to go to MacDonald’s.  
*Su-ru* means ‘to do’ in Japanese and *to-ru* means ‘to take’.
- 6) The adoption of initial alphabeticalized letter of Japanese word  
ex. cho m: M(m) means *mukatsuku* ‘disgusting’.

It can be observed that the creation of jargon in the Japanese Gal’s language relies heavily on the English lexical system. The reason for this is because most Gals are girls who are studying English in high school or junior high-school. They are in the process of learning numerous English words and phrases as a part of their education. The adoption of English linguistic elements to their everyday language might be linked to the creation of an image of ‘being cool’ and appearing ultra modern to their peers.

## 2.2 Syntactic and Pragmatic feature

The transformation of syntactic and pragmatic features is illustrated in this section. The syntactical usage of a particular functional word has gradually changed, as a result of this, grammaticalization or pragmaticalization can sometimes be identified.

### 2.2.1 The ending of an incomplete sentence

The Gal’s language shows a strong tendency to finish statements in an incomplete style with additions of conjunctions of subordinate clauses.

- (1) A: *Kino Rikako to eiga ika-na-kitta nn da.*  
yesterday Rikako with movie go NEG PAST N FP  
‘Yesterday you didn’t go to the movies with Rikako, did you?’  
B: *Unn, atama itakatta-shi.*  
Yes, head ache PAST CONJ  
‘Yes, (it was) because I had a headache.’
- (2) *Tte hagesiku imasara desu shi.*  
QUOT fierce after such a long time COP CONJ

‘As the above shows, it is fierce after such a longtime.’

(<http://crusader.cocolog-nifty.com/crusadersroom/2005/03/index.html>,

2005/03/30)

- (3) *Aitsu dare da shi.*  
That guy who COP CONJ  
‘Who is that man, (then)?’

*Koitsu nan da shi.*

This guy what COP CONJ  
‘What is this (man), (then)?’

(<http://www.shibukei.com/teenslab> 2005/01/21)

The standard usage of *shi*

- (4) *Ano mise wa, yasui-shi, oisii-shi, ikuto-ii-yo.*  
That shop TOP cheap CONJ, nice CONJ recommendable to go FP  
‘As that restaurant is cheap, and also nice, it would be nice to go.’

In the standard usage ...*(s)hi* is a sort of conjunction used for creating clauses, which are adopted when a speaker wants to present reasons for adding more information before telling his/her conclusion. However, in the Japanese Gal’s speech it is employed as the ending mitigating of utterance. Ex. (3) shows that ...*shi* is simply attached to the final position of a sentence which has an interrogative word in the middle of it. It is not set in the standard question style which should be accompanied with the particle ...*ka* at the end of a sentence. Instead, the Gals adopts the conjunction ...*shi* as a non-standard question marker ...*ka*. The result is that this usage makes the end of the utterance seem vague and inconclusive rather than interrogative.

### 2.2.2 Pragmaticalization: TEIUKA from subordinate marker to a filler

Pragmaticalization means to change the linguistic function of words to a form which provides signals indicating what messages the speaker expects to send through this form in order to communicate the intended propositional content. In the case of Gal’s speech the subordinate phrase maker *teiu ka* ‘rather than’ transforms into a discourse marker and finally turn into a filler. *Te iu ka* consists of the three parts; *te* is a quotation marker *iu* means ‘to tell’, and *ka* is a particle to confirm the new information.

The change of usage is categorized into four stages depending on the grade which is determined by how far from the original function the usage is. The following data have been collected from the chat or blog pages on web-sites.

Stage 1 Compound phrase particles: *te iu ka* ‘rather than’

- (5) *Gakko te iu ka puri sukuuru desu ne.*  
School rather than preschool copula FP  
‘Did I say school? I meant preschool.’ (Hinds 1982)

Stage 2 Discourse marker / hearsay marker: *teiu ka* ‘however’

- (6) Teacher: *Nannda, sono mayu wa.*  
What that eyebrow TOP  
‘What’s that with your eyebrow?’

Student: *Teiukaa, minna Amuraa toka ittee,*  
However, most Amuro's fans, something like this  
'But most of us, as Amuro(a singer)'s fans, are like'

(<http://www.geocities.co.jp/HeartLand-Gaien/7218/sample.html> 2004/08/07)

Stage 3 Pragmatic marker / Illocutionary connective: *te-ka* 'by the way'

- (7) *Miyu daigakusei datta nnda. Tekka hisa!*  
Miyu, a university student Cop N. Well (Greeting)  
'Miyu, you are a university student. By the way, nice to see you again.'

(<http://www.casphy.com/bbs/test/read.egi/love/1095956684/,2005/> 03/16)

Stage 4 De-semanticization, a filler: *tteka, tuukaa* 'is it?, So'

- (8) *Kaini ikimashita. Singata PS2 wo.*  
to buy I went New style PS2 ACC  
'I went to buy the new style of PS2 (a computer game machine).'

*Tteka, singata PS2 tte usui tiisai, konpakuto!*  
Well new style QUOT thin tiny kompakuto  
'Well, it is tiny, slim, and compact!'

(<http://homepage2.nifty.com/KHIRA/200503/2005031.htm>, 2005/03/12)

The usage of Stage 1 is standard Japanese. In Stage 2, *teinka* is adopted as the marker preceding the statement of a sort of objection. A concessive sense of the original standard usage from stage 1 can be still recognized in this stage. The function of topic transition is placed in stage 3. In this stage, the concessive implication is gradually fading out. In stage 4, it connects the statements without any concessive sense. *Teka* is adopted for the sole purpose of making the conversation flow or allowing time before giving one's statement. It is obvious that the function has been transmitted from the subordinate marker to contextual and phatic marker whose function is partly one of mitigation.

### 2.3 Orthographical feature

The Gal language has developed a distinct orthography. Although it is based on the present standard Japanese orthography, it astonishingly deforms it and employs many marks or signs from other languages or fields. The result is barely understandable to the uninitiated. What is more, the speech is quite flexible in relation to the space provided for a single letter. The space for a certain letter is not fixed. Some letters are expressed in twice the width of the normal space while others are expressed in half of that same space. All of these characters exist as such because the Gals have created this language through their communication on mobile phones. When they create a new letter in their own style, they send it to their friends and have the new idea seen and shared. Gradually these letters-creations come to be used in the Gal's daily mobile communication. The emergence of this "Gals' orthography" attests to the fact that the mobile phone is a crucial tool in their daily life.

Gal's orthography

しま” < 秩、走召→おM°U3レ T” £ ★ヨЯёカ らM°  
 カ” ωレ£ ”ヲT < ナニ”±レ Йё☆

Standard orthography of Japanese  
 ぼく秩、超おもしろいです。これからも  
 がんばって くださいね。

Glossary  
 ぼく 秩 超 おもしろい です。 これからも  
 Boku chitsu cho omoshiroi desu. Korekara mo  
 (This web diary) very enjoyable COP. From now on, too  
 Your web diary titled by Boku chitsu is very enjoyable. I wish

がんばって ください ね。  
 ganbatte kudasai ne.  
 do your best please FP  
 you good luck.

The main characteristic features of Gal’s orthography are as follows:

- 1) The adoption of three kinds of spaces: half space for the alphabet, a full space for a Japanese letter, one and half space for Gal’s created letters.  
 e.g. ぼく (standard)      しま” < (Gal)  
       超 (standard)      走召- (Gal)
- 2) The deformation Japanese standard letters and their replacement by other signs  
 e.g. す £      こ ヽ      ん ω
- 3) The alphabetization with some deformation by adopting the signs from the mobile phone’s function.  
 e.g. も mo (standard)      M° (Gal)  
       ね ne (standard)      Йё (Gal)
- 4) The mixed use of the two kinds of Japanese letters, Hiragana and Katakana.  
 e.g. か (standard)      カ (Gal)

The Gal’s orthography seems to be very elaborate work. It is not easy for ordinary people to understand why the Gals have spent so much energy on advanced linguistic inventions such as these. The result, however, is that such activity contributes to the emergence and organization of a sense of solid community and the strengthening of connections between its members.

### 3 The Cause and Process of the Growth of the Social dialect

In Section 3, the cause and process of the growth of the social dialect referring to Gal’s language as a case study, is examined. Applying Le Page’s theory, the above are explored in terms of individual identity, interaction among members and external pressure from society.

#### 3.1 The Application of The theory of Le Page: The act of identity

As the aforementioned description has shown, the Gal's language has been formed very comprehensively and developed elaborately in all aspects from a linguistic point of view. This indicates that the solidity of the gal's community is surprisingly remarkable. The reasons why the Gal's language has constructed so solid communities might be explained by the features of the individual member and the characters of the community.

Firstly, in terms of the members' common features, the gals belong to the same generation and are of the same sex. In tracing back to the Japanese history (see Section 3.3), there are several representative young women's languages in the various period. This means that it frequently happens that women form their communities for their own protection against the pressure from a man-oriented society. Gender/sex has been a crucial criterion in categorizing the people in Japanese society. The case of Gal's community is not exceptional (see Section 3.3). In addition to this, the Gals also come from a similar educational background and historical cultural sphere. The most noticeable factor in this case is that the members are definitely sharing the value of excessive consumerism in the context of urban life style.

Technological power plays a crucial role as a second factor contributing to the solidity of the community. Mailing list has enabled us to form completely closed private communities that exclude alien elements. Some of the chatting rooms in internet provide the 'ignorance' (*mushi*) button on the screen, which refuses the messages from a particular sender without alerting that sender. Another feature is the 'whisper' (*sasayaki*) button, which enables the chatters to converse privately with a particular member while at the same time chatting with other members (ex. <http://3dchat.com/index.php>, 07/10/05). It is almost impossible in an actual face-to-face situation to exclude a particular person without being noticed by him/her. It is rude to communicate with a particularly close person to the exclusion of others without being noticed as breaking the social code of proper etiquette. That is to say, the sociolinguistic topic concerning the relationship between the quality of communication and the features of the community need to be discussed.

In order to clarify the connections between the features of community and the socio-dialect created by the community, the theory of Le Page (1977) is insightful. Le Page (1985: 247) states that the processes of projection, of focusing or diffusion are very similar for all kinds of social behaviour through which we define ourselves, and a similar model is needed for social behaviour of all kinds, including language. While he mainly discusses ethnicity in acts of identity, this paper postulates that gender also acts as a stimulus for identity which is why gender is reliable marker in the study of linguistic connotations.

The reason why this paper adopts Le Page's theory in order to clarify the cause and the process of the construction of the Gal's speech, is due to Le Page's view which admits the two kinds of identity, as an individual and as a member belonging to a group. The hypothesis of this paper concerning Gal's language is that the identity both as an individual and as a group member plays a crucial role in constructing Gal's language. On this point, Le Page's theory, which recognizes one's identity respectively both as an individual and as a member of various groups, supports a conceptualization very close to the standpoint of this paper. It is an appropriate theory for revealing the dynamism of Gal's language.

As the conditions of forming the social dialect, Le Page (1979: 176) suggests that 'A(a) standard creole has developed in Belize City because of the close daily interaction of its inhabitants in a confined space and under conditions of external threat which has made this act of identity on their part positive and necessary'. This paper examines the formative processes of Gal's speech in relation to the interaction and the external threat.



### 3.2 The close daily interaction in the construction of Gal's language

The most characteristic feature of Gal's language is the effective utilization of the cyberspace. It can be argued that without using cyberspace, the present Gal's language would not have been formed as it has. According to the data of survey by DATA PLANET (2001), 54.4% of all users of web-site (*Maboo-no airand* 'Miracle Island') are female users.

Cyberspace has totally conquered the restraints previously imposed by physical distance. It enables us to contact individually with even the person who lives in the opposite side of the globe. If you and the person share the familiarity or closeness you can build up the cyberspace-friendship. As a result of this, it seems that a community is to be constructed quite easily without any spacious limitations.

Unlike the English-speaking world where most people access the Internet via computers, in Japan the Internet is overwhelmingly accessed via a variety of portable devices, particularly mobile phones (Gottlieb and McLelland 2004: cover). Women's networks are using the Internet in an attempt to highlight problems of harassment and bullying in the workplace, otherwise overlooked by mainstream media (ibid.). Students are shown to have embraced this technology to the extent that life without mobile Internet access would for many be inconceivable (ibid.). The marginalized groups and subcultures have found the Internet a valuable tool. It allows increased networking among disenfranchised individuals who now have access to powerful technology that enables them to represent themselves in their own voice and challenge public misconceptions.

Internet has emerged as the latest medium for information dissemination, communication and mobilization among women in Japan (Onosaka 2004: 105). Internet has increased the capacity of form bonds with individuals and groups who would otherwise have been virtually inaccessible (ibid.). The Japanese culture has been an important tool for customizing and personalizing new technologies in post-war Japan, its deployment within KEITAI (mobile) cyberspace has seen new roles emerge for women as both consumers and producers. Mobile phone use in Japan, this new technology is very much about individual expression and identity (Hjorth 2004: 57).

#### 3.2.1 The data from the blog: *Siho Gal's Kakumei* 'Gal revolution'

This section shows like what the blog created by Gals is like. This blog is famous for being frequently accessed. Its title is 'Siho Gal's Kakumei (Revolution)'. The aim of this blog seems to encourage general Gals to be ambitious in starting business by themselves. This blog appears to be organized by an individual Gal business woman; however, it is totally used for advertisement of her commercial video titled by "How to found one's own company, even a Gal can make it!"

Example: the blog of Gals' Revolution

こんにちわ ~ | ; ; ; ヴ . ) ｲﾝ

*Konnichiva.*

'Hello'.

むし◎※暑い日が続きますねえ!

*Mushi mushi atsui hi ga tsuzuki masu nee!*

Muggy hot days SUB continue COP FP  
'Muggy days are continuous, aren't they?'  
※② is a mark to indicate the repetition of the precedent word.

ところで!  
*Tokorode!*  
COJ  
'Incidentally'

あ※1たしは音楽関連事業をしているのに知識がまだ②足りません (・ε・) ※2  
*Atasi ha onngaku kannrenn jigyou wo siteiru noni chishiki ga madamada tarimasenn*  
I TOP music related business SUB doing with COJ knowledge SUB still is lacking  
'Although I am associated with music business, knowledge still is not enough.'  
※1 In the Gal's language, あ(a)い(i)う(u)え(e)お(o) are frequently used in the half space  
and the small size of letter.  
※2 Full of facial marks are noticeable.

音楽関連だけではなくて全般的に知識がまだ②・・・  
*Onngaku kannrenn dakedeha nakute zennpanntekini chisiki ga madamada*  
Music-related issues not only generally knowledge SUJ still  
'Not limited in relation to music, general knowledge is still ...'

今は、恥を知らながら何でも聞くようにしまっす☆  
*Ima ha, haji o siri nagara nanndemo kikyooni shimassu*  
Now shame ACC realize COJ anything (I) try to ask  
'Now I try to ask anything while I am ashamed.'

特に横文字は二ガテ～ ('～')  
*Tokuni yoko moji ha negate.*  
Especially horizontal letters TOP not good at  
'Especially I am not good at foreign languages.'

(<http://blog.livedoor.jp/sifow/> 2005/07/16)

Siho, the Gal business woman, is talking about how she has found some difficulties in operating her own music business but she is enjoying herself. Her statements are deeply considered in order to make many people feel familiar with her; to being humble, cute, a little bit immature and dependent while simultaneously trying to be independent as much as she can. This blog is so popular that it is highly ranked as the blog which many people have linked with, commented on and tracked back. The blog makes it quite easily possible to contact with other blogs and its readers because its most characteristic function such as 'track back' enables people to exchange information very freely and communicate with each other. Many people try to track back with this Siho's Gal's Revolution blog, aiming at leading readers to their own blog page.

You can send your article to the blog through your mobile phone. This is so called 'moblog' (the combination word made up of 'mobile' and 'blog'). The rise of the automobile (also) led to the development of new forms of social interaction (Ling 2004: 173). The rise of mobile phone also has implications for the discussion of social capital/individualism. One line of thought here is that this intensity of interaction-the mere weight of the interaction- serves to weld the social group together, be it a family or

a group of teens (Ling 2004: 184). With chat groups on the Net Rheingold (cited in Ling 2004: 187) has called these *smart mobs*: he suggests that they are type of self-organizing, peer-to-peer social grouping that comes and goes according to need. Lings (ibid.: 194) states that the mobile telephones enable young adults to coordinate their activities, feel secure, and participate fully in the various social circles, at the same time, he indicates the possibility which enables them to build up 'a type of virtual walled community in which they interact only with those whom they deem of interest at the moment'.

Cyberspace has enabled us to develop two totally opposite worlds; the endlessly open communicative world and perfectly closed community. In terms of the social dialect growth, unimaginably ideal conditions are provided. Under this kind of circumstance, social dialects are produced efficiently owing to the principles of closeness and exclusiveness, and diffuse rapidly all over society because of their openness and fluidity.

### 3.3 The external threat in the construction of Gal's language

It is very difficult to prove the existence of the external threat which the gals might receive. The source of the threat is vague because Gals seem to enjoy themselves when they use the language and communicate with other Gals. They don't feel consciously any threat. It might be argued that the situation of gals is quite different from creole-speaking persons who were threatened by the model language, being studied by Le Page (1977). However, the threat is not necessarily an attack from outside. Insecurity concerning the future can become a threat for identity.

First of all, it is the general economical situation that makes Japanese young girls pessimistic for the future. The Japanese economical situation has not been desirable since the middle of 1990. Morley & Robins (1995: 173) state that 'as we move into mid-1990s, some of the paranoia of recent years, concerning the Japanese 'economic miracle' seems to be fading. There are an increasing number of press reports (cf. Rafferty 1994) and some academic studies which suggest that the Japanese economy itself is now in trouble.' As far as the Gals are concerned, they slightly begin to notice their limitations posed on the possibilities for future self-fulfilment available to them. According to the data of the research on users of the popular web-site *Mahoo-no i-ranndo* 'Miracle Island' by DATA PLANET in 2001, the most frequent answer to the question 'what do you assume as a change in your life within one year?' is to acquire some vocational qualification. This answer has occupied 26 percent of the total number of answers, which is an outstandingly high ratio compared to the second answer of 'changing job' (17.9%). This statistical data shows how eager mobile phone users are interested in getting qualifications, in sharp contrast though to how difficult finding a new job is.

The data reflects how enthusiastic young people are to be employed in today's Japan. The Gals understand the social situation which they are progressively entering and their disadvantageous position compared to boys. Although discrimination on the basis of gender is legally prohibited in the field of employment, women have still to overcome considerable obstacles in accessing good jobs in Japan. It seems that there are not so many elements to make young girls ambitious and positive. It is quite natural for some of young girls to become pessimistic.

The traditional predominance of males as the outstanding characters in Japanese society should be considered as the second key factor that generates young girls' insecurity. Social dialects generally seem to be produced by the people at the fringe of the society while there are some recognizable elements of language use which reveal a certain belonging to the main stream of society. Teru Takahara (1951) advocates that Japanese women's languages reflect the far lower position of women in their given social context.

According to the records, several representative examples of women's speech have been noted over the course of Japanese history. There have been three representative styles of Japanese women's speech in the past: *nyoobo-kotoba*, a court lady's speech in 15C; *yuujo-go*, a call girl's speech in 17C-19C; *yamanote-kotoba*, the modern women's speech in 19–20C. Gal's language could be linguistically significant enough as the latest Japanese women's social dialect, although the political and social evaluation is varied widely. The common feature of the three is at least, that the women were placed at the fringe of the society while the socio-economical status is quite different among the four groups. The court ladies have been mistakenly assumed to be professional women, however, they did not work as the bureaucrats who associated with the formal part of the administration of the lord's land. Seiji Ando (1913: 336), Japanese language linguist, defines *nyoo-boo kotoba* as a social dialect such as *yuujo-go* is and finds an equal linguistic significance in both of them.

### 3.4 The act of identity of Gal's language

In this section, 'identity' which facilitates so vigorously Japanese women's dialects is discussed. As Le Page (1985: 244) argues in the section *Language and stereotypes*, a human population isolated from other human populations in some sense may become homogeneous, in its cultural characteristics, and in its language. This can be applied to Gal's language. The cyberspace is such a highly dense sphere that Gal's language develops efficiently. As a result of this, Gals have constructed their elaborate social dialect.

Le Page continues (ibid.):

such a population have in the past provided the popular idealized model for people's thinking about both 'race' or ethnicity, and about language. The appearance deriving from such a population have in the past provided the popular idealized model for people's thinking about both 'race' or ethnicity, about language.

If 'race' and 'ethnicity' were to be replaced with 'gender' in the above sentence, this could explain why and how the women's dialect is formed according to the stereotype image of women in the people's mind. Le Page suggests the universality of 'identity' which functions one's speech. This is the core notion of Le Page (ibid.) in relation to a socio-dialect and individuals.

The concepts deriving from such a model seem to answer the psychological needs of many people in relations to their identity: Who am I? What groups do I belong to?, and sometimes also, Who shares the language that I speak and hence project my self-concepts in? The model may in some societies derive strong reinforcement from concepts of family or caste or clan. It may also be strongly reinforced by certain physical traits. It may, may not, subsume language difference.

The concept of identity is composed of the two basic questions; 'who am I?' and 'What groups do I belong to?'. These two questions sometimes co-exist very harmoniously in one's mind, however, they sometimes awfully conflict. In the case of the Gals, they are very eager to keep the community identity firmly rather than pursuing individuality. Le Page (1979: 176) suggests as a sociolinguistic agenda that we should explain why some become a conformer while others become just 'lamers'. The demand

for the community identity answers this question. If the young man/woman have strong adherence to community identity, they are inclined to become an enthusiastic conformer. In other cases, they will not find so much interest in conforming to a group.

#### 4 Conclusion

This paper has tried to describe Japanese Gal's language as it appears mainly on cyberspace and analyzed its formation as a social dialect. The Japanese Gal's language has been fully elaborated in all of the linguistic fields. It can be observed not only in morphological and semantic innovations, which are very common among younger generation's group languages, but also in syntactical, discourse and orthographical innovation. As for the sociolinguistics examination of the cause and the process of its development, the theory of Le Page has been applied to. This theory focuses on the relations between society and individual behavior and advocates the significance of two conditions in the formation of a social dialect: the close daily interaction and the external threat. As the result of observation, it is proposed that the Japanese Gal's language has been created by the passion of acquiring a firm sense of community identity under circumstances of very dense everyday communication in cyberspace and of heavy pressure from the rigid gender-oriented society. That is, this social dialect is perceived to be a cultural production composed of ultra-modern technological factors and Japanese historical social factors.

#### Abbreviations

ACC	accusative marker	COJ	conjunctive particle
COP	copula	FP	final particle
N	nominalizer	NEG	negative
PAST	past tense	QUOT	quotative particle
SUB	subject particle	TOP	topic particle

#### References

- Ando, Seiji. 1913. Imyouinngo no kennkyuu wo nobete tokuni saiguu imikotoba wo Ronzu. *Kokugakuinzaasshi*. 19: 7.
- Beeching Kate. 2005. Politenss-induced semantic change: The case of *quand même*. *Language Variation and Change* 17:155–180.
- Britain, David and Cheshire, Jenny (eds.). 2003. *Social Dialectology*. John Benjamins: Amsterdam, Philadelphia.
- Bucholtz, Mary. 1999. "Why be normal?": Language and identity practices in a community of nerd girls. *Language in Society* 28: 203-223.
- Data Planet Research Institution. 2001. *Keitai Bunka- hakusho*. Ohmsha: Tokyo.
- Eckert, Penelope. 1999. New generations and explanations in language and gender research. *Language in Society* 28:2, 185-201.
- Fraser, Bruce. 1996. Pragmatic Markers. *Pragmatics* 6:2, 167–190.

- Gottlieb, Nanette and McLelland, Mark (eds.). 2003. *Japanese Cybercultures*. Routledge.
- Gauntlett, David (ed). 2000. *web. studies*. Arnord: London.
- Hinds, John. 1982. Japanese Conversational Structures. *Lingua* 52: 301–326.
- Hjorth, Larissa. 2004. [Cute@keitai.com](http://Cute@keitai.com). In Gottlieb and McLelland (eds.). *Japanese Cybercultures*. Routledge: London and New York.
- Ide, Risako and Terada, Tomomi. 1998. The historical origins of Japanese women’s speech:from the secluded worlds of “court ladies” and “play ladies”. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 129:139-156
- Le Page, R.B. 1977. Process of pidiginization and creolization. In Valdeman, A. (ed.), *Pidgin and Creole Linguistics*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Le Page, R.B. 1979. Review of Dell Hymes *Foundations in Sociolinguistics* and Norbert Dittmar *Sociolinguistics*. *Journal of Linguistics* 15: 168–79.
- Le Page, R.B. 1985. *Act of Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ling, Rich. 2004. *The Mobile Connection: The cell phone’s impact on society*. Morgan Kaufmann Publishers.
- Meyerhoff, Miriam. 1999. *Sorry* in the Pacific: Defining communities, defining practices. *Language in Society* 28: 225–238.
- Meyerhoff, Miriam. 2001. Communities of Practice. Chambers, J.K., Trudgill, P.& Schilling-Estes, Natalie (eds.), *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*.
- Morely, David & Robins Kevin 1995. *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries*. Routledge.
- Onosaka, Junko. 2003. Challenging society through the information grid: Japanese women’s activism on the Net. In Gottlieb and McLelland (eds.). *Japanese Cybercultures*. Routledge.
- Rafferty, K. 1994. Sun sets on Japanese miracle. *The Guardian*, 15 January.
- Takakura, Teru 1951. *Nippon no Onnna*. Rironnsya.
- Trudgill, Peter. 1983. Acts of Conflicting Identity. *On Dialect*. Basil Blackwell.
- Washi, Rumi. 2004. “Japanese Female Speech” and Lanaguage Policy in the World War II Era. In Okamoto, Shigecko and Shibamoto Smith, Janet S. (eds.). *Japanese Language, Gender, and Ideology*. Oxford.