



INSTITUTIONEN FÖR  
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# CHARACTERIZING FEMININITY

An English-Japanese translation analysis of female speech in *Encanto*

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**Aim:** Japanese is a language which contains gender specific language, something that may be difficult to translate to languages such as English, that does not have any counterpart to the female or male speech. The aim of this thesis is to explore the stereotypical female language, as well as to compare previous research with my analysis of the translation of the subtitled and dubbed version of the movie *Encanto*.

**Theory:** As a translator, the language you choose to apply plays a crucial role in creating or changing the image of a character. This applies especially to the translation of Japanese, a language with norms for women to speak and act in a certain manner. In this study, I will examine whether the translation of *Encanto* will reinforce or contradict the linguistic norms for women.

**Method:** The background will provide information about what female speech is, how it was created, and who it was created for. The key points for the qualitative part involves determining who the characters in *Encanto* are, how they are portrayed, and how choice of language constructs the characters. The quantitative data is presented in the form of charts that will offer an overview of the most common points of the female language, as well as which characters are using it, and how frequently.

**Result:** The result of my study revealed that female characters who adhered to gender stereotypes in the original version of the movie in English had their feminine or masculine attributes reinforced in the Japanese translation. As their personalities developed further, their diction changed to a speech-style more befitting their true characteristics.

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# 1. Introduction

Japanese is a language that, unlike English, can imply the gender of the speaker with the help of certain indicators, even without the gender being mentioned. For example, by using certain first-person pronouns and sentence-final particles (hereafter occasionally referred to as SF-particles or SFPs), one can generally assume the gender of the person speaking. This is what I believed until I started researching the subject. In reality, data from several studies suggest that contrary to the widespread belief, gendered language is not commonly used except for by fictional characters. Another example of when gender-specific speech is used is when translating from English to Japanese, as in the article written by Takatori (2015), who claims that gender markers are used more often in interviews translated from English to Japanese than what is common for native Japanese speakers.

There is a great quantity of research about gender-focused speech in Japanese, and an abundance of papers written on translations of Disney movies into languages such as Spanish, Arabic and Italian. However, I am yet to find any extensive research done on the different factors involved when translating movies from English into Japanese. Furthermore, the majority of the research seems to be devoted to the translation of Japanese movies to English, with the movies from Studio Ghibli as an example. Therefore, I wanted to shift the focus to the linguistic differences that appear in original works in English and their translations into Japanese. More specifically, this study seeks to gain an understanding of the different factors involved when translating to Japanese from English, and the factors I will mainly be looking at are first person pronouns and sentence-final particles.

My interest in this area developed when I started reading books and watching movies in Japanese to further improve my language skills. In the beginning, I mainly chose to get involved with media that I had previously watched or read in English, such as Disney movies. As I started gaining a better understanding of the language structures, I realized how dissimilar the language could be depending on the gender of the character. For that reason, choosing 'Encanto', a Disney movie that challenges the conventional image of female characters, felt like a natural choice.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 The origin of female language

Inoue argues that although we cannot determine a specific date of origin, evidence of women's language has been dated back to the fourth century. Further, evidence of premodern women's language suggest that it was mostly used by "feudal women such as court ladies, Buddhist nuns, and women in the pleasure quarters (geisha and prostitutes)" (Inoue, 2002, p. 393).

The reason for these linguistic differences stems from a contrast between occupational speech styles. Two speech styles analyzed by Ide and Terada (1998) are the above mentioned *nyōbo-kotoba* ("court-lady speech) and *yūjogo* ("play-lady speech" from red light-districts). Both of these occupational groups consisted exclusively of females, and due to the generally positive image of both of court ladies and "play-ladies" - but for different reasons-, the general mass started picking up their style of speech and making it their own. Especially *nyōbo-kotoba*, with its elegance and sophistication, became recognized as the ideal way of speaking for women in Japan. Thus, the linguistic features of the speech style became associated with gender, and no longer a certain occupation group or social class (Ide & Terada, 1998).

The idea of women speaking in a certain way due to it being the suitable speech for women lingered. Further, the increase of consumption of printed media that utilized women's language, and through that consumption, female language became a part of Japanese. During the early 1900's, *jogakuseigo* (schoolgirl speech) became the representation of what was typically female, with its use of distinctive sentence-final particles, such as *teyo*, *dawa* and *noyo*—linguistic features that remain in female speech to this day. Inoue reports that the emergence of what is contemporary female language today is not a natural event. It was created by writers of printed media at that time, and through consumption, it was accepted by women as their own language— not the other way around (Inoue, 2002).

Though originally considered vulgar and distasteful by intellectuals, it eventually got affiliated with high and middle-class women. Thus, the usage of honorifics was also instituted as a part of female speech, and eventually "women's language" was spread to women of all classes and backgrounds in Japan (Inoue, 2002).

For a long time, women's language was thought to be the words actually used by women (Nakamura, 2014) but at present, it has been concluded that it is not a real language, but a norm (Inoue, 2002). The ideology of it gets reinforced through repeated usage of feminine language in literature and other types of media, as well as through the exposure to this emphasized femininity, even though women in real life do not use women's language in everyday conversation (Furukawa, 2013). Therefore, Inoue concludes that the emergence of women's language was undoubtedly connected to consumption culture. Without having "heard" modern women speaking in novels, magazines etc., there would have been no original speaking body for women's language (Inoue, 2002).

Even as gender roles have gone through drastic changes throughout generations, the ideology that women in Japan should speak and act in a certain way remains to a certain degree.

However, it seems female language no longer emerges to the same extent as before in colloquial conversation between women. Rather, it appears in the fictional realm and translations of reported speech (Inoue, 2003).

## 2.2 Female Language Characteristics

Contemporary women's language mainly appears in the shape of sentence-final particles and pronouns that are normally used by females (Ide, 1986). Tables 1,2 and 3 below have been created to demonstrate the most common female language characteristics that will be analyzed in this study.

**Table 1: General stylistic features**

Frequently noted	Formal, gentle, soft, elegant
Other	Indirect; submissive; emotional
Lexical features	1 <sup>st</sup> person pronouns (e.g. <i>atashi</i> )
Morphological features	Sentence-final particles (e.g. <i>wa</i> , <i>kashira</i> )
Morphological/syntactic features:	Indirect directive forms (e.g. verb- <i>te</i> )

(From Okamoto & Shibamoto Smith, 2008, p. 92)

**Table 2: First-person pronouns**

Men's speech	Women's speech
<i>Watakushi**</i>	<i>Watakushi**</i>
<i>Watashi**</i>	<i>Atakushi**</i>
<i>Boku</i>	<i>Watashi</i>
<i>Ore</i>	<i>Atashi</i>

\*\*= Indicates a higher degree of politeness.

(From Ide, 1982, pp. 358-359)

The pronouns presented in Table 2 are either categorized as gender-neutral, feminine, or masculine. *Watakushi* can be used by both genders in formal situations, and the same can be said for *watashi*. However, Miyazaki (2004) states that *watashi* first and foremost is a plain feminine first-person pronoun. It is regarded as feminine or potentially gender-neutral, but not masculine. When used by a man, it is considered more polite, though women can use it in more or less polite situations. According to Abe (2010), *atashi* derives from the omission of 'w' from *watashi*, which modifies it into colloquial yet feminine pronoun.

The remaining pronouns, *boku* and *ore*, are both considered informal and masculine (Yamaguchi, 2007). Stereotypically, boys employ *boku*, whereas *ore* is perceived as the most assertive and masculine among the first-person pronouns (Miyazaki, 2004).

**Table 3: Sentence-final elements**

<p><b>Gender neutral</b></p>	<p><i>Ne</i></p> <p><i>Yo</i></p> <p>Plain predicate without SFP</p>
<p><b>Masculine (male speech)</b></p>	<p><i>Zo</i></p> <p><i>Ze</i></p> <p><i>Sa</i></p> <p><i>Na</i></p>
<p><b>Feminine (female speech)</b></p>	<p>Deletion of copula</p> <p><i>Wa</i> (used independently or with <i>ne</i> and/or <i>yo</i>)</p> <p><i>No</i> with <i>ne</i> and/or <i>yo</i> after noun/<i>na</i>-adjective</p> <p><i>Kashira</i></p>

(Based on Kawasaki & McDougall, 2003, p. 44)

*Ne* and *yo* are particles that are generally considered gender neutral. However, by using either of them with the casual copula *da*, the speaker adapts a more masculine speech style. Traditionally, a woman is expected to refrain from using the casual form of the copula, since it may be regarded as blunt or rude. Further, it is preferred for a woman to insert an additional sentence-final particle in front of *ne* or *yo* when the usage of a copula is nonessential. This is to provide a soft and elegant nuance (Kawasaki & McDougall, 2003).

SFPs such as *no*, *wa* and *kashira* act as a representative of Japanese feminine speech. They provide a soft, less assertive, and indirect speech style. Contrarily, *zo*, *ze* and *na* are symbols of masculine speech that indicate assertiveness. (Kawasaki & McDougall, 2003) *Kashira* is an SF-particle that expresses feelings of suspicion and doubt. It can be considered an expression where one is asking oneself rather than asking the other person for an answer. *Kashira* is often used by women, and the less soft version of it, *kana*, that is usually uttered by men (Ren, 2003).

Wakabayashi (2021) states that the sentence-final particle *no* is used by women and children to indicate an explanation or emphasis. Further, McCready and Davis (2020) argue that *no* can be defined as either information-seeking, if used with a final rise, or an assertive confirmation, if used with a final fall. An example of this is as follows:

'*Aitsu to issho ni iku no?/Aitsu to issho ni iku no.*'

("Will (you) go with him?/(I) will go with him".)

(McCready and Davis, 2020, p. 675)

Another sentence-final form used by girls and young women is *damono* or *damon*, which carries the annotation of bewilderment and an "an overtone of 'poor little me'" (Wakabayashi, 2021). Additionally, the "-*te*-form", mentioned by both Shibamoto (1987) and Kinsui (2017) can be used for both questions and demands, such as:

"*Tōkyō ni irashita koto atte?*" = Have you ever been to Tokyo?

"*Ocha wo sashiagete*". = Give (them) tea.

(Shibamoto, 1987, p.33)

### 2.3 Stereotypes

According to the article by Ide and Terada (1998), the reason for the upcoming of women's language is related to Confucianism and its ideology of subordination of women to men, as well as feudalism and its class systems. In Japanese, women tend to use more polite and indirect language, and that this can be associated with a lack of confidence and authority (Ide & Terada, 1998). However, counter arguments to this come from Sachiko Ide (1982) who claims that labeling female language as inferior to the one of men is a mindset that undermines the real meaning behind it—that the roles of men and women in Japan are equally valued, and that they merely play different roles. She also notes that women's more soft and polite speech act as a compliment to the rough and direct speech of men (Ide, 1982).



Contrary to previously mentioned studies, Abe (1995) argues that the oppression of women is revealed in female language, and that it creates a fixed image of language with stereotypes supporting it. According to her, most studies fail to recognize the complexity of women's language and thus, it is labeled as soft, unassertive and stereotypically powerless. It is important to examine how restrictive or unrestrictive these linguistic norms can be for women, and to ascertain how Japanese women manipulate these stereotypes to get what they want, as well as how their role and status in society affects how they speak (Abe, 1995).

## **2.4 Translation of Gendered Language**

As Furukawa mentions in her article, translation is not only the transformation of one language to another; it also requires translating the culture source to the target culture. Therefore, as every culture has its own social norms, a translator reads texts through a filter bound by the culture to which the reader belongs. Thus, translators are inevitably influenced by the social norms of their own culture (Furukawa, 2013).

This does not only apply to the translation of fiction. According to Takatori (2015), in translation of interviews with foreigners into Japanese, it is common for language used by foreign females to be translated to a more feminine speech style than the one used in English. Some newspaper editors and TV program producers argue that they choose to employ female speech patterns to match the character of the interviewee. However, Furukawa (2013) argues that "when a translator intensifies the femininity of a female character, he or she often ends up portraying her as someone quite different than, or even contradictory to, what is intended by the author" (Furukawa, 2013). Further, Takatori points out that translators manipulating the language in interviews occasionally lead to foreigners being treated in the same manner as anime characters or other fictional characters, whose actions, thoughts and feelings can be manipulated as if in a fictional world. In other words, the translator has the power to create, modify and develop personal images at will (Takatori, 2015).

In a study made by Furukawa (2013) that examined the use of sentence-final particles by female characters in translated texts, she found that male translators more frequently utilized sentence-final particles than female translators. This suggests that male translators are more likely to be bound to the sociolinguistic norms for women. However, female translators are not completely free from this norm either (Furukawa, 2013).

As mentioned in 2.3, female language is linked to the ideology of femininity within Japanese. Nakamura (2014) points out that through this language, we can not only express femininity, but also use it as a linguistic act to either follow or break the norm. However, as female language ideologies are less frequent in English, translation of Japanese texts that employ this linguistic act can either be left untranslated or significantly altered (Nakamura, 2014).

Translating a text that distinguishes between female and male language can prove challenging, and although gender-stereotyped speech is no longer the norm in Japan, when the femininity of the language is relevant, it is important to try to convey it (Wakabayashi, 2021). Even if sentence-final particles and some honorifics cannot be directly translated into English, translators employ certain methods to provide an impression of a more feminized character (Jiyoun, 2015; Wakabayashi, 2021).

This indicates that although English generally has fewer language differences between the sexes, certain linguistic habits that can be typical for and signal the gender exists (Jiyoung, 2015). It is however important to not overuse these gendered forms in translation in order to not carry over gender biases from one language to the other (Wakabayashi, 2021).

### 3. Theory and Previous Research

In her book about translation from Japanese into English, Wakabayashi (2021) states how sentence-final particles and certain grammatical aspects add an emphasis on the gender of the speaker, which may prove difficult when translating into English, since it does not have clear gender markers. While comparing female and male language, Wakabayashi stresses the importance of not overusing gender indicators that may originally have been more subtly feminine.

Takatori's (2015) article reveals that when translating interviews and other types of media from foreign languages into Japanese, gender markings are more frequently used than what is common for face-to-face interaction by native speakers. With an emphasis on sentence-final particles, Takatori explains how the language utilized by the translator contributes to creating a certain image of the speaker. She also argues that females, both in translated interviews and in the fictional world, converse in a more feminine manner than real Japanese women do, something that spreads a female language norm that does not exist in our reality.

Inoue (2003) writes in her article about the so-called authentic women's language, and how it, surprisingly enough, is mostly uttered by foreign characters being translated into Japanese. What this means, is that female language seldomly appears in real life, as opposed to the frequent appearance of it in movies, novels, video games and similar media. In the article, she also concluded that even though they may not speak according to female language norms, Japanese women feel a connection to it, and accept it as "their" language.

## 4. Aim and Research Questions

### 4.1 Aim

This thesis aims to explore stereotyped language, more specifically the female language, through an analysis of the Japanese translation of the Disney-movie *Encanto*. This analysis consists of both quantitative and qualitative research in which the quantitative data is utilized as support to the qualitative discussion.

The key points from my qualitative study will be determining who the characters are, how they are portrayed, and how their character traits determine their choice of language.

The quantitative data is presented in the form of a table which will provide an overview of the most common points of female language, as well as who is using it and how frequently. Potential gender-focused linguistic deviations may also be analyzed.

### 4.2 Research Questions

This study will try to answer the following questions. The answers will be presented in 8. Conclusion.

1. How are gender stereotypes portrayed in the translation of *Encanto* from English into Japanese?
2. How does gendered language construct female characters in the movie *Encanto* in Japanese?

# 5. Method and Material

## 5.1 Method and Material

In this study, the language used in the Japanese translation of the Disney movie *Encanto* will be analyzed to investigate whether a more female language is applied in comparison to the original version in English. The collected data will then be compared to the language criteria which are listed in the tables under “2.2 Female Language Characteristics”.

Further, I will analyze the movie according to qualitative research from a language and gender theoretical point of view. The analysis will mainly be focusing on 1<sup>st</sup> person pronouns and sentence-final particles, but certain specific phrases which might be perceived as more or less feminine will also be included to complement the research. Ide and Terada (1998) have written an extensive article about the origin of Japanese women’s speech, which will serve as one of my main sources for reporting on the history and emergence of a gender division within the language. Furthermore, as Inoue’s (2003) article is highly relevant to the chosen subject for my thesis, I will refer to it when writing about “authentic female language” and its appearance in fiction.

## 5.2 *Encanto*

*Encanto* (2021) is an animated musical fantasy movie set in Colombia. When marauders attack their village, Alma Madrigal and her husband Pedro are forced to escape their village. To save his wife and children, Pedro tries to confront the attackers, but sadly loses his life in the process. As Alma stands alone with nothing but her children and a live candle, suddenly a miracle happens. The candle turns magical and bestows the family with a sentient house called Casita who protects and takes care of them. But not only that—on their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, each of Alma’s children and grandchildren receive magical powers, such as growing plants, talking to animals and immaculate hearing—all of them, except for Mirabel. Close to the amazing family and their magical house, a new village is created, filled with people who rely heavily on the magical abilities of the Madrigals.

Surrounded by her relatives who are able to do amazing things, and who the villagers are very reliant on, Mirabel struggles with her own self-worth as the only powerless child in the family.

On the night of the ceremony for the youngest child to receive their powers, Mirabel starts seeing cracks appearing on the floor of Casita, and the magical candle almost gets blown out. This leads to Mirabel embarking on an adventure to save not only Casita and the candle, but also her entire family from becoming powerless. In the process, she learns a lot about the familial troubles of the Madrigals and unites them in order to save their miracle.

## **5.3 Characters**

### **5.3.1 Mirabel**

Mirabel is the protagonist of *Encanto*. For unknown reasons, she is the only member of the family—except for Alma and the in-laws—who does not receive magical powers. In the movie, Mirabel is now a teenager, and despite seeming content without powers most of the time, we as viewers sometimes get to see an insecure side of her, due to feeling inadequate and unhelpful in comparison to her siblings.

In general, she is unafraid and equipped with a curiosity that will sometimes get her into trouble. Mirabel deeply cares for her family and is determined to save them along with the miracle, no matter what.

With her curly, somewhat unruly hair, round glasses and thick eyebrows, she does not follow the norm on what a typically female character looks like. Compared to her sister Isabel, Mirabel has a rounder face and a big nose. Her choice of clothing consists of a white blouse, a long teal skirt, flat shoes and blue earrings.

### **5.3.2 Isabela**

Isabela is the sibling that according to Mirabel appears perfect, with her long, luscious hair, long eyelashes and relatively small nose and face. For the majority of the movie, she wears a pink dress with frills and flowers, diamond earrings, and a big, pink flower in her hair.

At first glance, Isabela can appear a bit conceited, something that we later on learn is due to her being afraid of not being able to live up to the high expectations of being the perfect member of the family.

Her magical ability is to grow flowers and other plants at her will. Initially, she only grows conventionally beautiful flowers, such as roses. But when she confesses to Mirabel that she has flaws, she starts being able to grow plants of a greater variety. Her looks change as her beautiful hair gets disheveled and her pink dress gets stained with colors from the different plants she has grown. Towards the end of the film, her dress turns into a light indigo color, with colors remaining on it like splatters, and the rose in her hair turns into a more colorful flower.

### **5.3.3 Luisa**

Luisa is the younger sibling of Isabela and older sister of Mirabel. With supernatural strength as her gift, she does all the heavy lifting in the village, and tends to help others often without complaining. She is very hard-working, earnest and focused on her tasks.

However, there is a certain dissonance between her appearance and her personality. She appears as a tall, muscular woman who mainly speaks in shorter sentences. For example, she often replies to requests for help with “understood” or “got it”. However, once Mirabel notices that Luisa is worried about the miracle and confronts her about it, Luisa reveals a more sensitive and rather anxious personality. She deeply fears losing her powers and is burdened by her gift and her responsibilities.

Luisa's brown hair is tied up in a bun, and like her younger sister, she wears a white shirt and a long skirt. She is significantly taller and more muscular than everyone else in the family.

#### 5.4 Limitations

I will perform a small study concentrating on gender-specific language in the shape of sentence-final particles and 1<sup>st</sup> person pronouns uttered by the characters I have chosen to analyze. Due to the time limit, I have deemed the previously mentioned subjects of analysis sufficient and have chosen not to focus on other factors such as honorifics, voice pitch, lexical form and word order, which are all areas within women's speech where research has been conducted, according to Abe (1995) and Shibamoto (1987).

In the version of "*Encanto*" with subtitles, it is not possible to determine whether '*watashi*', '*atashi*' or '*watakushi*' has been employed since they are all written using the same kanji. This is a factor I will take into consideration in my discussion.

Further, despite *Encanto* being a musical movie, I have decided to omit the particles that may appear in song lyrics due to the risk of them solely being used for a rhyming effect, despite not harmonizing with the personality of the character. In other words, I will only analyze SF-particles and honorifics that appear in regular conversation.

## 6. Analysis

### 6.1 Data review

The collected data that will be used in the analysis originate from both the dubbed and subtitled version of *Encanto* in Japanese. The data was collected through transcription and reading the subtitled and dubbed versions. Further, the name of the different characters, the subject of the collected data as well as number of times the SF-particles and pronouns were used are written in the tables 5, 6, 7 and 8 as can be seen below. The number of lines uttered by each character as well as the usage percentage of SF-particles and honorifics has also been calculated in table 9, 10 and 11.

**Table 4: Number of lines**

<b>Number of Lines</b>	<b>Subtitled Version</b>	<b>Dubbed Version</b>
<b>Mirabel</b>	193	191
<b>Isabela</b>	24	24
<b>Luisa</b>	35	33

**Table 5: Sentence-final Particles (Subtitled Version)**

<b>SF- Particles</b>	<i>-wa</i>	<i>-no</i>	<i>-ne</i>	<i>-yo</i>	<i>-kashira</i>
<b>Mirabel</b>	0	23	16	14	0
<b>Isabela</b>	5	3	1	5	1
<b>Luisa</b>	0	3	0	2	0



**Table 6: Sentence-final Particles (Dubbed Version)**

<b>S.F- Particles</b>	<i>-wa</i>	<i>-no</i>	<i>-ne</i>	<i>-yo</i>	<i>-kashira</i>
<b>Mirabel</b>	1	44	26	20	0
<b>Isabela</b>	6	5	0	5	1
<b>Luisa</b>	1	2	0	5	0

**Table 7: First-Person Pronouns (Subtitled Version)**

<b>First-person Pronouns</b>	<i>Watashi</i>
<b>Mirabel</b>	29
<b>Isabela</b>	2
<b>Luisa</b>	3

**Table 8: First-Person Pronouns (Dubbed Version)**

<b>First-Person Pronouns</b>	<i>Watashi</i>	<i>Atashi</i>
<b>Mirabel</b>	22	0
<b>Isabela</b>	3	4
<b>Luisa</b>	5	1

**Table 9: SF-particle Usage Percentage (Subtitled Version)**

<b>SF-P</b>	<i>Wa</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Ne</i>	<i>Yo</i>	<i>Kashira</i>
<b>Mirabel</b>	0%	12%	8%	7%	0%
<b>Isabela</b>	21%	13%	4%	21%	4%
<b>Luisa</b>	0%	8%	0%	6%	0%

**Table 10: SF-particle Usage Percentage (Dubbed Version)**

<b>SF-P</b>	<i>Wa</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Ne</i>	<i>Yo</i>	<i>Kashira</i>
<b>Mirabel</b>	0,5%	23%	14%	10%	0%
<b>Isabela</b>	21%	13%	13%	21%	4%
<b>Luisa</b>	3%	6%	0%	15%	0%

**Table 11: Honorific Usage Percentage (Dubbed Version)**

<b>Honorifics</b>	<i>Watashi</i>	<i>Atashi</i>
<b>Mirabel</b>	12%	0%
<b>Isabela</b>	13%	17%
<b>Luisa</b>	15%	3%

## 6.2 Analysis of Quantitative Data

The quantitative part aims to answer the first question of my research questions, “How are gender stereotypes portrayed in the translation of the movie *Encanto* from English to Japanese?”. The second question, “How is gendered language utilized to support certain stereotypes?”, will be explored in my analysis.

The majority of pronouns and particles in the constructed tables were intentionally chosen due to them being categorized as stereotypically female according to role language and gendered language norms.

As for the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronouns, it was difficult to determine whether some characters were referring to themselves with *watakushi* or *watashi* since the subtitles included the kanji ‘私’, which can be read both ways. This was easier to examine in the dubbed version. I had originally planned on including *watakushi* and *atakushi* in my analysis, but as they were not employed by neither of the characters, I decided to omit them.

### 6.2.1 Mirabel

As can be seen above, I have not only chosen to look at the English version in comparison to the Japanese- I also decided to compare the Japanese subbed version with the dubbed one. There are certain differences between them, as can be seen in Tables 4 to 7. For example, the usage of the separate sentence-final particles differs, but one can easily conclude that the overall usage of sentence-final elements has been increased in the dubbed version. For instance, the main character Mirabel’s usage of *da* is more frequent in the dubbed version. As mentioned in Table 3, it is more common for women to omit the copula *da* or *desu* and instead use *no* with *ne* and/or *yo* after a noun or a *na*-adjective.

The particle *wa* is only used once by Mirabel, and only in connection to when she is speaking to her sister Isabela together with Luisa, which interestingly enough affects Luisa in the sense that this is the only time Luisa utters the sentence-final particle *wa* as well. Perhaps this could be interpreted as Isabela’s femininity influencing her sisters.

As Mirabel takes on the role of an investigator in *Encanto*, it feels natural for her to utilize the sentence-final particle *no* often, since it is often used for explaining or inquiring. Furthermore, it adds a softer and more feminine nuance that does not manifest that clearly in the original version. She often uses the particle *no* when asking her family about uncle Bruno, as if trying to be more careful and not come on too strong as he is someone that the Madrigals avoid talking about. An example of this has been transcribed below.

**Line 1:** (00:45:36)

- a) **Mirabel (sub):** ‘*Kare ga dare ka no bijon o mitara dō iu imi kana? Ii imi ka, warui imi ka, shiritai no.*’
- b) (“If he had a vision about someone, what would it mean? I want to know whether that’s a good thing or a bad thing.”) (Own translation)

- c) **Mirabel (dub):** ‘*Moshi kare ga bijon de dare ka no sugata o mitara dō iu imi kana? Ii imi ka, warui imi ka, shiritai no.*’
- d) (“If he were to see someone in a vision, what could that mean? I just want to know a little bit. If it’s good or not...”) (Own translation)

This gives a slightly different vision of Mirabel compared to the spoken English version:

- e) “*If he had a vision about someone, what would it mean? I just wanna know.*”

However, when expressing feelings such as anger or frustration, she is often seen dropping her frequently used sentence-final particles- *no* and *ne*- for the plain form of the copula *da*, either standing by itself or in combination with *yo* for added emphasis. As an example, I have transcribed a scene where Mirabel is confronted by Alma, who accuses her of being the reason why everyone’s powers are faltering.

**Line 2:** (01:13:18)

- a) **Mirabel (sub):** ‘*Obaachan ga... Ie o kowashiteru! Dakara kiseki mo kieru!*’
- b) (“Grandma is the one destroying the house! That’s why the miracle is fading, too!”) (Own translation)
- c) **Mirabel (dub):** ‘*Chigau no wa obaachan dayo! Obaachan ga kono ie wo kowashiteru. Kiseki ga kieru no wa obaachan no sei dayo!*’
- d) (“Grandma is the one who is wrong! Grandma is the one destroying the house! The miracle fading is grandma’s fault!”) (Own translation)

I could not find any example of Mirabel uttering *da* when not trying to defend herself when confronted, and thus, one can conclude that she takes on a less feminine persona in such situations. Acting more assertive provides a more masculine appearance for her that we do not get to see otherwise.

Mirabel utters *watashi* 35 times in the subtitled and 22 times in the dubbed version. As mentioned before, it is important to keep in mind here is that Mirabel is the main character, and thus, she has the biggest amount of dialogue out of all the characters in the movie. *Watashi* is the only first-person pronoun that she uses in the entire movie. As *watashi* is a more gender-neutral pronoun in comparison to *atashi*, it is compatible with her appearance and behavior, that is generally not very masculine nor feminine.

Certain syntactic variations employed by Mirabel that stood out were *kana* and *damon*. Just like Luisa, Mirabel rarely utters the sentence-final particle *kashira*. Instead, she utilizes *kana*, a more gender-neutral version of the word that carries the same meaning.

As mentioned by Wakabayashi, *damono* or *damon* provides a somewhat child-like and dissatisfied tone, and it is uttered by Mirabel twice, both times when arguing with Alma about her investigation of the potential loss of powers of the Madrigal family. It is normally used by girls and women.

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To summarize, the result of the analysis on Mirabel's part lands somewhere in the middle. Most of the time, her speech is relatively neutral, with the occasional usage of either female or male language. Women's speech usually appears when she is trying to come on less strong or when she is trying to impose her will, which draws an interesting parallel the argument made by Abe (1995) in 2.3, where she claims that women can benefit from stereotypes associated with female language by manipulating them to get what they want. By assuming a less demanding personality, she might be more successful in persuading the others to give her the information that she wants. In contrast, a less feminine mannerism emerges whenever there is conflict or other situations where she feels the need to defend herself.

### 6.2.2. Isabela

There is a certain contrast between the three sisters, where Isabela and Luisa are the most dissimilar in terms of demeanor and speech. For example, Isabela ends her sentences with the particle *wa* a few times, something that only happens once for both Luisa and Mirabel, and only in the dubbed version. Further, the two sisters uttering *wa* only in the presence of their older, more feminine sister gives the impression that both Luisa and Mirabel might strive to act more like her, as she is the epiphany of perfection in the eyes of many.

Additionally, Isabela never utters the copula *da* in the entire movie. She does say *yo* occasionally, but usually in combination with *wa* or *no*, which softens the expression further. An example of this can be seen below in 3 (b).

**Line 3:** (00:48:01)

- a) **Isabela (dub):** '*Jinsei no yume ga kanau to kare ni iwareta wayo.*'
- b) ("He told me that my life's dreams will come true".) (Own translation)

As expected, she is also one of the characters that says *kashira* at the end of a sentence, albeit only once in both the subbed and the dubbed version of the movie. As described earlier, *kana* is the more gender-neutral version of *kashira*. In the original version of *Encanto*, all three characters use either *kana* or *kashira* as a translation of "I wonder", "maybe" or "perhaps". Therefore, as *kashira* is the more female version of the particle, Isabela using it while her sisters utter *kana* is a clear sign of her femininity having been amplified in the movie.

In the dubbed version, Isabela chooses to refer to herself with a combination of *watashi* and *atashi*. In a public setting where other people are observing her, she tends to refer to herself as *atashi*, and later on in the movie, when we find out that Isabela's perfection is a facade, she starts using *watashi*, a more neutral personal pronoun, instead.

As noted by Kinsui (2017) and Shibamoto (1987), the *te*-form at the end of a sentence can be used by women for inquiries and commands. The usage of this construction is not part of

the tables constructed for my study but nonetheless, as it is recurring occurrence for Isabela, I wish to include it in my analysis as it acts as a representative of women's speech. As mentioned above, *te*-form has two main usages, and below, I will cite two examples of Isabela employing this grammatical form.

Both examples take place in a setting where Mirabel tries to apologize to Isabela for ruining her engagement to a man from the village. The situation quickly escalates into a quarrel between the two of them. The first example presented below is uttered by Isabel as she tries to drive Mirabel away.

**Line 4:** (01:07:57)

- a) **Isabela (sub):** '*Ima sugu, detette!*'
- b) ("Get out, right now!") (Own translation)
- c) **Isabela (dub):** '*Sugu, detette!*'
- d) ("Get out, now!") (Own translation)

In both versions of the translated movie, *te*-form is employed as a demand for Mirabel to leave.

Although there is a difference between the language used in the beginning and the end of the movie, Isabela is the only one among the three characters who with her language use exhibits evidence of traditional women's language.

### 6.2.3 Luisa

The third sister that I have chosen to analyze is Luisa. Luisa is depicted as a conventionally masculine woman, not only due to her big, strong appearance, but also because of her speech style. As a character, Luisa tries to maintain a rather unemotional personality. Later on in the movie, we find out that Luisa is a very sensitive person, but because of the pressure that comes with being part of the Madrigal family, she suppresses her feelings and tend to focus solely on her tasks. Many of the phrases that she utters reflect this, as they are short and concise. Some examples are '*ryōkai!*' ("Understood!"), '*makaserō!*' ("leave it to me!") and '*doite!*' ("Get out of the way!").

Luisa is not a frequent user of the typically female speech constructions, such as *wa*, *no* and *kashira*. In fact, although Luisa have employed *no*, *ne* and *yo* at times, she is not a frequent user of sentence-final particles at all. Besides the previously mentioned particles, she has also uttered the SF-particle *na* and the copula *da* a considerable number of times. According to Table 3, *na* is typically used by men, and for this reason, it was not included in my original analysis. Furthermore, it is considered feminine to omit the copula *da* in its casual form, but Luisa does not do that. Even though I have not counted the number of times *na* and *da* has been uttered by her, I still considered this finding worthy of mention.

As I mentioned in my analysis of Isabela, the only time that Luisa and Mirabel employ *wa* is when they are conversing with Isabela. Even though Isabela has accepted that she no longer

needs to appear perfect, she still maintains a more feminine speech style than both of her sisters, particularly Luisa.

Throughout the movie, Luisa only refers to herself as *watashi* a few times, and *atashi* once when being in a more precarious state due to her worries of losing her magical powers. However, for the majority of the time, she calls herself Luisa as can be seen below in the example from the dubbed version of *Encanto*:

**Line 4:** (00:34:13)

- a) **Luisa (dub):** '*Atashi wa heiki. Mahō wa heiki. Luisa wa heiki. Shinpai goto nante nai*'.
- b) ("I am fine. The magic is fine. Luisa is fine. There's nothing to worry about"). (Own translation)

Another noteworthy utterance made by Luisa that is not an original part of my study is *monka*, the plain colloquial form of *monoka*, that is frequently used by men. The polite, non-colloquial form *mono desu ka* is often used by women. Due to it including *ka* and being situated at the end of a sentence, it might be interpreted as a regular question, but in reality, it conveys a rhetorical question with negative intention. An appropriate translation of it from Japanese to English is "definitely not" or "absolutely not". (Makino, S. & Tsutsui, M., 2008) After being confronted by Mirabel as to whether Luisa is worried about losing her powers, this is how she responds:

**Line 5:** (00:37:26)

- a) **Luisa (sub):** '*Zettai taoseru monka!*'
- b) ("As if I could be defeated!") (Own translation)

More often than not, Luisa tends to employ language that is uncharacteristic of traditional women's language, both when it comes to sentence-final particles, pronouns, and other syntactic variations.

## 7. Discussion

In this study, the occurrence of women's speech in the translation of the movie *Encanto* has been examined and analyzed in order to determine how gender stereotypes construct female characters. Female language was originally created as norm and an ideal for how women should behave and speak, and although Inoue (2002) and Takatori (2015) argues that female language no longer acts as a general linguistic standard, it still exists, though mainly in fictional work. Therefore, I decided to conduct a study where the contrasts between the original version of the movie in English and its Japanese translation would be analyzed.

Before I performed my analysis, I hypothesized how the characters would be translated from English into Japanese based on their physical appearance, general demeanor and articulations. For example, as Isabela conveys an aura of elegance and composure, as well as having the most traditionally feminine appearance out of the three, I expected her to be the one to speak in traditionally female speech by Japanese standard. Her contrarian, Luisa, was therefore anticipated to not use female language at all, or perhaps to employ a more masculine speech style. For this reason, the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun *boku* were included in my original template. However, on the account of *watashi*, *atashi* and *atakushi* being the only pronouns that appeared, *boku* was omitted. Lastly, I expected Mirabel's gendered speech to be non-existent or limited, since she behaves and appears more neutral in terms of gender stereotypes.

With her curious, direct and determined personality, Mirabel does not conform to the Japanese norms of how a woman "should" behave. Despite that, she is depicted as a more feminine character in the Japanese translation, as she uses a great amount of gender-biased sentence-final particles, as well as occasionally uttering the more masculine copula *da*. The general image of Mirabel as a female character is quite different in the Japanese version. In my opinion, this is mostly due to the number of times she utters *no* at the end of a sentence when asking questions. As mentioned before, Mirabel takes it upon herself to investigate what is happening to the miracle, and due to the time urgency, a lot of questions may come off as blunt or very direct in the English version, whereas they sound more carefully articulated in the Japanese translation. Therefore, she is depicted as someone more indirect and docile in the Japanese version.

As I see it, Isabela is a very misunderstood character who acts, dresses and speaks in a feminine manner to create a personality that aligns with the person she wishes to become. Why does she feel the need to adhere to stereotypes associated with women's speech? It is my understanding that this is mainly due to the influence of the grandmother of the Madrigal family, Alma. Although not a character I have chosen to analyze, I consider it important to mention her in order to gain an understanding of the character of Isabela. Alma speaks with elegance and refinement, two of the characteristics typical for female language as indicated by Okamoto and Shibamoto (2008). It may not be on purpose, but Alma does put a lot of pressure on her children and grandchildren in order for them to live up to the family name. Thus, it would seem that the perfectionism of Isabela and Luisa is rooted in a desire to please and avoid disappointing others, especially their grandmother. For this reason, I believe Isabela chooses to speak in a way that is similar to the one of Alma, which includes certain SF-particles, pronouns and other feminine expressions.

Utilizing polite, female language can also be perceived as a defense mechanism, since it creates a distance between Isabela in the people surrounding her, which enables her to



conceal her imperfections. After her confrontation with Mirabel about this matter, she lets go of her self-demandingness and starts expressing herself more neutrally. In the English version, her way of speaking does not change much towards the end, whereas in the Japanese one, her usages of feminine sentence-final particles are lessened. Based on this, I am of the opinion that the Japanese version presents an interesting contrast that is not seen in the original due to the lack of a female-specific language.

Although both Luisa and Isabela are striving for perfection, it manifests in different ways. Luisa is the quintessential tough person—strong, reliable and self-contained. Her ability to perform tasks is more important to her than her outward appearance, and since she wishes to reinforce her image of someone dependable, Luisa conceals her feelings and focuses solely on the tasks presented to her. According to Okamoto and Shibamoto (2008), some stylistic features involve being indirect, unassertive and emotional—the exact opposite of what Luisa is at the beginning. By taking on a more masculine/neutral speech style and demeanor, she wishes to be perceived as someone who the rest of the village can rely on. Whereas Luisa is straightforward in English, her masculine portrayal is intensified due to her uttering *da* and *na* at the end of her sentences, and other linguistic variations that are not representative for women's speech. Once Luisa expresses her feelings, her speech style changes from masculine/neutral to slightly feminine/neutral.

It is clear to see that *Encanto* included some quite stereotypical characters who conform to a conventional image of what kind of personality typically befalls what gender. Isabela, the pinnacle of femininity, and Luisa, the big, masculine woman, can at first glance seem like characters without depth. Luckily, as we progress in the story, one may realize that this was the point made by the creators of the movie. At first, we judge these characters based on their appearance, demeanor and words, but as they both realize that their self-worth is more than what they look like or what they do, we recognize that these stereotypes were inaccurate. Luisa, who acts the most reserved, is perhaps the most sensitive out of all of them, and Isabela, who seems self-controlled, conceals an unrestrained personality.

The Japanese translation represents this revelation by providing a speech style more accurate to what the characters are actually like toward the end of the movie, unlike in the beginning, where the femininity, or lack thereof, is intensified. Even before this, the translators of both the subtitled and dubbed version chose to include moments where the character's choice of language changed depending on who they spoke to and their state of mind. For example, Isabela starts dropping sentence-final particles as she realizes she does not have to act feminine to be perfect, and Luisa starts including more female speech patterns such as *atashi* and *wa* once she gathers the courage to sincerely express her feelings. The one whose language does not change that much during the course of the movie is Mirabel, which is to be expected due to her having the most neutral diction.

*Encanto* proves that gender stereotypes and expectations can be limiting, as one can be strong, adventurous and brave, regardless of gender and other traditionally female qualities.

Lastly, I would like to include further explanation as to why I considered it important to incorporate the Japanese used in both the dubbed version of and the one with subtitles. Naturally, dubs replace the original audio, and to make it as natural as possible, a translator might try to find words that take approximately the same amount of time to say as the ones from the original, as well as words that contain the same number of syllables. On the other hand, the purpose of subtitles is to read a more direct translation of the original manuscript. Thus, subtitles might be closer to the original. Because of the potential differences between the two versions, I deemed it appropriate to analyze both.

## 8. Conclusion

Women's language has become a stereotypical ideal, rarely uttered by women outside of the fictional realm. As noted by Takatori (2015), it can also be seen in translation from other languages into Japanese, and then normally with a more gender-specified speech-style than what was initially expressed.

This study has investigated Japanese gender stereotypes and its portrayal in the translation of *Encanto* from English into Japanese. It also attempted to explore how gendered language construct female characters in the movie. As female language within Japanese is a wide-ranged subject, limitations had to be established. Characteristics chosen for analysis are sentence-final particles, 1<sup>st</sup> person pronouns and certain supplementary syntactic variations that were deemed noteworthy. This has been done by collecting and transcribing data from the subtitled and dubbed versions of *Encanto* in Japanese. The collected data was then presented in tables, and its characteristics as well as number of times used by certain characters was analyzed.

The speech of the main character, Mirabel, was dependent on what situation she was in. In connection to disputes, she normally employed a more firm and assertive speech, but when trying to gain information, the amount of feminine speech was significantly increased.

Isabel, who plays the role of the stereotypically feminine sister, employed women's speech more than the other two. However, because of the character development she goes through, there is a difference of language between the beginning and the end of the movie, where her approach is slightly more neutral.

Tall and muscular, Luisa is depicted as a traditionally masculine character, in both appearance, behavior and with her speech-style. Being a person of action, she usually spoke in short phrases and omitted most sentence-final particles and pronouns, with the exception of some more typically male attributes. Whereas she does not appear as the typically feminine character, the masculine expressions used in the Japanese translation bolster the qualities conventionally associated with men. Similar to Isabela, Luisa's speech goes through changes toward the end of the movie where she starts utilizing more neutral and slightly feminine language.

The results show that although there were characters who originally followed gender stereotypes, their female and male language usage was amplified in the Japanese translation. Toward the end of the movie, we as viewers gain an enhanced insight into what the characters are really like behind their facades, and it is clear to see that these stereotypes that they adhere to, both in Japanese and English, are not who they truly are. Ultimately, they all adapt a speech style slightly different to what they originally had, and perhaps that was truer to their real personalities.

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