MEDIATED MASCULINITIES AND SCREENED SPEECH IN JAPAN

Indexicality, Ideology, and the Translation of Male Language

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ABSTRACT • This article examines the representation of male speech in two episodes of the Japanese television segment *Shirabete Mitara*, aired on Fuji TV online platforms between August and November 2025. Focusing on interviews with foreign men in Japan, it analyses the voice-over and subtitling strategies through which their utterances are mediated, with particular attention to the role of audiovisual translation in the construction of masculine speech styles**.** The study situates these practices within the broader framework of language ideologies surrounding male speech, considering how normative assumptions about masculinity and language use inform translational choices in Japanese media. The study adopts a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative distributional analysis and qualitative discourse analysis to examine correlations between speakers' age, nationality, and the distribution of masculine-coded linguistic resources (ML). The analysis documents the distribution of marked linguistic resources and their relationship with *hon'yakuban otokokotoba* (translated male speech style), examining their occurrence in relation to interactional positioning, epistemic stance, and mediated interpersonal alignment.

KEYWORDS • Language Ideology; Voice-Over; Interlingual Subtitling; Male Language; Audiovisual Translation.

1. Introduction

This study examines the representation of Male Language in two episodes of the Japanese television segment *Shirabete Mitara*, broadcast by Fuji TV between August and November 2025, and builds on a previous study (2025b) on the same program with a specific focus on female language (JWL) in Japan. It analyzes the voice-over and subtitling practices applied to foreign men interviewed in Japan, with the aim of investigating how different types of masculinity are constructed through translated speech. The analysis draws on ethnographic and anthropolinguistic scholarship (Agha 2007; Duranti 2021; Irvine & Gal 2000, 2019; Miyazaki 2023; Spitzmüller 2022), sociolinguistic research (Abe 2010; Furukawa 2009, 2024; Hiramoto 2009; Hirano 2023; Kobayashi 2024; Länsisalmi 2019; Itō, Muta & Maruyama 2025; Iwata, Shigemitsu & Murata 2022; Mashiko 2017; Nakamura 2020a, 2022, 2023, 2024; Ohara 2019; Okamoto 2016, 2025; Okamoto & Shibamoto-Smith 2004, 2016; Sanada 2020; Squires 2014; SturtzSreetharan 2006, 2009, 2017; Yamashita 2022; Yukawa & Saitō 2004), constructivist approaches to gender in audiovisual translation (De Marco 2006, 2009, 2016; Vitucci 2023, 2024a, 2024b), gender studies (Katō 2017; Nohara 2018; Saitō 2018;), research on role language (Johnstone 2017; Kinsui 2003, 2007, 2017; Yasui 2024), and male studies in Japan (Itō 2025; Kobayashi 2025; Shūji 2025; Steger

& Koch 2018). Against views of audiovisual translation as a merely technical operation, this study argues that translation practices are shaped by underlying linguistic ideologies that construct and circulate specific social imaginaries. Often internalized by viewers as naturalized representations, these imaginaries contribute to the reproduction of normative gender roles. In particular, in the context of voice-over and subtitling, the transformation of gendered speech is shown to be governed by two interrelated processes. The first is multisemiotic and involves the visual exploitation of foreign bodies as 'bodies of otherness,' foregrounding the disjunction between visual presence and vocal representation (Inoue 2003; Vitucci 2025a, 2025b). The second is interlinguistic and concerns the use of gendered speech registers that encode specific inter-indexical meanings through a translational process known as *transduction* – that is, the selective assignment of gendered speech styles to foreign speakers based on culturally and ideologically prefigured templates. Through this process, particular speech styles are systematically associated with specific groups of speakers on the basis of attributes such as gender, class, nationality, or ethnic affiliation, thereby fostering a process of *iconization* of the translated language commonly referred to as linguistic essentialism (Hiramoto 2009; Inoue 2003; Nakamura 2013, 2020b, 2023; Okamoto 2025). The outcome of this process is the reinforcement of metapragmatic stereotypes that extend beyond linguistic discrimination, ultimately reshaping social and identity-related perceptions of the groups involved.

Building on the aforementioned premises concerning language ideology, this study further explores two lines of inquiry emerging in Nakamura's recent work (2025a, 2025b). The first concerns a process of translational divergence in the audiovisual rendering of Western teenage masculinity – predominantly from the United States – into Japanese. According to Nakamura, the youth register she terms *yā-style*, strongly associated with excessive informality, is systematically mobilized in opposition to hegemonic and heterosexual masculinity traditionally embodied by the Japanese white-collar worker (*sararīman*) (Nakamura 2020b, 2022). In this way, translation serves to legitimize politeness and formality as central traits of normative Japanese masculinity, which continues to identify the *sararīman* as an ideal reference model (Dasgupta 2013), despite substantial sociolinguistic evidence showing that contemporary male speech rarely conforms to rigid gender norms (Miyazaki 2023; SturtzSreetharan 2006, 2009, 2017). More specifically, masculine markers such as the interjection *yā*, sentence-final particles[1] like *-sa*, *-kai*, and *-dai*, and pronouns such as *ore* and *kimi* function to index informal yet socially 'unreliable' masculine identities. Crucially, Nakamura characterizes this translational strategy as distinctive (*kubetsu suru*), insofar as it foregrounds and intensifies an ideological opposition between a negatively coded 'Other' and a reassuring linguistic 'We' aligned with standard Japanese (Heinrich 2012).

By contrast, the second line of inquiry highlights a more recent recontextualization of this idiolect, also termed *hon'yakuban otokokotoba*, within Japanese audiovisual media discourse. Here, it has increasingly been adopted by older male speakers from North America and Europe, thereby expanding its indexical field from a frivolous form of 'informality' toward meanings of 'cordiality'. This development can be accounted for through Ochs's theory of direct and indirect indexicality (1992), according to which linguistic features may acquire social meanings that indirectly point to broader social categories. At the same time, as Okamoto and Shibamoto-Smith (2016) emphasize, such meanings remain fluid and are continuously renegotiated in interaction. Accordingly, masculine-coded tokens are often deployed not only to project 'hard' masculinity, but also to express solidarity or informality across different homosocial contexts. From the perspective of *polyindexicality*, Nakamura thus demonstrates how the same translational repertoire may be refunctionalized over time, generating new and shifting indexical meanings (Okamoto & Shibamoto-Smith 2016: 290).

[1] Hereafter, SFP.

2. Dataset and Methodology

The dataset for this study consists of two episodes of the television segment *Shirabete Mitara* (しらべてみたら), a recurring feature within the news program *Live News It!* (*Live News イット!*), broadcast by Fuji TV between August and November 2025, with a total running time of approximately 50 minutes. Characterized by an investigative format and an accessible style, the segment covers a broad range of topics, including consumer practices, cultural trends, inbound tourism, and public safety. Its content is made widely comprehensible through the use of on-site interviews and statistical information. In its translated format, interviews with foreign participants are typically mediated through a combination of voice-over narration and interlingual subtitles, except in cases where speakers display fluency in Japanese. The episodes are publicly available via the broadcaster's official website (fujitv.co.jp), as well as through TVer (a free streaming service), FOD (Fuji TV's official platform), and the network's official YouTube channel. For the purposes of the present analysis of Japanese Male Language, only voice-over and subtitled segments involving foreign male speakers were included. Female speakers, Japanese-speaking male participants, and male individuals with fewer than three utterances were excluded from the dataset.

The topics addressed in the two episodes, presented in chronological order, are *Summer heat in Japan and foreign tourists*, broadcast in August 2025, and *Tourist destinations in Japan selected by foreign visitors*, broadcast in November 2025. In particular, this study will focus on the interviews conducted with 17 foreign male speakers, as reported in the table below:

Speaker's reference	Nationality	Approximate Age (where not indicated)	Japanese register in translation	Episode
S1	U.S.A.	20-30	NNPF	August 2025
S2	Australia	30-40	NNPF	August 2025
S3	U.S.A.	20-30	NNPF	August 2025
S4	Greece	30-40	NNPF	August 2025
S5	Sweden	20-30	NNPF	August 2025
S6	Swiss	30-40	NNPF	August 2025
S7	Russia	20-30	NNPF	November 2025
S8	Canada	20-30	NNPF	November 2025
S9	Germany	20-30	NNPF	November 2025
S10	Ireland	40-50	NNPF	November 2025
S11	U.S.A.	20-30	NNPF	November 2025
S12	The Netherlands	30-40	NNPF	November 2025
S13	Costa Rica	20-30	NNPF	November 2025
S14	Germany	30-40	NNPF	November 2025
S15	Hong Kong	20-30	NNPF	November 2025
S16	U.S.A.	40-50	NNPF	November 2025
S17	Spain	40-50	NNPF	November 2025

Table 1. Profile of the examined sample

The study pursues three main objectives: (1) to explore possible correlations between speakers' age and nationality and their use of ML in interlingual subtitling and voice-over[2]; (2) to identify the most salient marked linguistic tokens used by the speakers and explore their possible correlations with the so-called *hon'yakuban otokokotoba*; and (3) to assess potential developments in ML and the corresponding expansion of the indexical fields associated with individual tokens. To calculate the proportion of ML employed in the two analyzed videos – that is, the extent to which each speaker activated features from the ML repertoire – this study considered the following linguistic tokens: *yā* (primarily used in greetings), *-sa (interjection)*, and SFPs, along with their associated variants, such as, *-kai*, *-dai*, *-yo*, *-(n)da*, *-(n)(da)yo(ne)*, and *-ne*[3]. Once the ML percentages have been established for each speaker, a quantitative and qualitative analysis of their speech will follow, cross-referencing the variables of nationality and age[4].

3. Quantitative Dataset Analysis

The quantitative analysis of interlingual subtitles and voice-over across the 17 speakers (S1–S17) indicates that a total of 43 ML tokens were identified, yielding an average of 2.53 tokens per speaker (out of 8 possible tokens), corresponding to approximately 31.6% of the examined repertoire. The mean number of utterances per speaker was 5.35, suggesting a moderate degree of activation of male-marked linguistic features within relatively short interactional excerpts. By contrast, given the documentary-style nature of the program, it is important to note that the interview segments are extremely brief and rapidly alternating, frequently involving female speakers as well (excluded from the present calculation). Based on the sample reported in Table 1, the following heat map visualizes the mean activation of ML tokens across speakers grouped by age cohort and broad geographical macro-regions (North America & Australia, Europe, and Other). By aggregating individual nationalities into macro-areas, the figure offers an interpretable overview of how male-marked linguistic features are distributed across the dataset. In the 20-30 age group, the highest mean value is observed among European speakers (M = 2.50), indicating a relatively stronger activation of the examined repertoire in this cohort. Speakers in the "Other" category (Hong Kong, Costa Rica and Russia) show a slightly lower average (M = 2.00), while North America & Australia displays the lowest mean (M = 1.50). Conversely, the 30-40 cohort exhibits a higher mean value of 2.80 among European speakers, suggesting an even stronger activation of the repertoire in this age group. This continuity points to a stable mid-range activation of ML features within the European subset of the sample. Notably, the most salient value in the

[2] In the episodes examined, the voiced-over texts produced by the voice actors reproduced exactly the content of the subtitled texts, resulting in a stylistic overlap between the two translational modalities.

[3] This repertoire includes tokens that can be subsumed under *hon'yakuban otokokotoba* as well as SFPs commonly associated with informal male speech (Nakamura 2025a; Vitucci 2023, 2024b, 2025a). For the suffix *-yo*, it will be taken into account in the following sequences: adjective + *-yo*, verb + *-yo*. For the suffix *-ne*, it will be considered in the following sequences: SFP + *-ne*, adjective+ *-ne*, verb + *-ne*, copula + *-ne*. In particular, the aforementioned suffixes, even when used by male speakers, as already illustrated in the sociolinguistic literature, tend to mark an informal register of fundamental pragmatic and ideological importance for the purposes of the present study. Due to constraints inherent to the nature of the contribution, paralinguistic features of language and personal pronouns will not be taken into consideration.

[4] The diaphasic dimension is not considered here, since nearly all speakers, except for one, consistently use the NNPF.

heat map emerges in the 40-50 cohort, where European speakers reach the highest mean activation overall (M = 4.20), in line with the broader pattern observed across the other cohorts, in which European speakers also display the highest percentages of ML.

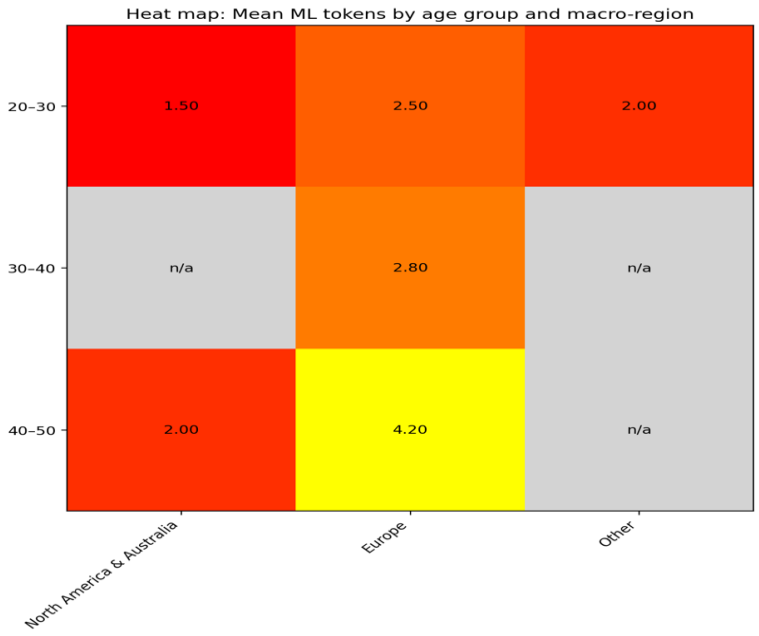

Chart 1. ML Percentage per Speaker in Voice-over and Subtitles

This finding is particularly significant, as it partly corroborates Nakamura's (2025a) observations on the speech styles of European (and North-American) senior speakers in comparable television programs. Specifically, she argues that, in recent years, the markers of so-called *hon'yakuban otokokotoba* when combined with the plain register have increasingly come to index not so much mere 'rudeness', but rather an informal and cordial interpersonal distance, one that can be described in terms of a certain 'affability'. In the present study, however, it is equally noteworthy that the translations of the adult speakers examined almost consistently lack the distinctive linguistic markers of *yā-style* (Nakamura 2020b, 2022).

Building on the quantitative tendencies highlighted in the heat map, the analysis now turns to the specific linguistic tokens through which ML is instantiated across the 17 speakers (Table 2). Across the sample, the most widely attested markers are SFPs indexing informal stance, particularly *-yo* and *-ne*. These appear in the majority of speakers' translated utterances, including S1 (*-sa, -yo*), S3 (*-yo, -ne*), S4 (*-yo, -ne*), S5 (*-yo, -da, -(n)(da)yo(ne)*), S6 (*-yo, -da, -ne*), and S16 (*-ne, -yo*). The distribution suggests that these particles function as relatively 'light' male-coded resources, contributing to an interactionally engaged and informal persona. A second cluster of tokens involves assertive explanatory forms such as -(*n*)*da* and its extended variants -(*n*)(*da*)*yo*(*ne*). These are prominent in speakers such as S9 (*-nda, -yo, -*(*n*)(*da*)*yo*(*ne*)), S10 (*-ne, -nda, -yo, -*(*n*)(*da*)*yo*(*ne*)), S12 (*-nda, -yo, -ne*), S13 (*-nda*), S14 (*-nda, -ne, -*(*n*)(*da*)*yo*(*ne*)), S15 (*-yo, -ne, -nda*), and S17 (-(*n*)(*da*)*yo*(*ne*), *-ne, -yo, -nda*).

Speaker's reference	Nationality	Approximate Age	ML tokens
S1	U.S.A.	20-30	-sa, -yo
S2	Australia	30-40	-dai, -sa, -kai, -yo, -da, -ne
S3	U.S.A.	20-30	-yo, -ne
S4	Greece	30-40	-yo, -ne
S5	Sweden	20-30	-yo, -da, -(n)(da)yo(ne)
S6	Swiss	30-40	-yo, -da, -ne
S7	Russia	20-30	-(n)(da)yo(ne)
S8	Canada	20-30	-(n)(da)yo(ne)
S9	Germany	20-30	-nda, -yo, -(n)(da)yo(ne)
S10	Ireland	40-50	-ne, -nda, -yo, -(n)(da)yo(ne)
S11	U.S.A.	20-30	-yo, -(n)(da)yo(ne)
S12	The Netherlands	30-40	-nda, -yo, -ne
S13	Costa Rica	20-30	-nda
S14	Germany	30-40	-nda, -ne, -(n)(da)yo(ne)
S15	Hong Kong	20-30	-yo, -ne, -nda
S16	U.S.A.	40-50	-ne, -yo
S17	Spain	40-50	-(n)(da)yo(ne), -ne, -yo, -nda

Table 2: linguistic tokens employed by the speakers

The recurrence of these forms indicates that ML activation often hinges on stance-marking and epistemic grounding, aligning with the documentary-style format's tendency to frame speakers' comments as assertive, conclusive, or evaluative. More strongly marked and less frequent masculine particles, such as *-kai* and *-dai*, appear only in a limited number of cases, most notably S2, whose repertoire includes *-dai, -sa, -kai, -yo, -da, -ne*. This speaker constitutes the clearest instance of dense token accumulation, combining interrogative masculinity (*-kai, -dai*) with multiple informal markers, thereby producing a more conspicuously male-stylized register. Importantly, European speakers exhibit relatively higher mean activation not necessarily through exclusive use of rare masculine forms, but through the cumulative layering of *-yo/-ne* with explanatory -(*n*)*da* constructions (e.g., S12, S14, S17). North America & Australia shows a more heterogeneous profile, ranging from minimal activation (S1, S3) to the highly marked concentration observed in S2. The "Other" category likewise remains limited but salient, with S13 restricted to *-nda* and S15 combining *-yo/-ne* with *-nda*. Overall, the token-level analysis demonstrates that ML activation in interlingual subtitling and voice-over is primarily realized through a small core set of SFPs *-yo, -ne, -(n)da,* -(*n*)(*da*)*yo*(*ne*), while more stereotypically masculine interrogative markers (*-kai, -dai*) remain exceptional (Chart 2). This suggests that male-markedness in the translated output is achieved less through categorical hypermasculinization than through the recurrent deployment of informal stance particles which, cumulatively, contribute to the construction of a masculine persona that is mediated by the audiovisual translation process.

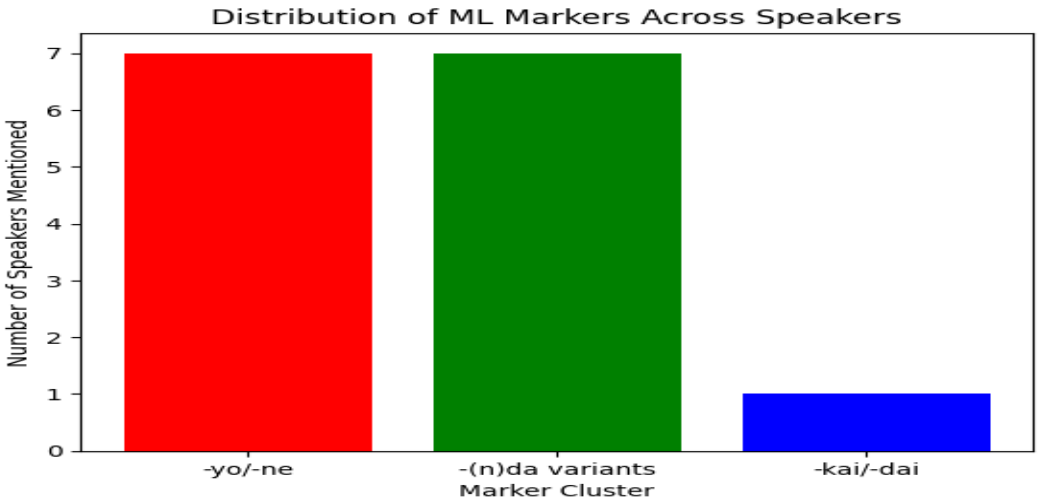

Chart 2: Distribution of ML markers across speakers

4. Qualitative Dataset Analysis

Building on the quantitative analysis presented above, this section offers a qualitative discourse analysis of the European interviewees who display the highest number of masculine-coded tokens (across 75% to 100% of their respective utterances) within the repertoire examined here. The aim is to identify possible semantic shifts in the use of SFPs, as well as the potential models of masculinity constructed through translation. Structurally, the *Shirabete Mitara* segment alternates between interviews with foreign participants and commentary by Japanese narrators, in addition to interactions with native Japanese interlocutors. Voice-over translation of the foreign speakers is performed by native-speaking voice actors, who are often distinct from the main narrators. Significantly, casting choices for these voice actors appear to be influenced primarily by the interviewees' age, rather than by physical appearance or national origin. In order to clarify the choices made by dialogue writers and subtitlers, a brief overview of the selected interviewees is provided below, with particular focus on the pragmatic features of their speech (Machida & Katō 2004, Moriyama 2025).

The August episode features two European speakers falling into the 20-30 (S5) and 30-40 (S6) age cohorts, in line with the parameters outlined above: S5 is from Sweden, whereas S6 is from Switzerland. Both interviewees are dressed in casual sportswear (a T-shirt and a baseball cap). S5 is recorded on a street in Tokyo in the company of two male compatriots, whereas S6 is interviewed in a park together with two fellow nationals, respectively a man and a woman. S5 is an avid karaoke enthusiast and, prompted by the narrator's (N) question, describes the differences between Japanese and Swedish karaoke practices:

N: Bokoku ni wa karaoke wa nai ndesuka?
(Eng. Is there no karaoke in your home country?)
01 Nai **ndayo**!
(Eng. There isn't, you know!)
02 Bā nado ni wa aru kedo, minna no mae de utawanai to ikenai **nda!**

(Eng. We do have karaoke in bars and stuff, but you're forced to sing in front of everyone!)
03 Sutēji ni agatte uta o utau **ndayo**!
(Eng. You've gotta go up on stage and sing!)

S6, by contrast, is interviewed in a park and, given the summer humidity, expresses appreciation for the opportunity to refill his water bottle free of charge using the drinking fountains available in Japanese parks.

04 Nippon de wa suidō no mizu o nomeru to kīte, pettobotoru ni irenta **nda**!
(Eng. I heard that you can drink tap water in Japan, so I filled a plastic bottle with it!)
05 Suisu no suidōsui mo nomeru kedo, nomeru no wa mezurashī koto **dayo**!
(Eng. Tap water is drinkable in Switzerland as well, but that's actually pretty unusual!)
06 Sono mama nomeru kuni wa amari nai kara **ne**
(Eng. Not many countries have tap water that you can drink directly)
N: Nippon no suidōsui dō desuka?
(Eng. How is Japan's tap water?)
07 Chotto nurui kamo
(Eng. Maybe it's a bit warm)

In this sequence, the stance adopted by S5 and S6 is indexed through experiential evaluation, cultural contrast, and epistemic positioning, linguistically realized through recurrent explanatory and stance-marking SFPs. As noted in previous research (Vitucci 2025b), this episode of *Shirabete Mitara* similarly frames its narrative by presenting to Japanese audiences advantages often taken for granted domestically but perceived as noteworthy by foreign visitors. Such framing supports the program's broader agenda of highlighting overlooked attractions and reassuring qualities of Japan, within which the interviewees' reactions are legitimized and their tone consistently appears enthusiastic. Within this framework, S5 repeatedly deploys the suffix *-ndayo*. In turn (01), responding to the narrator's question, it underscores the absence of comparable karaoke venues in Sweden. In turn (03), it instead emphasizes – partly with a note of irritation that singing in Sweden requires performing in front of strangers. In the first instance, the suffix indexes 'excitement' (*kōfun*), whereas in the second it conveys a degree of 'discontent' (*fuman*). Overall, S5's speech indexes experiential surprise and mild evaluative disalignment toward Swedish practices, contributing to the representation of Japan as a space of low-threshold social participation and everyday leisure accessibility.

A comparable orientation toward affective engagement emerges in S6's use of the variant *-dayo* in turn (05), which in this context more strongly indexes 'surprise' (*odoroki*) triggered by unexpected 'discovery'. The co-occurrence of *mezurashī* with *-dayo* further consolidates a stance of comparative rarity, thereby elevating Japan's infrastructural reliability within a broader global frame. This evaluative positioning is subsequently modulated in turn (06), where the softening particle *-ne* reintroduces intersubjective alignment, transforming individual assessment into assumed shared global knowledge and positioning the speaker as both knowledgeable and socially cooperative. Overall, this segment indicates that male-markedness in translation is not realized through overtly dominant or strongly assertive forms, but rather through the recurrent use of explanatory and informal stance particles. In this case, masculinity is discursively constructed through displays of experiential competence, pragmatic evaluative authority, and affective alignment with everyday social and material practices, resulting in a persona that is interactionally cooperative yet epistemically credible.

In the November episode, five speakers appear in chronological order who match the characteristics selected for this study, namely: S9 (20-30 age cohort) and S14 (30-40 age cohort) from Germany, S10 (40-50 age cohort) from Ireland, S12 (30-40 age cohort) from the Netherlands, and S17 (40-50 age cohort) from Spain. S9 is a young bonsai enthusiast visiting Japan with a group of friends. In his case as well, he is dressed casually, wearing a black T-shirt and shorts:

08 Bonsai ga mirareru [Bonsai Mūjiamu] to iu basho ga aru **nda**
(Eng. There's a place called the Bonsai Museum where you can see bonsai)
09 Nihon de bonsai wa yūmei dakedo,
(Eng. Bonsai are famous in Japan, but…")
10 Doitsu dewa mettani nai **yo**!
(Eng. In Germany you hardly ever see them!)
11 Jibun de ichi kara sodaterareruno mo subarashī **yone**!
(Eng. It's great that you can grow them yourself from scratch too, right?)
12 Totemo geijutsuteki da to omou **yo**!
(Eng. I think they're very artistic!)

Unlike S9, S10 is an older man and is interested in shops specializing in vintage electronics, including old telephones.

13 Waa! Tottemo natsukashī **ne**!
(Eng. Wow! That's really nostalgic, isn't it?)
14 Dayarushiki no kurodenwa wa kodomo no koro uchi ni atta **nda**!
(Eng. We had a rotary black telephone at home when I was a kid!)
15 Dakara totemo natsukashikatta **yo**!
(Eng. That's why it felt really nostalgic!)
16 Kore dake takusan no kikai ga atsumatte iru hakubutsukan wa
(Eng. This is the only museum in the world)
17 Sekaijū de koko dake **dayo**!
(Eng. Where this many devices are gathered together!)
18 Doko o sagashitemo nai **ne**!
(Eng. You won't find anything like it anywhere!)

Next, S12 is a slightly younger man than S10 and is traveling in Japan with his partner. He is also dressed in a T-shirt and shorts and is a fan of Japanese *melon pan*.

19 Asakusa no wakimichi ni yakitate no meronpan ga kaeru mise ga atta **nda**!
(Eng. There was a shop in a side street in Asakusa where you could buy freshly baked melon pan!)
20 Kankōkyaku to nihonjin no ryōhō ga meronpan o motomete narandeita **yo**!
(Eng. Both tourists and Japanese locals were lining up to get melon pan!)
21 Oranda no nihonshokuryōhinten no mono wa yakitate janai **nda**!
(Eng. The ones from Japanese food shops in the Netherlands aren't freshly baked!)
22 Nihon no dekitate ga saikō datta **ne**!
(Eng. "The freshly made ones in Japan were the best, weren't they?)

This segment constructs Japan as a site of rediscovery, where elements considered ordinary domestically are reframed as culturally distinctive through the perspective of foreign visitors. Here,

the tone adopted by S9, S10, and S12 is consistently marked by 'enthusiasm' (*kōfun*), 'nostalgia' (*natsukashisa*), and 'experiential authenticity' (*taikenteki shinseisei*), which are linguistically indexed through recurrent explanatory and stance-marking SFPs. S9, for example, repeatedly deploys explanatory and affective stance markers. In turn (08), *-nda* presents information about the Bonsai Museum as newly relevant shared knowledge, positioning the speaker as both discoverer and mediator of culturally salient information. In turns (10) and (12), the particle *-yo* asserts epistemic authority and foregrounds personal evaluation, particularly in the contrastive framing between Japan and Germany. The co-occurrence of evaluative predicates (e.g., *subarashī*, *geijutsuteki*) with *-yo* and *-yone* across turns (10-11) further indexes shared appreciation while maintaining a positive evaluative frame. Overall, S9's speech indexes 'admiration'(*shōsan*) and 'discovery' (*hakken*), contributing to the construction of Japan as a locus of artisanal and aesthetic authenticity. By contrast, S10 displays a stance more strongly oriented toward 'nostalgia' (*natsukashisa*). In turn (13), the combination of the interjection *Waa!* and the particle *-ne* indexes a stance of shared affective alignment. This interactional positioning is subsequently reinforced in turn (14), where the explanatory *-nda* frames the childhood recollection as biographically grounded knowledge. Finally, in turn (15), *-yo* further strengthens the connection between personal memory and present emotional response. Building on this evaluative trajectory, in turns (16-17) *-dayo* simultaneously asserts factual uniqueness and strengthens epistemic authority regarding the museum's exceptional status, before, finally, *-ne* in turn (18) softens the claim and reintroduces intersubjective alignment. Taken together, these forms index a nostalgic stance grounded in personal memory and material culture, thereby reinforcing the program's framing of Japan as a repository of preserved technological heritage.

By contrast, S12 indexes authenticity through experiential immediacy and sensory evaluation (*taikenteki shinseisei*). In turn (19), *-nda* frames the discovery of freshly baked *melon pan* as culturally salient experiential knowledge, a stance that is further developed in turn (20), where *-yo* presents the information as noteworthy and grounded in direct observation. Building on this trajectory, in turn (21) the contrastive *-janai nda* foregrounds perceived qualitative differences between Japanese and overseas products, thereby reinforcing the broader authenticity narrative. This evaluative positioning culminates in turn (22), where *-ne* indexes a shared evaluative stance, framing the superiority of freshly made products in Japan as socially recognizable common ground. Collectively, S12's speech indexes gustatory authenticity and immediacy of experience, contributing to the representation of Japan as a space of superior artisanal production and sensory quality. Overall, this segment suggests that the cumulative deployment of explanatory and informal stance particles enables the three speakers to construct a mediated masculine persona grounded in culturally sanctioned forms of affective engagement and evaluative authority.

To conclude the November episode, the final two speakers analyzed here are S14, a German man, and S17, a Spanish man. S14, also dressed in casual clothing, is dining with his partner at a highly renowned *tonkatsu* (Japanese pork cutlet) restaurant:

23 Kono mukashinagara no fun'inki ga tottemo ii **yone.**
(Eng. This traditional atmosphere is really nice, isn't it?)
24 Bokutachi wa chikaku no hoteru ni tomatte iru **nda.**
(Eng. We're staying at a nearby hotel, you know)
25 Ato koko wa SNS demo ninki dashi **ne!**
(Eng. And this place is popular on social media as well)

By contrast, S17 is with two friends and is about to enter a *mimikaki* (ear-cleaning) centre. Once inside, he enjoys the service to the point of falling asleep (29-33):

26 Mimikaki nante zanshinna sābisu **dayone**!
(Eng. Mimikaki is such an innovative service, right?)
27 Supein de mimikaki o shite moraeru kō iu omise wa zettaini nai kara **ne**
(Eng. You definitely don't find places like this offering ear-cleaning services in Spain)
28 Totemo kyōmi ga aru **nda**!
(Eng. I'm very interested in it!)
29 Kimochi yosugite neteta **yo**!
(Eng. It felt so good that I fell asleep!)
30 Minna mimikaki o shi ni koko ni kuru beki **dayo**!
(Eng. Everyone should come here to get *mimikaki* done!)
31 Subarashī gijutsu o motte iru **nda**!
(Eng. They really possess outstanding skills!)
32 Mimi wa shinkei kara karada zentai ni tsunagatte iru shi
(Eng. Since the ears are connected via the nerves to the whole body,)
33 Saikōni kimochi yokatta **yo**!
(Eng. It felt absolutely amazing!)

In this short segment, S14's evaluative stance is primarily oriented toward atmosphere, social validation, and mediated cultural legitimacy. In turn (23), the combination of the evaluative predicate *ii* with the SFP *-yo ne* indexes shared affective alignment, thereby framing the restaurant's traditional atmosphere as mutually appreciable experiential knowledge. Furthermore, the reference to *mukashinagara no fun'inki* reinforces this evaluative frame by constructing 'authenticity' (*shinseisei*) through temporal continuity and, in doing so, aligns with broader narratives that frame Japan as a site where tradition remains embedded in everyday consumption practices. Building on this orientation, in turn (24) the explanatory *-nda* situates the experiential account within a grounded contextual frame and, consequently, indexes epistemic transparency while simultaneously reinforcing narrative authenticity. This trajectory is then extended in turn (25), where *SNS demo ninki*, combined with *-dashi ne*, introduces externally validated popularity while still maintaining intersubjective alignment. Taken together, these forms construct a stance grounded in mediated authenticity and socially circulated value and, as a result, contribute to the representation of Japan as a space where tradition and modern visibility coexist.

In contrast, S17's discourse is more clearly oriented toward experiential novelty, embodied sensation, and technocultural innovation. In turn (26), *zanshinna* combined with *-dayone* indexes innovation while simultaneously maintaining shared recognition and cooperative alignment. Building on this evaluative frame, turn (27) introduces a contrastive comparison with Spain which, reinforced by *zettaini nai kara ne*, constructs strong negative evidence. At the same time, however, the form softens the categorical force of the claim through intersubjective orientation, thereby balancing epistemic confidence with interactional politeness. In turn (28), *-nda* further develops this trajectory by framing personal interest as discovery-based knowledge, thus reinforcing experiential legitimacy (*taikenteki shinseisei*). In parallel, the explanatory *-nda* in turn (31) frames technical skill as specialized knowledge, while the physiological explanation in turn (32) further grounds evaluation in perceived bodily logic. Taken together, these resources allow S17's discourse to index experiential immersion and embodied trust and, in turn, contribute to the construction of Japan as a site where everyday services are reinterpreted as technologically refined and bodily beneficial. Accordingly, when compared to S14's socially mediated authenticity, S17 more strongly

foregrounds sensory immediacy and experiential transformation. Overall, this segment reinforces the broader pattern whereby male-markedness in translation emerges through the cumulative deployment of explanatory morphology and informal stance particles. From a pragmatic point of view, the deployment of masculine-marked stance resources – rather than indexing authority in hierarchical terms – allows speakers to display enthusiasm, evaluative certainty, and experiential authority while remaining interactionally cooperative. Crucially, however, this informal idiolect does not align with the normative model of standard speech associated with native Japanese male speakers. As Nakamura (2020b, 2022, 2025a) has argued, the *hon'yakuban otokokotoba* repertoire constructs a form of mediated masculinity that remains ideologically distinct from the dominant reference point for normative Japanese male speech.

5. Discussions and Perspectives

Although the sample examined in this study is limited to two episodes of the program *Shirabete Mitara* and focuses on European speakers, the mixed-methods approach adopted, which integrates quantitative data with qualitative discourse analysis, allows the case study to identify several salient patterns that directly address the three guiding research questions:

Correlations between speakers' age, nationality, and use of ML. Among the European speakers examined (S5, S6, S9, S10, S12, S14, S17), ML use shows a gradual increase across age cohorts rather than strong nationality-based differentiation. While younger speakers (20-30) display moderate activation mainly through informal stance particles such as *-yo* and *-ne*, the 30-40 cohort shows denser clustering of explanatory forms such as -(*n*)*da* and hybrid variants *-(n)(da)yo(ne*), suggesting stronger epistemic stance marking. The highest activation emerges in the 40-50 group, where ML is realized through cumulative layering of informal and explanatory particles rather than rare strongly masculinized forms. Overall, nationality appears less predictive than age in shaping ML density within the European subset. These findings suggest that, in translation, older European speakers tend to be rendered through more epistemically grounded and stance-rich masculine-coded repertoires, while younger speakers are associated with lighter, interactionally oriented ML resources.

Most salient marked linguistic tokens and their possible correlations with *hon'yakuban otokokotoba.* Across the European speakers examined, the most salient marked linguistic tokens are informal stance particles, particularly *-yo* and *-ne*, together with explanatory forms such as -(*n*)*da* and their hybrid variants (e.g. *-n)(da)yo(ne)*). These tokens recur across speakers and age groups, indicating that ML activation in translation is primarily realized through stance-marking and epistemic grounding rather than through strongly stereotyped masculine forms. In this respect, their distribution aligns with recent interpretations of *hon'yakuban otokokotoba* as indexing 'informality', 'cordial interpersonal distance', and 'affective engagement' rather than overt 'roughness' or 'hypermasculinity'. Crucially, the dataset also shows a near-total absence of linguistic features typically associated with the so-called *yā-style* masculine speech (Nakamura 2020b). This absence suggests a translational tendency to avoid strongly marked or socially risky masculine indexicals in favor of more neutralized, interactionally acceptable male-coded resources. Overall, the data indicate that translated male speech is constructed through the cumulative layering of 'light' or soft masculine-coded forms, contributing to a moderated masculine persona compatible with contemporary audiovisual translation norms.

Developments in ML and the corresponding expansion of indexical fields. Within the scope of this study, developments in ML point to a reconfiguration of masculine indexicality along two partially overlapping but functionally distinct macro-types: *Epistemically Grounded and Experiential-Affective Masculinity and Socially Aligned Cooperative Masculinity* (Chart 3).

Macro-type	Speakers	Core Linguistic Resources	Indexical Fields	Social Meaning & Discursive Domains
Epistemically Grounded and Experiential-Affective Masculinity	S5, S9, S12, S14, S17	-(n)da, -(n)(da)yo(ne), -yo	(hakken, shōsan, kōfun, odoroki, fuman, taikenteki shinseisei)	Evaluatively competent persona: factual + experiential authenticity, controlled affect, embodied discovery.
Socially Aligned Cooperative Masculinity	S6, S10, S12, S14	-ne, -(n)(da)yo(ne)	(natsukashisa)	Socially integrated persona: alignment, shared nostalgia, soft evaluation.

Chart 3: Masculine Typologies and Their Indexical Fields

Rather than primarily indexing roughness, authority, or social dominance, male-marked forms increasingly operate across expanded indexical fields that integrate epistemic positioning, affective stance, and experiential evaluation. Within the first macro-type, forms such as -(*n*)*da*, -(*n*)(*da*)*yo*(*ne*), and -*yo* tend to co-occur with emotionally and epistemically grounded meanings associated with states such as *kōfun* (enthusiasm), *odoroki* (surprise), and, to a lesser extent, *fuman* (mild dissatisfaction), particularly in discovery-oriented interactional contexts. At the same time, these resources contribute to the construction of culturally mediated affective positions, including *shōsan* (admiration) and *hakken* (discovery), and extend toward experiential domains captured by notions such as *taikenteki shinseisei* (experiential authenticity). In these cases, ML indexes first-hand experience, sensory immediacy, and epistemically grounded personal evaluation, contributing to the projection of an evaluatively competent persona characterized by experiential authenticity and controlled affect. In parallel, the second macro-type foregrounds socially integrative and interactionally cooperative stance work. Here, forms such as -*ne* and –(*n*)(*da*)*yo*(*ne*) are more closely associated with indexical fields such as *natsukashisa* (nostalgic affect), contributing to the construction of socially aligned personae grounded in shared affect and soft evaluation. Overall, the findings suggest that across both macro-types, ML participates in indexing socially sanctioned emotional expressivity, experiential authority, and interactional cooperativeness, reflecting a broader expansion of masculine indexical fields within mediated communicative contexts.

Conversely, from an ideological perspective, it is interesting to observe how, within the context of the broadcast analysed here, the two masculine linguistic profiles emerging from the translation appear to be instrumental in constructing a 'reassuring' image of Japan, both in terms of its tradition and its modernity, as if scriptwriters neither wished nor were able to ever call it into question (Mandujano-Salazar 2016, 2024). From our perspective, this kind of self-orientalist approach implies that, in order to achieve emotional proximity and to reaffirm the positive qualities associated with Japan, foreign male speakers are required to adopt a more 'friendly' and 'proximal' linguistic register, distancing themselves both from models perceived as insufficiently representative (e.g. the *yā style*) and from speech styles that would be considered overly normative

to be credible to a domestic audience (e.g. the use of *keigo* by Japanese male speakers in homosocial contexts). This perception is further supported, in our view, by studies conducted within the framework of 'male studies' (Itō 2025; Kobayashi 2025; Shūji 2025; Steger & Koch 2018), which demonstrate that the hegemonic ideal of masculinity circulated through Japanese media continues to crystallize around indigenous masculine taxonomies that have yet to distance themselves from the figure of the traditional *salaryman*. This model functions not only as a social ideal to be emulated, but also as a linguistic template to be reproduced. The idiolect associated with this pattern, therefore – in line with recent studies by Nakamura – ultimately contributes to constructing an additional layer of mediated alterity, further intensifying the opposition between 'others' and 'us' through masculine profiles that are less 'hard' and more socially acceptable. At the same time, the television programme analysed here can be seen to reproduce a broader pattern of translational divergence that most likely operates through ideological downgrading, positioning foreign speakers within a sphere of alterity and thereby preserving a 'safe distance' between the normativity of domestic language use and the linguistic forms reproduced in dialogue. Interestingly, in this regard, the translation of foreign women's speech moves in a diametrically opposite direction, namely toward the reproduction of a positive model (women's language) that positions itself as the sociolinguistic 'norm' to be emulated (Nakamura 2025b, Vitucci 2024a). Whether this should be interpreted as yet another manifestation of linguistic nationalism is not something that can be conclusively established in this context. What can be more confidently suggested, however, is that *Shirabete Mitara* also mobilizes an 'invisible ideology' (Furukawa 2009) which, in some way, neutralizes the target audience through the mechanism of *transduction* (Inoue 2003, Hiramoto 2009), assigning a specific idiolect to all the foreign speakers in question (Duranti 2021; Irvine and Gal 2000, 2019; Spitzmüller 2022). Given that virtual spaces are social contexts where speech styles remain subject to dynamic ideological formations, the extent to which this type of positioning will shape the unconscious masculine imaginary of Japanese audiences – and whether it constitutes a broader pattern of audiovisual translational divergence across Japanese media – calls for further systematic investigation. Against this background, it remains to be asked why higher percentages of this 'friendly', 'proximal', and highly 'informal' idiolect appear among older European speakers. One possible explanation is that this pattern reflects a greater perceived psychological distance, in the translators' minds, between America and Australia, as opposed to Europe. If this were the case, further investigation would be required to examine the type of *iconization* activated by scriptwriters and to monitor its future developments.

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