

## Gender, Language, and Community: GALE SIG Forum

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The JALT GALE SIG Forum examined the conference theme of community with a focus on gender. Sara Schipper highlighted some of the struggles female students face at an elite university in Japan and offered implications for educators. Antonija Cavcic examined linguistic discrepancies between male and female politicians' use of *gairaigo* (loan words) during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic in Japan. Sachi Komai presented a literary approach to the theme focusing on the Japanese novel, *Out* (1997, translated 2003), written by Natsuo Kirino.

JALT GALE部会では、今大会のテーマである「コミュニティ(共同体)」について、ジェンダーの観点から発表が行われた。本稿はフォーラムに参加した三名の発表内容をまとめたものである。Schipperは、日本の名門大学に入学した女子学生が直面する困難に焦点をあわせ、そこからどのような教育現場への示唆が見えてくるかを検討した。Cavcicは、COVID-19の流行初期段階に日本の政治家が使用した外来語について、男性政治家と女性政治家の間にどのような差異があったかを検証した。駒居は、桐野夏生の小説『OUT』を取りあげ、本フォーラムのテーマに対する文学的なアプローチを行った。

The Gender Awareness in Language Education (GALE) forum at JALT2020 was held with the title Gender, Language, and Community. The four speakers considered gender and language in communities both inside and outside the classroom. This paper summarizes three of the four presentations that comprised the session. Sara Schipper considered gender gaps in Japanese top universities, Antonija Cavcic analyzed male and female politicians' use of *gairaigo* (loan words) in Japan during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, and Sachi Komai examined the depiction of female suffering in a translated Japanese novel written by Natsuo Kirino, one of the most famous female novelists in Japan. These three presentations offered opportunities to examine various spheres of the Japanese community through the lens of gender.

### Voices of Female Students at a Top University in Japan

Sara Schipper

This section of the GALE Forum focused on women in education in Japan, particularly at the post-secondary level. Sara Schipper highlighted two common issues that arose in her qualitative study on the experiences and struggles of women at a top university in Japan: isolation and a lack of female role models. She then examined the wider implications of those issues and offered concrete suggestions for educators. She ended with the message that listening to women's voices and making small changes can begin a positive shift of more girls and women entering and succeeding at top universities in Japan.

According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) (2020), women make up only 34% of the student population at Japan's 86 national universities. At Osaka University, Kyoto University, and the University of Tokyo, which are often ranked among the top ten universities in Japan ("Japan University," 2020), women make up only about 33% (Osaka University, 2019a), 23% (Kyoto University, 2019), and 20% (University of Tokyo, 2019). Schipper's own classes at one such university,

which often included very small numbers of women or no women at all, inspired her to conduct a qualitative study on the obstacles, struggles, and shared experiences of female students at top-tier universities.

For her study, Schipper interviewed five second-year female students at a national university three times. Each interview was 50-80 minutes in length. The first interview covered the student's current situation, the second her background, and the third her future hopes. This three-interview format made it possible to understand the students' current circumstances by placing them in the wider context of their life experiences. Schipper recorded and transcribed the full interviews before executing the classification process: organizing excerpts into categories (e.g., female role models, classroom struggles) and highlighting common themes (see Seidman, 2013, pp. 127-130 for further explanation of classification of interview data).

Students were mostly recruited from the researcher's advanced writing class, which included several international students and returnees. The participants had all had some study abroad experience: One was a Chinese student studying abroad in Japan, and the other four were Japanese students who had all studied in English-speaking countries (two for a month or less). Though all the interviews were conducted in English, some students used Japanese for clarification. Participation in the study was completely voluntary, and students were told they could withdraw at any time. All participants gave informed written consent, and all necessary permissions from the university were granted. Pseudonyms were used to refer to the students mentioned in the presentation and are also used in this article. Two of the common themes that arose in the interviews were discussed in this forum: isolation and a lack of female role models.

### Isolation

Schipper first clarified that the isolation several of these women reported feeling seemed to be rooted in the custom of self-segregation by sex in the classroom. This is a common occurrence in Japanese schools from kindergarten through higher education (see Kittaka, 2020; Helverson, 2016). Schipper asserted that this division into same-sex groups can cause isolation, particularly when one group is severely outnumbered.

Next, comments given by some of the participants on the issue of isolation were presented. A student from the Faculty of Education, Nanako, commented on her experiences in a highly-competitive high school in Tokyo, where girls made up only about 20% of the student body. Nanako's discomfort as one of a small minority in her school motivated her to enroll in the Faculty of Education at the university, which

according to the university's website, has the largest proportion of female students at 40%. Another student, Lifan, from the Faculty of Engineering, commented on her experience in her university calculus class, in which she was one of only two women. She said that the men would often engage in discussions about the contents of the lecture after class, and though she wanted to join them, felt embarrassed to do so. Lifan claimed that the students never had an opportunity to have conversations in mixed-sex groups in or out of the classroom, making it difficult for her to approach the men. She added that due to their usual lack of contact with each other, the men might consider her "the wrong kind of girl" if she did approach them. Kana, another student from the Faculty of Agriculture, commented on a similar situation at her high school, where she was only one of eight girls in the science course.

Schipper noted that one of the wider implications of these stories of isolation is that girls and women may feel limited in their choices of faculty or fields of study. They may continue to choose the same majors and courses of study that have always included more women to avoid isolation and discomfort like Nanako did. Another implication is that girls and women may miss opportunities for confirming and broadening their understanding of subjects. Deprived of the chance to engage in meaningful discussions of class contents, Schipper asserted, female students may lag behind their classmates.

Schipper advised that educators at all levels make mixed-sex groups the norm. A study by Helverson (2016) at a Japanese university found that the majority of university students actually preferred being assigned to mixed-sex groups though they never made them on their own. They seemingly only broke into same-sex groups because they felt it was "natural" or expected (this feeling was echoed by one of the interviewees in Schipper's study). When given the opportunity to work in diverse groups, however, students could see the value in it (Helverson, 2016). It was brought up in the post-presentation discussion that even when placed in mixed-sex groups, some university students still hesitate to engage with the opposite sex. Schipper suggested that educators start implementing mixed-sex groups as early as possible to get students accustomed to it.

A second solution that was presented to the problem of isolation was for educators to give adequate opportunities for class participation to students who may feel excluded. It was first suggested that educators make it clear to students when and how they can be contacted for consultation. Schipper also cited an article by Burke (2019), which described one American professor's success story with the use of an anonymous online forum. When the professor replaced his usual method of public question-and-answer sessions with a way for students to ask their questions anonymously, the number of

questions he received in one semester, particularly those from female students, increased by more than six times (Burke, 2019). Though students may hesitate to ask their questions publicly for fear of judgment or humiliation, allowing anonymous questions, either in a private chat on Zoom or on a slip of paper in class, is an advisable strategy.

### Lack of Female Role Models

Schipper first gave some background on the number of female full professors at top universities. At the 86 national universities, full-time female professors make up only 18% of the total (MEXT, 2020). The percentage of female full professors at Osaka University (2019b) was about 10%, while Kyoto University (2018) and the University of Tokyo (2018) both had less than 8%.

Comments on the lack of female role models from the participants in the study included Nanako's (Education) idea that the sex of one's professor may have a strong influence on what kind of research the students are exposed to or are inspired to do themselves. Nanako realized this while listening to a female professor reporting on some research she had done on women's experiences. Schipper then reported on some comments given by a student in the Faculty of Agriculture, Ami, who had been invited to participate in a recruiting event at the university specifically for high school girls. Ami felt deep disappointment seeing an older male professor address the girls, simply telling them there were not enough female students at the university. Ami noted that a more relatable, "cooler" female professor could have done a great deal more to encourage girls to enroll.

Schipper then presented the wider implications of the findings on the lack of female role models. First, she asserted that both men and women lack opportunities to discover new perspectives and fields of research. It was emphasized that this not only occurs because of a lack of gender diversity, but also other kinds of diversity (racial, cultural, etc.). Students without exposure to various research and viewpoints, it was argued, may remain unaware of potential research fields or courses of study. Second, Schipper claimed that girls and women may be unable to envision themselves in certain roles or doing certain jobs. Finally, she suggested that girls may avoid entering STEM fields and other fields where women are underrepresented.

As a solution to these problems, Schipper encouraged educators to seek out gender-equality promotion offices, which exist on many university campuses in Japan (including the three aforementioned national universities), and events that recruit new students to ensure that women are adequately represented. She also recommended that teachers

of junior and senior high school girls encourage them to join extracurricular activities such as GSTEM, a summer program specifically for girls interested in STEM (STEM Career Path Project for Girls, 2019). Finally, she advised educators to introduce successful women from various fields (either virtually or face-to-face) to their classes. A study by Lancaster University (2020) was cited, in which two women who had prospered in the field of economics were invited as guest speakers to some first-year economics classes at a university in the U.S. The study found that the female students in the classes that received visits from these women were twice as likely to enroll in future economics classes as those who did not receive visits (Lancaster University, 2020). Schipper claimed that because these visits from successful role models changed the female students' course of study and likely their career paths, this may be the most important implication in her presentation.

### Conclusion

Schipper concluded her presentation by telling educators not to be discouraged. Despite the issues of isolation and a lack of female role models reported here, the students in her study expressed a great deal of satisfaction in their experiences at university. In fact, the participants in faculties and departments with more women (Education and Agriculture) reported higher levels of satisfaction overall than those in departments with fewer women. Schipper claimed it could be possible to start a positive shift: The more female representation girls and women see at the top, the more likely they will be to enroll and thrive at top institutions, and the less likely they will feel isolated and uninspired by a lack of role models.

\*A more comprehensive version of this paper appeared in *Journal and Proceedings of Gender Awareness in Language Education* (Schipper, 2021).

### Gender and *Gairaigo*: A Discourse Analysis of Japanese Politicians' Public Announcements During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Antonija Cavcic

Antonija Cavcic discussed how unprecedented global crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic have highlighted the significance of cooperation, communication, transparency and the clear dissemination of crucial information. While key politicians and authorities' statements have differed across the globe, in Japan, the two major figures responsible for making official announcements and declarations—Prime Minister Shinzō

Abe and governor of Tokyo, Yuriko Koike—have remained fairly consistent in their frequent addresses to the public. Although, the key difference between both speakers is their use of *gairaigo* (loan words). Cavcic’s presentation was a discourse analysis of the discrepancies between both figures’ use of *gairaigo* and also considered whether it implies inclusivity and diversity (in the uptake of Covid-19-related terms used overseas), or simply clarity (using recently established lexica for efficient and clear communication). Her research also questioned the extent to which loan words were understood by those possibly more likely to be familiar with them— young Japanese citizens.

### Methodology

Cavcic’s research involved two approaches. The first was discourse analyses of six respective press conference transcripts from April through to July 2020 which were accessible on Tokyo Metropolitan Government’s Website (2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2020e, 2020f) and the website for the Prime Minister’s Office of Japan (2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2020e, 2020f). Using text mining tools, she analyzed word frequency and clusters of loan words and commonly used expressions. The second approach was an online questionnaire distributed to 143 undergraduate students at Teikyo University of Science at the end of July in 2020. With both open and closed questions, Cavcic was able to obtain qualitative and quantitative data. The intention was to gauge young Japanese citizens’ general comprehension of loan words, and the clarity and persuasiveness of both leaders’ public addresses.

Before revealing her research findings, she briefly covered Koike and Abe’s backgrounds and employment history to gain insight as to why they use (or prefer not to use) loan words. It was noted that Koike’s foreign language proficiency in English excelled over Abe’s based on her fluency in both Arabic and English, and former career as an interpreter and newscaster (Koike, 2020). It was also noted that Koike has been criticized for her overuse of loan words during her 都民ファースト (*tomin faasuto*) campaign in the past (Kimura, 2016).

### Analysis and Discussion

To proceed, Cavcic revealed the findings of her discourse analyses of Abe and Koike’s press conferences. An analysis of the word clouds found that some of the most common words both figures used were *keigo* or honorific expressions related to speaking and requesting. Aside from that, what particularly emerged from the findings was Koike’s use of 都民 (*tomin*) “citizens of Tokyo” and みなさま (*minasama*) a polite form for “everyone”,

which was more pronounced than Abe’s use of 国民 (*kokumin*) “citizens of Japan” and みなさん (*minasan*) for “everyone.” The most pronounced loan words were Abe’s リスク (*risuku*) and Koike’s use of コロナ (*korona*) which was discounted as it was a proper noun. Overall, Cavcic surmised that Koike was perhaps more preoccupied with the citizens, while Abe was concerned with the virus itself given how pronounced 都民 (*tomin*) citizens appeared in the word cloud of Koike’s corpus. On the other hand, Abe appeared to be concerned with the virus (or infection) since his use of the words 感染 (*kansen*) or infection and 検査 (*kensa*) testing was almost double that of Koike’s.

When examining clusters, Cavcic noted that in Koike’s sample, 都 (*to*), みなさま (*minasama*), 協力 (*kyōryoku*) and お願い (*onegai*) translated as citizens of Tokyo, everyone, cooperation, and please were often grouped together. These findings were similar to Abe’s sample where 国民 (*kokumin*), みなさま (*minasama*), 協力 (*kyōryoku*) and お願い (*onegai*) were also clustered together. She concluded that both figures were politely requesting the cooperation of the citizens they were responsible for addressing.

The word frequency findings found that Abe’s use of the word 感染 (*kansen*) or infection was more than double that of Koike—which, for Cavcic, seemed to stress the severity of the situation. When analyzing verbs, she noted that both politicians’ use of verbs such as 進む (*susumu*) proceed/progress and 守る (*mamoru*) protect were on par, but Abe used 出来る (*dekiru*) can/be able to three times as much as Koike. Abe also mentioned the words 尽くす (*tsukusu*) exhaust/do everything possible and 避ける (*yokeru*) avoid, which Koike did not. What this implied, for Cavcic, is Abe’s confidence in the government’s capabilities to contain the virus by “exhausting all means” possible with a positive can-do attitude. Similarly, the adjectives revealed much about both speakers’ stances. While the use of “difficult” (難しい *muzukashī*) was almost on par, Abe’s general choice of adjectives perhaps conveyed the severity of the situation more than Koike. This was exemplified in Abe’s frequent use of the terms 恐ろしい (*osoroshī*) terrible, 辛い (*tsurai*) hard or tough and 悪い (*warui*) bad. Furthermore, the word 厳しい (*kibishī*), which in the context of his speeches connotes something that is difficult or severe, topped Abe’s adjective list. Essentially, the findings suggested that Abe was acknowledging the severity of the situation with an air of confidence that it could be overcome, while Koike seemed to be careful about making too many bold or dramatic statements.

As for loan word use, Cavcic initially noted that although Koike had been criticized by fellow politicians and Japanese media outlets for using too many loan words, in the analysis of her sample, Abe and Koike’s use of loan words were almost on par. On closer inspection, the findings revealed that not once did Koike mention lockdown ( ロックダウン *rokku daun* ). In fact, it was Abe who mentioned it about nine times. Also,



words such as “telework” and “cluster” were frequently used by both figures, but it was more frequently used by Abe. According to Cavcic, Koike’s top three terms (monitoring, guideline, alert) suggested action being taken, whereas Abe’s top three terms (risk, cluster, speed) indicated some kind of urgency and emergency. Furthermore, Koike’s use of terms such as support, stay home, “with corona”, quality of life, wise spending, social distance, contract tracing and essential worker reflected not only coronavirus terms used abroad and a sense of universality, but the implication that the virus is here to stay and we have to adjust our lives, while making sure that support is being received.

Cavcic further argued that Abe’s use of loan words came across as rather aggressive—highlighting a need to control and contain the virus and speed up the process rather than learning to live with it. This was made implicit, for example, in terms such as “post-corona.” In any case, Cavcic maintains that while the key coronavirus terms adopted by Koike might initially be difficult for Japanese people to understand, there is an air of inclusivity about them—bringing Tokyo closer to the wider international community and acknowledging that the virus is a global issue. For her, although the lexical complexity of loan words might cause clarity issues, there is diversity and a sense of inclusivity. Moreover, even if some of these terms are initially difficult to understand, they have entered public discourse relatively quickly. For instance, the terms “social distance” and “stay home” are now widely used in public places.

To confirm and expand on her conclusions derived from the discourse analyses, Cavcic questioned undergraduate students’ attitudes towards loan words in a questionnaire. The results revealed that students had mixed feelings about the uptake of Covid-related loan words. 39% of students disagreed that they should be used, 17% were ambivalent about using loan words, but overall, most of the students (44%) agreed that loan words regarding Covid-19 should be used. Some stated, “This is Japan so there’s no need to use loan words,” while others claimed, “They’re universal terms, so they should be used” or “Coronavirus is not just a problem in Japan, but in many countries so we should use *katakana* or loan words.” When ascertaining the respondents’ comprehension of the Covid-related loan words used by politicians, the majority of responses (66%) were positive, but at least one third of respondents still did not understand some of the loan words being used. Most respondents seemed to understand “social distancing” and even “cluster” to some extent, however, terms such as “overshoot” were confusing for some. Acknowledging that her sample was not representative of the entire population, Cavcic nonetheless argues that awareness of these terms is spreading and that the uptake of loan words is one way for a language to diversify and expand.

## Conclusion

To conclude, Cavcic’s study revealed that there was very little difference between the amount of loan words Abe and Koike used. Furthermore, Koike seemed preoccupied with the citizens, whereas Abe appeared to be concerned with the virus (or infection).

Abe acknowledged the severity of the situation and seemed confident that it could be overcome, but Koike was careful about sounding too ambitious. Also, Cavcic argued that Abe’s simpler and more direct terms were sometimes aggressive in tone—highlighting a need to control and contain the virus and speed up the process rather than learning to live with it, but Koike’s use of fairly complex loan words conveyed a sense of inclusivity since it brings Tokyo closer to the wider international community and acknowledges that the virus is a global problem.

As for the overall comprehension of loan words and their necessity, most of the survey respondents agreed that loan words regarding coronavirus should be used. They also overwhelmingly preferred Koike’s manner of address over Abe’s even if a third of the respondents admitted they did not know many of the Covid-19-related loan words adopted by politicians. To close, Cavcic addressed the question as to whether the gender of a speaker correlates with their overall use of loan words and concluded, or rather found, that there is little correlation. She argued that, in general, loan words float in a neutral space in the Japanese language in the sense that they can be manipulated, and incorrectly used with very little criticism compared to using *kanji* or specific Japanese words with fixed meanings. For her, loan words are fluid and sometimes ambiguous, but there is a sense of flexibility and diversity about them.

## Natsuo Kirino’s Crime Fiction as Global Feminist Noir

### Sachi Komai

Sachi Komai presented a literary approach to the forum’s theme. As more people migrate across borders, intercultural approaches are becoming increasingly important in language education (Kramsch, 1998). Komai focused on the Japanese female novelist Natsuo Kirino and showed that the English translation of her work can be a tool to reconsider Japanese gender inequality from an intercultural viewpoint.

In literary studies, it has been pointed out that literature that has spread throughout the world market is “always as much about the host culture’s values and needs as it is about a work’s source culture; hence it is a double refraction, one that can be described through the figure of the ellipse” (Damrosch, 2003, p.283). Many researchers have analyzed Japanese writers and encountered this elliptical figure between Japan and

abroad. In this forum, intending to raise gender awareness, Komai focused on Natsuo Kirino's work, *Out*, as one example that brings transnational viewpoints on Japanese gender structure. *Out* gained commercial success in English-speaking markets (Arimoto, 2004; Davis, 2010) and its critical depictions of Japan's male-dominated structure have been analyzed in many papers, in both Japanese and English (English examples: Copeland, 2017; Qiao, 2019; Seaman, 2006; Sokolsky, 2018). The novel, accepted by both popular readers and in academia, can be a vehicle for considering the hidden Japanese gender structure in the domestic context.

Komai compared acceptance of *Out* in Japan and overseas, especially in English-speaking countries, and showed how the English translation visualized the Japanese gender structure, which is veiled when people only read the Japanese edition.

### What Is *Out*?

First, in her presentation Komai introduced the author Natsuo Kirino, who was born in 1951 in Japan. Her most famous novel, *Out*, was published in 1997 and translated into English in 2003. It became the first Japanese novel nominated for The Edgar Award, one of the most prestigious mystery awards in the United States. Kirino with this work became a pioneer of Japanese contemporary crime novels in translation.

*Out* concerns four housewives, Masako, Yayoi, Yoshie, and Kuniko, who work the night shift at a bento factory while managing their homes in Tokyo. One day, Yayoi kills her husband, who has used up the family's savings in hostess bars and on gambling. She decides to cover up the murder and asks Masako for help. Masako dismembers the body in the bathroom of her house and packs the pieces in garbage bags, in conspiracy with Yayoi and Kuniko. This incident leads Masako to the dark business of dismantling dead bodies with *yakuza*, generating far more income than her part-time work.

### *Out* in the Context of Japan: Depiction of Japanese Class

Second, Komai demonstrated the novel's impact on Japanese society. The book was accepted not just as thrilling entertainment, but also as a prominent novel that describes disparities from women's point of view. Matsuura (2002) pointed out that the women depicted in *Out* broke the conventional image of middle-class society. In the 1990s when *Out* was published, Japan was in a recession after the collapse of the economic bubble, and was beginning to shift from a middle-class society, (一億総中流社会 *ichi oku sō chūryū shakai*), to an income-gap society, (格差社会 *kakusa shakai*). Kirino portrayed this shift in her depiction of housewives.

What is important is that Kirino did not depict ordinary housewives but part-time working housewives (パート主婦 *pāto shufu*). They were married with non-regular employment and their number increased with men's falling wages in the 1990s. As Minashita (2017) pointed out, *Out* is seminal work that visualized the dilemma of part-time working housewives who were required to provide the same level of housework as full-time housewives while working as non-regular employees. Many women were incorporated into Japanese society as cheap labor and undertook both non-paid work at home and low-paid work in companies. The novel clearly reflects the severe gender gap demonstrated by women's labor patterns in the 1990s. The women in *Out* work part-time night shifts for assorted reasons. For example, Yayoi sleeps during the day when her children are in nursery school, and leaves her children with her husband while she goes to work at night. Depicting the daily lives of part-time working housewives, the novel unveils women's non-paid and low-paid labor hidden behind men's full-time regular employment (See Kawamura, 1999; Taneda, 2009).

*Out* demonstrates the peculiarity of Japanese gender segregation. One foreign reader asked Kirino, "In Japan, why do wives work in blue-collar jobs while husbands work in white-collar jobs?" (Kirino, 2005, p. 8, my translation). That question could only come from overseas readers, as it was quite natural to Japanese readers that wives tried to maintain a *middle-class lifestyle* by working a part-time job. *Out* illustrates the distinctive gender structure of Japanese society; gender segregation is so strong that man and woman working in different occupational classes form the same middle-class household in Japan (Minashita, 2017).

### *Out* as Global Feminist Noir

If *Out* portrays a unique family form in Japan, why has this novel gained global prominence? As its third focus, Komai introduced *Out* in terms of global crime fiction to clarify how the context of Japanese life changed with the English translation.

Noting that Kirino's work was well-received in the English market, Davis (2010) emphasized: "While capturing the essence of contemporary life of Japan, she [Kirino] captures the essence of life in the contemporary industrial world" (p. 11). From a similar perspective, in *Globalization and the State in Contemporary Crime Fiction*, *Out*'s depiction of Tokyo was analyzed alongside other crime fiction novels set in France, Mexico, and elsewhere. In this book, Breu (2016) examined housewives' labor in Tokyo, a "global city," where "while financial markets continue to prosper...the urban landscape is ever more starkly divided between economic winners and losers" (p. 41). Global capitalism can

exploit people as a throwaway labor force and collude with class, immigration, race, and other divisions. In *Out*, the exploitation is depicted by gender segregation. Housewives' wages are not high enough for them to live independently, even if they divorce their husbands. In the novel, "all four women are corralled by the related logic of capitalism and patriarchy into subject positions that mutually reinforce their subordinate status" (Pepper, 2016, p. 221). *Out* is a story about women who struggle to escape from their daily space with criminal behavior.

These women's circumstances reflect not only the Japanese recession but also the international spread of global capitalism. Women within the disposable labor force cannot find an escape route in their normal lives. Kirino's portrayal of housewives can be read as an example of "the essence of life in the contemporary industrial world" (Davis, 2010, p. 11), in which global capitalism is intertwined with the domestic context and exasperating gender disparities.

## Conclusion

Komai's study highlighted *Out*'s depiction of housewives, as well as the increasing class division among Japanese families. This portrayal of suffering spread beyond Japan and has connected to the social violence rampant in other readers' countries. Kirino creates an ellipse, linking Japanese gender segregation to global capitalism.

English translation enlarges the context of Japanese life and the acceptance of the novel reveals the transnationality of women's suffering. International acceptance reveals both the peculiarity and the common characteristics of Japanese society, difficult to capture solely in the domestic context. Especially in Japan, where gender inequality is rooted in deep patriarchy, reading the novel from a gender perspective and understanding how it has been received abroad allows readers to consider Japan's gender structure recursively and globally.

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\*This chapter is an adaptation of a paper that first appeared in *Journal of Modern Languages & Cultures* (Komai, 2020).

## Concluding Comments

The three presenters demonstrated how Japanese gender structure is captured and reflected in literature, language, and language learning contexts. Their research projects have highlighted the necessity of examining language and gender from both a macro perspective that considers the wider Japanese community and a micro perspective that considers how to realize gender equality in the classroom. The discussions with attendees in the question-and-answer session also demonstrated how educators in Japan face Japan's gender gap in many ways, both inside and outside of the classroom. The contributions from the presenters, as well as the points raised by the attendees will surely inspire future research into the role gender and language play in different facets of the community.

## Bio Data

**Sara Schipper** is a senior lecturer in the Institute of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Kyoto University. She has over 20 years of English language teaching experience, mostly in Japan, at both public and private universities. Her research interests lie in gender, social science, and theoretical linguistics. <schipper.saralynne.4m@kyoto-u.ac.jp>

**Antonija Cavcic (PhD)** is a senior lecturer at the University of Shiga Prefecture. Her current research interests include study abroad trends and gender representation in manga and print media. Generally, though, she is involved in research concerning both Japanese popular culture and English language education in Japan. <cavcic-a@ntu.ac.jp>

**Sachi Komai** is a junior researcher at University of Tsukuba. She is interested in contemporary Japanese literature and culture. Her other articles focusing on Natsuo Kirino were published in *The Annual Review of Cultural Studies* (6) and *Orientalia Parthenopea* (XIX). <komai.sachi.gf@u.tsukuba.ac.jp>

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