

## THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN JAPANESE WRITTEN MEDIA

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the representation of women in Japanese society in relation to men with respect to the use of language. One selected section of the published media has been used to determine if the Japanese language still propagates the traditional role of women as being different to and beneath that of men or if there has been some change. The traditional relationship of women to men is called in Japanese *dan-son jo-hi* and dates back to before the Meiji era. *dan-son jo-hi* involves the idea that men should be respected and not women, that women have lower status than men in society. As a case study, the magazine *AERA* that purports to be the "Time magazine of Japan" was selected. Thirty articles published between 2000 and 2002 from "*Josei*" the women's section of *AERA*, were examined by using three analytical techniques: Content analysis; Foregrounding analysis; Gender control and Gender image analysis. These three analyses show that the messages about a woman's role vary from one of promoting historical traditional attitudes through to more current "Western attitudes" with respect to equal status for women.

Ilha do Desterro	Florianópolis	nº 50	p. 099-126	jan./jun. 2006
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The study demonstrates that there still is a continued tendency to portray Japanese women in traditional and subservient roles in the section of the Japanese media studied. The analysis also demonstrates that the articles focus primarily on female rather than male roles. The implications of these written messages about gender and identity are discussed. Directions for further research utilizing a combination of the three analytical techniques used are also considered.

**Keywords:** Representation of women; Japan; text; magazines; gender; identity.

## Introduction

The position of women in Japanese society, that is, their relationship to men, appears to have changed significantly during the last century. The professions, such as business, medicine, politics and the judiciary, now include some women. However, despite the influence of agencies of change such as the 1946 Japanese Constitution, the Women's Movement, the 1986 Japanese Equal Employment Opportunity Law and ready access to international attitudes and developments through travel and the internet, there are many indications that equality for Japanese women has not yet been realized. In Japan the very structure of the Japanese language itself has been put forward as a conservative influence, promoting historical differential status of men and women and perpetuating the traditional social structures and images of women, that portray them as separate and subservient. This situation has been written about by a number of researchers (Endo, 1995; Maynard, 2000).

One magazine, *AERA*, was selected for detailed study, with respect to the use of written language that would enable the current study to be used for comparison purposes against a continuing study into the future to ascertain if change is occurring. The selection of the magazine used for analysis can be seen in the context of the aggregated Japanese magazine market. As befits a modern-day population in excess of 100 million, the market for print media in Japan is large and complex. The website of *J-magazine 2003* reports that 835 magazine titles are currently

in circulation in Japan. These magazines cover a wide range of general and specialized markets.

The role of these magazines in defining the aspirations of their readers is closely connected to their role in influencing the purchasing behaviour of their readers for their advertisers. Nancy R. Rosenberger (1995) notes that although a number of new magazines for women appeared with the lifting of cultural restraints after 1945, including some magazines promoting a social revolutionary role for women, those that were not financially backed by advertisers did not survive for long.

Minako Saito (2000) and Lise Skov (1995), amongst others, report that, in Japan, women's magazines defined women's culture. They do this by advertising commodities that carry images of freedom, independence, international sophistication, status and sexuality. The advertising typically addresses a range of lifestyle elements, ranging from skin quality, make-up, and clothes for all occasions relevant to the ideal lifestyle; clothes for everyday events, marriage, work and dating. However, when the texts of these magazines are seen in the Japanese cultural context it is also easy to make connections with traditional male-female roles. The traditional relationship of women to men is called in Japanese *dan-son jo-hi* and dates back to before the Meiji era. *Dan-son jo-hi* involves the idea that men are respected and not women, and those women have lower status than men in society. The time when these ideas saturated everyday life and dominated society is no more than one or two generations away for many Japanese.

This paper presents a linguistic analysis of the Japanese language used in the selected magazine as a case study to ascertain to what extent, if any, the language employed projects, and subsequently sustains a dogma of women's subservience to men in Japanese society. The choice of the Japanese magazine *AERA*, within this broad market, was seen as the most appropriate, as this magazine is seen as influential, having both male and female readership and in the writer's opinion, has a long circulation life span enabling ongoing studies.

*Representation of the subordinate role of women in the Japanese language*

My focus is on the representation of the subordination of women in Japanese society within the Japanese language itself. One feature of this is the range of grammatical levels and aspects of language at which the representation of subordination occurs.

One reason for this subordination is the close association of the different forms of the Japanese language with the historical status of women. For example, the recorded use of *Onna Kotoba*, the “Women’s Language”, dates back to the time of the appearance of written language in Japan. During the feudal Muromachi period (14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century Common Era), “women’s language” first appeared as *nyobo kotoba*, which was used among the *jokan*, the female servants to court ladies who resided within women’s quarters. During the Edo period (17<sup>th</sup> century) women’s language further developed as *jochu kotoba* among court ladies, female servants of the court and samurai families, and courtesans. During this time, the use of female language spread to the merchant families, and finally to the community of women in general (Horii 1990, Endo 1995).

It is important to note that these changes did not take place without deliberate promotion through educational channels such as special schools for girls and training manuals for girls (Endo 1995). These established a pattern for training young females that endured for centuries and emphasized training in the use of “proper” feminine language: to speak softly and gently, in “graceful” feminine behaviour, and in being submissive and obedient to their husbands.

*Source material: AERA*

My primary source material is made up of articles from the women’s section of the mainstream Japanese magazine *AERA*. The choice of *AERA* rather than other magazines as the initial platform for an analysis of contemporary Japanese magazines was based on the fact that, in order to find suitable text material referring to relationships between men and women, I needed a magazine which falls between the

generic media which infrequently refer to this relationship save when its eccentricity makes it newsworthy and the specialist “women’s magazine” genres with their focus on marketing female lifestyle products.

*Asahi Shimbun*, the important Japanese daily newspaper with a readership of approximately 8 million, publishes *AERA* weekly (published circulation 280,000). The title “*AERA*” is an acronym, made up of the initials of the English language phrase: **A**sahi **S**himbun **E**xtra **R**eport and **A**nalysis. The Asahi website purports *AERA* to be the ‘the *Time Magazine* of Japan’ (*AERA and Shuukan Asahi*, 2004). On the website [www.wakuwaku.org/bbs-s.htm](http://www.wakuwaku.org/bbs-s.htm) (downloaded August 2004) it was noted that some *AERA* articles are specifically written for women and young people, though these articles still constitute only a small proportion of the total. The primary market of *AERA* would seem to be members of the male business community, and the provision of a women’s section in the magazine appears to be an attempt to broaden this market to cater for the female business community. The content of *AERA* parallels that of the US *Time Magazine*, with articles that are mostly concerned with international and domestic politics, business, plus a range of lifestyle issues.

The advertisements placed in *AERA* are implicitly targeted at affluent people, mostly male: for example, beer, automobiles, masculine style Swiss watches, cigarettes, cordless shavers. From time to time advertisements appear directed at female readership, for example, gender specific clothing.

*AERA* is not part of an ostensibly Women’s Magazine genre. In general it targets the business sectors of the Japanese community.

With its general content and contemporary market, and the constraints imposed by its aims to be identified as a quality “*Time Magazine*-like” publication, it is free from the excesses of the “women’s magazine” genre. I have proposed that the *AERA josei* (women’s section) will serve as a good indicator of the progress of one mainstream Japanese magazine in presenting the identity of women in a light other than that of the traditional Japanese women’s role.

### Analysis of Current Articles in AERA

I have focused on thirty articles from the *Josei* section, published over the years 2000 to 2002. The 30 articles were selected on the basis that their content included a significant amount of material on the status of women and their relationship with men.

In order to identify the message conveyed by these articles at both the macro and micro levels, three different analytical techniques were used to measure how women are portrayed:

- 1. Content analysis
- 2. Foregrounding analysis
- 3. Gender control and Gender image

Other methods employed for examining the text include an analysis of qualifiers of 'women', modifiers of words relating to women, 'female' qualified positions, and use of archaic gender terms.

### Content analysis of thirty articles

*Method:* Using the Likert Scale, the content of each article was assigned a score from 1 to 5. The analysis of the articles text was inclusive of the traditional role for Japanese women *dan-son jo-hi* through to the more contemporary role for Japanese women as expressed in the writing and in its context. This type of assessment tends to be somewhat qualitative with the incremental measurements 1-5, and in my study I have analysed the text detail but also endeavoured to determine the balance of gender control whether it be female, male or neutral in a holistic manner. I have used the word positive to suggest where the textual control is in evidence, be it male or female.

An article that portrayed Japanese women's traditional roles, or devalued women's roles, was scored 1.

An article was scored 2 if it essentially portrayed a traditional Japanese women's role but where there were some positive aspects for women in the article.

An article was scored 3 if it did not focus upon the traditional roles for Japanese women or conversely upon a positive role for Japanese women and was considered to be gender neutral.

An article was scored 4 if it portrayed a positive role for Japanese women but there were some positive aspects for men in the article.

An article that reinforced a positive role for Japanese women, with no positive aspects for men, was scored 5.

The scores on the Likert Scale assigned to each article are presented in Table 1. Examples of my scoring follow:

Firstly an article scoring 1:

Article N° 15 – ‘Want to break up and can’t’ describes a woman’s ten years of marriage, and her life as a wife and mother in the traditional role.

Secondly an article scoring 2:

Article N° 11 – ‘Come on boys catch up’ discusses female politicians. It explains that all male politicians are described by the term “*giin*”. However, female politicians who are competent are called “*giin (josei)*”, and female politicians who are incompetent are called “*Josei (giin)*” where there is no similar gender reference to an incompetent male politician. No reference is made to the fact that these terms are discriminatory. Nor does it question why competent female politicians are not just called ‘*giin*’.

Thirdly, an article scoring 3:

Article N° 22 – ‘Working women and their mothers-in-law’ describes how working women get along with their mothers-in-law. This article did not include any aspects of the traditional Japanese women’s role and the women are neither dependant upon, nor independent of, men in the context of the article.

Fourthly, an article scoring 4: Article N° 1- 'Over 30 and still *joshi* at heart': *joshi*(girl), career women refer to themselves as *joshi*. This term, originally used to denote high school girls, has the neutral meaning of female, and does not carry the implication of the stereotyped female carried by the former term, *josei*.

Finally an article scoring 5:

Article N° 3 – 'Single women in their 30's, exceedingly extravagant, but not because of loneliness'. "*Non Para*" is about women aged in their 30's who stay single, are supported by their own income and do not live with their parents. These, the "non-para" are the opposite of the traditional "parasite" singles. These women are independently in control of their lives.

*Results:* The mean score of these articles is 3.66. Scores ranged from 1 to 5. This indicated that the messages conveyed by the selected articles about women's role varied from the promotion of very traditional attitudes to promotion of non-traditional roles for women, although they tended to be positive. A summary of the articles studied and the Content analysis scores for each article follow in Table 1:

**Table 1**  
AERA magazines women's section articles Content analysis

N°	AERA Titles (Romaji)	AERA Titles (English Translation)	Content analysis (Likert) Score
1.	<i>30 sugitemo 'joshi'na watashitachi</i>	Over 30 and still 'joshi' at heart ( <i>joshi</i> , a girl: a term used at school)	4
2.	<i>Nerai wa oobeikei eriito</i>	Target is an elite white male	1
3.	<i>Shinguru 30 onna:sabishikara ja nai kyuuukyokuno zeitaku</i>	Single women in their thirties: exceedingly extravagant, but not because of loneliness	5
4.	<i>Tatakiage onna</i>	Women who started on the bottom rung of the ladder	4

5.	<i>Kodomo hoshiku nai otto</i>	Husbands who don't want children	3
6.	<i>Shinguru joshi no daioojoo</i>	Peaceful deaths of single women	5
7.	<i>Haha ni natte yomigaeru Kateika no akumu</i>	A woman's nightmare about a home science class returns when she becomes a mother.	3
8.	<i>Bijin nanoni ikinikui</i>	It's hard work even though I am beautiful	2
9.	<i>Onna ga tsuyoi jidai no nyuukanpaku</i>	Husband as the ruler: a new-style in the age of strong women	5
10.	<i>Donmai sugiru haha oya tachi</i>	Mothers who "don't care" too often	3
11.	<i>Ganbare otokonoko</i>	Come on boys catch up!	2
12.	<i>Shussan shinchooryuu' watashi burando' risoo o motomete</i>	New trend in delivering a baby: in search of the ideal of 'my own brand'	5
13.	<i>30 dai onnna wa kigyoo shinai: Kaisha rabu no jinsei</i>	Women in their thirties don't start up a business: Love for the Company	4
14.	<i>Suponsaa furin</i>	Having an affair and funding it	5
15.	<i>Wakaretai wakarerarenai</i>	Want to break up but can't	1
16.	<i>Fufu de shiisoo tenshoku</i>	A married couple changing jobs (in turn) like a seesaw	5
17.	<i>Umitai kedo umenai</i>	Want to have a baby but can't	2
18.	<i>Sasurai kitsuen josei</i>	Wandering female smokers	4
19.	<i>Yoki otto kashikoi chichi Hataraku onna no omou tsubo</i>	Good husband and wise father – playing into the working woman's hands	4
20.	<i>Jidoo gyakutai no yamai, haha wa kokufuku shita</i>	Mother overcame the disease of child abuse.	3
21.	<i>Joi doru</i>	Female doctors	5
22.	<i>Hataraku onna to giri mama</i>	Working women and their mothers-in-law	3
23.	<i>Eijiresu onna wa mainichiga batoru</i>	Each day is a battle for 'ageless' women	4
24.	<i>Itsumademo junai furin</i>	Having an affair of 'true love' forever	5
25.	<i>Onna ga kyariaa o oriru toki</i>	When a woman steps down from a career path	4

26. <i>Shokuba mama na kanrishoku</i>	Female managers – mother figures in the workplace	3
27. <i>Dankon josei ga sagasu otona no onna no jiritsu</i>	Independence for mature women sought by baby boomer women	4
28. <i>Naku nomo hitori non para shitsugyoo</i>	Crying alone – retrenched ‘non-parasitic’ women	5
29. <i>Chihoo no haha o yobiyoseru ketsudan ni mayou tokai de hataraku 30 dai shinguru josei</i>	Single women in their thirties working in the city – wavering on asking their mothers to move to the city from the provinces	3
30. <i>Nagaiki no kagi wa hitori non kirakusa</i>	The key to long life is the freedom of a widow’s life.	3

The summary of the assigned Likert ratings follows in Table 2.

**Table 2**

Content analysis of 30 articles

Likert Rating	Frequency	%
1	2	6.7
2	3	10
3	8	26.7
4	7	23.3
5	10	33.3
Total:	30	100

Mean score: (3.66)

Table 2 above can be compared with Figure 1 below which illustrates an ideal situation with a language that is gender neutral compared to the measured outcomes. It can be seen that there is significant variance from the “ideal” neutral rating where the weighting is towards women. This result may well not be unexpected as the articles studied do form part of the Women’s section of *AERA*.

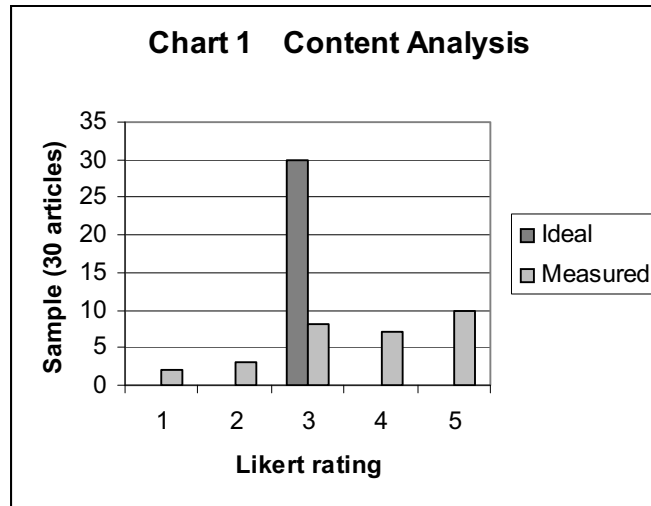


Figure 1: *Foregrounding analysis of the titles of 30 articles*

### Foregrounding analysis of 30 articles

One purpose of article titles in mass media magazines is to attract the attention of the reader and motivate him or her to continue reading into the body of the text.

Foregrounding analysis is a technique used in stylistic analysis, initially developed by linguists of the Prague school. It focuses on sections of text that are emphasized within the body of the textual material. This is achieved by linguistic devices in the foregrounded text standing out, highlighted or prominent in the body of the text (Halliday, 1976).

The effect of foregrounding is relative. Halliday uses the term "prominence" to characterize foregrounded text (Halliday, 1976). Hasan explains that "the concept basic to foregrounding is that of contrast" (Hasan, 1985). She also observes that foregrounding becomes noticeable because of its consistency, and that foregrounding would be impossible without the existence of a consistent background. I have also considered the foregrounded message with respect to Gender control and Gender image.

*Method:* The analytical method of foregrounding is employed here in examining each of the titles of the thirty *AERA* articles to determine:

- what is foregrounded (which words are highlighted against the others)
- how foregrounding is achieved (what devices are used)
- the foregrounded message about women in terms of:
  - o Topic gender: What is the prominent gender of the title's topic (male "M", or female "F")?
  - o Gender control: Who is in control of the situation as illustrated by the title of the article? What is the gender of those foregrounded and in control in the use of language in the title: (male "M" or female "F")?
  - o Gender image: What is the image of prominent gender of the title's topic (positive "+" or negative "-")

In amplification of the meaning of Gender control and Gender image in the context of this paper I would quote from Alexander Schonfield (1999):

Present day Japanese has evolved very differently from European languages. One relatively unique aspect of Japanese is the diversity of its gender specific constructs and their usage. In the current state of Japanese and its many dialects, speaker gender plays an important role in word choice, sentence structure, tone of voice and more generally the ways in which a person can present him/herself with the language. The importance of roles in Japanese society makes the speaker obligated to conform to language stereotypes whereas in English, the language of self-proclaimed individualists, social forces have been pushing to neutralize

the inherent biases of the language breakdown as well (*from the Internet, site not available*).

The thirty articles that I have analysed had titles and supporting subtitles. The subtitle was a précis of the articles content. I found that both the titles and the subtitles of the articles were representative of the text within the articles themselves and not 'sensationalised' as typified in newspaper headlines and billboards. For example, article nine within my study, titled "Husband as the ruler: a new style in the age of strong women" has the title amplified in the subtitle. The article draws on the views of three married women and their views were similar in that they wanted a shared role, rather than the traditional role, with their husbands regarding decision making within the relationship. The articles title, subtitle and content were harmonious and did not indicate editorial exaggeration of the title or subtitle to attract the readers' attention. All of the articles under review followed a similar pattern in that both the title and subtitle was representative of the ensuing article.

*Results:* Let me examine a selection of nine article titles to illustrate the foregrounding used in them:

**Title 4: "Women who started on the bottom rung of the ladder" *Tatakiage onna***

What is foregrounded?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 'tatakiage' ('start on the bottom rung of the ladder')</li> <li>▪ "onna"</li> </ul>		
What devices achieve foregrounding?	1. Juxtaposition: use of 'onna' as the subject of 'tatakiage', when this is conventionally applied to men		
Foregrounded message:	Topic gender F	Gender control M	Gender image F-

**Title 5: "Husbands who don't want children" *Kodomo hoshiku nai otto***

What is foregrounded?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 'kodomo hoshikunai' (do not want children)</li> <li>▪ "otto" (husband)</li> </ul>		
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What devices achieve foregrounding?	1. Association of 'otto' (who are traditionally the progenitors in society) with 'kodomo hoshikunai' ('who don't want the children')
	2. Topic marker –husbands, children

Foregrounded message:	Topic gender	Gender control	Gender image
	M	M	M-

**Title 7: “A woman’s nightmares about her home sciences class return when she becomes a mother” *Haha ni natte yomigaeru Kateika no akumu***

What is foregrounded?	■ 'akumu' (nightmare)
What devices achieve foregrounding?	1. Opposition: Contrastive association of the disturbing 'nightmare' with the conventional and familiar 'home science class' that is an important part of the conventional career path of all Japanese women, in preparation for being a good wife and wise mother ( <i>ryosai kenbo</i> ) after marriage 2. Topic marker (becoming a mother)

Foregrounded message:	Topic gender	Gender control	Gender image
	F	F	F-

**Title 9: “Husband as the ruler: a new style in the age of strong women” *Onna ga tsuyoi jidai no nyuu kanpaku***

What is foregrounded?	■ 'onna ga' (woman) ■ 'tsuyoi' (strong) ■ 'nyu kanpaku' (new style of husband)
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What devices achieve foregrounding?	1. Particle – emphatic use of 'ga' 2. Opposition of 'Husband . . . ruler' and 'strong women' 3. Contrastive association of 'strong' and 'women' in a traditional society where women are expected to be passive 4. Allusion to song title ' <i>kampaku sengen</i> ' (satirical song about a domineering husband who first tries to
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lay down the law, but finishes up as a mere decoration for his wife)

5. Irony

Foregrounded message:	Topic gender	Gender control	Gender image
	M	F	F+

**Title 11: "Come on boys catch up!" *Ganbare otokonoko***

What is foregrounded?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 'otokonoko' (boys-high school term/neutral)</li> <li>▪ 'ganbare' (Go or catch up)</li> </ul>		
What devices achieve foregrounding?	1. Irony: It is women who condescend to encourage men to catch up with them in "the rat race", using the cheer 'ganbare' often used by high school cheer squads to encourage athletes. The article describes how mature men in business are actually losing the race against women to achieve		
Foregrounded message:	Topic gender	Gender control	Gender image
	M	F	M-

**Title 13: "Women in their thirties don't start up a business: Love for the Company" *30 dai onnna wa kigyoo shinai: Kaisha rabu no jinsei***

What is foregrounded?	▪ '30-dai onna' (Women in their thirties)		
What devices achieve foregrounding?	1. Irony 2. Topic marker (women in their 30s) 3. Allusion to how male executives are 'married to the company' ( <i>kaisha rabu</i> )		
Foregrounded message:	Topic gender	Gender control	Gender image
	F	M	F-

**Title 14: "Having an affair and funding it" *Suponsaa furin***

What is foregrounded?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 'suponsaa' (being sponsored/funded)</li> <li>▪ 'furin' (love affairs)</li> </ul>		
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What devices achieve foregrounding?	1. Irony: the title implies the affair is primary, and money an accidental benefit, in contrast to the conventional notion of the woman (mistress) providing a service for a fee controlled by the man 2. Semantic innovation: presenting an affair in the light of a business project managed by the female, with funding arrangements planned to support it		
Foregrounded message:	Topic gender	Gender control	Gender image
	F	F	F+

### Title 15: "Want to break up but can't" *Wakaretai wakarerarenai*

What is foregrounded?	■ '-tai vs - rarenai' (want but cannot)		
What devices achieve foregrounding?	1. Semantic innovation: presents the female as potentially able to initiate and accomplish termination of an affair 2. Use of potential negative form of 'to want' ( <i>wakaretai</i> , <i>wakarerarenai</i> ) stresses women who want, but cannot		
Foregrounded message:	Topic gender	Gender control	Gender image
	F	F	F-

### Title 16: "A married couple exchanging jobs/roles in turn like a see-saw" *Fuufu de shiisoo tenshoku*

What is foregrounded?	■ 'fuufu' (husband and wife) ■ 'sii soo' (seesaw)		
What devices achieve foregrounding?	■ Husband and wife (theme marker) ■ Imagery (seesaw), also a theme marker for the reciprocal relationship of the career positions of the husband and wife		
Foregrounded message:	Topic gender	Gender control	Gender image
	M, F	M=F	(M=F)+

It should be noted in my analysis that the scoring method used does not form a judgement on whether the traditional role of Japanese women is

more positive or less positive than the emerging non-traditional role of Japanese women. I have used the word positive in the context of the text where women are empowered as compared with the traditional role where Japanese women would not be empowered when compared with men. I have not formed a value judgement on whether this emerging situation of change will be better or worse for women; this will become evident as the immutable change process proceeds.

The summary of my complete findings from the articles studied is presented in the following table.

**Table 3:**

*Summary of Foregrounded Message analysis in the title of AERA Women's section articles*

Type	Topic Gender		Gender control		Gender image	
	N <sup>o</sup>	%	N <sup>o</sup>	%	N <sup>o</sup>	%
F (Female):	24	80%	21	70%		
F+					14	47%
F-					11	37%
M (Male)	5	17%	8	27%	0	
M+					0	
M-					4	13%
F+M	1	3%	1	3%		
(F+M)+					1	3%
Total:	30	100%	30	100%	30	100%

The summary of my findings illustrated in Table 3 shows that while in a clear majority of the article titles (80%) Topic Gender, women are foregrounded, Gender control was somewhat less (70%), but 37% of these articles gave women a negative image. All the men who were foregrounded were ascribed a negative image.

#### *Gender control and Gender image in one article*

I have further examined article 1 from the group of 30 articles in the *Josei* section of *AERA* studied in this paper to determine the Gender

control and Gender image in the phrases used in the article. I have used two methods.

*Method 1:* I have only selected phrases that refer to men or women in the article. I have done this giving consideration to expressions incorporating either the masculine or feminine gender, which gender was attributed control of a situation and whether a given gender was given a positive, negative or neutral image. It is sometimes quite difficult to determine Gender control in language. For example, phrase 3 in the article “assuage a man’s weariness” (*Otsukare danshi e no iyashi*) is considered. On the surface, this phrase suggests that women are in control – they have the power to restore a man’s strength. In the long term, however, this phrase empowers the control of men, because it suggests that only men can work hard enough to become so weary and women do not. Accordingly, I have restricted consideration of Gender control to the immediate context of the phrase. I have given some examples of this analysis using the selected article 1, titled *Over 30 and still ‘joshi’ at heart* - (*joshi* is a girl, a term used at high school and the neutrality of both sexes is implied). I have selected phrases which, this article being about how a woman can assert a modern identity, are relatively rich in examples of Gender control. Also by using just one article we do not need to describe a new context for each phrase.

The first four items from this article incorporate the word “man” (*otoko* or *danshi*); all the other items are expressions incorporating the word “woman” (*onna*).

For this analysis I have selected 32 phrases from the article which foreground Gender control. The summary of my findings is shown in Table 4. The collective results of each analysis are presented in Table 5.

*Results:* Let us now look at ten of the 32 phrases. Which gender is in control in each of these? I would argue that in every case, at least in the short term, the female gender is controlling the situation, that is, making the decisions in the short term. For example,

Phrase N° 3: *Otsukare danshi eno iyashi*, “Assuage a man’s weariness/cure a man’s fatigue” implies that only men work hard enough to become fatigued, and so a negative and subordinate image

of women is projected at the same time as the positive image of women's capacity to cure that fatigue.

On the other hand:

Phrase N° 4: *Otoko ni kobinai*, "not play coquettish with a man" implies that women have the power to control men through flirtatious manipulation and the 'masterful male' fantasy; but recommends that this be abandoned in favour of an equal relationship.

Phrase N° 6: *Onna rashiku*, "Looks feminine", women speaking of other women to evaluate as positive their attractiveness to men. Here men are in control in that women are evaluated in terms of their cuteness [sic] to men. This portrays women as secondary to men.

Phrase N° 7: *Onna no kusenai kawaiku nai*, "You are ugly for a female"; this implies that all women should be cute – attractive, gentle, elegant and pretty. Clearly men are in control of this language and it casts negative, that is, a disempowering image of women.

Phrase N° 11: *Rukkusu no ii joi san*, "A good-looking female doctor". This phrase appears to empower women, but on the contrary appeals to female stereotypes. In the context, 'good looking' means that it meets the approval of men. Men are the gender in control here and the image of women is poor, as an agent subsidiary to and serving men.

Phrase N° 13: *Modan Gaaru*, "A modern girl, a cool, hip girl". Self-referential phrase for the "new woman". Women control this. "Cool", "hip" lends a positive image where women are in control.

Phrase N° 15: *Joshiryoku appu*, "Pump up the girl power". It is very clear that here the female gender is controlling the situation, and that this portrays women with a positive image.

Phrase N° 16: *Joshi na watashi-tachi*, "We girls". Instead of using the 'no' particle, the incorrect particle *na* is used. What does this mean? This emphasizes "we girls" – as if empowered. Again, the female gender is controlling the situation and with a positive image (from a pro-feminist point of view).

Phrase N° 20: *Joshi na kibun*, "Female sentiment - feel like a woman", 'na' foregrounds and marks woman as a theme marker;

emphasises a woman's sentiment in its own right, and not as subsidiary to males.

Phrase N° 29: *Josei Jooshi*, "Female boss". A female qualified position. One does not normally refer to a 'male boss' – just 'the boss'. This phrase foregrounds the assumption that males are in control.

Phrase N° 30: *Josei giin*, literally, 'female Congress person'; a female qualified position. One does not normally refer to a 'male Congress person', just 'Giin'. This phrase foregrounds the assumption that men are in control.

Finally, to complete the analysis of "Gender control", let us look at two phrases including the word "female" as a marker. For example, items 29 and 30 include the phrases: "*Josei Jooshi*" (female boss) and "*Josei Giin*" (female congressman), respectively. Tanaka (1997) labels these phrases as discriminatory expressions because when applied to men, the qualifier "male" is omitted. I would argue that these phrases are not necessarily discriminatory and that it depends on the context where they are used.

*Method 2:* When "female" is used as a qualifying marker, I have taken the conventional view that this is discriminatory, although there may be a context within which "female" markers serve to promote the image of women.

#### Gender control and Gender image

Phrase N°: 1	Phrase: <i>Danshi uke suru fuku</i> , "Clothes that are well-received by men",	
Incorp. gender: M	Gender control: F	Gender image: F+
Phrase N°: 2	Phrase: <i>Konomashii danshi o mitsukeru</i> , "Find a desirable man"	
Incorp. gender: M	Gender control: F	Gender image: F+
Phrase N°: 3	Phrase: <i>Otsukare danshi e no iyashi</i> , "Assuage a man's weariness/cure a man's fatigue"	
Incorp. gender: M	Gender control: F	Gender image: F+

Phrase N°: 4	Phrase: <i>Otoko ni kobinai,</i> "not play coquettish with a man"	
Incorp. gender: M	Gender control: F	Gender image: F+
Phrase N°: 5	Phrase: <i>Bijin nanoni,</i> "In spite of being beautiful/despite being good looking, 'God's gift to men;'"	
Incorp. gender: F	Gender control: M	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 6	Phrase: <i>Onna rashiku,</i> "Looks womanly"	
Incorp. gender: F	Gender control: M	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 7	Phrase: <i>Onna no kuse ni kawaiku nai,</i> "Unattractive despite being a woman"	
Incorp. gender: F	Gender control: M	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 8	Phrase: <i>Nakeba Onna no buki,</i> "Tears are women's weapon"	
Incorp. gender: F	Gender control: M	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 9	Phrase: <i>Onnanokoppoi,</i> "Girlish/girly"	
Incorp. gender: F	Gender control: M	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 10	Phrase: <i>Onna toshite karechai soo,</i> "As a woman, I'm like a 'dry, withered flower'"	
Incorp. gender: F	Gender control: M	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 11	Phrase: <i>Rukkusu no ii joi san,</i> "A good-looking female"	
Incorp. gender: F	Gender control: M	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 12	Phrase: <i>Onna o uri ni shite,</i> "A 'female excuse'"	
Incorp. gender: F	Gender control: M	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 13	Phrase: <i>Modan Gaaru,</i> "A modern girl, a cool, hip girl"	
Incorp. gender: F	Gender control: F	Gender image: F+

Phrase N°: 14	Phrase: <i>Joshi tte mirarenai</i> , "I'm not regarded as a woman/ I'm one of the boys".	
Incorp. gender: F	Gender control: F	Gender image: F+
Phrase N°: 15	Phrase: <i>Joshiryoku appu.</i> " Pump up the girl power"	
Incorp. gender: F	Gender control: F	Gender image: F+
Phrase N°: 16	Phrase: <i>Joshi na watashi-tachi</i> , "We girls"	
Incorp. Gender: F	Gender control: F	Gender image: F+
Phrase N°: 17	Phrase: <i>Joshiryoku o tsukeru</i> , "Enhance (pumping up) a woman's sex appeal (make prettier)"	
Incorp. Gender: F	Gender control: F	Gender image: F+
Phrase N°: 18	Phrase: <i>Hana no ooeru</i> , "A 'decorative' office lady"	
Incorp. Gender: F	Gender control: F	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 19	Phrase: <i>Joshikan ga masu</i> , "Enhance one's femininity"	
Incorp. Gender: F	Gender control: F	Gender image: F+
Phrase N°: 20	Phrase: <i>Joshi na kibun</i> , "Female sentiment - feel like a woman"	
Incorp. Gender: F	Gender control: F	Gender image: F+
Phrase N°: 21	Phrase: <i>Joshi na koto</i> , "A girl thing"	
Incorp. Gender: F	Gender control: F	Gender image: F+
Phrase N°: 22	Phrase: <i>Suupaa uuman</i> , "A superwoman"	
Incorp. Gender: F	Gender control: F	Gender image: F+

Phrase N°: 23	Phrase: <i>Josei dokusha muke</i> , "Targeting female readers"	
Incorp. Gender: F	Gender control: F	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 24	Phrase: <i>Josei henshuu buin</i> , Female editorial staff members	
Incorp. Gender: F	Gender control: M	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 25	Phrase: <i>Josei saito</i> , "A website for women"	
Incorp. Gender: F	Gender control: M	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 26	Phrase: <i>Joshi ana</i> , "A female announcer"	
Incorp. Gender: F	Gender control: M	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 27	Phrase: <i>Joshidaisei buumu</i> , "A boom amongst female university students"	
Incorp. Gender: F	Gender control: M	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 28	Phrase: <i>Dokushin Josei</i> , "A bachelorette"	
Incorp. Gender: F	Gender control: M	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 29	Phrase: <i>Josei jooshi'</i> , "Female boss"	
Incorp. Gender: F	Gender control: M	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 30	Phrase: <i>Josei giin</i> , "Congress woman"	
Incorp. Gender: F	Gender control: M	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 31	Phrase: <i>Josei soogooshoku</i> , "Female general office worker"	
Incorp. Gender: F	Gender control: M	Gender image: F-
Phrase N°: 32	Phrase: <i>Bijin Jaanarisuto</i> , "An attractive journalist"	
Incorp. Gender: F	Gender control: M	Gender image: F-

### Analysis of Gender control and Gender image in one AERA Women's section article

	Incorporate Gender		Gender control		Gender image	
Type	N <sup>o</sup>	%	N <sup>o</sup>	%	N <sup>o</sup>	%
F (Female):	28	88%	15	47%		
M (Male):	4	12%	17	53%		
F positive:					13	41%
F negative:					19	59%
Total:	32	100%	32	100%	32	100%

*Results:* These results show that although 88% of the phrases in the article referring to gender were about women, less than half (47%) of all the foregrounded phrases concerned situations where women were in control, and similarly with Gender image less than half (41%); the total phrases portrayed a positive image of women, while over half (59%) portrayed a negative image of women.

### Conclusions and Thoughts for the Future

My findings are that the Japanese language, as used in a foremost Japanese magazine with a significant circulation, is no longer traditionally bound to convey long-held views of female subordination as intrinsically embodied in its semantics. It collectively portrays increasingly ambivalent perceptions of women with women being progressively portrayed in a dominant role, in some cases with implicit superiority over men.

I have extracted and analysed 30 articles from the women's section of the *AERA* magazine as the basis for my study. The results show that even in a contemporary, and what may be expected to be 'gender neutral', magazine the women's section conveys a variety of images of the status of women in Japan. These images range from the portrayal of women in modern, non-traditional roles to the portrayal of traditional, subservient roles for women. Perhaps the most significant aspect of this is the continued and significant portrayal of women in traditional subservient roles.

The content analysis of the articles showed that the identity of women, as portrayed in the thirty articles, was moving away from more traditional roles to more empowering roles for women. Table 2 with the analysed outcomes can be compared with Figure 1 which illustrates an ideal situation with a language that is gender neutral compared to the measured outcomes. It can be seen that there is significant variance from the “ideal” neutral rating where the weighting is towards women. This result may well not be unexpected as the articles studied do form part of the Women’s section of *AERA*. The findings would suggest the existence of a degree of editorial maintenance of the traditional role of women with some acceptance of change.

The title foregrounding of the articles illustrated in Table 3 shows that while in a clear majority of the titles (80%), women are foregrounded, Gender control was somewhat less (70%), but 37% of these articles gave women a negative Gender image. All the men who were foregrounded were ascribed a negative image. These findings confirm a significant movement away from the traditional portrayal of women in the titles of articles. The findings were somewhat similar to the findings from Content analysis.

A more surprising finding (and one in keeping with the maintenance of cultural conservatism) has been the ambivalence of the attitudes to control by women portrayed in at least one article, i.e. “Over 30 and still ‘*joshi*’ at heart”. Here, phrases frequently portray the feminine gender in short-term control of the situation but the male gender being in long-term control. This amounts to this *AERA* article giving an ambiguous message about the role of women. Despite its superficially modern appearance, essentially this article supports traditional attitudes toward women.

A further outcome of the collective findings is that they indicate the opportunities for ongoing study in this area of written language. A worthwhile study could be to use the synchronic analysis contained in this paper and carry out a diachronic analysis in the future to determine if any changes in the use of the language have occurred in articles in the women’s section of *AERA*. An additional study, using the three

analytical techniques used in this study, to determine the portrayal of women in other Japanese journal genres, for example, women's magazines, and a comparative review of journal genres between different countries, for example, Japan and the United States, may be worthwhile.

The overall conclusion is that the traditional role and identity of Japanese Women *dan-son jo-hi*, as portrayed in one sample of the Japanese written media, is changing towards a more modern role. Some of the agencies of change are the 1946 Japanese Constitution, the Women's Movement, the 1986 Japanese Equal Employment Opportunity Law and ready access to international attitudes and developments through travel and the Internet. It is expected that this trend will continue.

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