

He's more katakana than kanji: Indexing identity and self-presentation through script selection in Japanese manga (comics)

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This paper examines the role of script selection in indexing identities and styles of self-presentation within a Japanese manga (comic). By cataloguing where the kanji, hiragana, and katakana scripts are used to represent first person pronouns, I establish the contexts where each script/pronoun combination serves as a locally normative representation. These norms are compared against non-normative representations to gain insight into the local meanings associated with the various scripts. Analysis of the variant forms is combined with an interview with the manga's author. Ultimately, the results reveal that the contribution of script to the meaning of a Japanese text goes beyond any single marked selection, and involves interactions between both locally normative patterns of script use and meaningful local violations of these norms. Selections of script are seen to convey nuances in how meaning is constructed in the text, as well as reflecting wider ideologies about language use in Japan.

本研究では日本の漫画を一作品取り上げ、文字表記方法によって登場人物のアイデンティティや表現スタイルがどのように構築されるかを考察する。登場人物の一人称代名詞が日本語の最も一般的な表記文字(漢字、ひらがな、カタカナ)のうちどの文字で著されているかを調査し、それぞれの表記がどのような文脈で用いられているかを分析することにより、文字表記の選択をもたらす、あるいは影響する動機を明らかにしようとする。この結果により日本語の文字表記の選択はテキストの意味において複雑で、且つ相互的な影響力を持つことが分かる。文字表記による意味は、ある一場面でのどの文字が使われているかという個別の選択によって決まるものではなく、作品全体の中で見られる一貫したパターン(また、そのパターンからの例外的な逸脱)との関係で構築されるのである。これまでの先行研究では社会言語学的な見方で日本語の文字表記バリエーションについて多くは論じられていないが、本論文では、日本語の文字表記の選択は意味作成やニュアンスにおいて重要であり、また、日本でダイアログ作成に影響する言語思想(イデオロギー)を観察するためのツールであることを明確化する。[Japanese]

KEYWORDS: Indexicality, Japanese, Japanese writing, script, language ideology, comics

INTRODUCTION

Compared to avenues for linguistic variation like accent, spelling, or word choice, the indexical potential of script has only recently become a topic of empirical inquiry. This is not necessarily surprising, as script selection is rare or even non-existent in many languages. In English, for example, distinct populations with contrasting pronunciations, spelling standards, and/or vocabulary preferences are still united in their use of the Roman script. However, a growing body of research has evidenced many cases where selection from competing scripts can become a target of metalinguistic discussion and socially meaningful use (Sebba 2009, 2012). In actions like the development of the Deseret alphabet by Mormons in America, the rejection of imposed scripts and/or celebration of native scripts by writers of Korean or Cherokee, and even in the adoption of the German-associated Blackletter by English-speaking heavy metal bands to index militarism or machismo, we see clear examples of script acting as a marker of distinct social groups and/or ideologically associated traits (Bender 2008; Brown and Yeon 2015; Harkness 2015; Spitzmüller 2012, 2015; Thompson 1982).

The indexical potential of script selection is particularly interesting when discussing written Japanese. In most writing systems, script selection is somewhat analogous to dialect, as distinct communities utilize distinct methods of producing the same language (Unseth 2005). For instance, many languages spoken in India are written in multiple scripts, but an author generally uses a single script exclusively when writing a text (Choksi 2014). The contemporary Japanese writing system departs from this script/dialect analogy, as it instead necessitates the combined use of multiple scripts within a sentence. In particular, three scripts known as *kanji*, *hiragana*, and *katakana* are found within almost any contemporary text not written for children. Although the use of the three scripts generally follows codified standards, almost any element of the Japanese language can be (and, indeed, has been) written in each script (Konno 2015). Consequently, the Japanese writing system allows for variation in script use on a 'scale which is inconceivable in the case of more familiar [to Western readers] writing systems' (Backhouse 1984: 220). This provides potential for meaningful and systematic variations in 'saying the same thing' (Silverstein 1985: 222) which is difficult, if not impossible, to observe in other languages.

My goal in this study is to further our understanding of how variant uses of *kanji*, *hiragana*, and *katakana* can be part of the creation of a 'total linguistic fact' (Silverstein 1985: 220). That is, an unpredictable, layered, context-dependent, and ideologically mediated linguistic unit that is co-constructed by the denotational (i.e. conventional or dictionary-literal) and indexical meaning(s) of linguistic signs (Blommaert 2016; Wortham 2010). To do so, I investigate variation in the script(s) which represent first person pronouns throughout the dialogue of adult characters in the Japanese manga ('comic')

Usagi Doroppu ('Bunny Drop'). More specifically, I identify and compare consistent links between script/pronoun combinations and definable speaker identities and styles of self-presentation to shed light on how each script's indexical field influences if, when, and where the author represents a pronoun in hiragana, katakana, or kanji. Analysis of the script selection is supplemented by a stimulated recall interview conducted with the manga's author.

Ultimately, the representation of pronouns in *Usagi Doroppu* is found to involve both contrasting norms that separate major character identities and temporary variants which index locally non-normative styles of self presentation. The specifics of each norm's design and use also shows that script selection can serve as a location for observing the influence of linguistic ideologies on how dialogue is constructed in Japanese. However, before discussing the data or findings in further detail, it is necessary to first explain the particulars of script and script selection in Japanese writing. The following section will provide this summary, and in doing so establish why investigation of Japanese script selection is still necessary despite prior discussion of the topic.

SCRIPT AND SCRIPT SELECTION IN CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE WRITING

As mentioned, the three primary scripts used in contemporary written Japanese are known as kanji, hiragana, and katakana. Of the three scripts, kanji is by far the oldest and most complex. Contemporary written Japanese uses thousands of distinct kanji, with each morphosyllabic character usually representing sound and meaning simultaneously (Matsunaga 1996). As an example, in the construction *これは紙です* (*kore wa kami desu*, 'this is paper') the kanji 紙 both represents the morae *kami* and means 'paper'; the kanji both signifies sound and distinguishes the morae from other homographs. In contemporary Japan, kanji are primarily used to represent nouns of Japanese or Chinese origin, and the non-inflectional stems of most verbs and adjectives (Seeley 2000).

Hiragana and katakana are instead phonetic scripts developed in Japan. Both consist of corresponding sets of 46 characters which represent individual morae in Japanese phonology. In contrast to kanji, individual hiragana and katakana therefore do not possess clear meaning outside of the context of a language act. For instance, three options for writing the morae *kami* are the previously mentioned kanji 紙, the hiragana かみ, and the katakana カミ. While the kanji representation is almost certain to mean 'paper', the other options could represent the words 'paper', 'hair', 'god', or a number of other homographs which would require distinct kanji (髪 and 神 for 'hair' and 'god', respectively). Currently, the major role of hiragana is to represent grammatical particles and the inflectional elements of a sentence, while katakana most commonly represents loanwords from languages other than Chinese (Konno 2014a). Both

scripts are also used to represent onomatopoeia, and to replace kanji considered difficult to read or write.

While the use of multiple scripts in Japanese is therefore far from chaotic, the major applications of each script are actually better described as conventions rather than rules (Konno 2014a). Some conventions, like the use of hiragana for particles and inflection, are quite rigid. However, there is not necessarily a definitive or 'best' representation for many individual words, and variant selections are often better described as 'uncommon' than 'wrong' (Konno 2014b). Consequently, authors are allowed some individuality in their script use, and orthographic variation stands as 'a major characteristic of the Japanese writing system' (Joyce, Hodošček and Nishina 2012: 269) even within standard writing. In more creative or flexible styles/mediums of writing (e.g. manga, advertising, online communication), script variation can be even further pronounced, as the fact that any script can technically represent almost any word opens the door for a wide variety of creative play (Gottlieb 2010; Robertson 2015). Table 1 shows three examples.

Speaking broadly, researchers have established two major motives for the selection of unconventional or uncommon script variants in Japanese. The first is a desire or need for legibility-related changes. For instance, authors may use an otherwise unusual representation to draw attention to a word, avoid kanji with unpleasant meanings, adjust their text composition in consideration of the literacy level of their readers, or clarify word boundaries when orthographic norms would cause one script to dominate a sentence (Akizuki 2005; Gottlieb 2005). These recognized sources of script variation are not the focus of the current study, but must be considered as potential explanations for any interesting script use found in written Japanese.

The second major reason for script selection, and the one of interest to this study, is that authors sometimes vary their script use in relation to the meaning of a word or sentence. That is, authors select 'a particular script type for the "feeling" it evokes' (Kess and Miyamoto 1999: 108), with each 'feeling' arising from links¹ between a script, its historical or contemporary uses or users, and culturally associated traits. For example, the kanji script was once mostly restricted to the domain of educated, upper-class males. Even today, it is still seen as a symbol of maturity and erudition. Consequently, its marked use

Table 1: Three words written in the three major Japanese scripts

Script	Japanese word (English translation)		
	<i>kaki</i> ('oyster')	<i>megane</i> ('glasses')	<i>biiru</i> ('beer')
Kanji	牡蠣	眼鏡	麦酒
Hiragana	かき	めがね	びいる
Katakana	カキ	メガネ	ビール

is frequently argued to make writing have an old-fashioned, masculine, formal, or scholarly feel (Brown 1985; Tsuboi 2003). Hiragana-heavy texts are instead viewed as feminine, cute, gentle, or childish (Akizuki 2005; Miyake 2007), as hiragana was historically the primary script used by women writers, and is currently the first script learned by Japanese children (Hirose 2007; Yoda 2000). Finally, the nonstandard use of katakana is said to be able to evoke a foreign or modern feel due to the script's major role of representing loan words (Tomoda 2009; Tranter 2008). While it should be recognized that many descriptions of each script come from the assertions of individuals rather than empirical analysis, a sizeable body of psycholinguistic research has evidenced that the listed impressions (*inshō*), feelings (*kimochi*), effects (*kōka*), or images (*imēji*) of each script – to borrow the terms used across the cited works – exist in the minds of native speakers and can influence their script use under experimental conditions (Hirose 2007; Iwahara, Hatta and Maehara 2003; Ukita et al. 1996).

However, the widespread recognition of the idea that native speakers of Japanese view each script differently belies a lack of systematic and context-sensitive empirical investigation into how and why these images manifest in variant uses of kanji, hiragana, and katakana in natural (i.e. not produced for the purpose of research) texts. Most studies which touch on the topic are more broadly interested in identifying differences in script use between writers/genres via script proportion analysis. Generally speaking, these studies contain clear uses of script which cannot be attributed to legibility-related concerns, but their analysis of how the selection of a particular script creates meaning is constrained by a few reoccurring limitations.

The most common limitation in prior research is a nearly exclusive interest in nonstandard uses of katakana. The focus on katakana is understandable. Purposeful selection of hiragana and kanji can be hard to identify because the scripts possess some overlapping roles (Usami 2004). Furthermore, the (perceived) increase in katakana/loan words in Japanese writing has long been a subject of debate and controversy in Japan (Tomoda 2009; Twine 1991). Still, the lack of attention to variant use of all three scripts prevents us from fully accessing if and how multiple representations contrast and interact to index meaning across a text or texts (Masuji 2011).

The second major limitation is that analysis of what individual selections of script are intended to convey is rarely based on systematic trends evidenced within texts written by a single author. Instead, potential uses of script for effect are taken from works written by multiple authors with potentially clashing script preferences, and/or presented out of context in tables or as individual words. This forces the motives for any particular selection to be analyzed through attending to a researcher's individual conception of a script's indexical field, the types of words being represented in a nonstandard manner, or demographic differences between authors/audiences (e.g. Joyce, Hodošček and Nishina 2012; Rowe 1981; Satake 1989). While often persuasive, these

explanations are not rooted in clear divides between the local contexts where a single author uses different scripts to represent the same item(s). Consequently, the explanations may inadvertently overlook nuances of what caused the selection, similar to how traditional descriptions of venues for variation originating in Japanese speech (e.g. the use of honorific variants (*keigo*), 'women's language' (*onna kotoba*), or pronoun selection) have been found to inaccurately describe the diversity of reasons why individuals use or avoid certain lexical variants and/or grammatical forms (Agha 1998; Cook 2011; Moskowitz 2014, 2015). Finally, since previous studies almost always identified marked script use by referencing published guidelines for script use in standard Japanese (Masuji 2011), there is a possibility that locally normative language use has been treated as marked (Davila 2012), or that meaningful locally nonstandard variants have been overlooked due to chance alignment with standard language use (Bucholtz and Hall 2005).

In making these pointed critiques, I do not intend to dismiss the contributions of prior research to the field. The limitations discussed so far are often due to script use for effect being only an ancillary element of studies with other primary interests, and this study would be impossible without the fundamental finding that some script variation must be attributed to associations authors hold with kanji, hiragana, and katakana. Rather, the intent of my critique is to establish why the role of script selection in indexing meaning in Japanese writing needs further study despite the basic concept seeing decades of recognition. While there is no doubt that hiragana, katakana, and kanji can function as indexes, there is much that remains unknown about the specifics of how and why (i.e. for what purposes) this occurs, with systematic and context-sensitive analysis necessary to further our understanding of the phenomenon.

DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

The primary data for this study comes from the dialogue throughout the nine primary volumes of the manga series *Usagi Doroppu* ('Bunny Drop') (Unita 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b, 2011). The manga medium was selected as a data source for two primary reasons. The first is the popularity of manga in Japan. Although manga are described as Japanese comics, it is important to establish that they are a 'critical part of the [Japanese] culture industry' (Prough 2010: 56). Yearly sales of manga are over three times larger than those of comics in America and Canada combined (Oricon 2012; Virtue 2015), and the medium reaches such a high level of mainstream acceptance that even official government communications, corporate histories, classical works of literature, and educational texts can be found in manga form (Kinsella 1996; Schwartz and Rubinstein-Avila 2006). This substantial popularity of manga makes them a linguistically influential medium, with many noted trends in both speech and writing thought to have

been spread or popularized by the language used by protagonists of popular titles (Nakamura 2007; Ueno 2006; Unser-Schutz 2010, 2013). Consequently, manga serve as a valuable site for examining contemporary stereotypes and ideologies regarding language users and language use in Japanese (Kinsui 2003).

Secondly, the comic medium has a well-recognized history of conveying information through the graphic manipulation of text (McCloud 1993). Comics are distinct from most other writing which contains dialogue in that an author generally does not explicitly describe paralinguistic elements of an utterance. That is, there is no clear place in a speech bubble for written descriptions of a character's speech (e.g. 'he whispered in a thick French accent'). Instead, authors tend to rely on the representation of words to express information about a character or speech act (McCloud 2006; Wolk 2007). This established reliance on graphic manipulation of text to create meaning provides the potential for comics/manga to be a particularly fertile location for observing the use of script as an index.

The manga used for analysis here, *Usagi Doroppu*, is a slice-of-life manga written and illustrated by the Japanese *manga-ka* Yumi Unita between 2005 and 2011. The manga was first serialized in *FEEL YOUNG*, a manga magazine with an annual run of around 80,000 copies (Japanese Magazine Publishers Association 2014). Generally, the comics within *FEEL YOUNG* fall within the Ladies' Comics (*redisu komikkusu*) genre, which is aimed primarily at female readers between 15 and 45 years of age (Ito 2005). However, although *Usagi Doroppu* contains tropes of this genre, being drawn in a realistic style and involving some discussion of relationships, it is atypical in not focusing on female protagonists or romance (Ueno 2006). Rather, the protagonist of the first four volumes is a Japanese businessman named Daikichi who learns how to be a single father after adopting a six-year-old girl named Rin. Each of these four initial volumes consists of about six months of time, with Rin in her first year of elementary school at the end of the fourth volume. In the fifth volume the story enters its second major act, and jumps forward ten years. Rin is now in high school, and Daikichi and Rin serve as co-protagonists. As the story continues more romance-related elements appear, but the major plotline of the latter volumes centers around Rin deciding to find her biological mother. The complete story is currently available in Japanese and English as nine individual volumes, and a tenth bonus volume (called a *bangaihen*) was released in 2011.

Usagi Doroppu was selected over other potential manga series due to: (1) its popularity, having spawned an animated series and a feature film; and (2) its creation by a single author/artist. The manga's mainstream nature raises confidence that the language/script use within is aimed at a fairly general readership. Sole authorship ensures that there is no risk of script variation resulting from contrasting preferences. While Japanese publishers can have internal guidelines for script use, the author confirmed in the interview that

she had complete control over how she represented her characters' dialogue (Yumi Unita, personal communication, 3 March 2015).

The data used in this study were collected by transcribing the entirety of the dialogue from *Usagi Doroppu*, and coding each utterance by volume, speaker, and page number using NVivo software (a data analysis program that allows the cataloging and coding of text and multimedia). Every lexeme in the dialogue was then also coded in relation to the script it was written in (e.g. hiragana, katakana, or kanji). This created a searchable corpus which could show how many times each word in the manga appeared in which script(s), and within which speech bubble(s)/conversation(s) each individual script/lexeme combination occurred. This paper analyzes a subset of the data from this corpus, looking at variation in the representation of pronouns spoken by adults and teenagers in the manga. The dialogue of child characters is ignored here because script use for children's speech is distinct from the norms for script use in the manga currently under study and in Japanese more generally. Children's dialogue is therefore better analyzed separately from teenage and adult usages, and in a holistic way, as any single selection of script for a child's dialogue is potentially part of a larger construct for the representation of children's speech in writing.

Analysis began by using the coded dialogue to catalogue where (i.e. in what dialogue) each script/pronoun combination occurred in the manga. This catalogue was used to look for distinct contexts where specific combinations of a script and a pronoun served as a local norm in the manga. Here 'contexts' is defined broadly to include who is speaking, who is involved in the conversation, and the contents of/motive for the speech act. The definition of a 'local norm' is based on a slight modification to that used by Ukita et al. (1996): any script that the author used to represent a word over 70 percent of the time in a definable context is considered to be the local norm for that context. That is, rather than use a general conception of the orthographic norms of standard Japanese (raised earlier as problematic), quantitative cataloguing of the script use within the manga itself created localized definitions of what is normative and marked throughout both the text and the dialogue of individual speakers/speaker groups. The study then compared the context in which each identified script/pronoun combination norm occurred against the others to identify the specifics of what made each context distinct. Similarly, noted types of deviations from each identified norm (e.g. locally marked uses of katakana for a pronoun in a context where the manga otherwise uses kanji) were examined to see whether they could be similarly attributed to consistent contextual triggers. Ultimately, both examinations helped establish if and how specific character types and styles of self-presentation influenced the use of kanji, hiragana, and katakana for pronouns across the text. This analysis was complemented by a stimulated-recall interview on script and script use conducted with the manga's author, Yumi Unita, via email in March 2015. The interview was used to access the

author's general impressions of each script, receive further information for the motives for interesting orthographic trends noted in initial analysis, and inquire about locally variant script use which could not be attributed to a definable context or trend.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Japanese pronouns and their use in Usagi Doroppu

Before examining the script use for first person pronouns in *Usagi Doroppu*, it is necessary to briefly discuss pronoun use in both the manga and Japan. First person pronouns have long been recognized as a location where Japanese language users select from variants to adopt stances or index their identity, with each individual pronoun connected to different social voices or styles of self-presentation (Ono and Thompson 2003). Within *Usagi Doroppu*, the four pronouns that appear are *watashi*, *ore*, *boku*, and *atashi*. According to Ide (1979), these pronouns are broadly differentiated as follows:

- *watashi* is the politest of the four, and although used by both genders is more common and less formal in women's speech;
- *boku* and *ore* are male-exclusive, with *boku* more polite than *ore*; and
- *atashi* is a casual (compared to *watashi*) pronoun used only by women.

Recent studies have shown that pronoun use in Japan does not always fit within Ide's descriptions, and can index more than gender or a particular level of politeness (Maree 2003; Miyazaki 2002; Moskowitiz 2014). However, the use of pronouns in *Usagi Doroppu* agrees with Ide's stereotypical descriptions, reflecting findings that Japanese popular media often divides characters through more conventional or 'normative' language use than is seen in natural conversation (Kinsui 2003, 2010; Nakamura 2013, 2014).

For example, the stereotypically masculine pronouns *ore* and *boku* account for all but one of the 541 pronouns used by males in *Usagi Doroppu*. Teen males prefer the 'rougher' *ore*, using it 109 times, and avoid the 'politer' *boku*, using it only twice. Adult males instead have individual preferences for *boku* or *ore*, with their selection depending on the character's general personality or the contextual politeness of their speech register. To explain 'contextual politeness', consider the manga's protagonist Daikichi. Daikichi prefers a rough, slang-heavy speech style which uses *ore*; the pronoun accounts for 352 of the 382 pronouns that appear in his speech. However, Daikichi switches to *boku* 29 times, and each use occurs in politer dialogue with either superiors at work or people he's just met. Daikichi's dialogue also contains the sole use of *watashi* by a male speaker, which he uses when calling Rin's biological mother, Masako, for the first time. In this conversation, Daikichi (who Masako does not yet know exists) utilizes a number of indexes of formal, other-directed deference which never appear in his speech elsewhere. A clear example is a reference to

Table 2: Contexts in which each pronoun found in *Usagi Doroppu* is used

Pronoun	Male speech	Female speech
<i>watashi</i>	Limited to hyper-polite speech	Norm for polite speakers/speech
<i>boku</i>	Norm for polite speakers/speech	Not observed
<i>ore</i>	Norm for all teens, and rough or casual adult speakers and speech	Not observed
<i>atashi</i>	Not observed	Norm for all teens besides Rin, and rough or casual adult speakers and speech

his adopted daughter as *kaga rin-san* ('Ms. Rin Kaga'). Daikichi simply calls her *rin* ('Rin') in all other conversations. In sum, the locally marked use of the stereotypically hyper-polite male *watashi* appears as part of a locally irregular adoption of a formal stance towards his interlocutor, which is in alignment with Ide's descriptions. Female characters' pronoun use is similarly stereotypical, as women only use the 'feminine' pronouns *watashi* and *atashi*. All teenage girls besides Rin use the more casual *atashi* exclusively. Rin instead always uses *watashi*, with her status as the most mature and studious of her peers reflected in her preference of the more polite pronoun. Like the *boku/ore* divide in the speech of adult men, adult women whose speech regularly contains indexes of formality use *watashi*, while women who frequently use slang or casual speech registers prefer *atashi*. Table 2 summarizes the contexts in which each pronoun is used in *Usagi Doroppu*.

In short, the author's pronoun use varies consistently in relation to the gender of a character and/or the speech register they use in a given context, and this variation occurs in a fairly conventional manner. However, as will be shown in the analysis of the author's script use, attending only to pronoun-based variation overlooks the totality of means through which pronouns index socially meaningful identities and stances across the text.

Script use for men's pronouns

Beginning with male dialogue in *Usagi Doroppu*, there is a steady divide between the script normatively used to represent the pronouns of teenagers and adults. As can be seen in Figure 1, 110 of the 111 pronouns (99.1%) used by teenage males are written in katakana. In contrast, 414 of the 430 first person pronouns (96.3%) used by adult males are written in kanji. Putting aside the exceptions for now, initial examination of the data indicates that the use of kanji or katakana for *boku* and *ore* is in some way related to a character's age. If a character is in high school, kanji will almost always be treated as inappropriate for their pronouns, while katakana is generally avoided for writing the pronouns used by adult males.

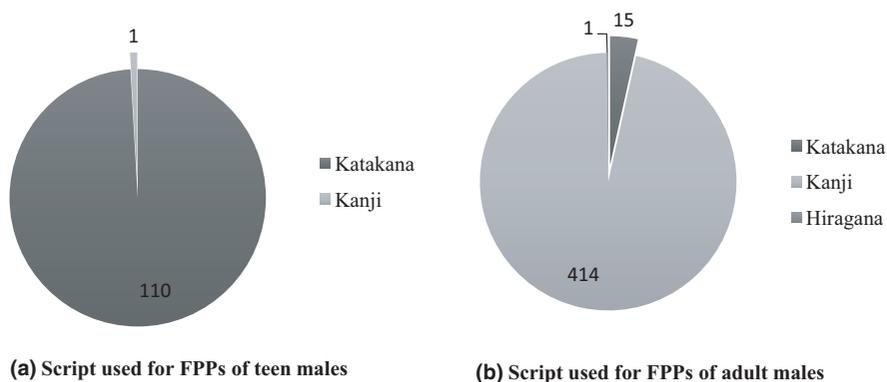


Figure 1: The representation of first person pronouns (FPPs) in male dialogue in *Usagi Doroppu*

Due to this divide in script use, male characters in *Usagi Doroppu* can be differentiated both lexically (i.e. through pronouns) and orthographically (i.e. through script), with each individual contrast indicating different information about what divides a speaker from another. For example, Daikichi and his father respectively prefer the pronouns *ore* and *boku*. This contrast in their pronoun preference reflects a contrast in their general demeanor: Daikichi has a short temper, while his father is the only member of their family who is never seen yelling or raising their voice. However, as both speakers are adults, kanji is used for all of their pronouns. This means that the characters' pronouns are lexically incongruous (*ore* vs. *boku*) but orthographically alike (kanji (俺) vs. kanji (僕)). In contrast, both Daikichi and a teenage male named Kōki prefer the pronoun *ore*, but Kōki's pronouns are always written in katakana. The normative pronouns of Daikichi and Kōki are consequently lexically identical (*ore* vs. *ore*) and orthographically distinct (kanji (俺) vs. katakana (オレ)). Between Daikichi's father and Kōki we then see two levels of distance, as the characters are distinguished through both lexical (*boku* vs. *ore*) and orthographic (kanji (僕) vs. katakana (オレ)) divides. Together, these combine to reflect differences in both demeanor/politeness (pronouns) and something relating to age (script). The identities of the male speakers simultaneously influence the selection of variants through two channels, with four distinct script/pronoun combination norms indexing four distinct categories of (male) speakers.

However, while age can predict whether a male character's pronouns will be represented by katakana or kanji over 96 percent of the time (524/541), the idea that script is directly indexing a speaker's age may be an oversimplification. When asked how she chose whether to use kanji or katakana for male pronouns, the author wrote that:

It's always a bit arbitrary but I do divide the use [of script]. The image of 俺 [*ore* in kanji] → (if compared to the katakana) a little old fashioned, Japanese, visually hard impression. The image of オレ [*ore* in katakana] (if compared to the kanji) → naughty, young, a bit show-offy, visually sharp. But these images are just my personal feelings, and not a strict thing.² (Yumi Unita, personal communication, 3 March 2015)

Based upon the author's comments, the kanji/katakana divide between adult and teen pronouns does not appear to be consciously planned. Rather, selection is influenced more subconsciously by 'images' the author holds regarding each script. This would imply that the prominence of kanji in adult males' speech is not a consequence of age, but rather of the author treating adults as having a lower normative occurrence of behavioral traits she treats as best indexed by katakana, and vice versa. Indeed, examination of the locally marked departures from the adult/teen kanji/katakana divides supports this interpretation. Across the manga, locally nonstandard pronoun representation in male speech (i.e. the use of katakana for adult male pronouns and use of kanji for teen male pronouns) is not random, but consistently occurs when a character behaves incongruously with the images the author feels are indexed by the locally standard script for their age group.

For example, in Excerpt 1 we see the use of a kanji-represented *boku* (boxed in the excerpt) in the dialogue of a teenager named Yasuhara. This excerpt occurs when Yasuhara meets Rin for the first time and makes a semi-formal request. It is one of only two times teenage males use *boku* in the manga, and the only time any teenage male's pronoun is written in kanji.

Excerpt 1: *Usagi Doroppu*, Vol. 6, p. 135

Yasuhara: じゃ、ごめんね。僕、今日はさすがに部活に顔出さないと...
すいませんこんなカンジで... あとよろしくお願いします。

*ja gomen ne. [boku], kyō wa sasuga ni bukatsu ni kao dasanai to...
suimasen konna kanji de... ato yoroshiku onegaishimasu.*

Ah, sorry. [I] should show my face at the club activities today...
sorry to leave now but... please take care of things from here.

In all later stories, where Yasuhara is closer with Rin, he instead uses the teenage male standard of a katakana-represented *ore* (オレ). Furthermore, the dual conversion in Excerpt 1 is not repeated during the second use of *boku* by a teenager, which occurs when an embarrassed Kōki is making obviously false excuses to Rin about why his bag smells of perfume. Kōki's adoption of a 'childish' stance towards Rin in this scene is contrastively accompanied by maintenance of the local katakana standard (i.e. ボク), with no polite stance-taking occurring in the dialogue/scene.

Still, since Yasuhara is a minor character with limited dialogue, the single use of kanji in his speech risks being dismissed as chance or a mistake. However, every violation of the manga's kanji norm for pronouns in adult male speech similarly occurs when a character acts in a locally non-normative (here, immature, showy, impolite, etc.) manner. For example, three of the 15 adult-male pronouns written in katakana occur in the dialogue of a character named Tama during his first appearance in the manga. In this story Tama is yelling angrily at Daikichi, and uses a katakana-represented *ore* (オレ) three times. In all later dialogue Tama is instead calm and friendly, and his dialogue only contains uses of *boku* written in kanji (僕), moving to the more polite variant in both channels.

Similarly, three uses of katakana for *boku* (ボク) occur in the speech of an unnamed male model during his initial meeting with Daikichi at Rin's school. In this chapter, the model has a spirited conversation with Daikichi about past work posing in his underwear for Daikichi's company. The model's speech contains polite elements, explaining the use of *boku*, but is highly performative and energetic compared to the other 30-something fathers. For instance, in Excerpt 2 the model is blushing and clapping his face with both hands while laughing. His dialogue is highly animated, and although polite overall contains multiple exclamation points and irregular spellings (underlined in Excerpt 2) often intended to make writing appear cute (Miyake 2007). The model's performance in this dialogue (and the chapter) is silly and flamboyant, matching the 'show-offy' (*chara chara*) feel the author attributes to katakana. Additionally, the sole use of hiragana for a male pronoun also occurs in the model's dialogue during this conversation, further indicating that something specific to this character is causing irregular pronoun representations. Based on previous descriptions of hiragana, the childish elements of the scripts' indexical field may be relevant here. That said, as the hiragana *boku* (ぼく) is a single handwritten exception, rather than part of any clear trend, a definitive reason for the selection is not possible to obtain using the methods of analysis employed by this study.

Excerpt 2: *Usagi Doroppu*, Vol. 4, p. 78

Model: あああ!! それ多分**ボク**です!! はずかしっ。御社にかなりお世話になっておりますうー。肌着も海パンもNGナシでなんでも着てました!!

aaa!! sore tabun boku desu!! hazukashi. onsha ni kanari osewa ni natte orimasu-, hadagi mo kaipan mo enuji nashi de nandemo kitemashita!!

Ahh!! That was probably me!! So embarrassing! I'm very indebted to your company. Underwear, swim trunks, I wore whatever I was asked!!

In contrast, during his second (and final) appearance the model is more subdued. In this later chapter he joins other adults at a park, and participates

in a dialogue about the difficulties of being a single parent. In this more restrained environment, wherein children and parents of both genders are present and the model is enacting his identity as a parent rather than a model/new friend, the model's dialogue is written using standard spelling and grammar, and his two uses of *boku* are all written in kanji (僕).

Finally, the remaining nine uses of katakana for adult-male pronouns come from the dialogue of two workers at Daikichi's company. One is unnamed, and uses a katakana-represented *ore* (オレ) twice while smoking and complaining about Daikichi in the bathroom of a restaurant. Like with Tama, the character's speech and behavior in the scene where a katakana-represented *ore* occurs is casual, angry, and vulgar (he refers to Daikichi as *kachinige kitanē*, roughly 'a scumbag who runs off with the winnings'). However, further particulars of the character's identity are difficult to describe as he only appears in two panels. On the other hand, the last seven uses of katakana are spread across the dialogue of an unnamed subordinate of Daikichi's who appears in multiple volumes. The author uses a katakana-represented *ore* (オレ) for all but one of the eight pronouns in this character's dialogue. The subordinate is therefore depicted as preferring the same pronoun as Daikichi (*ore*) but the pronoun is normatively represented with a different script. Like with Daikichi and Kōki, the script divide again mirrors differences between the two characters. While both are *ore*-normative, employ rougher speech styles, and are prone to outbursts, Daikichi is the protagonist, a college-educated bilingual, wears a tie, and works as a manager. The subordinate is instead bearded, has pierced ears, wears a beanie and wallet chain to work, and frequently references his own poor academic achievement. Speaking broadly, the subordinate's dress, behavior, and appearance are slightly 'punk' and do not match those of stereotypical white-collar males in Japan or the manga (Dasgupta 2013). These departures from the manga's depiction of normative masculine adulthood are echoed in the subordinate's status as the only adult male using a clear katakana norm for his pronouns, with the character orthographically distanced from both other adult males and kanji's indexical field.

Due to the high consistency of katakana usage for the subordinate's pronouns, the one scene where his selected pronoun is written in kanji is particularly conspicuous. The kanji-represented pronoun appears when the subordinate meets Rin (i.e. his boss's daughter) for the first time. In Excerpt 3, the subordinate can be seen initially greeting Rin with his normative katakana-represented *ore* (オレ, boxed in Excerpt 3). He then explicitly corrects himself, and switches to the more polite *boku* (underlined in Excerpt 3) to position himself as showing respect. This change is not merely limited to pronoun selection though, as *boku* is written in kanji (僕) rather than katakana (ボク). Consequently, we again see a character's locally nonstandard self-presentation accompanied by locally nonstandard lexical and orthographic variants. In this specific case, the adoption of a polite stance requires distance from both *ore*-linked identities and katakana-linked identities in the manga

(including the normative identity of the character himself), with the changes to both channels necessary to bring the subordinate's pronouns into temporary orthographic alignment with the norm the manga establishes for more 'mature' adult males.

Excerpt 3: *Usagi Doroppu*, Vol. 7, p. 58

Subordinate: エーット、オレ... いや僕たち会社で河地さんにお世話
 になってて...

*ētto, [ore]... iya boku tachi kaisha de kawachi san ni osewa ni
 natte te...*

Umm, ore, no, boku tachi³ all work under Mr. Kawachi and...

Script use for women's pronouns

In addition to the adult male/teen male divide, a second major orthographic contrast in the manga exists between the pronouns used by male and female speakers. All but five of the 321 pronouns used by female characters are written in hiragana. The more casual pronoun *atashi* is written in hiragana (あ) all 89 times it appears. The politer *watashi* is written in hiragana (わ) in 227 of its 232 appearances, with the remaining five uses in kanji (私). No pronouns used by women are written in katakana. As a result, for all but six of the 862 pronouns in the manga (99.3%), we can identify if the speaker of any excerpt is male or female by checking whether any pronouns are written in hiragana.

Certainly, the divide between the script use for male and female pronouns relates in some part to word choice. *Atashi* is exclusive to female dialogue in the manga, which makes how the author would represent a hypothetical male use of *atashi* (e.g. by a non-heteronormative speaker) unknown. The pronoun also has no commonplace kanji representation in Japanese, and the manga's preference for hiragana aligns with the conventions of standard written Japanese. The manga's standard representation for the polite *watashi* in male dialogue is also somewhat unclear, as males only use *watashi* once. However, Daikichi's singular use of *watashi* is represented by kanji (私), and kanji is conventionally used to represent *watashi* in standard written Japanese. Additionally, the author referred to kanji as 'hard' and 'masculine' in the interview, and stated that she 'thinks' this would cause her to use kanji to write *watashi* in male dialogue (Yumi Unita, personal communication, 3 March 2015).⁴ While the author's reply indicates that she does not recall Daikichi's use of *watashi*, it shows that the use of hiragana for the pronoun is not due to a manga-wide norm. Rather, the script use for *watashi* is conditional on an almost biological sense of a speaker's sex, as even uses of *watashi* by retired, decorous, and/or highly educated female characters are normatively written in hiragana.

Furthermore, the absence of katakana-represented female pronouns is important, as it indicates that the author treats the script as inappropriate for female pronouns regardless of a speaker's speech, dress, or relationship to ideologies defining 'feminine' behavior. That is, the author does not use katakana representations of female pronouns even when a speaker's dialogue or behavior contains the triggers seen to bring about locally marked katakana-representations of pronouns in kanji-normative male characters' dialogue. For instance, in the manga a female teenager named Akari hangs out in a bar, is verbally and physically abusive to her partners, bullies and harasses Rin for years, and fakes a pregnancy to extort money from Kōki. Despite being very much 'young', 'naughty', and 'a bit show-offy', to borrow the author's terms, Akari's uses of *atashi* are always written in hiragana (あたし) rather than katakana (アタシ). The author therefore appears to either: (1) treat a katakana-represented *atashi* as outside her conception of acceptable script use (despite its appearance in other manga, Robertson 2015); or (2) treat katakana-represented pronouns as indexing identities which either involve a masculine element or are incongruous with all types of female identity and self-presentation that appear in the manga.

Lastly, out of the five cases where *watashi* appears in kanji (私) in female dialogue, four were included in the stimulated recall section of the interview because they did not appear within any definable context(s). The author referred to all four uses as 'probably something like a typing error',⁵ and wrote that she 'fundamentally intended to use わたし [*watashi* in hiragana]'⁶ for female speakers (Yumi Unita, personal communication, 3 March 2015). The fifth kanji representation of a female-used *watashi* may therefore also result from mistaken input, but is interesting in that it reflects the simultaneous lexical and orthographic changes to pronouns seen earlier in the dialogue of male speakers. The locally nonstandard representation of *watashi* appears in the first statement made by a minor female character named Ota. In the semi-formal context of a work meeting, Ota uses a kanji-represented *watashi* (boxed in Excerpt 4) once while asking Daikichi a question during his speech to newly hired employees.

Excerpt 4: *Usagi Doroppu*, Vol. 3, p. 83

Ota: 私^私は営業職で採用されたんですけど——
^私*watashi*wa eigyōshoku de saiyō saretan desu kedo——.

私^私 was hired for a sales position, but——

After the meeting, the character defaults to a more casual speech style which only uses the less formal pronoun *atashi*. Furthermore, in contrast to her initial work-related question, the content of Ota's dialogue in these later scenes primarily consists of attempts to flirt with male employees. The differences in both Ota's selection of a pronoun and its orthographic representation between Excerpt 4 and Excerpts 5 and 6 therefore directly mirror the switches noticed in the dialogue of Yasuhara and Daikichi's subordinate. That is, during

irregularly formal self-presentation, a normatively casual speaker's dialogue contains a pronoun which is locally nonstandard in terms of both its lexical and orthographic representations, with the locally irregular stance influencing two distinct channels.

Excerpt 5: *Usagi Doroppu*, Vol. 3, p. 92

Ota: あたしもこーゆートコで働きたいなァ... それにひとりぐらい女の子がいた方が楽しいじゃないですかー

atashi mo kōyū took de hatarakitai nā... sore ni hitori gurai onna no ga ita hō ga tanoshi janai desukā

□ would like to work in this kind of place too... wouldn't it be more fun to have a girl around?

Excerpt 6: *Usagi Doroppu*, Vol. 3, p. 96

Ota: あたしとかどーです?

atashi toka dō desu?

How about a girl like me?

DISCUSSION

Throughout the manga, we see that the author's selection of pronouns and script varies consistently in relation to both distinct character identities and stances the characters adopt in particular scenes. By interacting with an item subject to linguistic ideologies or metalinguistic discussion in and of itself, the author's script selection shows influence from more than just a single element of any script's indexical field. Rather, (the author's conception of) the indexical fields of orthographic and lexical variants function in a symbiotic relationship. The result is an effect unique to the particular combination, which is lost if only one channel is examined.

Consequently, within the manga the traditional *watashi/boku/ore* and *watashi/atashi* contrasts exist in a more of a matrix-like system, wherein norms and movements can occur in lexical and/or orthographic directions (Table 3). For instance, a katakana-represented *boku* (ボク) is rougher than a kanji-represented *boku* (僕), but still indexes a type of self-presentation which is more mature, calm, or polite than a katakana-representation of the rougher pronoun *ore* (オレ). Selection between a katakana-represented *boku* (ボク) and a kanji-represented *boku* (僕) can then clarify which *boku*-associated identity (e.g. semi-polite but childish or show-offy vs. semi-polite and more 'adult') a character adopts. Hiragana instead represents a norm for all female speakers, with hiragana-represented male pronouns exceedingly rare.

Table 3: Comparison of observed and potential script/pronoun combinations in *Usagi Doroppu*

Pronoun	Script		
	Kanji	Katakana	Hiragana
<i>watashi</i>	私 Marks super-polite/ formal speech by both genders	ワタシ Unobserved	わたし Norm for speech by polite or studious females, esp. adults
<i>ore</i>	俺 Norm for informal speech by rougher adult males	オレ Norm for most teen males, and angry/ very casual adults/ adult speech	おれ Unobserved
<i>boku</i>	僕 Norm for politer adult males, can mark polite male speech	ボク Used by males acting flamboyant, showy, or silly	ぼく Can appear when a (adult) male is very excited, more data needed
<i>atashi</i>		アタシ Unobserved	あたし Norm for women with rougher speech/behavior, especially teens

Furthermore, the findings make it clear that the importance of any selection of script cannot be understood by analyzing individual examples. No selection survives out of context, as the ultimate effect the index creates is interactive and partially bound to the situated use of the variable (Eckert 2008). For instance, that a temporary use of katakana in adult-male dialogue is meaningful in *Usagi Doroppu*, and that it indexes what can be broadly defined as immature or impolite masculinity rather than other images associated with marked katakana use like foreignness, coldness, or eroticism (Robertson 2015), is dependent upon the author establishing local, contrasting norms for script use between teen males, adult males, and females. If any of the three norms were absent, the effect created by the use of katakana in adult-male dialogue might change or even disappear. Likewise, the importance of Daikichi's subordinate's use of katakana-*ore* (オレ) as a norm is partially meaningful in its relation to the kanji norm adopted by all other adult males, with the subordinate's speech, like his behavior, in constant interaction with the local 'adult male' standard it contrasts with and violates. Excerpt-level analysis of any use of script discussed here would sever the text-internal contrasts which guide the activation of specific elements of its indexical field,

and prevent understanding of the particular motive(s) behind the selection. Indeed, in *Usagi Doroppu* the question of which script is standard for each pronoun in the manga as a whole is more or less irrelevant. Each extant representation is regular within some contexts and marked in others.

Finally, the data shows that script selection in Japanese has the same potential to reflect higher-order linguistic ideologies as more studied avenues for language variation. While connections between men and kanji or women and hiragana are observable in historical orthographic practices, with women being once socially discouraged from using/learning the kanji script, national (e.g. at least officially non-gendered) guidelines for script use have been mainstream since the early 1900s at the latest (Gottlieb 2005; Seeley 2000; Yoda 2000). Similarly, in contrast to the manga's standards, teenage males are by no means the primary users of katakana, and decreases in kanji recognition over the last few decades mean that the actual writing of an older female is likely to include more kanji than writing by twenty-something males (Yoshimura 1985). The idea that hiragana is more appropriate to female speakers, or that kanji indexes masculinity, is more the result of contemporary metalinguistic dialogues and ideologies about script, language use, and language users in Japan than a reflection of extant orthographic practices. The author's selections of script are influenced by and participating in the transmission of ideologies or 'cultural messages' (Agha 2003: 246), as the script use in *Usagi Doroppu* reflects and affirms the long-running belief in Japan that there are (or should be) inherent differences in male and female language use (Inoue 2004; Nakamura 2007, 2014). While script cannot be 'heard', it is nevertheless separates how the speech of the two groups is represented on the page.

CONCLUSION

In looking at the representations of pronouns throughout *Usagi Doroppu*, it is clear that script selection can be a very important and nuanced element of how meaning is created in written Japanese. While the use of pronouns to index character types in Japanese (manga) is well established, within *Usagi Doroppu* the normative script used to write pronouns stands as another linguistic area influenced by contrasts between the contextual self-presentation and/or gender of speakers. The concurrent use of multiple scripts particular to Japanese also allows variant script use to occur from scene to scene or even sentence to sentence, and thereby mark changes in the stances adopted by individual speakers from panel to panel. Furthermore, while some observed selections of script relate to once extant first-order connections between a script and a primary body of users, the ideologies about script and language that influence the author possess substantial distance from the realities of script use in contemporary Japan. As a result, the use of script for pronouns in the manga does not merely reflect actual dialect-like divides in linguistic practice. Rather, like spelling changes or word choice, Japanese script selection stands as a

major avenue for indexing a variety of identities, registers, and methods of self-presentation, and observing how contemporary ideologies about language use and language users can affect the representation of language. Ultimately, this study shows clearly that ignoring variant uses of kanji, hiragana, and katakana throughout a text risks overlooking a potentially major element of the message(s) the writing contains or is intended to convey. Selections of script are seen to convey nuances in how meaning is constructed in the text, and serve as a potential location for revealing overarching ideologies about language use in Japan.

NOTES

1. These links are first- and higher-order indexical connections in all but name, but I avoid the use of the term 'index' here as it is not used in the cited studies.
2. Original Japanese: いつも、なんとなくですが使い分けています。「俺」のイメージ→(カタカナと比べてどちらかというと)少し古風日本的視覚的に硬い印象。「オレ」のイメージ→(漢字と比べてどちらかというと)やんちゃ若さ少しちゃらちゃらしている視覚的にとがっている。これらはあくまでわたし個人の感じ方で、厳密なものでもありません。。。
3. The suffix *-tachi* is attached to first person pronouns to create the plural.
4. Original Japanese: 基本的には、硬い印象にしたい場合は「私」にすると思いますが。あとは、公の場では男性も「私(わたし わたくし)」と言いますが、そういう場合は漢字かなあと。漢字には男性的な印象もあるような気がします。
(Fundamentally, I think I use kanji for *watashi* when I want to create a hard impression. Furthermore, in public situations men also say *watashi* or *watakushi*, and in these cases I think I might use kanji. I feel like kanji also have a masculine impression').
5. Original Japanese: これは誤植のようなものかもしれません。
6. Original Japanese: 基本的に「わたし」にしていたつもりでした。

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