The portrayal of the Osaka dialect and its speakers in contemporary Japanese prose: challenging or perpetuating linguistic stereotypes?

Abstract

The representation of dialects in fictional texts often reflects real language attitudes and ideologies towards non-standard varieties (Hodson 2012). This paper focuses on the representation of the Osaka dialect in contemporary Japanese literature. It is based on a qualitative analysis of ten Japanese prose texts, written between 1980 and 2023. First, it was determined how the overall image of the Osaka dialect is created within the text through the narration, stylistic devices and metalinguistic comments. Next, the characterization of fictional dialect speakers was examined with particular attention to socio-demographic factors, such as their place of origin, social class, age and gender. Given Eckert's (2008) claim that linguistic variants are context-dependent rather than tied to fixed social categories, the indexical field framework was used to examine the situational use of the Osaka dialect. The study determined that the traditional stereotypes highlighted by Kinsui (2003) are no longer dominant, due to the fact Osaka dialect is not associated with any particular social group, and its use can imply different social meanings depending on the situation. Nevertheless, these representations are still firmly rooted in existing linguistic ideologies, such as the standard language ideology.

Keywords: Osaka dialect, standard language ideology, dialects in literature, linguistic stereotypes, indexical field, idexicality, language attitudes, language ideology

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Introduction

According to Schneider's (2002: 73) classification of texts according to their proximity to speech, literary dialect belongs to the "invented" category, as it is fictional and may or may not be based on actual language use. This is because a literary text can be considered a unique communicative act in which meaning is created between a single author and numerous readers, leading writers to refer to stereotypes—sociolinguistic markers that rise to overt social consciousness and become widely recognized (Labov 1971: 200). Due to this, literary texts can be seen as source of knowledge about language attitudes towards non-standard varieties (Hodson 2012: 10–12). Language ideology is defined as a set of intersubjective beliefs about a language and its use (Silverstein 1979: 193, Rumsey 1990: 346). These beliefs may refer to one language, specific linguistic structures or even people using a particular language (Ahearn

2012: 23). Whereas language attitudes can be described as inherently subconscious, subjective and individual, linguistic ideologies are constructed by specific social groups in order to serve their interests (Dyers, Abongdia, 2010: 121), which means that within one society many ideologies may exist simultaneously (Kroskrity, 2004: 501–511). According to Preston (1999: XXV), understanding those attitudes and beliefs is crucial, especially when planning actions aimed at the maintenance of linguistic diversity. The analysis of media representations which, on the one hand, reflect the current power structure, while on the other hand, as Lippi-Green (2012: 119) notes, help to maintain it, may be one of the ways to achieve this goal.

Starting with Bakhtin who defined the novel as "a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized" (1981: 262), many scholars have recognized the importance of heteroglossia in the literature. For instance, Blake (1981) established that non-standard dialects have been present in English literature since medieval times and served a variety of purposes, such as introducing elements of humor, creating a feeling of authenticity as well as indexing characters' backgrounds. The latter is particularly true in the case of Victorian novels, where dialects were mostly spoken by servants and peasants, whereas the portrayal of their speech tends to reflect the ideas of higher social classes rather than real language use (Ferguson 1998, Hakala 2010, Hodson 2016). Apart from class differences, the racial context also turns out to be crucial, as the depiction of Afro-American dialects in American literature could be used to undermine the system of racist oppression (Jones 1999) or uphold it (Minnick 2007). Using the example of North African literature, Toolan (1992), in turn, shows that although inappropriate representation may perpetuate stereotypes, its absence can be interpreted as an erasure of marginalized voices. In Japan, since the early 2000s, there has been an increase in interest in showing local varieties in fiction as a result of the so-called dialect boom. However, according to Kinsui (2003) these representations are very often simplified versions of real dialects; therefore, they can be seen as an example of role language – a style of speaking created on the basis of linguistic stereotypes and used by fictional characters to indicate certain traits (age, gender, class, origin, etc.). Although role language is most characteristic for popular culture, Tanaka (2011) and Waki (2016) established its presence in contemporary literature.

This study aims to investigate the stereotypes about the Osaka dialect found in contemporary literature and to identify the linguistic ideologies underlying them. As one of the dialects spoken in the Kansai region, it is considered to be the most prestigious of Japanese non-standard varieties due to the cultural and historical importance of this area (Sanada 2018: 39–

40). However, in a country dominated by standard language ideology, it is nevertheless perceived as an inferior and less correct form of speech (Heinrich 2012: 172–173). Moreover, studies show that there are certain prejudices about the Osaka dialect and its speakers that might be further perpetuated through inadequate media representations (Kinsui 2003: 81–101, Jones 2010: 99). In this paper ten Japanese texts of various genres, written after 1980, which feature at least one dialect-speaking character, were analyzed in terms of their portrayal of this language variety. Excerpts featuring the dialect were examined in order to determine how, through the narration and stylistic devices, an overall image of the Osaka dialect is created. Particular attention was paid to its role in constructing the socio-demographic background of the fictional speakers. In light of Eckert's (2008) claim that specific linguistic variants cannot be directly linked to fixed social categories, bur rather their meaning is context-dependent, the framework of indexical field was also applied in order to examine the situational use of Osaka dialect.

The complex case of the Osaka dialect

The Osaka dialect is spoken in the northern part of the Osaka prefecture, especially the area around the city of Osaka as well as the southeastern part of the neighboring Hyogo prefecture. Dialectologists classify this variety as part of the Kansai dialect group, which is one of the branches of western Japanese (Katō 1977: 62). The Kansai and Osaka dialects share many characteristics, such as more pitch accent patterns than in standard Japanese, no vowel reduction, debuccalization of /s/, negative suffix /-N/ or /heN/ and copula *ya* (Long, L'Peng 1993: 10–11). Nevertheless, the Osaka dialect exhibits distinctive linguistic features, e.g., its paradigm of negative verb conjugation deviates from both standard Japanese and the Kyoto variety, as presented in table 1 (Okumura 1975: 279).

English	Osaka dialect	Kyoto dialect	standard Japanese
not write	kakehen	kakahen	kakanai
not drink	nomehen	nomahen	nomanai

Table 1. Formation of negative form in Osaka dialect, Kyoto dialect, and standard Japanese.

It is also well-known for certain lexical items. Some come from comedy sketches popular in Osaka, such as the derogatory terms *sukatan* or *akan*, meaning a person of little intelligence. Others, such as the honorific *gowasu* copula, date back to the Edo period, when Osaka was a merchant city (Zenkoku hōgen tomonokai 1994: 156–164).

The social perception of the Osaka dialect is complex and full of contradictions. In general, the Kansai dialect is considered the most prestigious of the Japanese dialects due to its

cultural and historical significance. However, although Osaka as a port city developed trade, the center of political power remained in Kyoto, where the imperial palace had been located for over 1000 years. As a result, for a long time, this variety served as a medium for supra-regional communication among members of the higher classes. It retained its status even when, from the end of the 12th century, the emperor's position began to weaken as power transferred to shoguns from the Kantō region. After the Tokugawa shogunate officially moved its administration to the city of Edo (currently Tokyo) in the 17th century, high-ranking samurai and educated people continued to use the Kansai dialect, but the influence of local eastern dialects led to the emergence of a new common language (Sanada 2018: 8–15). Following the Meiji restoration in 1868, this variety was chosen as a base for standard Japanese and was promoted in the media and education system of the newly established nation state (Heinrich 2012: 58–82). The standard soon dominated the public space, while local varieties continued to be used in private situations within the local communities (see Mitsui 2014: 80–81, Ball 2014: 376–378).

Nevertheless, the Kansai dialect has retained a vestige of its former position, and its speakers report using it in various domains without shame (see: Jinnouchi 1999). Nationwide studies have proven that it has a positive emotional image (Inoue 1999: 149) and is considered to be the most pleasant of all Japanese varieties (Long 1999: 203). What is more, in the early 2000s lexical items from this variety have been spotted in other regions, possible due to its use in social media and popular culture (Tanaka 2005:171, Hanzawa 2005: 193). However, high prestige is reserved mostly for the variety of the former capital Kyoto, while the inhabitants of neighboring prefectures do not necessarily feel sympathy for their own varieties (Tanaka 2014: 109). There are also significant differences in the perception of the Kyoto and Osaka dialects: while the former was described by the responders as "polite," "calm," "elegant," "beautiful," and "suitable for a young girl," the latter was perceived as "sloppy," "loud," "aggressive," and "inappropriate for a young girl" (Takagi 2015: 100–104). In 2007, more than 20% of students from Tokyo described the Osaka dialect as "funny," "attractive," and "scary"; 10% as "masculine"; and 5% as "cute" and "cool." The Kyoto dialect turned out to be "charming," "feminine," and "refined," then also "mild," "warm," and "attractive" (Tanaka 2011: 72). However, the attitude of users is, as usual, highly dependent on the context, as shown by the analysis of entries on a blog site by Okamoto and Shibamoto-Smith (2016: 85-94): commenters supported the use of the dialect in specific situations, for example at home, and condemned in others, such as school or the workplace. Overall, speakers of the Kansai dialect were more proud of their own variety than speakers of other Japanese dialects, although there were also

differences in the opinions of the Kyoto and Osaka varieties, with the former being rated much more positively.

According to Kinsui (2003: 81–101), the origins of those stereotypes can be traced even to the second half of the Edo period, and they are undoubtably connected to the dialect's representation in the arts. Whereas pre-modern Japanese literature was primarily written in the Kyoto variety of the language (Frellesvig 2010: 214), during the 16th century, Osaka emerged as the focal point of a flourishing merchant culture, and it became the home of many notable artists, such as Ihara Saikaku and Chikamatsu Monzaemon. However, by the end of the Edo period it also became a target of satirical novelists from other regions, who created its stereotypical image. In works by Jippensha Ikku and Shikitei Sanba, characters speaking the Osaka dialect were portrayed as talkative, funny, and cheerful, but also miserly, greedy, vulgar, gluttonous, and loud. These traits continued to characterize portrayals in various media throughout the second half of the 20th century (Kinsui 2003: 81–101). After the Meiji Restoration, the standard language became the basic tool for literary creation; however, some writers decided to include regional dialects in their works, mostly in the form of reported speech, mimicking the heteroglossia of western realistic novels. The Kansai dialect was often chosen, which indicates positive attitudes and prestige (see: Nihonkindai bungakukai 2008: 2–6). For example, Tanizaki Junichiro, despite his Tokyo origins, hired language consultants and included the Osaka dialect, which he associated with tradition and elegance, in several of his books (Yokota-Murakami: 2018: 108–109). On the other hand, Oda Sakunosuke, who was born in Osaka and repeatedly used his native dialect and acknowledged the stereotypes associated with this variety. In *Ōsaka no kanōsei* (Osaka's potential, 1946) he explains that while the Kyoto dialect is considered to be more beautiful and elegant, he himself finds the Osaka variety more lively and charming, therefore more suitable for writing.

After World War II, the Osaka dialect started to appear in the new media – radio, television, comics, and games – which, on the one hand, increased its recognizability and popularity, but on the other, spread the stereotypical image. In the 1970s, due to its use in popular gangster movies, it began to be associated with criminal environments and violence, while the growing popularity of *manzai* – comedic skits from Osaka, featuring down-to-earth and ribald humor and linguistic jokes in the local dialect – reinforced the perception of the speakers of this variety as lacking seriousness. Since then, we have seen certain attempts to break these stereotypes, but they are still present in various media portrayals (Kinsui 2003: 100–101, Jones 2010: 95-99). One example is the Palme d'Or-nominated film *Soshite chichi ni naru*

(Like Father and Son, 2013), where the dialect is used to make a contrast between two father figures: the laid back, funny, yet more masculine Osaka dialect speaker Yūdai and the strict and demanding Ryōta, who speaks the standard language and is perceived as more feminine by the viewers (see: King et al., 2002). This proves the persistence of some beliefs about this variety to this day.

The Osaka dialect in contemporary literature

At present, the Osaka dialect still remains one of the most frequently featured non-standard varieties in contemporary media, including literature (Tanaka 2016: 108–109). There are several reasons why writers choose to include it in their texts. Firstly, its popularity guarantees commercial success, as many books on this topic achieve bestseller status and serve as the basis for movies and television series. Therefore, even writers with no connection with Osaka, such as light novel author Asano Atsuko, sometimes choose it over their own for that reason. Others, especially Osaka natives, view the promotion of this dialect as their personal mission. For example, Tanabe Seiko recalled that at the beginning of her career there was a huge stigmatization of non-standard varieties in the literary community, and nobody could imagine writing a novel, especially a romance, in the Osaka dialect. With her works, she tried to prove that it was possible (Tanabe 2005: 12).

While authors such as Tanabe Seiko, Tsumura Kikuko and Shibasaki Tomoka have made the dialect their trademark, others use it occasionally in order to achieve a specific artistic effect: in an interview for the e-hon portal, Nishi Kanako said that it often appears in her works because of its unusual rhythm. Moreover, she specifically decided to choose its colloquial variety, significantly different from the sophisticated language used by pre-war writers such as Tanizaki (Nishi 2006). Murakami Haruki also experiments with various Kansai varieties, including the Osaka one, which fits into his usual method of mixing various varieties to create his own, unique style (Akins 2012: 35–36). A similar approach has also been presented by Kawakami Mieko, who in her debut tried to achieve the effect of narrative polyphony by mixing the standard language and the Osaka dialect (Kawakami 2019). However, in later works she decided to only write in standard Japanese to reflect the more serious subjects she was addressing. The writers' individual attitudes towards the dialect is certainly not homogeneous, which also affects its portrayal.

However, using a combination of literary and linguistic methods, it is possible to identify the most common beliefs about the Osaka dialect and its speakers. Since it would be

impossible to analyze all the existing works that features at least one Osaka dialect speaker, ten texts, written between 1980 and 2023, and which best encompass the diversity of these narratives (see table 2) were selected for this study. They represent different types of prose: short stories, short story collections and novels, as well as various literary genres, including crime stories, romances, fantasy and youth novels. Some, like Nishi's *Tsūtenkaku* (Tsūtenkaku tower) and Kawakami's *Natsu monogatari* (Summer stories) received critical acclaim and won prestigious literary awards. In the case of two authors who are well-known for their use of Osaka dialect, more than one text was selected.

Title	Abbreviation
Asano Atsuko, *MANZAI* (MANZAI). Tōkyō: Popurasha, 1999.	Asano 1999
Higashino Keigo, *Naniwa shōnentanteidan* (Naniwa Detective Boys). Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 1988.	Higashino 1988
Kawakami Mieko, *Natsu monogatari* (Summer stories). Tōkyō: Bungeishunjū , 2019.	Kawakami 2019
Makime Manabu, *Purinsesu Toyotomi* (Princess Toyotomi). Tōkyō: Bungeishunjū, 2011.	Makime 2011
Miyamoto Teru. *Haru no yume* (Spring dream). Tōkyō: Bungeishunju, 1985.	Miyamoto 1985
Murakami Haruki, '*Iesutadei'* (Yesterday), in: *Onna no inai otokotachi* (Men without women). Tōkyō: Bungeishunju, 2014.	Murakami 2014
Nishi Kanako, *Tsūtenkaku* (Tsūtenkaku tower). Tōkyō: Chikumashobō, 2006.	Nishi 2006
Nishi Kanako, *Saraba* (Farewell!). Tōkyō: Shōgakukan, 2014.	Nishi 2014
Tanabe Seiko, *Yuki ga furu made* (Until snow falls), w: *Joze to tora to sakanatachi* (Josee, tiger and fishes). Tōkyō: Kadokawa shoten, 1985.	Tanabe 1985
Tanabe Seiko, *Ubatokimeki* (Silver butterflies). Tōkyō: Shinchosha, 1984.	Tanabe 1984

Table 2. List of analyzed texts.

The portrayal of the Osaka dialect

The majority of the stories are set in Osaka. As a result, the local dialect is usually a natural part of the setting. It is rarely described directly, as neither the narrator nor the characters pay too much attention to it. The most common adjectives describing the dialect include general terms, such as "good," "bad," "perfect," or "energetic." However, there are several cases where impressions, reflections and linguistic beliefs about the variety are expressed, usually by outside characters. In Murakami 2014, the main character describes his feelings about the way his work colleague Kitaru speaks:

> Even though Kitaru was not particularly handsome, his facial features were rather elegant. He wasn't tall but slim, his clothes and hairstyle were fashionable and simple. As long as he didn't speak, he looked like a well-mannered, sensitive city boy. But as soon as he opened his mouth, that first impression crumbled like a sandcastle trampled by a labrador. People were surprised by his perfect Kansai dialect and high-pitched voice. This mismatch in appearance was frightening.
>
> (Murakami 2014: 68)

Although this description seemingly refers to a specific character, the beliefs expressed there can be applied to all speakers of the dialect, and those inferred characteristics supposedly contrast with his well-groomed appearance and does not suit a boy from good family. By showing how Kitaru's way of speaking changes his social perception, Murakami reveals the mechanisms of linguistic prejudices. A different perspective is offered by writer Rika Yusa from Kawakami 2019, who, in a conversation with a fellow author Natsuko, shares her impression of the Osaka dialect:

> When I was in Osaka, I saw three women engaged in a conversation about something. The sentences were interspersed with different points of view, statements, times, everything was mixed together. The pace was incredible, and they were laughing all the time, but the conversation was moving forward. Completely different from television, where everything is, after all, adapted to it. The purpose of exchanging sentences in Osaka dialect is not communication, but competition. On top of that, you play the role of the audience yourself. What a narrative...
>
> (Kawakami 2019: 254–255)

In this case, the variety is characterized in a more positive way: it is chaotic and fast-paced, but at the same time diverse and colorful, making it ideal for creating engaging stories. Later, Rika also reflects on the possibilities the variety brings to literature, making it seem like a valuable asset for a writer. These two examples clearly demonstrate the two competing linguistic attitudes identified by Shibamoto and Shibamoto-Smith (2016: 90) and their impact on the evaluation of the Osaka dialect itself: those who support the use of the dialect perceive it as interesting or beautiful, while its critics see it as a sign of lack of sophistication.

These authors, who come from Osaka, seem to be aware of the internal diversity of this variety, which they often refer to. The most frequently mentioned dialect is that spoken in the Senba business district, which appears in Miyamoto 1985, Tanabe 1987, and Nishi 2006. Since it is derived from the language of Edo-period merchants, it is characterized by the presence of

archaic vocabulary as well as a tendency to use higher levels of honorifics than in other varieties. Its counterpart is a dialect prevalent from the economically disadvantaged neighborhoods of central Osaka. Presently, it has gained paramount recognition, primarily attributed to its widespread utilization in comedic skits. It is so distinctive that the protagonist of Murakami 2014 recognizes it immediately, where he hears his friend speak:

> "You can't think of anything other than that you're from Kansai," I said. "But it's not the Hanshin dialect. It's a way of speaking from deep downtown of Osaka."
>
> "You're totally right. During the summer holidays in high school, I was doing an exchange program near Tennoji. A very interesting place."
>
> (Murakami 2014: 60)

At the same time, however, the dialect as presented in the texts themselves is often repetitive and stereotypical. Sanada (2018: 72) lists three features that are associated with the modern Kansai dialect: the copula *ya*, the negative form suffix /-heN/, and the honorific modal verb *haru*. All of them appear repeatedly in the works analyzed, enabling the reader to immediately identify which variety they are dealing with, even without mentioning its name in the text. Therefore, it can be considered as an example of an eye-dialect, although this term is usually used for unconventional spelling used to reproduce colloquial usage (Brett 2009: 49). For example, right in the first scene of Miyamoto 1985, during the conversation between the protagonist and the owner of the apartment, almost all of the most characteristic features of this dialect appear:

> "Denki ga **tsukehen** no desu kedo…"
> Onna shujin wa, chiratto Tetsuyuki o mite, "Iya, wasureta wa, denki kaisha ni renraku suru non. Mēta no toko no sūitchi, kitta mama **ya** nen" to itta.
> "Konban, makkurana naka de shinbōsen to akan no desu ka"
> Tetsuyuki wa hara ga tattaga, odayaka ni itta.
> "Ato de, rōsoku motteitte agemasu sakai, hitoban shinbō shite chōdai"
>
> "I can't turn on the light."
> The landlady looked at Tetsuyuki and replied:
> "No, it was me who forgot to contact the energy company. The switch on the meter is still on.
> Tetsuyuki was angry, but he spoke calmly:
> "Will I have to endure staying in the darkness today?"
> "I'll bring you a candle later, but please bear with it tonight."
>
> (Miyamoto 1985: 6–7)

Authors also often use lexical items emblematic of the Osaka dialect. This is due to the fact that the Japanese writing system does not allow for a complete reflection of the phonology of this variety, for example due to the inability to mark a different tonal accent, which is one of the

most characteristic elements of this variety. This limitation undoubtedly affects the way it is presented, forcing creators to focus on lexical and morpho-syntactic differences. What is more, the dialect appears almost exclusively in direct or reported speech, but never the narration itself (see table 3). In the case of first-person narratives, we can occasionally find the dialect in the characters' thoughts, but they are always clearly separated from the rest of the text. Nishi 2006 does this with introductory verbs:

> Soshite saigo ni mōichido kagami o mite owari. Tobira o akeru to, hyakuenshoppu de utte iru yasuppoi ki no "toiretto"-satsu ga yureru. Sore o miru to mata iraira shite, kirei ni natta ka dō ka nante dō demo **ee yan ke**, to omou.
>
> One last look in the mirror and that's it. When I open the door, the cheap "toilet" sign from the 100-yen store shakes. When I see this, I get irritated and wonder why I even care if it's clean in here.
>
> (Nishi 2006: 55)

It seems that in contemporary prose, the Kansai dialect is not only the language of speech, but also of the thoughts of its speakers, but it can never be used for narration (see: table 3), which has become the domain of standard Japanese since the Meiji period. According to Hodson (2014: 86), this kind of approach indicates the existence of a hierarchical relationship between varieties in the author's mind, which is rooted in standard language ideology. The reader will also automatically perceive the standard language used by the narrator as objective and neutral, while dialect is only a tool for character characterization.

	Asano 1999	**Higashino 1988**	**Kawakami 2019**	**Makime 2011**	**Miyamoto 1985**	**Murakami 2014**	**Nishi 2006**	**Nishi 2014**	**Tanabe 1985**	**Tanabe 1987**
direct speech	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
reported speech			X	X			X		X	X
narration										

Table 3. The location of dialect in the texts.

The portrayal of speakers of the dialect

Next, let us examine the portrayal of Osaka dialect speakers in the selected texts. In all ten books they belong to the main characters of the story. This means that in the case of this variety, the stereotype mentioned by Takahashi (2012: 17) – that the dialect speakers can only appear in a supporting role is not confirmed. Moreover, nine out of the ten analyzed works feature more than one Osaka dialect speaker. Such an extensive representation makes it possible to analyze, how through the use of dialect the authors construct the characterizations of the fictional characters as people from a specific town, social class, age group or gender.

Most of the dialect speakers come from Osaka, the third largest city in Japan. The only exception is Akimoto from Asano 1999, who lives in the fictional city of Minato. Although the author does not specify its location directly, the dialect and references to local culture allow us to conclude that it is also located near Osaka. However, none of the works feature speakers from rural areas, which confirms that the dialect is associated primarily with urbanity. The majority of characters presented in the analyzed texts are native speakers of the Osaka dialect who acquired it naturally, having grown up in this area. Ayumu, the protagonist of Nishi 2014 describes this process in his own example:

> Our family had been living in Osaka for a long time, so everyone naturally used the Kansai dialect when talking.
>
> (Nishi 2014: 13)

At times they are also shown speaking the standard Japanese, which they learned from school and the media. Therefore, knowledge of non-standard dialects is not presented as a limitation, but rather something that enriches their linguistic repertoire, allowing them to choose the variety depending on the social context. Two texts feature so-called "new speakers": Kitaru from Murakami 2014 and Asahi from Makime 2011, who learned the dialect later in life owing to their interest in various aspects of Osaka culture. This refers to the phenomenon of "dialectal cosplay" described by Tanaka (2011: 86), which consists in imitating grammatical structures, expressions or accents portrayed in the local media by people coming from different regions of Japan.

In terms of socioeconomic status, most Osaka dialect speakers, especially main characters, tend to be educated, white-collar workers whose stable financial situation allows them to be classified as middle or upper class. An example is the Akutsu family from Nishi 2014: after graduating from a prestigious university, the father found a well-paid job in a research concern, and his wife was able to give up her professional career and devote herself

entirely to taking care of the house and children. In Higashino 1988 we can see the Osaka dialect being used on daily basis among teachers and police officers. Due to Osaka's status as a commercial city, many of the characters are also local entrepreneurs: Iwako from Tanabe 1984, who takes over the running of her husband's textile company after the war, or restaurant owner Sanada from Makime 2011. However, there are also some characters who struggle with financial difficulties. Tetsuyuki from Miyamoto 1985 comes from a middle-class background, but after the death of his father, he is forced to pay off his debts by working as a bellboy. Natsuko from Kawakami 2019 was raised by a single mother and had to earn her living from an early age. Eventually, she is the only one in the entire family who managed to graduate and move to Tokyo to start a successful writing career, but her sister is unable to escape the intergenerational poverty. The life of the inhabitants of an economically disadvantaged neighborhood in southern Osaka is presented in Nishi 2006, where two main characters are a factory worker and a bar hostess. Thus, it seems the Osaka dialect is not associated with any specific class or occupational group, although working-class characters are shown more using its colloquial forms, as can be seen in the scene of witness examination from Higashino 1985:

> "Saikin o okoshita toka wa?"
> "Kiitemasen nā. Shigotojō no koto **yattara** hanchō ni kiku no ga ichiban **yakedo**"
> "Soshitara atode kikimasho. Tokorode, danna san no koto de nanika sōdan o uketa koto wa nai desu ka?"
> "**Omahen**. Kotchi wa chotto gurai sōdan ni noritai to omotte, matteta gurai yattan desu ga, shin no tsuyoi hito nan desu na."
>
> "Has anything happened recently?"
> "I didn't hear anything. But when it comes to work-related things, it is better to ask the brigade leader."
> "We'll ask him later. By the way, didn't you advise her about her husband problems?"
> "No. I was waiting to give her some advice, but she's a very strong person."
>
> (Higashino 1988: 44)

The detective – Osaka dialect speaker himself uses standard Japanese during a formal interrogation, while a factory worker answers in a dialect.

Similar conclusions can be drawn regarding the age of the characters. In every work analyzed we can observe adult speakers, and half also include children and seniors. The Osaka dialect is used not only at home, but also at school, which is especially visible in works set among the student community, such as Higashino 1988 or Asano 1999:

> "Datte, ki ni naru **yan**. Taka-chan, sakkā-bu no renshū, zuru shita yaro. Minna, sagashi teta mono"
> "**Ee, ee** no. Ima wa, koitsu to daijina hanashi tetan **yakara**. Sakkā nanka dō demo **ee** no" ...
> "Atto…… kono mae, Taka-chan no kurasu ni tenkō shite kita hito?"
> "**Sōya**. Seta, Seta Ayumu"

Akimoto ga boku no namae o yukkuri hatsuon suru. Hagimoto Ena ga yukkuri unazuku.
“Uchi, Hagimoto Enadesu. Megude **ee yo.** Taka-chan no”
“Taka-chan no koibito janai ka?”
“Tada no yōna tomodachi. Yōchien kara no nagai o tsukainan **ya**”
Fui ni, Akimoto wa boku no kata o daite aruki dashita. Boku wa hikizurareru.
“Taka-chan. Honma ni sakkā yasumu no? Okorarete mo shira**hen** de”
“Kamawante. Ore, ima, koitsu ni muchū **ya nen**. Sakkā nanka dō demo **ee te**”

“Because I’m curious. You skipped the soccer team’s practice. That’s why everyone was looking for you.”
“Yeah, right. I was just talking about important things with this guy. I don’t care about soccer or anything. ...
“Oh ... is that the person who transferred to your class the other day?”
“That’s right. Seta, Seta Ayumu.”
Akimoto pronounces my name slowly. Ena Hagimoto nods slowly.
“My name is Ena Hagimoto. You can call me Meg. His...”
“Aren’t you his lover?”
“We’re just childhood friends. We've known each other since kindergarten.”
Suddenly, Akimoto grabbed my shoulder and started walking. I’m being dragged away.
“Taka-chan. Are you really going to take a break from soccer? I don’t know if you’re upset.”
“I don’t care. I’m crazy about this guy right now. I don’t care about soccer.”

(Asano 1999: 19)

An example of an older speaker is seventy-seven-year-old Utako from Tanabe 1984. She comes from a traditional merchant family and is very proud of her origins and dialect, but at the same time she is aware that many old customs and expressions are fading into oblivion. Although in everyday life her speech does not differ significantly from her children’s and grandchildren’s, in the presence of former employees of her company she allows herself to use archaisms such as the Osaka first-person pronoun *wate* or the honorific suffix *-don*, typical for Edo and Meiji period merchants (1987: 284). When she starts a romance with her former neighbor, she is most attracted to his way of speaking and writing, which remind her of old Osaka (1987: 133). One may conclude that for contemporary writers the dialect is not only the slowly disappearing language of older generations but also a living way of communication between different age groups.

In the majority of the texts analyzed, both men and women are shown speaking in the Osaka dialect. The only exceptions were two stories which took place in other parts of Japan: Murakami 2014 and Kawakami 2019, where an overall limited number of dialect speakers was featured. However, with regard to gender, the manner of speaking differs – for instance, female characters tend to use more standard forms. This may be connected with a belief that the Osaka dialect is not very feminine (see Takagi 2015: 100–104). Thus, the authors take certain steps to add femininity to female protagonists by appealing to the so-called “women’s language” (*onna kotoba*) - linguistic features and patterns that are thought to be more commonly used by women. Although research shows that the actual language of Japanese women differs significantly from

these assumptions, it is still strongly present in fictional works (see Ohara 2021: 209). This is because the distinct speaking styles for men and women in Japanese emerged during the development of modern literary language (Inoue 2002: 404-409). The works analyzed in this paper are no exception. The linguistic stylization of women's and men's speech in the Osaka dialect slightly differs from the typical representation of male and female languages in standard-language texts, the gender of the characters still significantly influences the way writers choose to show their way of speaking. For instance, one of most characteristic features of women's language is the presence of final particles, such as *nen*, *ne* or *na* to introduce uncertainty and soften the message. In contrast, men tend to end sentences more often with the copula *ya* alone, although they also use final particles, even those that in standard Japanese belong to women's language, such as *wa*. However, *ze* and *zo* that are considered to be more masculine, do not appear at all. The choice of pronouns is also related to the gender of the characters: women referred to themselves as *uchi* or *atashi*, and men as *ore*. We can see this in Tanabe 1985, when Iwako, a forty-six-year-old saleswoman from Osaka, meets her lover from Kyoto in a traditional inn:

> "Oso nate shimote daibu, omachi ni narimashita?" Iwako no koe wa itsumo chīsai. …
> "Iya iya, sō demonai."
> "Kurai ouchiya koto …"
> "Un. Kedo, umai mon tabesasu no**ya**. Nihen hodo kitakainā. Anta ni mo kora, zehi , tabe sa shitai omōte**nā."**
> Ōba wa go jū ichi ni naru otokodaga, koe wa hari ga atte chikara ga atta. Utai o yatteiru to iukara sono sei kamo shirenai. Onō no kai ni Iwako wa sasowareruga,
> **"Uchi**, soredake wa akimasen**nen**…" to nigeteshimau. Ōba wa tsuma to ocha mo naratteiru sōdaga, Iwako wa ocha mo yaranai.
> "Kyōyō, naute sumimasen." to itta koto ga aruga.
> "Sonnan, kyōyō **ya** nai. Honma no onna no kyōyō iutara, anta mitai ni, are ga sukina onna no koto **dosshan"** to Ōba wa fuzaketeitta. "Iya, onna no, **ya** nai ningen no kyōyō, iunkainā jikkuri tanoshimu kotonode keru yoyū ga ningen no kyōyō **ya.**"
> "Sora, uchi, mō toshi **ya mon.** Yonjū roku ni nattara darekate, sō to chigaimasuka"
> "Nakanaka. Isōde itehen **neya**, sōiu onago han wa. Iromachi e kudaritara kinkarami mi ni narushi, shirōto wa ukiyo no giri ni shibararerushi…"
> "fufufufu"
> "Iwako han dakey**a.** anta mitai nan, **orahen**." ….
>
> "Sorry for being late. Have you waited long?" Utako always speaks in a quiet voice. …
> "No, not really." Ōba replied calmly. Still, Iwako assumed he had been waiting for her for a long time.
> "What a dark inn!"
> "That's true, but it serves good food. I've been here a few times and definitely wanted you to try it."
> Ōba, who turned 51 this year, has a strong, youthful voice, probably because he studied Noh chants. Ōba tries to invite Iwako to Noh performances, but she always declines his invitation, saying, "It's not my thing." He also said that he and his wife were learning the tea ceremony, but Iwako was never interested in it. In the past she refused, explaining:
> "I'm not a very refined type."

> "It has nothing to do with sophistication. Women who are truly sophisticated are people like you, they do what they like," he replied, amused "No, not only women, it can also apply to all people. True "sophistication" means that people are carefree enough to enjoy everything to the fullest."
> "Well, that comes with age," said Iwako. "People who are 46 years old, like me, care less about conventions, right?"
> "It's actually very difficult to find a woman with such broad horizons. In the red-light district, you have to pay for it, and an amateur like me could get lost in the rules there." Iwako giggled.
> "You are the only woman, Iwako. There is no one like you."
>
> (Tanabe 1985: 222–224)

While her lover always speaks in the dialect and in the informal form, Iwako almost exclusively uses the standard polite form *-masu* and uses dialectal constructions only four times. When she explains to her beloved her lack of interest in traditional Japanese art, her statement includes typical features of women's language, such as the final particle *mon* and the pronoun *uchi*. In this way, she tries to compensate for her perceived lack of femininity and sophistication. The stereotype of the masculinity of the Osaka dialect can also be found in the novel Makime 2011 from the 2000s. The main character, Daisuke, although assigned male at birth, has doubts about his gender identity. One day he finally decides to go to school in a girls' uniform, accompanied by his friend Chako:

> "Niatteru ka na, boku?" to iu Daisuke no toi ni,
> "omae, futori-sugi" (...) `
> "**Honmani** yatte mō tan'**ya nā**…" wazuka ni mae o aruku sako ga, potsuri to tsubuyaita.
> "Hen kana" to Daisuke wa tazuneta.
> "Hen'**yaro**"
>
> - Does it suit me? – asked Daisuke, to which Chako replied
> - You're too fat.(…)
> - You really did it… - Chako, walking slightly in front of him, murmured.
> - Is it weird? – asked Daisuke.
> - It's weird.
>
> (Makime 2011: 45-46)

Daisuke, although still using the masculine pronoun *boku*, performs femininity through the use of standard forms combined with softening final particle *kanā*. On the other hand, Chako, who is characterized as a tomboy with stereotypically boyish interests, willingly uses dialectal forms, such as the phatic expression *yarō*.

Overall, as can be seen in the summary table 4, apart from urban origin, there is no correlation in contemporary literature between specific socio-demographic characteristics and knowledge of the Osaka dialect. Contemporary writers seem to be aware that this variety is not a monolith, diversifying the way characters speak in relation to social class, occupation, age and gender. For instance, authors may use informal dialect expressions to reflect the way of speaking of the working class or use an archaic dialect from the Senba district as part of the

characterization of an educated older businesswoman. The complexity of dialect representation in literature becomes more evident as we analyze in what situations the dialect is used.

	Asano 1999	Higashino 1988	Kawakami 2019	Makime 2011	Miyamoto 1985	Murakami 2014	Nishi 2006	Nishi 2014	Tanabe 1985	Tanabe 1987
place of origin										
urban	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
rural										
social class										
working class	X	X	X		X			X		
middle or higher class	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
age										
child	X	X	X	X			X	X		
adult	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
senior		X		X	X		X	X	X	
gender										
female	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
male	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Table 4. The socio-demographic features of Osaka dialect speakers

The situational context of dialect use

As mentioned, almost all of the Osaka dialect speakers in the analyzed texts also have standard Japanese in their linguistic repertoire, which means they can opt for either of the two varieties or mix and combine them depending on the situational context of the conversation and the pragmatic strategies adopted. This adds another layer to the analysis of how dialects are represented in contemporary literature.

Osaka dialect is primarily shown as a tool for communication within in-groups. It is related to the opposition fundamental to Japanese culture between *uchi* (in-group) and *soto* (out-group), which translates into a completely different set of linguistic and extra-linguistic norms

(Ball 2004: 356). Within the *uchi*, one can afford greater freedom and authenticity, which in language translates into a departure from rigid rules of propriety and forms of politeness. It also encourages the choice of non-standard varieties, which further serves to emphasize a shared identity (Ball 2004: 375-378). Thus, in the works analyzed, we can also see how the authors use the dialect to create the feeling of authenticity and trust within the circle of family, friends, employees of one company or residents of the same neighborhood. However, it also appears in conversations with outsiders, such as in the already analyzed scene of police interrogation in Higashino 1988, provided that the interlocutor also comes from the same region. The situation is different when the protagonist assumes that the potential interlocutor is not from Kansai, in which case standard Japanese is likely to be used. An exemplification might be the conversation between Chako and half-French Asahi from Makime 2011:

> “Anou, eigo no senseidesu ka?” Temoto no kami o totonoenagara, sako wa ozuozu toikaketa.
> “E , watashi? ”
> Isshun, kyoton to shita hyōjō o miseta joseidattaga, kyū ni hagan shite,
> “chigau, chigau” to ōkiku te o futta.
> “Jā, furansugodesu ka?”
> Namae kara rensō suru kokumei o omowazu ageta sakodattaga, furansugo no jugyō jitai, somosomo gakkō ni wanai.
> “Sensei janai no. Kaikeikensain. Tada no yakunin” (…)
> “Kon'na namae de, tashika ni umare mo Furansudakedo”
> josei wa kyū ni kotoba o tomeru to, karada o kagame, sako no mimimoto ni sasayaku yō ni tsugeta.
> “Watashi - furansugo shabera rehen nen”
> (...) nando mo saki hodo no josei no koto o omoikaeshita. Kyū ni Ōsaka-ben de hanashikake rareta toki wa, bikkuri shita.
>
> "Um, are you an English teacher?" Chako asked timidly, sorting out the papers in front of her.
> "Eh, me?" The woman looked confused for a moment, but then suddenly burst out laughing,
> "No, no," she said, waving her hands.
> "So, French?" Chako couldn't help but mention the name of the country that came to mind from the name, but French classes were not offered at the school. "I'm not a teacher. Just an official at the Board of Audit."
> (...)
> "My name is French, and I was born in France, but..." The woman suddenly stopped talking, leaned over, and whispered in Chako's ear. "I can't speak French."
> (...)
> As she did so, she thought back on the woman from earlier many times. She was surprised when she was suddenly spoken to in Osaka dialect.
>
> (Makime 2011: 77 – 78)

This scene can be read as a reference to beliefs about the situational contexts in which standard Japanese should be used instead of dialect. A 1994-1995 national survey asked respondents whether they used Standard or regional Japanese in various situations. The results showed that

respondents were most likely to use their local dialect when talking to someone from their area on a local street (82%) and least likely when asking directions from a Standard Japanese speaker in Tokyo (19%) (Okamoto, Shibamoto-Smith 2016: 83).

Another important factor determining the choice between a dialect and a standard is the position held in the group. When Tetsuyuki from Miyamoto 1988 starts his work in a hotel, he is a the bottom of social hierarchy, so he is shown adjusting his language accordingly:

> Shimazaki to iu jinji kachō ga, bōi kyaputen to shirusa reta nafuda o mune ni tsukete iru seinen o yonde, Tetsuyuki o shōkai shita.
> "Kyō kara arubaito ni kite kureru Iryō-kun **ya**. Goji kara jūji made ga shigoto jikan **ya**" suru to, Isogai Kōichi to iu na no bōi kyaputen wa,
> "jūniji made denai to **komarimasu** yo" to Shimazaki ni fumansō ni itta.
> Shimazaki wa kakubatta kao o Tetsuyuki ni mukete,
> "ie ga tōin **ya**. Saishū no densha ga, ee to, nanji yatta ka na?" to kiita.
> "Jūichiji sanpun **desu**" Tetsuyuki ga kotaeru to, Shimazaki wa nando mo unazuite. (...).
> "Nande konna ni atsuin **desu ka**" to Tetsuyuki wa kiite mita.
> Isogai to iu, Tetsuyuki yori sukoshi nenchō ni mieru seta seinen wa, tsūro no sayū no kabe o tenokō de tataite,
> "koko ga guriru no chōriba de, kotchi ga randorī **ya**. Koko wa reibō ga **todokahenkara**, natsu wa jigoku **ya**" to itta.
>
> Shimazaki, the head of HR, called over a young man with a badge that said "bellboy coordinator" and introduced Tetsuyuki to him.
> - This is Iryō, who will work with us from 5 to 10 from today.
> Hearing this, the coordinator, called Isogai Kōichi, said dissatisfied to Shimazaki:
> - I'm afraid he can't leave until 12.
> He turned his face to Tetsuyuki and said:
> - He lives far away. What time is the last train?
> - At 10:03.(…)
> - Why is it so hot? – Tetsuyuki asked.
> Isogai, a boy not much older than Tetsuyuki, slammed his hand on the right and left walls of the passage.
> - Here's the grill and here's the laundry room. The air conditioning doesn't work so it's hell in the summer.
>
> (Miyamoto 1985: 29-30)

The head of the HR department, who is at the top of the group hierarchy because of his position, addresses his subordinates in Kansai dialect, although they use standard Japanese in his presence. When they are left alone, Isogai, who has been employed longer, assumes the leadership role, begins to feel more at ease and responds to his new colleague in dialect. Tetsuyuki, on the other hand, allows himself to use dialect only after a few weeks on the job.

On the other hand, people from Kansai who have moved to other parts of the country find themselves in a completely different sociolinguistic situation. In such a case, rapid assimilation often occurs, as in the case of the narrator from Murakami 2014, who within first

few weeks after starting his studies in Tokyo, completely switches to standard Japanese, which he thought would symbolize a new beginning:

> Anyway, I wanted to throw it all away and start a new life in Tokyo as a new person. I wanted to try out a new possibility of being myself. For me, discarding the Kansai dialect and adopting a new variety was a practical (and also symbolic) way to achieve this. After all, the language we speak shapes us as people.
>
> (Murakami 2014: 62-63)

A different strategy is adopted by the protagonist Nishi 2006, who finds himself among the children of Tokyo businessmen at a Japanese school in Cairo, so his way of speaking arouses the astonishment of his peers. So to avoid sensationalism, he decides to use the standard variety in the school environment, while at home he continues to use the dialect. His attention-loving sister, on the other hand, does the exact opposite. Natsuko from Kawakami 2019 tries to cultivate her knowledge of the Kansai dialect through contact with remaining family in Osaka. In her case, it shown as a way to keep in touch with her own working-class roots despite the social advancement. Even so, she admits in a conversation with a friend that she subconsciously hides her dialect in formal situations (Kawakami 2019: 322).

Some texts also portray the strategy of code-mixing, which involves changing the code in one linguistic act (see Hudson 2001: 53). It can be the result of a conscious strategy, as when one of Ayumu's classmates in Asano 1999 unexpectedly speaks to the teacher in hypercorrect standard language to convince her of his idea for a school play:

> "Ano, dakara ne…… etto, Moriguchi, doko kara kiita nda"
> "Sensei, joshi chūgakusei no jōhō-mō o amaku min toite kudasai. Sore yori, **honma** no koto nan desu ne"
> "Ee, un, dakara ne… sō, tashikani kinō, gakkōgawa kara boku ni hanashi wa attan ya. Mitsugumi no kaikakusho ga anmari fuzake **terute na**"
> "Watashitachi wa, shōjiki ni kakimashita. Fuzakete nanka imasen. Majime desu"
> Moriguchi ga mune o haru. Kireina hyōjungodatta. Taishita yatsuda nā to, tsukudzuku kanshin suru.
>
> - Yeah, that's why... How do you even know that, Moriguchi?
> - Please do not underestimate the information network of junior high school students. But more importantly, it's true.
> - Uh, yes, that's why... It's true, the school authorities wanted to talk to me yesterday. I was told there was too much tomfoolery in the third grade script.
> - We wrote it honestly. There's no fooling around there. Everything is serious.
> Moriguchi puffed out his chest. He now spoke beautiful standard language. I was really impressed.
>
> (Asano 1999: 98)

Initially, the boy, like the teacher, uses Osaka dialect - the switch to standard Japanese is a deliberate action intended to enhance the effect of persuasion in the entire statement. However,

the code can also be changed involuntarily, for example under the influence of strong emotions. When Utako from Tanabe 1987 goes to the hairdresser, she is so involved in her story about self-care courses for middle-aged women that she unconsciously switches to the Kansai dialect:

> "Ie, motto jissai-teki chishikirashūgozaimasu yo, okusama" sensei wa watashi no a tama o ikutsu mo no taba ni wakeru. Sōshite, hana ni tsun to kuru senryō o, kami ni kosuri tsukete yuku. "Soredesukara, dansei hō wa hairezu, kōza wa josei onrī to iu kotodesu. Uchi e irassharu o kyaku-sama no naka demo, jukunen josei no kata ni wa ima kara, sono kōza, ōhyōbandesu wa" .(...).
> "Watashi mo yoku shirimasen kedo, ima made kikitakute mo kikenakatta yōna shitsumon mo dekiru sōde, mō oishasan o ate ni shi tete wa **akan, to**. Tsumari oishasan wa otoko **ya** shi, joi-san **yūte** mo wakakattari, hitori mi yattari, son nan wa tayori ni **naran**, to"
> Kono sensei wa hanashi ni muchūninaru to, Ashiyaatari no `gozaimasu' kotoba ga datsuraku shite, isei no ii Kansai-ben ni naru.
>
> - No, ma'am, there is more practical knowledge there. – the hairdresser divided my hair into strands and then started rubbing in the dye, which stings my nose. – That's why men can't take part, it's a women's course. (...) I don't know exactly, but you can ask questions there that you have never asked before. Doctors are unreliable because they are either men or young women without families - when the hairdresser became too absorbed in the conversation, she lost her "gozaimasu", characteristic for Ashiya city, and started speaking in an energetic Kansai dialect.
>
> (Tanabe1987: 97)

The main character immediately notices that at some point, instead of the standard and honorific copula *gozaimasu*, the woman begins to use the colloquial and dialectal form *ya*, which she treats as a violation of language norms of a conversation between an employee and a client, resulting from excessive involvement in the story. However, the opposite situation is witnessed by the heroine of Nishi 2006, when one of the bar customers confesses his feelings towards another employee:

> "Ore wa, ore wa a, Mami ga sukina dakenan da yoūtsu! " sō itte Hashiguchi-san wa oioi to nakikuzureru. Fudan jibun no koto o 'washi' to ii, 'denga na mangana' no Ōsakaben no kuse ni, kyū ni 'ore' soshite hen na Tōkyōben, to iu, shibai ga katta sore o hajime, yuka o dondon to tataku.
>
> -I, I, love Mami! – having said this, Mr. Hashiguchi burst into tears. He usually called himself "washi" and used the old Osaka merchant dialect, but suddenly he started calling himself "ore", using standard Japanese, and banging on the floor theatrically.
>
> (Nishi 2006: 60)

In this case, the man is also acting under the influence of emotions, but in order to express them, he subconsciously imitates the behaviour known from cultural texts and media, which are dominated by standard Japanese, so it is easier for him to express his feelings using this variety. As we can see in the instances of code-switching the authors are very often constructed on the base of the opposition between dialect, treated as a more authentic and natural form of

expression, and standard language, the use of which signals greater distance, cool calculation or a studied pose.

Conclusions

This paper has examined the stereotypes towards Osaka dialect found in contemporary literature. Whereas some linguistic features are strongly associated with this variety and can be used as a kind of eye-dialect, the traditional beliefs about the speakers of these dialects, mentioned by Kinsui and other scholars, have been replaced by a more complex and fluid indexical field. Although associations with urbanity and merchant traditions are still present, most of the characters speaking Osaka dialect vary in terms of origin, social class, age and gender. The writers seem to be aware that the dialect is not homogeneous, using different variants to highlight the socio-demographic background of the characters. Moreover, an analysis of the situational context of the characters' use of dialect revealed that the choice between dialect and standard language can be dictated by various factors, such as belonging to the same internal group, the degree of formality or the place where the act of communication takes place. Changes between codes, on the other hand, can be portrayed both as conscious or unconscious. Thus, by referring to pragmatic strategies familiar to readers, authors are able to indirectly shown the character's emotions or personalities as well as relationships between them.

The study also confirmed the presence of various, competing language ideologies, in which these portrayals are rooted. Although dialect is welcomed in many spheres of life, its use is also bound by the normative ideology of differential use (*tsukaiwake*) (Okamoto, Shibamoto-Smith 2016: 94), dictating the use of the standard language in certain situations. The dominance of the standard language ideology is further evidenced by the fact that the dialect appears only in direct and indirect speech, while the narrative is subjugated to standard Japanese. Nevertheless, traces of new interest in custom varieties are evident. However, changes in social beliefs as a result of the dialect boom are also evident, when the role of regional varieties in the creation of local identity was noticed and appreciated. As a result, the evaluations of Osaka dialect also vary: in some cases it can be viewed as interesting, beautiful, an authentic, and regarded as a skill rather than a constraint. In others speed, incoherence and crudeness are attributed to it.

The results of the analysis not only offer a clearer insight into the social perception of the Osaka dialect but also contribute to a better understanding of literature's function as a

conveyer of stereotypes and language ideologies. Future research should focus on the impact of how dialects are represented in literature, especially their influence on readers' beliefs.

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