Yakuwarigo – real or fictionalized speech?

How real Japanese influences role languages and how role languages are reflected in real Japanese

A hybrid u:japan lecture by Patrycja Duc-Harada

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https://japanologie.univie.ac.at/ujapanlectures
The aim of this lecture is to present the widely discussed concept of *yakuwarigo* 役割語 'role language' from two perspectives: fictionalized speech (using examples of characteristic lines and dialogue taken from popular anime, manga and drama series), as well as real Japanese language used in private and public spheres. This discussion promises to reach interesting conclusions concerning the impact of *yakuwarigo* 役割語 on role and character languages, and the ways and reasons for which role languages are occasionally and intentionally implemented in real speech as a communicative strategy.

The first part of the lecture discusses major terms (*yakuwari* 役割和, *yakuwarigo* 役割語, *kyarakutā* 角話 and *kyarakutā gengo* 角話語, *kyara*, *rashisa*, *sutereotaipu*, *rejisutā*, etc.) from the perspective of linguistic stylization and Japanese sociolinguistics. In this part, standard language (*hyōjungo* 普通話), Japanese standard honorifics (*keigo* 敬語), but also non-standard honorifics (e.g. -*ssu* form) will be introduced as examples of role languages that play a significant part in portraying appropriate (demanded) or inappropriate (undemanded) behaviours. The topic of *yakuwarigo* 役割語's potential impact on the language and behaviours of contemporary people and their speech will also be briefly discussed.

In the second part, selected examples of role languages and character languages that occur in real Japanese communication will be introduced. Two communicative spheres: private (e.g. teacher’s speech, parent’s speech), as well as public (e.g. posters, announcements, commercials, blogs, celebrity speech) will be distinguished in order to discover major tendencies and also explain motivations for using stylized speech. Finally, the occurrence of role language in language education (based on examples from textbooks) will be briefly presented to indicate the impact of role language and stylized language on young people’s linguistic competencies.

The lecture is based on selected published sources referring to the discussed subjects, as well as the outcomes of the individual research conducted by the author in recent years.