

# Comparison of female and male sports hero constructions in newspaper coverage

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## Abstract

This paper applies selective parts of van Leeuwen's (1996; 2008) social actor theory and investigates the differences or similarities in how female and male players are constructed as sports heroes in terms of gender in broadsheet and sports newspaper articles. It focuses on two players: Yukiko Ueno (female) and Yuki Saito (male). Ueno was a pitcher in the national softball team when her team won a gold medal in the Beijing Olympics in 2008. Saito was a pitcher in the champion team of the National High School Baseball Championship in 2006. I selected articles about them from national broadsheets and sports newspapers when they drew the most attention from the media. Despite some similarities in the ways of constructing them as sports heroes, I argue that Saito's hero construction is associated with masculinity in the sports newspaper articles, while Ueno's is not associated with femininity in either the sports newspaper or the broadsheet articles.

## Introduction

This paper<sup>1</sup> presents a part of my PhD research, which explores male sports hero construction and masculinity in the newspaper coverage of the National High School Baseball Championship 2006 (the Championship hereafter). This is a comparative study, which aims to explore the similarities and differences of female and male sports hero constructions and the extent to which gender is relevant to a male sports hero construction in the main study.

This paper compares the representations of two players: Yukiko Ueno and Yuki Saito. Ueno was a pitcher in the national softball team when her team won a gold medal in the Beijing Olympics in 2008. Saito was a pitcher in Waseda Jitsugyo High School team (Waseda-jitsu or Sojitsu for abbreviation) when they won the Championship title in 2006. Because baseball is one of the most popular sports in Japan, although the players are all high school students, there is a lot of media coverage on the National High School Baseball Championship every year. Softball is similar to baseball; it uses a similar field with four bases and a slightly bigger and softer ball and a bat. It is sometimes regarded as a girls' substitute for baseball in Japan. Many schools have a softball team for girls and a baseball team for boys. Also in the Olympic Games, softball was played only by women, while baseball was played only by men.

The backgrounds of the two players are different: Saito was in a high school baseball team and had games at national level, while Ueno was in the national team and had games at international level. However, the duration of the tournaments and their positions in the game are similar as both Ueno and Saito were pitchers. Pitcher is an especially important position and tends to draw attention in the game. There was considerable media coverage on them during and after the respective events. Therefore, I think they are comparable.

The media play a crucial role in the construction of sports heroes (Okamoto, 2004; Vande Berg, 1998). In sport media, representation of sportswomen is scarce in relation to sportsmen (Duncan and Messner, 1998; Lines, 2002). Sport media often attribute stereotypical masculine aspects to sportsmen and feminine aspects to sportswomen. On the one hand, the focus is on power and strength in media representation of sportsmen, whilst on the other hand, the media representation of sportswomen shows weakness and emotional vulnerability more than for sportsmen and tends to underestimate their achievements. Moreover, studies on the visual media (Duncan, 1990 and Duncan and Sayaovong, 1990, mentioned in Duncan and Messner, 1998) reveal that their body parts, such as breasts and thighs, are sometimes highlighted in photos and they are represented as sexualised (Duncan and Messner, 1998). Media representation of sports heroes is part of sport media. Reflecting the underrepresentation of sportswomen, most sports heroes are male (Lines, 2002; Vande

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Berg, 1998), and media representations of male sports heroes 'reproduce and instantiate hegemonic masculinity' (Vande Berg, 1998: 139).

Defining the concept of 'sports hero' is not easy. Sports heroes, as has already been mentioned, are media constructs. It is almost impossible for most people to actually meet them, knowing about them only through the media. As male sports heroes' features are concerned, Vande Berg (1998) lists outstanding athletic performance, courage, expertise, perseverance, assertiveness, generosity, honesty, character and so on. Not all sports heroes necessarily have all of these virtues. Some sports heroes or stars are referred to with moral concerns over such as corruption and drug taking (Whannel, 2002). For sports heroes, outstanding athletic performance is what counts most. Aspects of morality and personality depend on how they are represented in the media and how the public respond to them. Rebellious attitudes can draw attention from the media and help to construct a star, while good manners can be represented as dull (Lines, 2002).

Looking at Ueno and Saito's media representation of what they achieved, I regard them as 'sports heroes'. Ueno and her team won a gold medal for the first time in the Olympics 2008. The national softball team had never won a gold medal before. She drew most attention from the media in the team because she was the best pitcher. She pitched in the most important games including the final. She suddenly became well-known nationally and appeared on TV shows and events. A few books about her were published as well.

Saito's team won the Championship after having two final games, which is unusual. He pitched in all the games they had in the Championship, which is quite hard. He was actually referred to as 'hero' in the media as I will show later in the paper. Like Ueno, books about him were also published. Both sports events that Ueno and Saito were involved in were crucial in the Japanese sporting world in that year. However, the feverish media focus on them did not last long because they were not professional athletes like sports heroes in professional football or baseball, whose performance and celebrity status draw attention year after year.

For this study, I use data from two broadsheets and two sports newspapers (i.e. tabloids) on each player in this study and apply selective parts of social actor theory (van Leeuwen, 1996; 2008) as an analytical method. My research questions are addressed below.

1. What are the similarities and differences in the representations and constructions of a female and a male sports hero in the broadsheet articles and the sports newspaper articles?
2. What are the similarities and differences between the constructions of a female and a male sports hero in terms of gender?

The first question will be answered by comparing the two types of newspapers and the second question, by comparing female and male sports hero constructions. Representation means what is presented explicitly in a text and construction means what is presented implicitly in a text.

The paper consists of five sections. The next section will describe my data. The third section will explain social actor theory and the categories I apply for this study. After that, I will present findings from the analysis. Finally, I will conclude with answers to the research questions and implications of the study.

## Data description

In this section, I briefly describe the sample texts for each player with regard to the size of the sample articles. I also give some background to the events and newspapers.

### Sample articles on Ueno

Sample texts on Ueno include articles focusing on her that were published on the days after her team's semi-final and final games. The articles are mainly about her pitching at the game including some quotes from her. The dates of the articles are the 21<sup>st</sup> and the 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2008. Her team reached the final on the 20<sup>th</sup> and won a gold medal on the 21<sup>st</sup>. The articles are from two national broadsheets and two national sports newspapers. They are the *Asahi Shimbun* (AS) and the *Yomiuri Shimbun* (YS) as the broadsheets and the *Nikkan Sports* (NS) and the *Sports Nippon* (SN) as the sports newspapers. Sports newspapers are similar to tabloids. Most readers of sports newspapers are men. For example, 79.5% of readership of NS is male (The Nikkan Sports, 2008). The gender proportions of the broadsheets are almost equal. The main contents of sports newspapers are sports news and betting/racing information. Most of them have a section of sex entertainment for heterosexual men. It is obvious from the contents that the target readership of sports newspapers is men.

I collected one article from each newspaper. The total number of sample articles on Ueno is eight. Because the fact that Japan reached the final and won a gold medal in softball at the Olympics was big news, all the sample articles are from the front page of each newspaper. Table 2.1 shows the number of characters in each article on Ueno, as the size of a Japanese corpus can best be shown by the number of characters. The table shows that the sports newspaper articles are longer than the broadsheet articles.

| Date             | Broadsheet |      | Sports newspaper |      | Total |
|------------------|------------|------|------------------|------|-------|
|                  | AS         | YS   | NS               | SN   |       |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> | 681        | 634  | 1055             | 1020 | 3390  |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> | 943        | 633  | 1015             | 891  | 3482  |
| <b>Total</b>     | 1624       | 1267 | 2070             | 1911 | 6872  |

Table 2.1 Number of characters in the articles on Ueno

### Sample articles on Saito

Sample articles on Saito are from the newspapers issued after the last two days of the Championship. Because the final game ended in a tie first and it was played again on

the next day, the sample articles are about the two final games. They are from the 21<sup>st</sup> and the 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2006. The titles of the newspapers are the same as Ueno’s sample: AS and YS as broadsheets and NS and SN as sports newspapers. The broadsheet articles are from the sports section. The sports newspaper articles are from the front page. I collected one article from each newspaper. YS did not have any articles focusing on Saito in the sports section on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. So, the number of sample articles on Saito is only seven. Nevertheless, the sizes of the whole data of Ueno and Saito are not so different. Table 2.2 shows the number of characters in the articles on Saito.

| Date             | Broadsheet |     | Sports newspaper |      | Total |
|------------------|------------|-----|------------------|------|-------|
|                  | AS         | YS  | NS               | SN   |       |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> | 586        | 663 | 1356             | 857  | 3462  |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> | 648        | -   | 1203             | 1154 | 3005  |
| <b>Total</b>     | 1234       | 663 | 2559             | 2011 | 6467  |

Table 2.2 Number of characters in the articles on Saito

## Analytical method

Since I apply van Leeuwen’s social actor theory (1996; 2008) as an analytical method in this study, I will introduce this theory and then explain what parts of the theory I will use for the analysis.

### Social actor theory

Social actor theory (van Leeuwen, 1996; 2008) originally intends to explore social issues such as immigration and racism in English texts employing a Critical Discourse Analysis approach. He proposes categories to investigate how social actors are represented in a text. It is useful to look at, for example, which social actors are included or excluded in a text, individually or collectively represented, specifically or generically represented; how social actors are referred to, and so on. The theory enables us to systematically investigate which social actors are foregrounded and the linguistic strategies used to achieve this. Such investigation can be helpful to reveal the intentions of the writers and the ideologies that the intentions are based upon.

I adapt this theory to look at sports hero construction and gender in Japanese. The theory can be useful in the examination of how Ueno or Saito and other social actors are represented; and how the ways of representing them can contribute to the hero construction of Ueno or Saito. Moreover, I would like to explore how gender relations, femininities and masculinities, are relevant to their representations. Van Leeuwen (1996, 2008) does not mention gender very much. He only points out the representation of fathers in children’s stories and the ways of referring to men and women in newspapers are sometimes different, but does not discuss gender regarding these. My sample texts do not include men and women together; Ueno’s texts have

only women and Saito's texts have only men. So the study cannot explore whether men or women are foregrounded. Rather, it intends to compare the texts on a woman and a man and explore the respective gender representation. The next section explains how I adapt this theory to my data.

### **Categories in social actor theory to be applied**

This section describes the categories in van Leeuwen's theory (1996; 2008) that I apply. The categories I use in this study are exclusion, genericisation, nomination, categorisation, assimilation and impersonalisation. These categories are important for representations of Ueno and Saito. Most of the categories can be applied to Japanese similarly as to English. However, it is necessary to look at features of Japanese such as honorifics to examine nomination in a Japanese text. I explain the categories and supplement the theory to look at Japanese texts where necessary.

#### *Exclusion*

*Exclusion* is to exclude social actors from the text. Van Leeuwen (1996: 38; 2008: 28) proposes three types of exclusion: *radical exclusion*, *suppression* and *backgrounding*. Radical exclusion is not to mention social actors and their activities at all in a text. Therefore, radical exclusion does not leave a linguistic trace in a text. In other words, social actors radically excluded from the text are social actors involved in what is not written in the text. Only by comparing the text with other representations of the same event, is it possible to know the radically excluded social actors. Suppression is to exclude social actors, but include their activities in a text. For example in my data, a play is described, but the players involved in the play are not described in the text. Backgrounding is to exclude social actors in a description of a given activity but they are mentioned elsewhere in the text.

#### *Nomination and categorisation*

*Nomination* and *categorisation* are related (van Leeuwen, 1996: 52; 2008: 40). Both are used to look at how social actors are referred to in a text. Nomination is how social actors are named. For example, it looks at whether a social actor is referred to by surname or first name. Social actors can be represented by a category they share with others. Categorisation has two sub-categories: *identification* and *functionalisation*. Identification is to represent social actors by their identities such as gender, age, or race. Functionalisation is to represent social actors by their function such as roles and occupation. In Japanese baseball reports, players are often referred to with their names and their roles such as fielding positions and the batting orders. In Japanese, honorifics, which are often attached to the end of names, can represent gender, relationship between the addresser and the addressee, roles, occupation, and so on. For instance, *san* is an honorific which can be attached to both women and men, *kun* is usually used to refer to boys and men and *chan* is commonly used to refer to children or younger

people and can show endearment or closeness<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, an honorific like *sensei* is used to refer to teachers and doctors.

Although van Leeuwen (1996; 2008) does not mention pronouns in his discussion of nomination, I would like to include pronouns in nomination to analyse Japanese texts. Japanese has a variety of first and second person singular pronouns. They can indicate gender identity, formality and the relation between the addresser and the addressee. Therefore, they can be useful to explore gender and power relations among social actors. For instance, a first person singular pronoun, *boku*, is commonly used by young men and boys. Another first person singular pronoun, *watashi*, is commonly used by women in any context and by men in formal contexts.

Additionally, I include reflexive pronouns such as *jibun*, which often appear in Japanese, in nomination. They can be used as a substitute of the first person or the second person singular pronouns but they do not represent gender, formality, or power relations.

#### *Assimilation*

*Assimilation* is to represent social actors collectively, i.e. referring to them as groups (van Leeuwen, 1996: 48; 2008: 37). For instance in my sample, a player can be referred to individually with his or her name (*individualisation*), while a player can be represented with other players as a team.

#### *Impersonalisation*

*Impersonalisation* means not to represent social actors as human beings but to represent them by other means (van Leeuwen, 1996: 59; 2008: 46). There are two main types of impersonalisation. *Abstraction* is to represent social actors by their qualities, while *objectivation* is to represent social actors by places or things associated with them. Objectivation can thus be a form of metonymy. For example, a reference to a pitcher as 'a right arm' in Japanese baseball reports, represents the pitcher by a part of his or her body. It is objectivation according to van Leeuwen (1996; 2008) as well as metonymy.

Now that I have explained the main points of selective parts of van Leeuwen's (1996; 2008) social actor theory, the next section will present findings from the analysis of my sample articles applying these categories.

## **Findings from the analysis**

This section presents findings from the analysis of the sample articles on Ueno and Saito. It has two parts: The first part will present references to the two players, while the second part will show the representation of social actors in the articles focusing on the two players.

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<sup>2</sup> In this paper, I only deal with Japanese commonly used in the major media including my samples, i.e. 'common Japanese'. The meanings and implications I exemplify can be different in different dialects.

### References to Ueno and Saito

I will now show the references to Ueno and Saito in each article. These involve nomination, categorisation, and impersonalisation. Firstly, I show the references from the broadsheet articles and secondly, from the sports newspaper articles.

Table 4.1 and 4.2 show references to Ueno and Saito and the number of times they are used in each article in the broadsheets. I include references used in quotes, which are shown with quotation marks. First and second person singular pronouns used in reference to them and reflexive pronouns are included.

| Date             | AS  |                                 | YS  |                   |
|------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|-------------------|
|                  | References  | No. of times used               | References  | No. of times used |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> | Ueno<br>Yukiko Ueno (26)<br>'Self' ( <i>jibun</i> )   | 3<br>1<br>1                     | Ueno<br>Ace<br>'I' ( <i>watashi</i> )<br>Japan's ace                      | 5<br>2<br>1<br>1  |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Iron arm Ueno<br>Yukiko Ueno (26)<br>The iron arm<br>The body of 174cm and 72kg<br>'I' ( <i>watashi</i> )<br>'Yukiko-chan'<br>'Self' ( <i>jibun</i> ) | 1<br>1<br>1<br>1<br>1<br>1<br>1 | Ueno<br>26 year-old right arm<br>The iron arm<br>Self ( <i>mizukara</i> ) | 3<br>1<br>1<br>1  |

Table 4.1 References to Ueno in the broadsheet articles

| Date             | AS   |                                 | YS   |                   |
|------------------|--|---------------------------------|--|-------------------|
|                  | References   | No. of times used               | References   | No. of times used |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> | Saito<br>Waseda-jitsu's Saito<br>'I' ( <i>boku</i> )<br>Ace  | 2<br>1<br>1<br>1                | Saito<br>'I' ( <i>boku</i> )<br>Self ( <i>jibun</i> )<br>'Self' ( <i>jibun</i> ) | 3<br>1<br>2<br>1  |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Sojitsu iron arm<br>Waseda-jitsu's Saito<br>'I' ( <i>boku</i> )<br>'Self' ( <i>jibun</i> )<br>The ace<br>Self ( <i>jibun</i> )<br>Self ( <i>mizukara</i> ) | 1<br>1<br>1<br>2<br>1<br>1<br>1 | No article   |                   |



|  |                           |   |  |  |
|--|---------------------------|---|--|--|
|  | Iron arm with poised face | 1 |  |  |
|--|---------------------------|---|--|--|

Table 4.2 References to Saito in the broadsheet articles

Note: Waseda-jitsu, Sojitsu: abbreviation of Saito's team name

Both Ueno and Saito are mostly referred to by their surname in the articles. Ueno is called 'ace' in the YS article and Saito is also called 'ace' in the AS article on the first date. 'Ace (*eesu*)' means the best pitcher in the team. So, referring to them as ace is functionalisation according to van Leeuwen (1996; 2008), here involving evaluation. It shows that they are both good pitchers.

On the second date, after getting a gold medal, Ueno is referred to as 'the iron arm' in both broadsheets. Saito is also referred to as 'Sojitsu iron arm' after winning the Championship. The iron arm is both a metaphoric and a metonymic reference and objectivation in impersonalisation according to van Leeuwen (1996; 2008). The expression is commonly used to refer to a great pitcher in Japanese. It represents power and strength by the use of iron and focuses on arm, which is an important body part for a pitcher. There are other metonymic references to Ueno in the articles on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The YS article refers to her as '26 year-old right arm'. This reference also focuses on her arm. In the AS article, her body, 'the body of 174cm, 72kg' represents her. Placing emphasis on her body reflects the fact that the articles are on the topic of sport.

'Yukiko-*chan*' in the AS article on the 22<sup>nd</sup> is a quote in the story of Ueno's childhood. It refers to Ueno as a child, so it uses the honorific *chan*. The first person singular pronoun Ueno used is *watashi* (AS 22<sup>nd</sup>, YS 21<sup>st</sup>), while Saito used *boku* (AS 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, YS 21<sup>st</sup>). This is because their gender is different. The first person singular pronouns in Japanese can indicate gender identity: *watashi* is the most commonly used first person singular pronoun for women and girls, whereas *boku* is commonly used for young men and boys. This different use of the first person singular pronouns in the quotations by Ueno and Saito is the only indication of their gender in the articles. Apart from this, there is no gender indication in the references to them.

The references to Ueno and Saito in the broadsheet articles show that they are great pitchers. The same expressions 'ace' and 'the iron arm' are used to refer to them. Apart from the first person singular pronouns in their quotations, there are no references indicating gender. Therefore, the broadsheet articles do not represent gender in their references to the two.

Table 4.3 and 4.4 show references to Ueno and Saito in the sports newspaper articles.

| Date             | NS                       |                   | SN                 |                   |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
|                  | References               | No. of times used | References         | No. of times used |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> | Ueno                     | 4                 | Ace                | 3                 |
|                  | Self ( <i>mizukara</i> ) | 1                 | Ueno               | 6                 |
|                  | The big ace              | 1                 | 'Ueno'             | 1                 |
|                  | 'Ueno'                   | 1                 | A reliable pitcher | 1                 |

|                  |                             |   |                       |   |
|------------------|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
|                  | The right arm of the ace    | 1 | This iron arm         | 1 |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Ueno                        | 4 | Ueno                  | 2 |
|                  | 'You' ( <i>omae</i> )       | 1 | Self ( <i>jibun</i> ) | 2 |
|                  | The ace                     | 1 |                       |   |
|                  | 'Ueno'                      | 1 |                       |   |
|                  | 'I' ( <i>watashi</i> )      | 1 |                       |   |
|                  | The iron arm medal to Japan | 1 |                       |   |

Table 4.3 References to Ueno in the sports newspaper articles

| Date             | NS                                |                   | SN                          |                   |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
|                  | References and predicates         | No. of times used | References and predicates   | No. of times used |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> | Saito                             | 3                 | Sojitsu's uniform number 1, | 1                 |
|                  | 'A man'                           | 2                 | Saito                       | 1                 |
|                  | 'Saito'                           | 2                 | Cool man                    | 1                 |
|                  | Saito, who has the ace number     | 1                 | The ace                     | 1                 |
|                  | 'Self' ( <i>jibun</i> )           | 1                 | Saito                       | 1                 |
|                  | Self ( <i>jibun</i> )             | 1                 | 'Self' ( <i>jibun</i> )     | 1                 |
|                  |                                   |                   | The iron arm                |                   |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Saito                             | 3                 | 'I' ( <i>boku</i> )         | 1                 |
|                  | 18-year-old who is usually gentle | 1                 | The iron arm                | 1                 |
|                  | 'Saito'                           | 1                 | 18-year-old boy             | 1                 |
|                  | 'Self' ( <i>jibun</i> )           | 2                 | Saito                       | 5                 |
|                  | Saito becoming a hero at Koshien  | 1                 | Self ( <i>jibun</i> )       | 1                 |
|                  |                                   | 1                 | 'Self' ( <i>jibun</i> )     | 3                 |
|                  | The man, Yuki Saito               |                   | Sojitsu's uniform number 1  | 1                 |
|                  |                                   |                   |                             |                   |

Table 4.4 References to Saito in the sports newspaper articles

Again, both Ueno and Saito are referred to as 'ace' in both the NS and the SN articles. Ueno is even called 'the big ace' in the NS article on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Both Ueno and Saito are referred to as 'the iron arm' in the SN article from the first date. Such representations of the two players are the same as in the broadsheet articles. In the NS article on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, however, Saito is referred to using the word 'hero', which is not seen in the broadsheets.

In both NS and SN articles on Saito, there are some references to him indicating his gender. He is referred to with the word 'man' in both NS and SN on the 21<sup>st</sup>. This is an indication of masculinity. I show an extract from the NS representing a masculinity of emotional competitiveness. It uses Saito's mention of 'man'. The first line is in Japanese, the second in Japanese in phonological alphabets and the third line is a word-by-word translation. The translation of the whole sentence is at the end.

(1)

駒大苫小牧の 「怪物」 エース 田中への 闘争心が、  
*komadaitomakomai-no 'kaibutsu' eesu tanaka-eno tososhin-ga,*  
Komadai-tomakomai's 'monster' ace to Tanaka fighting spirit  
斎藤の 心を さらに 強くした。  
*saito-no kokoro-o sarani tsuyokushita*  
Saito's spirit even made stronger  
The fighting spirit towards 'the monster' ace Tanaka in Komadai-tomakomai made  
Saito's spirit even stronger. (Saito, S14, NS-21<sup>st</sup>)

「男と男の 勝負 ですから」と、  
*'otoko-to otoko-no shobu desukara'-to,*  
'a man and a man confrontation is since'  
珍しく 熱い 言葉を 口にした。  
*mezurashiku atsui kotoba-o kuchinishita*  
unusually hot words mentioned  
'It's a confrontation between a man and a man', (Saito) unusually used passionate  
words. (Saito, S15, NS-21<sup>st</sup>)

The sequence of two sentences uses Saito's quote to relate masculinity to the confrontation between Saito and Tanaka, a man and a man, strong pitchers. Tanaka, the pitcher in the opposing team, is referred to as "'the monster' ace' and represented as a very strong pitcher. Saito refers to Tanaka and himself as 'a man and a man' and represents their confrontation as serious. 'A man and a man' is even used in the small headline of the paragraph having this sequence, i.e. as a pullout. It shows the article's focus on the word 'man' and the masculinity represented by it. A man here represents a masculinity of emotional competitiveness, which implies that men are competitive, passionate and serious about winning.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the SN article uses the word 'boy' to describe Saito after finishing the final game. The two extracts below are from SN. The first one is from the 21<sup>st</sup> and the second one from the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

(2)

クールな 男が 滴る 汗を ハンドタオルで ぬぐうこともせず  
*kuuruna otoko-ga shitataru ase-o handotaoru-de nuguukoto mosezu*  
cool man dropping sweat with a face towel without wiping  
直球を 続けた。  
*chyokkyuu-o tsuzuketa*  
fastballs continued  
The cool man continued fastballs without wiping his dropping sweat with a face  
towel. (Saito, S14, SN-21<sup>st</sup>)

(3)

重圧から 解放された 瞬間、  
*jyuuatsu-kara kaihouareta shyunkan,*  
from pressures relieved at the moment  
18歳の少年に あらゆる感情が 一度に 襲ってきた。

*18sai-no shyonen-ni arayuru kanjyo-ga ichidoni osottekita*  
to the 18-year-old boy all emotions at once attacked  
At the moment of being relieved from pressures, all emotions attacked to the 18-year-old boy. (Saito, S12, SN-22<sup>nd</sup>)

The first extract refers to Saito as ‘the cool man’ and describes him pitching in the game. On the other hand, the second extract depicts the game as over and refers to him as ‘the 18-year-old boy’. Saito is represented as an adult man during a game and as a boy outside of a game. Such representation associates being an adult man with his good performance in baseball. Although it does not use the word ‘boy’, the NS article on the 22<sup>nd</sup> refers to him as ‘18-year-old, who is usually gentle’. This reference also associates his being 18-year-old, implicating that he is still a boy, with his daily life, when he is not pitching. Thus, the sports newspapers contrast Saito’s adult manhood during the game and boyhood outside of the game.

Moreover, the NS article on the 22<sup>nd</sup> associates being a man with Saito’s great achievement, as below.

(4)  
数々の記録だけでなく、記憶にも残った男、斎藤佑樹。  
*kazukazu-no kiroku dakedenaku, kioku-nimo nokotta otoko, Saito Yuki.*  
many records not only but also in the memory remained man Yuki Saito  
The man Yuki Saito will be remembered not only in many records, but also in the memory of people. (Saito, S36, NS-22<sup>nd</sup>)

In this sentence, Saito is referred to with his full name. Using a full name in Japanese is rather formal and official. By juxtaposing the word ‘man’ and Saito’s full name, NS asserts that Saito is the man and represents a masculinity of accomplishment (Tominari, 2008).

Thus, the sports newspaper articles on Saito represent masculinities using references to him. They represent the great achievement of Saito in the Championship as a sign of his masculinity as an adult man and the confrontation between Saito and Tanaka as serious because it is between men.

By contrast, there is no reference indicating femininity in Ueno’s articles in the sports newspapers. Like the broadsheet articles, representation of gender is only found in the pronouns used in quotations in the sports newspaper articles on Ueno.

There is a reference to Ueno with a second person singular pronoun *omae* in a quote from her manager (female) in the NS article on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. There are various second person singular pronouns in Japanese and they can indicate formality, as well as the relation between the speaker and the addressee. *Omae* is commonly used by male speakers to address either males or females. It is not usually used by females and it cannot be used to address someone older or of a higher status either. Instead, it is used to address someone in equal or lower position than the speaker. The relation between the speaker and the addressee is usually close and it is used in an informal context. So, the manager’s use of *omae* for Ueno gives a masculine impression. This shows that they are close and their hierarchical relation, which is commonly seen in sports and their rather masculine linguistic habit. Including *omae* in the article implies that NS does not

mind representing their masculine habit and rather wants to show the reliable relationship between Ueno and her manager.

As I have demonstrated, the references to Saito in the sports newspapers are different from those in the broadsheets. The sports newspapers represent masculinity in the references to Saito explicitly. On the other hand, they do not represent femininity in the references to Ueno. Rather, they represent a masculine impression by her manager's use of *omae* to Ueno.

### Representation of Ueno or Saito against other social actors

This section looks at the representation of the social actors, Ueno or Saito and other people. The findings will show that the articles on both Ueno and Saito sometimes apply similar ways of foregrounding them and exaggerating their achievement as a pitcher.

To focus on Ueno or Saito, respectively, the articles do not mention other players very much. They are sometimes not referred to even when their actions are described in the text, which is suppression in van Leeuwen's theory (1996, 2008). I show examples of suppression from both Ueno's and Saito's samples from AS. Both examples describe the scene when Ueno or Saito's ball was hit for a homerun by an opposing batter.

(5)

まさかの 同点 本塁打を 浴びる。

*masakano douten honruida-o abiru*

unbelievable tied homerun had (showered)

(Ueno) suffered an unbelievable homerun to be tie scored. (Ueno, S15, AS-21st)

(6)

先頭に 安打を 許し、

*sentoni anda-o yurushi,*

the first batter a hit allowed

続けて 初球を

*tsuzukete shokyu-o*

consecutively the first ball

バックスクリーン左に 打ち込まれた

*bakkusukuriin hidari-ni uchikomareta*

centerfield fence left being hit

(Saito) allowed a hit to the first batter, and then the next ball was hit to the left side of the centre field fence. (Saito, S6, AS-22nd)

Although hitting a homerun is important in softball and baseball, the batters who hit a homerun in the above examples are suppressed. By doing so, the focus of the depiction is on the pitchers while the batters who hit the homeruns are represented only vaguely. This represents the unhappiness of the pitchers with their balls being hit for a homerun rather than the happiness of batters hitting a homerun.

Even when other players are referred to, they are sometimes not referred to specifically or individually like Ueno and Saito. They can be referred to only with their

roles or positions, i.e. functionalisation, without their names like ‘the first batter’ in the above example (6).

They can also be referred to collectively (assimilation) such as ‘the team’. By referring to Ueno and Saito specifically and referring to other teammates collectively, Ueno and Saito can be represented as separate and clear and the other players as blurred. In the next extract from SN, Ueno’s teammates are not only represented collectively but also impersonalised.

(7)

歓喜の 輪の 中心には、 上野が いた。  
*kanki-no wa-no chushin-niwa, ueno-ga ita*  
joy circle in the centre, Ueno was  
Ueno was in the centre of the circle of joy. (Ueno, S5, SN-22nd)

In this example, Ueno’s teammates are referred to as ‘the circle of joy’. The expression does not refer to them individually and moreover, it does not represent them as human beings. This is an example of impersonalisation according to van Leeuwen’s theory (1996, 2008). Only Ueno is represented separately and clearly as a human in this sentence and other teammates are represented collectively and blurred.

By assimilating their teammates, Ueno and Saito can be represented as the one who led their whole team alone.

(8)

強じんな 体力 と 精神力で、  
*kyojin'na tairyoku-to seishinryoku-de,*  
strong stamina and spirit  
2試合 318球を 投げきった エースが、  
*2shiai 318kyu-o nagekitta eesu-ga*  
2 games 318balls having pitched ace  
日本を 決勝に 導いた。  
*nihon-o kessho-ni michibiita*  
Japan to the final led  
The ace, having pitched 318 balls for two games with powerful stamina and strong spirit, has led Japan to the final. (Ueno, S3, YS-21st)

‘The ace’ in (8) refers to Ueno and ‘Japan’ refers to the whole team. Ueno is represented separately from the whole team and the sentence represents that she is the one who led the team. This exaggerates what she did. A similar representation is found in Saito’s sample from NS as well.

(9)

甲子園で ヒーローになった 斎藤が  
*koshien-de hiirou-ni natta Saito-ga*  
at Koshien becoming a hero Saito  
創部 101年の 古豪・早実を  
*soubu 101 nen-no kogou Soujitsu-o*  
founded for 101 years old Soujitsu

初優勝へと 導いた。

*hatsu yuusho-eto michibiita.*

the first championship led

Saito, becoming a hero at Koshien, led the old Soujitsu, which was founded 101 years ago to the first championship. (Saito, S33, NS-22nd)

In (9), Saito is referred to with the word 'hero' and represented as the one who led 'the old Soujitsu'. The sentence represents the team not only collectively but also in a historical context and locates Saito in the historical context (Tominari, 2008). It exaggerates what Saito did. Representations as in the two extracts exaggerate Ueno and Saito's ability, power and responsibility as a pitcher, which can contribute to constructing them as heroes.

The above discussion was about examples representing Ueno and Saito specifically and their teammates collectively. Referring to Ueno and Saito specifically and referring to the opposing team members collectively can represent that they alone confronted the opposing team. This can also exaggerate their power, ability and responsibility as a pitcher, which can contribute to constructing them as heroes.

(10)

4大会 連続の 金メダル

*4taikai renzoku-no kinmedaru*

4th Olympics consecutive gold medals

独占を 狙った 米国打線は、

*dokusen-o neratta beikokudasen-wa,*

monopoly aimed the US batting line-up

26歳の 右腕の 前に 屈した。

*26sai-no uwan-no mae-ni kusshita*

26 year-old right arm in front of yielded

The US batting line-up, who aimed at dominating gold medals consecutively for four times, yielded in front of 26-year-old right arm. (Ueno, part of S2, YS-22nd)

Ueno is referred to as '26-year-old right arm'. The batters in the US team are referred to collectively as 'the US batting line-up'. Since it also indicates their role as batters, it is a combination of functionalisation and assimilation. By representing the batters that Ueno pitched at as in this sentence, the batters who hit from Ueno, for example, are ignored. This again exaggerates what she did and her ability as a pitcher.

From Saito's sample of AS, the sentence shown in (11) represents teams that Saito had games with collectively.

(11)

すまし顔の 鉄腕が かもす 迫力に、

*sumashigao-no tetsuwan-ga kamosu hakuryoku-ni,*

poised face's the iron arm make power

数々の 強豪は 屈していった。

*kazukazu-no kyogo-wa kusshiteitta*

numerous powerful players/teams yielded

The power of the iron arm with poised face made numerous powerful players/teams yield. (Saito, S23, AS-22nd)

Saito is represented as 'the iron arm with poised face'. The reference is impersonalisation using a metaphoric and metonymic expression to represent his strength and power as a pitcher (see 4.1). Powerful players or teams that he had games with are referred to collectively with the word 'numerous'. It shows that the players or teams that Saito beat are many and exaggerates what Saito did, as well as his power and ability as a pitcher.

Thus, the ways of representing Ueno or Saito as separate from other players and representing other players collectively are common in both broadsheet and sports newspaper articles and in both Ueno's and Saito's articles. Such representation not only distinguishes Ueno or Saito from other players, but in some cases also helps to construct them as heroes.

## Conclusion

I would like to conclude the paper by answering the research questions addressed in Section 1. The first research question is about comparing the constructions of a female and a male sports hero between the broadsheets and the sports newspapers. As I have demonstrated, both types of newspapers foreground Ueno and Saito by referring to them specifically and individually as well as referring to other players collectively. This can represent them as separate from others and represent them clearly and others vaguely. Such representation can even emphasise their power, ability, and responsibility as a pitcher and lead to their construction as heroes. As a difference between the broadsheets and the sports newspapers, only the sports newspapers represent masculinities and relate them to the construction of Saito as a hero. However, there is no representation of femininity in Ueno's articles in either the broadsheets or the sports newspapers.

The second research question is about the similarities and differences between the constructions of a female and a male sports hero. The ways of representing social actors to foreground Ueno and Saito and exaggerate their power, ability and responsibilities are similar in both hero constructions. However, the sports newspapers explicitly associate masculinity with a male hero construction while, they do not associate femininity or masculinity with a female hero construction. They represent masculinities of accomplishment and emotional competitiveness in Saito's representation. In the male hero construction in the sports newspapers, representation of masculinity is an important aspect. The sports newspapers celebrate masculinity by relating it to the hero construction of Saito and his achievement as a pitcher.

As far as this study shows, the broadsheets treat both players equally regardless of their different gender and the sports newspapers do not represent femininity in Ueno's articles and construct her as a hero regardless of gender. This is, in a way, a good result in terms of gender neutral media representation, compared to past studies



showing gender differentiated representation of athletes in sport media. Needless to say, the limitations of this study, such as small data set and only one analytical method applied, may affect the result. Moreover, this may be related to Ueno being a softball player. Softball is not like tennis and figure-skating, which are thought to be 'consistent with conventional "femininity"' (Duncan and Messner, 1998) and appearance and fashion tend to be focused on. In addition, it may be relevant that Ueno looks rather boyish with very short hair. Different heroes are represented differently. The nature of the sport is also very important in sports hero construction and gender representation.

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