Girls changing the language

– *a comparison between the Meiji schoolgirls and the present day kogals*

Elin Nilsson

Abstract

When girls in Japan acquired the right to higher education in the wake of the Meiji reformation in the 19th century, these girls began to talk in a way that was considered vulgar by the public. It was called *teyo dawa kotoba* (*teyo dawa* speech) – and over time it became what we call female speech today. During the Meiji and Taisho periods proper ladies did not talk that way, and it was considered to be vulgar slang. Today that is the way proper ladies are expected to talk. *Teyo dawa kotoba* was not considered to be female speech until the 1930s. Kogals (a subculture of girls in their late teens) have been around since early 1990s, and they have their own vocabulary also considered to be vulgar slang – are there any signs that the same thing is happening today? Are present day Japanese people aware of which words they use (if any) that originated as kogal slang? If not, can this be considered the beginning of a similar assimilation of slang of teenage girls? A comparison between the Meiji schoolgirls and the present day kogals is possible and certain similarities can be found at just a quick glance.

Keywords: kogal, kogyaru, gyaru, teyo dawa, jogakusei, Meiji schoolgirl, slang, Japanese, Japan

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 *The topic*

Today *teyo*, *dawa* and *noyo* are final particles in sentences spoken by a feminine Japanese-speaking woman, and we are taught that is the way really feminine women are supposed to talk. Today this way of talking is most commonly heard in Japanese animation and *dorama*[1], as well as seen in literature to emphasize the character's gender. However these final particles were once considered vulgar by the public and they originated from schoolgirls in their late teens during the Meiji period (1868-1912). These schoolgirls also had a tendency to mix *kango* in their language. *Kango* are words of Chinese origin, which were considered too rough and masculine for women to use. The public blamed the newspapers.

In the early 1990s kogals emerged. Kogals are girls in their late teens recognised by their loose socks around their ankles, miniskirts, extreme make-up, extreme colours, and their own vocabulary. Just like the Meiji school girls, these girls and their vocabulary are considered vulgar. Today the public blames TV and the magazines.

The first time I came across kogals was in the TV-*dorama Gyarusa* (or *Gal Circle*) from 2006, in which a group of teenage girls meet up every day to hang out and dance *parapara*[2]. They are not the extreme kind of kogals, but the specific vocabulary is present. When I got into contact with J-pop I learned many Japanese slang words and not until recently did I find out that most of them were of kogal origin. The fact that Japanese is not my mother tongue might contribute to the fact that I did not know the origin of the slang, but at the same time I have heard Japanese exchange students use kogal slang words indiscriminately. This spurred the thought in my mind that maybe they are not aware either.

Kogals are great users of electronic communication and hence blogs are overflowing with kogal slang. Because of this the general texting language among teenagers in Japan is kogal influenced, as well as the messages put on *purikura* (print club) pictures. Thanks to the electronic evolution the kogals' slang spread quicker and easier, than did the slang of the Meiji schoolgirls.

The purpose of this thesis is to compare these two kinds of teenage girls. Can it be they have something in common despite having 100 years in between them? To be able to achieve this, I have first to give a detailed account of research regarding both types of girls (chapters 3 and 4) to better understand their surroundings and the components of their slang, then compare them (chapter 5) to

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[1] *Dorama* is the Japanese transliteration of drama, but to separate Japanese TV –dramas from Western TV-dramas, the word *dorama* is used.

[2] *Parapara* is a form of synchronised dancing originating in Japan. It has existed since the early 80s, but only gained popularity abroad in the late 90s.

better see what factors they have in common. I then examine the use of slang among the Japanese youth and the awareness of this slang among the Japanese adults (chapter 6) to examine if an assimilation might be taking place. For a better understanding of what goes on at a sociolinguistic level I also briefly present the phenomenon of language change (chapter 2).

Interestingly enough the Japanese people are starting to feel like they are losing their female speech – what used to be *teyo dawa kotoba*, and that their female youth is starting to speak in a more masculine way. These sentence-final particles have become part of a role language over the years, called *ojoosama kotoba* (lady speech). Because of this, I will also examine whether Japanese girls commonly use classical female speech or prefer a more neutral way of speaking.

1.2 *Data & Methodology*

The main source of information on the Meiji schoolgirls has been the works of Inoue Miyako (2003, 2004). Her two articles on the Meiji schoolgirls are the base of my work concerning them. Consequently, the main source of information on the kogals has been the works of Laura Miller (2004, 2005). Both her articles from 2004 are the foundation of my work regarding the kogals. Kinsui (2003) and Kinsella (2005) also proved important for my account of research for the schoolgirls and the kogals respectively.

The latter part of this thesis is based on my own research, in which I sent questionnaires to 90 Japanese people of varying ages, but mostly exchange students in the age 20-30. A majority of the people who answered were women. I also gained the input of 5 women older than the exchange students, whose inputs were highly valued to help me understand the evolution of the Japanese slang among young people and especially young women. From their answers I could make a lot of assumptions of what the present situation is like.

Labov's *Driving forces in linguistic change* (2002) and Trudgill's *A glossary of sociolinguistics* (2003) proved very helpful throughout the writing of this thesis, the first one as a way of understanding why and how these changes to language occur and the second to easier understand the linguistic terms used by Labov.

2. Language change

2.1 *Driving forces*

According to Labov a way for languages to change is the removal of elements in the language system with the goal to make communication easier and faster. Special groups also help change the

language due to their wish to increase their distinctiveness. (Labov, 2002) Trudgill points out two theories coined by Labov: the first one is about change from above, meaning that the speakers are aware that they are making these changes. The second one is called change from below, and means that the speakers are not conscious of the changes taking place. (Trudgill, 2003: 20-21)

Labov points out that the changes studied in the second half of the 20th century show a high variety of different social groups. Looking at the graphs he provided (see Labov, 2002), one can assume that people under 20 years of age from the upper and middle working classes are at the forefront of language change. Usually these changes are rejected by the public, when the public becomes aware of their existence. It is suggested that these changed forms are associated with certain groups and people who use them do so to show that they belong within their specific group. Labov also suggests a parallel between the changes in fashion and the changes in language, saying that they seem to be closely related. (Labov, 2002)

> Sociolinguistic studies of the speech community find that linguistic variation is correlated with a small number of social variables: age, gender, social class, race/ethnicity, urban/rural status and location in social networks. While internal constraints on variation are typically independent of each other, it is normal to find strong interaction among the external factors. Typically, the differentiation of stable linguistic variables by gender varies across social classes: in particular, the second highest status group shows the greatest gender differences. Linguistic changes from below show a somewhat simpler configuration: one or the other gender is usually in advance for all social classes. In the great majority of cases, it is women who are ahead – usually by a full generation. (Labov, 2002)

2.2 *Why are the girls important?*

Quenqua (2012) says that girls and young women do not get the credit they deserve for pioneering new vocal trends and fads. He explains that it is a long-withstanding notion in linguistics that women are ahead of the linguistic curve and that women in general serve as a sort of incubator for new popular slang and vocal trends. No one seems to be able to give a definitive answer as to why women create these vocal trends and slang words, and although they usually make their way into the public vocabulary the reasons remain shrouded. Quenqua, however, offers three theories as to why women are ahead:

1). "Women are more sensitive to social interactions and hence more likely to adopt subtle vocal cues",
2). "Women use language to assert their power in a culture that, at least in days gone by, asked them to be sedate and decorous", and
3). "Young women are simply given more leeway by society to speak flamboyantly." (2012: D1)

Labov explains that it is a well-known fact that women are ahead of men in terms of language change, but as the change closes in on its completion the gap decreases. During the change

the gap can sometimes be as wide as a whole generation. Labov suggests that this is due to women taking care of children more often than men. The men will stay at the level of language change given to them as a child, while the women will evolve. This could explain how women usually are one generation ahead of men. (Labov, 2002)

Miller explains that in Japan there is an idea that there exists a singular women's language. This notion, she says, has its roots in the educational reforms of the Meiji period. (Miller, 2004B: 227) Hasegawa further explains that the way we differentiate women's and men's language in Japanese today is heavily influenced by the changes to language made in Japan in the Meiji period, where the schoolgirls created the base for what was to become the Japanese feminine speech of the present day. (Hasegawa, 2010: 113-114)

3. The Meiji schoolgirls

3.1 *Introduction*

When girls acquired the right to higher education in the wakes of the Meiji reformation in the 19th century, these girls began to talk in a way that was considered vulgar by the public. The intellectual males of the Meiji period called the way the schoolgirls talked *jogakusei kotoba* (schoolgirl speech), unless they wanted to sound condescending and used the term *teyo dawa kotoba* (*teyo dawa* speech). To them the way the schoolgirls talked was unpleasant and vulgar. During the Meiji and Taisho periods proper ladies did not talk that way. Today that is the way proper ladies are expected to talk. *Teyo dawa kotoba* was not considered female speech until the 1930s.

3.2 *Circumstances*

During the Japanese modernisation women's secondary education became mandatory and as a result an entirely new group of people emerged. "The term schoolgirl referred to girls and young women of the elite classes who attended the women's secondary schools." (Inoue, 2003: 156) The secondary schools for women were designed to create the ideal Japanese woman, who was a good wife and a wise mother (*ryoosai kenbo*). The school was thus created to transition the girls from childhood to adulthood and prepare them for their future lives as reproducers, married to and mothers of Japan's soldiers. (Czarnecki, 2005: 50) Nakamura argues that schoolgirls started to use *teyo dawa* speech in protest of their Confucian futures as good wives and wise mothers. (2004: 65)

Male intellectuals of the Meiji period identify specific locations (i.e. "low-class" neighbourhoods in Tokyo or the pleasure quarters) as well as different types of geisha, as the origin

of *teyo dawa* speech and in contemporary texts they all seem to regret that this kind of vulgar speech has spread to noblewomen. According to them *teyo dawa* speech has spread when geishas married men with status and used this kind of language to their children. To these male intellectuals it was appalling that through modernisation the social hierarchy came apart and that social change was coming from the lower classes instead of the upper section of society. (Inoue, 2003: 170-171) Kinsui says in his description of the origin of *teyo dawa*, as well as his description of the criticism against it, that it is usually said that *teyo dawa* speech originated among the lower class people and geishas. He also says that he has not been able to find any objective proof that confirms it. But he himself argues that the reason *teyo dawa* speech spread to the schoolgirls in higher education is because they were taught *teyo dawa* by the low class children in preschool and then continued using it. (Kinsui, 2003: 146-150)

Many blamed the newspapers and the domestic novels. They claimed that the schoolgirls learned *kango* (words of Chinese origin considered masculine) from the newspapers, and some claimed that they learned *teyo dawa* speech from the domestic novels where the main character often was a young woman who spoke *teyo dawa*. Domestic novels, however, had both male and female readers. (Inoue, 2003: 175) Nakamura presents the idea that the authors of domestic novels may have chosen to use *teyo dawa* speech because it was useful in emphasizing the young woman's identity. But she adds that by not using male language they differentiated between male and female language, and by not using polite language they excluded their characters from normative female students. (Nakamura, 2004: 68) Kinsui also points towards the usage of *teyo dawa* in schoolgirl magazines (*jogaku zasshi*), and argues that they participated in the spreading of *teyo dawa* among Meiji schoolgirls. (Kinsui, 2003: 148)

What Inoue does not tell her readers is that the image of modernity and progress that the schoolgirls possessed came to be replaced by an image of degenerate girls, this according to Czarnecki (2005). The schoolgirls depicted carrying books were replaced by pictures of schoolgirls busying themselves with their schoolboy lovers. At this time the Western idea of chastity, only one lover, and girls staying virgins until marriage had entered the Japanese society. The girls who were found out were made poster-girls by media to signal a warning to all good families of the dangers and possible degeneracy that lurked within women's secondary education. These girls found their real names in print and in some cases even their pictures. (Czarnecki, 2005: 50-51)

But by the end of World War I, the public started to stop viewing *teyo dawa* speech as vulgar. Various shop-keepers and/or salesmen started to address girls and young women with *teyo dawa* speech. Advertisements used *teyo dawa* speech when the product was aimed towards young women, and columnists in women's magazines started to use *teyo dawa* speech in their writings. By the 1930s *teyo dawa* speech had evolved from "vulgar" to the "feminine language". (Inoue, 2003:

178-179) Kinsui points out that while *no* and *wa* are commonly heard nowadays, *teyo* and *koto* have become more of a concept and a caricature of what he calls "*ojoosama kotoba*" (lady speech). (Kinsui, 2003: 163-164) Even more ironically than the vulgar schoolgirl speech becoming the commonly used feminine language, is that Japan now laments the "loss" of its feminine speech. (Inoue, 2004: 46) This makes it seem as though Japanese women had spoken this way since forever and not only since the 19th century. This is due to the fact that this kind of feminine speech came to be depicted as an ancient tradition. During the Second World War it became important to fulfil all the feminine duties and to be a *Yamato nadeshiko* – a true daughter of Japan. But because of the war the women had to fill the soldiering men's roles and begin to work. This affected the traditional feminine speech, and as a result of the war the women slowly started to forget their traditional language – a development which is still on-going today. (Ekdahl, 2010: 22)

3.3 *Characteristics of the slang*

3.3.1 *Sentence-final forms*

Sentence-final forms and/or final particles are common in informal spoken Japanese and their function is to transmit the speaker's attitude and feelings towards what he or she is saying. There are significant differences in which final particles to use depending on whether the speaker is male or female. In present day Japanese the final particles *wa* and *no* are considered feminine, even more so if they are followed by the final particles *yo* or *ne*. *Kashira* is also a feminine particle, usually translated to mean 'I wonder'. (Ekdahl, 2010: 9-10, Pettersson, 1995: 250-258)

The fact that a girl was a schoolgirl was revealed by how she ended her sentences. Meiji intellectuals focused on the sentence-final forms, such as *teyo, dawa, koto-yo, wa, chatta, noyo*, according to Inoue. (2003: 162) *Dawa* and *noyo* are still used to this day in feminine speech. (Ekdahl, 2010: 20) What the girl said was marked more by how she said it, rather than what she said. Consequently, the most cited phrase attributed to schoolgirls is "*Yokuteyo, shiranai wa*" (It's okay, I don't care), something that bears the same significance as "whatever" said by a Valley Girl in America. (Inoue, 2003: 166-167) Inoue classifies both *teyo* and *dawa* as "non-referential and context-dependent, with neither any established semantic nor etymological origin". (Inoue, 2004: 47) Ekdahl offers four examples of *teyo dawa* speech originally given by the contemporary 19th century writer Ozaki Koyo:

1. *Ume wa mada sakanaku(t)**te yo***. (The plum trees do not yet bloom.)
2. *Ara moo sa(k)ita **noyo***. (Oh dear, they did already bloom.)
3. *Ara moo sa(k)**ite yo***. (Oh dear, they did already bloom.)

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4. *Sakura no hana wa mada sakanain(o)* **dawa**. (Cherry blossoms are not going to bloom yet.)

Teyo was considered vulgar partly because it was non-grammatical and that kind of language is usually spoken among the "lower classes", and partly because it was used by prostitutes. (Inoue, 2003: 169)

Kinsui devotes a part of his chapter on female speech to describe the grammar of *teyo dawa* speech. He says that the grammar can be divided into four sections.

1. The first section describes how *teyo* is used to tell a listener something that you want him or her to notice. Example: *Sensei, irasshiteyo*. (The teacher is coming). Kinsui says that in some rare cases *ne* can be used instead of *yo*, and if *yo* is deleted from the sentence it becomes a question with rising intonation at the end.
2. The second section says that it can be used to make a light order, and in this case the intonation goes down. If *yo* is changed to *ne* it becomes a soft confirmative sentence.
3. The third section explains that if you attach *yo* to the quoting *tte* and add a rising intonation at the end, it becomes a female expression. Example: *Otoosan, kyoo hayaku karu***tteyo**. (Dad, I told you to come home early today).
4. The fourth section describes how *te* followed by *yo* in the middle of a sentence transforms the sentence into an assumption. Example: *Kyoo wa umi ga shikete***teyo***, totemo janai ga, ryoo nyaa derarenai yo.* (Today the sea is very stormy, so there's no chance of going fishing).

Kinsui ends this part of his chapter on female speech by saying that the problem with *teyo* is that it can be used for both past tense and present tense indiscriminately, and presents two examples: 1) *Kinoo wa, totemo tanoshiku***teyo** (Yesterday was a lot of fun), and 2) *Watashi, ima, totemo tanoshiku***teyo** (I'm having a lot of fun right now). (Kinsui, 2003: 166-167) This confusion is shown in a contemporary 19th century essay by Yanagihara Yoshimitsu who says that schoolgirls incorrectly used *nasutte* when they meant to use *nasaru ka* (Are you going to do …?). This means that Yanagihara interpreted *nasutte* as being in past tense only, while the schoolgirls used it for both past and future tense. The suffix *–te* could actually be both past and future tense, which (as has been pointed out before) only shows that Yanagihara is wrong to assume that the schoolgirls used their language incorrectly. (Inoue, 2003: 173)

3.3.2 *Honorifics and male language*

Schoolgirl speech in general was considered vulgar not only because of its use of *teyo*, but also

because of its lack of honorifics. Japanese has a very complex system of honorifics to this day. The use of honorifics is usually applied to people of lower standing than yourself, to a stranger, or to a costumer. (see Shibatani, 1990) In older times women were expected to talk as politely as possible to show the proper deference. One contemporary 19th century author states that the use of "*soo desu*" (It is so) by schoolgirls is deplorable. A woman should use "*soo de gozaimasu*" (It is so), since it indicates proper deference. The public considered the schoolgirls to be sloppy and lazy due to their absence of proper honorifics. The same pattern can be noticed with their use of *nasutte* (I did) instead of *nasarimashita*, and *itteyo* (I have gone) instead of *yukimashitayo*. It is of importance to note that the verb *nasaru* (to do) already suggests deference, which the verb *suru* (to do) does not. (Inoue, 2003: 172) Through the schoolgirls' usage of "vulgar speech" the male intellectuals called them "morally corrupt", and linked moral corruption to vulgar speech. The lack of proper honorifics was seen as proof of this proposed lack of morals. (Inoue, 2004:43, 49)

When schoolgirls spoke of themselves they used the word *atai* ('I'), which also was considered vulgar because it was the first person pronoun preferred by geishas and thus not appropriate for an upper class schoolgirl to use. (Inoue, 2003: 170)

Suzuki adds that in some contemporary Meiji period domestic novels the heroine voices protest in male language (ex. *Kimari ga warui ya!* (It's embarrassing!)). She explains that this could have been a way for women to use the power of male language to challenge the male-centred society. Sometimes the heroine also uses aggressive wording associated with male speech like *nandai* (what the hell). Both of these examples were of course considered inappropriate for young women to use during this era. (Suzuki, 2006: 590) Surprisingly enough and contrary to what Inoue said about schoolgirls using *atai* to refer to themselves, Nakamura claims that schoolgirls also were accused of using male language, such as saying *boku* to refer to themselves. Nakamura also says that the schoolgirls lack in proper honorifics could be seen in their usage of *kuru* (to come) and *iku* (to go), instead of the more polite versions *irassharu* (to come) and *ukagau* (to go). The two later verbs suggest the proper deference for young women. Nakamura offers this quotation from a contemporary 19th century article in Yomiuri *shinbun*: "An old woman knits her brows when she hears words such as *so nee* 'That's right' and *ara yokuteyo* 'Ah, I don't care'. She would be shocked to hear girls say *soo kai* 'Is that so?' and *ii ja nai ka* 'That's good.'" This statement suggests that schoolgirls used both *teyo dawa kotoba*, as well as what Nakamura calls "male student language". (Nakamura, 2004: 49-50)

3.3.3 *Kango and English*

To hear the schoolgirls mix *kango* (words of Chinese origin) and English into their vocabulary was something else that bothered the intellectual males. *Kango* and English had long been taught only to

the upper class males and *kango* was still considered masculine. *Wago* (words of Japanese origin) was considered more feminine and was part of the way a woman was supposed to talk – elegantly, softly, and deferentially. What was even worse was when the girls mixed high-class *kango* with vulgar *teyo dawa* speech. When the first women's schools were founded, women, for the first time, had access to *kango* and English in their curriculum, but despite them learning English in school the schoolgirls' usage of English was often caricatured. (Inoue, 2003: 173-175) But although women were taught the *kango* forms and English at school, their teachers ushered them to use words of Japanese origin since they were considered softer and more feminine. (Inoue, 2004: 49)

What made *kango* unpleasant was not only because it was not considered feminine, but because it was gender-transgressing. *Kango* and English had both been reserved for male scholars in the past and the fact that women now could use their private language was jarring to the ears of the intellectual males. *Kango* and English were also considered to be written language and should preferably not be spoken; only written, which made the female usage of *kango* and English doubly jarring, since the written language was not only spoken, but spoken by a female voice. (Inoue, 2003: 174)

3.3.4 *Intonation and pronunciation*

The schoolgirls' rising intonation and sing-song pronunciation as well as their fast and contracted way of speaking was jarring to the ears of the Meiji intellectual males and they condemned *teyo dawa* speech as sugary and shallow. (Inoue, 2003: 156) The critics of schoolgirl speech claimed that the contraction created by adding *teyo* at the end of a sentence was proof of how lazy and sloppy these schoolgirls were and this contraction was explained as being caused by speaking too fast. Since women were supposed to speak elegantly and gently, this was seen as a very deplorable way of speaking. The contraction that *teyo* caused gave the sentence a bouncing impression, as well as the schoolgirls usually adding raised intonation to their *teyo*-ending sentences, created a way of talking that was not seen as very womanly. (Inoue, 2004: 49) The same logic was applied on the verb ending form *chatta*. (Inoue, 2003: 172)

3.4 *Summary*

In this chapter the Meiji schoolgirls were examined in regards to public appearance and language. It is easy to find a connection between the situation mentioned by Labov and what happened with the language of the Meiji schoolgirls. They were young women below the age of 20 who changed their language and led the innovation, and as Labov pointed out the public was not happy about these changes when they found out. This is a change from above, meaning that the girls were aware that they made these changes to their language.

The schoolgirls' public appearance was the image of a modern Japan. But when the speed of the modernisation became too fast, the image changed to that of degenerate girls who did not want to fill their roles as good wives and wise mothers, and who spent their free time having premarital sex. The image changed from that of a modern girl with slightly vulgar speech, to that of a degenerate girl with vulgar speech – completely void of morals.

4. The kogals

4.1 *Introduction*

In her 2004 article Miller describes the kogals as "gender-transgressing" and adds that their "language style challenge the longstanding norms of adolescent femininity". Interestingly enough, this style can also apply to young men, but Nanba is the only author who takes any notice of this. (2006: 116) The number of girls associated with this style is much higher than the men, and because of that this chapter will talk about kogals as only girls. This chapter correlates with what Labov said about changes in fashion and changes in language being closely related.

4.2 *Circumstances*

There has never been a large percentage of the teenage population following this style, thus the importance of kogals does not lie in their numbers. Rather their importance lies in how they symbolise the current redefinition of women. (Miller, 2004B: 226)

Miller describes how the kogal style began in the early 1990s. The style originated when high school girls started wearing 'loose socks', bleached hair, distinct make-up, and very short skirts. The origin of the word 'kogal' is not known (Miller describes the etymology as "hazy"), but most probably it is derived from the term *kookoosei gyaru* (high school girl). It is interesting to note that the term 'kogal' is not used among the girls themselves, who prefer the term *gyaru* (girl or gal). The kogals' own slang concept called "*datsu gyaru*" (giving up being a girl) indicates that it is not just about the fashion for those involved. As the style spread media came up with various names for the most extreme kogals, for example *yamanba*, *ganguro*, and *gonguro*. *Yamanba* is originally the name of a witch in several Japanese myths, *ganguro* means black face, and *gonguro* indicates an even more extreme *ganguro*. (Miller, 2004A: 87-88) These names were given to girls with the most extreme tans and white-rimmed eyes, and Kinsella points out that those names were used as slurs in male press. (2005: 144) Along with their garish make-up kogals are known to create styles that border on being taboo. One of these styles was called *misepan* (showing panties), meaning that they

wore miniskirts so short that the underwear would show. (Miller, 2004A: 87-88)

What media does to kogals is to display the lifestyle as a teenage trend that will blow over as soon as they "grow up". The media does not take seriously the kogals' strive to create unique identities for themselves, in a society where people focus on being part of a group rather than an individual. But the term *datsu gyaru* (giving up being a girl) indicates, as mentioned above, that there is more to it than just teenage rebellion. It is a lifestyle or an identity and not just fashion. (Miller, 2004B: 240-241) This is doubly shown in the terms *onee gyaru* (older sister girl) for older kogals, and *gyaru mama* (girl mom) for kogals who decide to have children. (Miller, 2004B: 231) Considering the graph given by Nanba it becomes obvious that the kogal style begins for some already in the first year of middle school, while it seems to greatly expand during high school – the numbers being the highest during the final year. This could indicate that the kogal style does not only belong in high school, but also among its graduates. (Nanba, 2006: 116)

Kogals contrast against the cute and conservative style of most Japanese women. But Miller argues that the kogal style has opened up fashion possibilities for more young women, since the style is based on features they buy rather than features they already have. The kogal style is based on fake tan, fake hair, fake nails, and fake eyelashes, unlike the cute *kawaii* style that require pre-existing features like "a round face, pigeon-toed stance, and undeveloped chest" (Miller, 2004A). The fakeness of the kogal style meant that anyone could be a kogal: "It made cute girls ugly, and ugly girls average." (Miller, 2004A: 91)

Kinsella points out the accusations made by the media that *yamanba* and *ganguro* girls were both ugly and stupid – why else would they dress up like that? Those accusations formed a base stereotype that these girls were pitiful, degraded, and "engaged in egoistical folly". (2005: 145-146) It even goes as far as accusing *yamanba* and *ganguro* of being animals in heat trying to snare men with their extravagant clothing and make-up, or that they dress in that manner to warn off predators saying that they are poisonous. Some men's magazines make allegations that the *yamanba* and *ganguro* belong to a different race of people and that they are turning black. (Kinsella, 2005: 146-149) But most kogals and *ganguro* are not trying to look black or African American. They are simply creating something that has not been seen before, by combining retro and borrowed style to assemble a unique look and fashion statement. (Miller, 2004B: 229)

The media has a love/hate relationship with the kogal lifestyle. They are often associated with different kinds of sex business. The most common that is still in use is called *enjo koosai* (subsidized companionship). This means that kogals meet with strange men for dates that sometimes involve sex. In return they receive money or gifts. (Miller, 2004B: 239) Other types of sex business associated with kogals are *burusera* (which means the kogals sell their used underwear to men), *telecura* (which is telephone calls mediated between males and females, often leading to

sex), and *date club* (men pay membership and an entrance fee to choose a woman with whom he wants to have a date, sometimes involving sex). Kogals do not participate in these activities because they are desperate but rather because they want money to spend on clothes, gadgets, and accessories. This attitude towards sex and money among kogals started a flow of assumptions from critics that the kogals were part of a moral collapse and were in need of moral education. (Suzuki & Best, 2003: 62, 72)

4.3 *Characteristics of the slang*

4.3.1 *Talking freely and openly*

Just like in the Meiji period, the dominant ideological model for women says that female speech should display innocence, modesty, docility, and deference. The kogals' speech style challenges the normative gendered talk, but despite the condemnation they get from adults the kogals still continue to create new words and expressions. Their contempt for society's expectations is clearly shown in their usage of nonstandard forms, new words, and explicit references to sex and other taboo topics. (Miller, 2004B: 226, 231) Women are normally told that it is bad conduct to express their feelings and ideas too directly. But kogals ignore this tradition and talk freely of sex (both hetero and other), likes, and obsessions. As some of the few who talk openly about sex kogals have claimed the Japanese taboo words as their own. One of them is *manko* (cunt) which they use in own forms such as *mii man*, which combines the English 'me' with an abbreviation of *manko*, *man*, to mean 'my pussy'. The usage of *mii* also shows up in *mii feichi* (my fetish). Kogals also use the word *teman* to indicate masturbation. The word combines the Japanese word for hand, *te*, with *man*. (Miller, 2004B: 236-237) They also speak freely of older people who they do not like, for example older men. One word used to describe disliked older men is *chibidebu*, which combines the Japanese words *chibi* (shrimp) and *debu* (fatty), giving the man an image of being short and fat. (Miller, 2004B: 237)

> Kogals are ushering into Japanese cultural history new ideas about femininity and gender, and their linguistic innovations seep into mainstream speech, contributing to general changes in the Japanese language. Kogals are a convincing example of how speakers might interrogate cultural forms and social relations through language. Their critique of gender conformity is expressed though language and other original and provocative cultural products, including fashion, comics, and new script styles. These endeavours provoke mainstream censure, and kogals have been the objects of intense scrutiny and social commentary. (Miller, 2004B: 227)

Apart from creating new vocabulary kogals, and other women, are accused of destroying the language structure. Kogals, more than other girls, are known for using masculine words (like '*boku*'

instead of '*watashi*', when saying 'I') and avoiding honorifics. This is seen as an attempt to redefine what it means to be a woman in Japan, and should not be seen as the kogals trying to be masculine. (Miller, 2004B: 234). Kogals also have a tendency to avoid the mandatory name suffixes when speaking with people, for example –*san*, neutral, -*kun*, for boys, -*chan*, for girls, and –*sensei*, 'teacher'. (Coulmas, 2005: 59)

4.3.2 *Own words and intensifiers*

While the style associated with kogals began in the early 90s, the slang associated with kogals began already in the 70s, and by the 80s it had become common. (Nanba, 2006: 101) Since the kogal style basically is a sub-style to common gals (*gyaru*), this is not surprising. Gals have been around for longer than kogals, but the kogals have come to represent the entire spectrum of the style and also the words. One thing that kogal speech has in common with ordinary youth slang is that many words are forgotten as soon as they are invented, but Miller lists some words that have endured the trends. *Dasai* (uncool) along with *wanpataan* (repetitive) have been in use since the 70s, by now *dasai* have the variations *dassee* and *dashaa*, and *wanpataan* is usually clipped to just *wanpa*. Other enduring and commonly used words mentioned by Miller (2004B) and Kuwamoto (2003) are:

- *mukatsuku* (disagreeable),
- *yabai* (no good),
- *bakkure* (play innocent),
- *uzattai* (fussy),
- *kattarui* (wiped out),
- *hekomu* (feeling sad),
- *jibetarian* (squatting person),
- *bucchakeru* (not hiding your opinions),
- *mattari* (at ease),
- *iketeru* (cool),
- *arienee* (no way),
- *ikemen* (good-looking guy), and
- *kireru* (over-emotional).

Kogal speech is also overflowing with intensifiers such as:

- *maji* (really),
- *meccha* (awesomely),
- *choo* (super), and

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- the English loanword *suupaa* (super).

A common way for kogals to create new words is by combining the verb suffix *–ru*, and everyday nouns. Examples of this mentioned by Miller (2004B) are:

- *tako-ru* (eat takoyaki),
- *maku-ru* (go to McDonald's),
- *oke-ru* (go to karaoke) and
- *raame-ru* (eat ramen noodles).

A very specific kogal word in this form is *uni-ru*, which is a word made up specifically to indicate the ugly faces kogals make at the camera. (Miller, 2004B: 233-234)

4.3.3 *Abbreviations*

But the most widely known characteristic of kogal speech is their abbreviations. Miller (2004B), Sakuma (2007), and Coulmas (2005) offer these examples:

- *panion* from *konpanion* (companion),
- *riiman* from *sarariiman* (salaryman),
- *Bukuro* from Ikebukuro,
- *Buuya* from Shibuya,
- *hazui* from *hazukashii* (embarrassing),
- *urui* from *urusai* (noisy),
- *muzui* from *muzukashii* (difficult),
- *mendoi* from *mendokusai* (pain in the ass),
- *kimoi* from *kimochi warui* (gross),
- *kebai* from *kebakebashii* (garish),
- *musai* from *musakurushii* (squalid),
- *kiwai* from *kiwadoi* (precarious),
- *kimai* from *ki mazui* (bad feeling),
- *karipaku* from *karita mono pakupaku* (not return a borrowed item),
- *kinpa* from *kinpatsu* (someone with blond hair), and
- *keronpa* from *kamino**ke ron**gu kin**pa**tsu* (guy with long blond hair).

Choo (super) is sometimes combined with abbreviations such as *chooSW*, where 'S stands for *seikaku* (personality) and 'W' stands for *warui* (bad), giving the meaning "super bad personality". (Miller, 2004B: 232) Same goes for Coulmas' example of *chooBM*, where 'B' stands for *baka* (fool) and 'M' stands for *marudashi* (bare), giving the word the meaning "super obvious fool". (Coulmas, 2005: 60) As proof of the kogals' inventiveness Miller offers the compound of *shibutaku*, which is

an abbreviation for the lottery stands (*takarakuji*) in Shibuya. (Miller, 2004B: 233)

Another way of abbreviation that did not originate from kogals, but is something they have become known for, is to avoid certain morphemes. In Japanese the potential form is created by adding *-rareru* to the end of a verb, hence *miru* (to see) becomes *mirareru* (can be seen), and *taberu* (to eat) becomes *taberareru* (can be eaten). A growing part of the Japanese population, kogals part of it, has started to drop the *–ra*, making the words shorter and saying *mireru* or *tabereru* instead. This way of speaking is called *ra-nuki* (*ra*-deletion), and has been singled out as the worst sort of youth speech by media. (Miller, 2004B: 234-235).

4.3.4 *Mixing English and Japanese*

It is not uncommon for kogals to create new verbs by combining a Japanese word with the English suffix –ing (which becomes *ingu* in Japanese). This combination creates words like these mentioned by Miller (2004B):

- *komaringu* (being troubled),
- *nemuringu* (going to sleep),
- *bentoringu* (eating a lunch box), and
- *wakattingu* (to understand).

Another mix of words that the kogals use is, according to Sakuma, the mix of foreign words with the Japanese verb *suru* (to do). He adds that this mix was not invented by the kogals, and has been used for a long time, but the usage of these combinations has increased lately. He gives these examples: *gettosuru* (to get), *pureesuru* (to play), *keasuru* (to care for), and *oopensuru* (to open). (Sakuma, 2007: 58)

Yet another way for the kogals to create new words by mixing English and Japanese is by adding the English morpheme *–er* (doer of …) at the end of words. This morpheme is transliterated as *–aa* in Japanese. Miller (2004B) provides these examples of this kind of words:

- *furiitaa* (freelancer),
- *geemaa* (gamer),
- *messhaa* (someone who has a streaked hair style: *messhuu*),
- *kurabaa* (club-goer),
- *chiimaa* (team member),
- *naruraa* (narcissist),
- *kitiraa* (someone who loves Hello Kitty goods), and
- *komoraa* (teenagers who shut themselves in their rooms for weeks or years, from *hikikomori*).

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The last three ones, however, do not have a clear distinction to whether they are derived from the English morpheme *–er* or if they derived from the Japanese plural suffix *–ra*. (Miller, 2004B: 234)

A popular way to create new words is by combining two English words transliterated into Japanese, or one Japanese word with one English word, which makes words like these mentioned by Miller (2004B):

- *dotakyan* (to cancel at the last minute) from *dotanba* (last moment) and *kyanseru* (cancel),
- *ikemen* (good-looking guy) from *iketeru* (cool) and *men* (men),
- *hisaro* from *hiyake saron* (tanning salon),
- *domebura* from *domesutekku burando* (domestic-branded goods), and
- *misepan* from *miseru pantsu* (visible underwear).

The last three examples are also examples of the kogalesque way to shorten words, treated in 4.3.3.

4.3.5 *Gyaru moji*

The kogals are avid users of technology and in the late 1990s they started a new way of typing texts, which is referred to as *gyaru moji* (girl characters) (Miller, 2005: 137):

> Girl characters include disarticulated Chinese characters and mathematical symbols, or Cyrillic letters used as substitutes for Japanese syllabic characters. […] The Japanese syllable 'ra' might be written with the Cyrillic letter Я (it represents 'ya' in Russian) together with 'a'. […] Some girl characters represent words, such as using the symbol © to represent the address term *chan*, an endearing diminutive for 'Miss'.

Due to the fact that kogals use technology more heavily than other groups in Japan, they have led the innovation for emoticons. The Japanese emoticons, called *kao moji* (face characters) are more detailed than the Western counterparts. Miller offers these examples: *wai* (wow) \(8o8)/, *itai* (ouch) (>_<), *hakushu* (applause) (^^)//, and *kikoenai* (I can't hear you) <<(-.-)>>. (Miller, 2004B: 229)

Constantine also offers examples of several abbreviations common in youth texting, some of these are: AB '*anta baka?*' (you stupid?), BIJ '*baka itten ja nee yo!*' (cut the crap!), BK '*busakimo*' (ugly and creepy), WBS '*watashi'tte busu?*' (am I ugly?), UD '*usotsuki na debu*' (a lying fatso), and MIW '*majide imi wakannai*' (I've no idea what you're saying). (2011: 12, 14, 35, 38)

Gyaru moji is also common for typing blog entries, and kogals' blogs are overflowing with special abbreviations and emoticons. Tanabe gives some examples and describes what they all mean. ♪ at the end of a sentence is an affective sign, which gives the statement a soft-ending characteristic. This is used instead of full stop. A simple 'w' at the end of a sentence is used instead of the *kanji* for laughter. A 'w' simply stands for the first letter of '*warai*', which means 'laughter' in Japanese. As is the case with ♪, 'w' is used instead of full stop. ② is used

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to indicate a duplication of words, for example *tokidoki* (sometimes) and *hitobito* (people) would be written *toki*② and *hito*② respectively. ☆ is a common sign of affection among young girls, usually put at the end of a sentence. Another common sign of *gyaru moji* is a massive overuse of exclamation marks. (Tanabe, 2007: 6)

4.4 *Summary*

This chapter describes how the kogals are girls trying to break through the social boundaries of what a Japanese woman is supposed to be and create something new, both fashion wise and language wise. Kogals are trying to assert selfhood in a society where you are taught to be part of a group and not an individual.

Looking to the beginning and what was said by Labov, kogal speech is a way of language change intended to simplify communication by making words shorter. But it can also be put in the category of jargon[3]. The kogals mix a lot of English in their Japanese, but their access to English is very limited.

Thanks to the electronic evolution kogal speech and *gyaru moji* have spread to people outside of the kogal community, and although it probably would have sooner or later the Internet has sped up the process.

5. Comparison between the Meiji schoolgirls and the kogals

5.1 *Public appearance*

In terms of public appearance the girls have some things in common, in a way even in the regard of fashion. The Meiji schoolgirls were the first girls to wear *hakama* (Japanese trousers) in public places, something the public did not approve of – which at that time was much the same as the taboo fashions the kogals came up with in the 90s. It is easy for people of today to view the kogals as more rebellious than the schoolgirls, but fact is they were probably just as bad in their time.

Looking at their public image the Meiji schoolgirls were originally an image of modern Japan, an image of progress. The kogals do not share this image with many Japanese people, but to an outsider they could be perceived as a step forward towards gender equality. They were both described as breaking the boundaries of gender. They both live in a time when the place for women is considered to be in the home, taking care of the house and the children. Nowadays it is alright for

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[3] Jargon is a form of language created from contact with a foreign language, but the contact with the foreign language is minimal. (Trudgill, 2003)

women to have careers before they are home makers, but they are still expected to become housewives once they get married. This sentiment bears much similarity to the Meiji way of thinking.

The part of society that disliked these two types of girls the most were the males. In the Meiji period it was the Meiji male intellectuals, today it is common male magazines.

But the most striking similarity in public appearance is the one of degeneracy, moral collapse, and sex. Both types of girls were accused of being morally degenerated. Both types of girls were accused of sexual frivolity. Kogals are not publicly accused and discriminated with their names and pictures published like the schoolgirls were, but just like the schoolgirls were the kogals are accused of participating in sex businesses because of their fashion only. Not all kogals do that, just as not all schoolgirls did it.

5.2 *Language*

I would categorise both *teyo dawa* speech and kogal speech as jargons. Because of the transformation of *teyo dawa* speech from schoolgirl slang to female speech, I would say that *teyo dawa* has gone through stabilisation[4], while kogal speech has not. Both of them were influenced by foreign languages; English and Chinese, but neither had any direct contact with any of the languages outside of their English classes in school, thus the contact was limited, which makes them qualified for jargons.

Interestingly enough the schoolgirls were accused of talking sloppily and lazily for clipping the honorifics off of the sentences and also using the end particle *teyo*, which makes the sentence shorter and easier to say. Interpreting this as the schoolgirls simplified their language, it could be interpreted that the kogals are doing the same thing when they shorten the words. The schoolgirls did not have access to all the electronic gadgets that the kogals use, but even there the kogals are abbreviating and simplifying their language by using emoticons and symbols instead of *kana* and *kanji*.

Both of them challenged society's norm on how women should talk. The schoolgirls dropped honorifics and did not talk deferentially enough. They were sloppy and lazy, instead of being elegant and modest, the way women were supposed to be. Kogals do this too. They challenge society's norm of women by talking openly about sex and desires, and by mixing male words and sentence-final particles into their sentences.

In one of Miller's articles from 2004 she gives an example that the style of combining a word with the Japanese verb class suffix *–ru* was present already in the Meiji period's schoolgirl

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[4]Stabilisation is the process in which a diffuse language, such as jargon, takes on a more stable form shared by all its speakers. (Trudgill, 2003)

speech. She provides *enbi-ru* (to envy) as said example. (Miller, 2004B: 234) This shows yet another layer of speech that these two types of girls have in common, as well does the usage of male language. In my research (treated in next chapter) one of my informants claims that kogals speak with a very stupid intonation and, without realising it she pointed towards another linguistic similarity between these two types of girls. The intonation and pronunciation of the Meiji schoolgirls was considered unpleasant at the time, it seems like now the intonation of the kogals has received the same label.

It is interesting to note that the kogals seem to have been more inventive with their language than were the Meiji schoolgirls. Could this be due to history erasing some facts or could it be that the schoolgirls did not have the possibility of changing their language more than they already did due to societal factors?

Their languages both changed at a time when Japan's society was changing. In the case of the Meiji schoolgirls it was the Meiji reformation, redefining the role of Japanese women. In the case of the kogals it is the progress towards gender equality. It is interesting to note that both kinds of "languages" were cited scornfully in media in their time, but *teyo dawa kotoba* still evolved into feminine speech – despite all its scornful and degenerate history.

6. Survey

6.1 *Introduction*

For my research I formed a questionnaire in English including questions relating to slang, kogal speech, schoolgirl speech and feminine speech. The questions asked in my questionnaire were:

1. How old are you?
2. Are you male or female?
3. What is slang in your opinion?
4. Do you use slang? If yes, please give examples.
5. Does anyone close to you (friends, family, etc.) use slang? If yes, please give examples.
6. Do you or anyone you know use feminine speech? For example, do you have *teyo*, *dawa*, *noyo* at the end of your sentences?
7. Do you know about the schoolgirls of the Meiji period or their way of talking (*jogakusei kotoba*)? If yes, please describe shortly.
8. Do you know what a kogal is? If yes, please describe shortly.
9. What are, according to you, kogal words?

10. Please put in bold the words you have heard and underline the words you have used. (See graph)

11. Did you know that all of the words above are kogal words?

I sent in total 90 questionnaires to Japanese people, mostly young Japanese exchange students, but also to my teachers at the university, a Japanese classmate, and one of the teachers I used to have at my school in Tokyo, this to gain the inputs of people older than the exchange students. In total 32 people answered the questionnaire sent to them, out of these 32, 27 were exchange students and 6 of these were male. To find out how popular and well-known the kogal words I have mentioned above are I asked them to specify which words they had heard and which words they had used. If I combine the results from both 'heard' and 'used' I get a result that looks like this (sorted by frequency):

meccha	41	uzattai	25
dasai	40	arienee	23
yabai	40	bakkure	23
choo	39	musai	22
maji	39	kattarui	18
ikemen	37	keasuru	18
mukatsuku	37	pureesuru	18
hekomu	36	riiman	17
mattari	35	jibetarian	15
kimoi	34	okeru	6
kebai	33	komaringu	5
kireru	33	takoru	5
bucchakeru	32	nemuringu	4
mendoi	32	urui	4
muzui	30	makuru	3
wanpataan	30	oopensuru	3
iketeru	29	bentoringu	2
hazui	27	raameru	2
gettosuru	25	wakattingu	2
suupaa	25	panion	1

From this it is discernible that *dasai* (uncool), *yabai* (no good) and *meccha* (awesomely) are the most popular words, closely followed by *maji* (really), *mukatsuku* (disagreeable), *ikemen* (good-looking guy), and *hekomu* (feeling sad). The least known words were *panion* (companion), *raameru* (eat ramen noodles), *bentoringu* (eating a lunch box), and *wakattingu* (to understand). This could indicate that the more frequently used/heard words have entered the more established and common vocabulary, while the less known still remain intimate with its origin group of people. 4

6.2 *Young people*

When asked about what slang was according to them, most of them answered that slang is a way for young people to talk with their friends, and that the words are short and easy to say. It is not used in

formal environments i.e. talking to your boss or your teacher. Many also pointed out that slang words change so very rapidly that it can be hard to keep up, and that each generation of young people create their own words to reflect their society. Some also said that usage of slang gives a lazy and impudent image and that they prefer not to. But when asked if they or someone close to them use slang a great majority said yes and gave examples. The most popular words mentioned were *maji* (really), *meccha* (awesomely) and *yabai* (no good), all of which were described by Miller as having kogal origin.

Very few said that they use feminine speech, most specified it as something that they only hear in animations or read in manga. Three young women admitted that they use it, and most others confided that their mothers use it. One man said that gay entertainers use it on TV. Most pointed out that not many people speak that way anymore, and that if they do they are probably upper class, and because of that some called it *ojoosama kotoba* (lady speech), which is exactly what Kinsui calls modern day *teyo dawa kotoba*. Still, only three young people had an inkling of what *teyo dawa kotoba* was, and none could give a specific and correct description. The answers that did not just say "no" or "I don't know" were:

- "I'm not sure, but it is a very polite way of speaking. Sounds like *ojoosama*."
- "Is it like *haikara*?"
- "*Gokigenyoo*[5]"
- "I have no idea. My image of *jogakusei kotoba* is the language written in books. At that time, the language of writing and speaking were more different than now. So I do not know about the real *jogakusei kotoba*. My image is use of *-desutte, -dawa* like that. It is regarded as *ojoosama kotoba* nowadays."
- "I don't really know much about it, but at the Meiji period women were supposed to or expected to behave/talk really quietly, gracefully and elegantly. So I assume many girls were using the way of feminine speech. Also, the way of speech was highly dependent on the class ranks. If one was from a high class family they tended to speak gracefully more often."
- "Sorry, I don't know about them. But maybe Higuchi Ichiyoo[6] might be the one."

When asked if they know what a kogal is, most of them mentioned their make-up, tan, bleached hair and specific fashion. Only one young woman mentioned their unique way of texting, and only five young people described kogals as having something to do with the invention of new slang. But when asked to specify kogal words, most gave examples as it being bad or dirty Japanese that is hard to understand even for people in the same age. One young woman said that kogal words

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[5]Japanese greeting used both when meeting and when parting
[6]Japanese 19th century female writer

are intended to express feelings shortly and directly, which in some cases was the exact same definition given of slang in general by these young people. One of them mentioned that kogals spoke with a "really stupid intonation". Interestingly enough, most of them expressed the idea that kogals were a thing of the 90s and that the style is old-fashioned now. Some even said that the style does not exist anymore.

After they were asked to fill out which words they had heard respectively used (see graph on previous page), I asked them if they knew that all those words had kogal origin. Most people had no idea. Only three women and one man knew. Mostly they said that they did not know that some words were kogal words, but some even protested against the idea that they were all kogal words. Especially the words that mixed English with Japanese seemed hard to believe that they were indeed kogal words. A majority of them only answered 'no' to the question if they knew that they were all kogal words, but some of them also admitted that they knew that some of them were of kogal origin but that they had used others without knowing about it. Some claimed that they used *meccha* (awesomely) because it was Kanto or Osaka dialect.

6.3 Older people

When it comes to the slightly older people two of them specified slang as a means of casual conversation. One said that Japanese slang was a way of speaking used in conversation with family members or friends, while English slang had a more rough and rude feeling to it. Another one said that slang could sometimes be positive in the sense that it makes people feel intimate and friendly, but that it is mostly negative in the sense that it makes people feel offended. A third one specified slang as words that are not in the dictionary and that people who use them do so because the words seem cool or fun. The youngest of the older people defined slang as culture and that slang is the development of language throughout history. When asked to specify if they use slang only one of them said no, and some of the words mentioned as being used were *maji* (really), *meccha* (awesomely), *yabai* (no good), *kimoi* (gross), *mattari* (at ease), and *choo* (super), all of which were described by Miller as having kogal origin. Only one of them said that people in her surroundings do not use slang.

Three out of the five older people said that they use feminine speech, while the other two said that people close to them do. Still only two of them knew about *teyo dawa kotoba* and could give an almost accurate description.

Two of them had never heard of kogals, and the three of them who did know about them only described them from a fashion point of view. However, when asked to specify kogal words one of them said that she had no idea but that she had heard that their way of texting is quite unique. In contrast with the idea of the young people that the style does not exist anymore was this question by

one of the older people: "Are they dying out?" This gives the image that she sees the style as very much alive even to this day.

When asked if they knew that the words are kogal words, most just said 'no' or were a little surprised, but one of them protested against the notion saying that the ones she had used were not specifically kogal words.

6.4 Summary

It is easy to see from these questionnaires that usually neither young nor older people know the origin of their slang words. The young people do not generally know about the origin of the feminine speech that their mothers use, and it does not seem to be very common knowledge among the slightly older people either. Both young and older people were surprised to find out about the origin of their slang words. This could indicate that an accumulation has already taken place and that the words created by kogals have entered the vocabulary of common Japanese people.

I found it strange that several young people thought of the style as almost extinct. Because one of the first things I noticed the first time I stepped into Shibuya in 2010 was a male kogal, a male *ganguro* kogal, surrounded by several female kogals in less extreme outfits. They went to McDonald's (*makuru*) and I could listen to them talk while I was there – though I could not understand much. I find it strange that they (the young people) think the style to be almost extinct when I ran into kogals presumably 15 years after the style's peak. Although it could be that nowadays kogals are restricted to only Shibuya – their supposed place of origin. That would also fit the 2007 *dorama* of *Gal Circle*, which mostly takes place in Shibuya. But it could all be a misunderstanding created on my part. One of the people wrote in his questionnaire that they do not use the word "kogal" much nowadays and they are all just referred to as "gals".

It is also interesting to note that older people seem to use feminine speech more than the young people. This could mean that this "loss of feminine speech" feared by Japan is actually taking place, and that the young women indeed do prefer a more neutral way of speaking.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to find out if the Meiji schoolgirls and the present day kogals have anything in common, and if an assimilation similar to that of *teyo dawa* speech is taking place today with kogal speech. The time period in which I was allowed to do my research was very short and thus my research is very small and provides possibilities for further research, should someone be

interested to do so.

Looking at the comparison conducted by me it is obvious that both schoolgirls and kogals have many things in common, but looking from a language changing point of view the most striking aspect they have in common is the one of being young women in a time of redefining Japan's social structures. Despite having 100 years in-between the social variables were very similar. What sets them apart is that the Meiji schoolgirls were upper class, and the kogals are usually middle working class. But both types of girls managed to catch the attention of the public and gain the interest of the media. This interest from media helped the assimilation of the slang by the public, and (especially in the case of kogals) without really being aware the vocabulary seeped into their lexicon and everyday conversations.

The history of the feminine speech seems to be lost to the general public, as is the awareness of where slang comes from. A quick consultation of my Japanese electronic dictionary confirms that *dasai*, *meccha*, *yabai*, *choo*, *maji*, *ikemen*, *mukatsuku*, *wanpataan*, *suupaa*, and *kattarui* are already included in the dictionary. As is a version of *pureesuru – puree o suru* (to play). I consider this as a change of language being underway and that in some decades' time commonly used words such as *iketeru*, *mattari* and *kimoi* may no longer be considered slang, but actually have full parts in the Japanese language and will be included in the official dictionaries. However, Coulmas mentions in his book that it seems unlikely that these words ever will be used in standard Japanese. His argument is that it is because it is so recent and most kogal words are tossed away the year after invention. (Coulmas, 2005: 59) But my research covering the slang usage of older people as well as the young people seem to tell me that words of kogal origin already has spread outside the original group and nested its way into the common vocabulary, and as quoted in chapter 4 Miller backs up this theory.

It is of course difficult to draw any real assumptions from a research as small as mine. It could be nothing but the slang of this generation. But the fact that the older people use the same slang words as the younger people make it seem as though these slang words have spread past common generational youth slang.

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