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Disarray in the language

A sociolinguistic study of *kotoba no midare*

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Abstract

The following thesis investigates Japanese native speakers' attitudes towards linguistic changes and the degree to which they associate it with social aspects and changes on a wider-encompassing spectrum. More specifically, the study looks at the phenomenon commonly known as *kotoba no midare* ("disarray in the language"), a notion that has long been part of the Japanese public discourse surrounding language change. Over the years, various researchers have attributed the concerns regarding *kotoba no midare* to worries about social problems on a wider scale. The objective of this thesis is to examine to what extent the aforementioned assertions hold water. Furthermore, it also aims to provide a more general overview of how native speakers of Japanese consider linguistic change. The results of the study indicate that the respondents associate language change with social change to a high degree, and that they also view *midare* as being interlinked with social aspects to a lesser extent.

Keywords: Japanese, language change, linguistic change, social change, *kotoba no midare*, attitude, opinions

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Conventions

Romanization

This thesis employs the modified Hepburn system of romanization for Japanese words and phrases. Macrons are used to indicate long vowels, with the exception of the long /e/ sound in the cases where it is commonly rendered as *ei*, and of romanizations of certain names which may not follow Hepburn conventions. Terms that are commonly anglicized, such as Tokyo and Kyoto, are also written without macrons. Phrases and words appearing in Japanese are italicized.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Language change is both a natural phenomenon that occurs inevitably over time and a topic of discourse which manages to attract a great deal of negative attention because of its unavoidable progress. The Japanese language and its changes over time are no exception to this rule. In the case of the Japanese public debate surrounding language, the word that is perhaps the most commonly associated with language change is the expression *kotoba no midare* (“disarray in the language”). Ever since it first became established as a widely known expression in the mid-1970s, it has managed to attract a great deal of attention in discussions concerning linguistic changes. To this day, the aforementioned concept is not only viewed as a matter of concern for many people expressing their dismay over language change, but also acknowledged on the level of national language policy.

In various studies that have been conducted over the years, it has been common for researchers to attribute the concerns regarding *kotoba no midare* to apprehension about problems and changes that exist on a wider social scale. Nevertheless, while this is frequently alluded to, the bulk of research that has been conducted so far has primarily concerned itself with *which* aspects Japanese speakers view as *midare*, rather than *why* they hold those attitudes. The aim of this study is to change that by bringing the latter question into perspective.

1.2. Aim and research questions

The objective of this study is to investigate Japanese native speakers’ attitudes towards language change, as well as how those same speakers view language change in relation to social aspects and changes on a wider scope. The intention behind the examination of the aforementioned areas of interest is not only to find an answer as to what views the participants hold, but also what their reasons are for doing so.

The following research questions will be the focus of this thesis:

- To what extent do Japanese native speakers view language change as *kotoba no midare*?
- To what degree do those native Japanese view linguistic changes as related to social changes?
- How do they see the relationship between *kotoba no midare* and social change?

1.3. Structure

After the introduction in Chapter 1 comes Chapter 2, wherein a description of the manner in which *kotoba no midare* is commonly defined and its history are given. Furthermore, the subject of what factors are commonly alluded to as being the reason for the high amount of concern regarding *kotoba no midare*, as well as its role in official language policy, is also highlighted.

Thereafter follows Chapter 3, which is the part dedicated to the present study. Following a short explanation of the methodology and a description of the participants' background, the results of the questionnaire conducted for the purpose of this thesis are presented. Chapter 4 is centered around a discussion about what the results of the questionnaire reveal. Finally, Chapter 5 brings the thesis to a conclusion by providing a commentary on the results from the previous section and a short description of what potential future research could be conducted.

2. Background

2.1. Defining *midare*

Midare is not the only word used in Japanese to describe language change, nor even the only established expression used to denote this particular phenomenon. In the research literature and surveys pertaining to the subject, the term *yure* is also commonly employed to refer to linguistic changes. The former signifies “disorder, confusion, disarray, chaos”, whereas the latter parallels the use of the linguistic terms “language change” and “shift” in English; moreover, it is also used to refer to multiple co-existing variations of the same word, such as *ataakai/attakai* (“warm”) and *kanjiru/kanzuru* (“to feel”). Thus, *yure* can be described as an expression considering a shift in language from an objective standpoint, without carrying any further implications. The use of *midare*, on the other hand, presupposes that a certain linguistic change is an example of an error or a misuse, and therefore implies a negative value judgement and carries a nuance of subjectivity (Carroll 2001: 80; Bunkachō 1995). Furthermore, *midare* places an emphasis on the language change as being a shift away from a standard, from how “things used to be” – *jibun no monosashi kara zurete iru* (“to be out of alignment with one’s own yardstick”) – and a desire to return to the previous state of affairs (Carroll 1997: 27).

Nevertheless, in spite of the subjective connotations of *midare*, the term is employed in official surveys, such as those carried out by the Agency for Cultural Affairs (Bunkachō 2020). The National Language Council (1993) describes the phenomenon in terms of “the problem known as disorder, change and so on in the language” (*iwayuru kotoba no midare ya yure nado no mondai*). The NHK employs the term *midare* in its opinion polls (NHK 2013), although the term *yure* is used in its reports on language.

Through the years, the basic notions concerning *kotoba no midare* have not changed much. However, what linguistic phenomenon is considered a hot topic at the moment is not constant, but has shifted to a certain extent over time. Some of the topics that have been the center of discussions include: misuse of *keigo* (honorific language), non-standard grammar forms such as *ranuki kotoba*,¹ new and trendy words, reforms of the script system,

¹ The term *ranuki kotoba* (“*ra*-deletion words”) refers to an alternative variant of the potential form in Japanese. According to official standards, the potential form of vowel stem verbs ends in *-rareru*. However, in the case of some verbs, it has become increasingly common to drop the *-ra*. For example, the vowel stem verb *taberu* (to eat), which according to official standards is supposed to be conjugated as *taberareru*, may be conjugated as *tabereru*.

female language, young people's language, *gairaigo* (foreign loanwords) and accent changes (Masuda 2012).

2.2. The history of *midare*

Seidl (2020: 157) writes that even in language communities with a standard language, there is no such thing as universally accepted, objective criteria of what constitutes as “good” or aesthetically pleasing language. Nevertheless, that does not stop the notion of “bad language practice” from arising, nor from being seen as a threat to the integrity of the language community.

In 1941, Matsuo Chōzō, head of the Bureau of Publication, wrote in an article detailing the Education ministry's policy regarding the Japanese language, that the people at large needed to be made conscious of how decayed their language usage had become in both speech and writing, and that correcting this dismaying state of affairs could only be accomplished through regulation and purification of the language (Gottlieb 1995: 93). While the attitude echoed in this article can be regarded as a precursor to the modern debate surrounding *kotoba no midare*, the notion that the Japanese language is falling into decay is not new, but has been a frequently recurring topic in the public discourse around language since at least the eighteenth century, albeit with shifting focus (Gottlieb 2005: 96). The expression *kotoba no midare* itself surfaced in relation to the influx of European loanwords and Sino-Japanese neologisms in the late 1870s and 1880s (Hansen 1998, cited in Carroll 2001: 70). Lewin (1979: 95–99) describes how the term later made its reappearance in the post-war period; this time, the expression was used in reference to the massive increase of words of American origin entering the Japanese language, as well as with regard to the changes that the *keigo* system (honorific language system) underwent during this time period. Gottlieb (1995: 52) also notes that the notion of the language being in a state of disarray was evoked in political discussions on issues in the script system during the 1960s. Newspaper articles from this period discussing the issue indicate that particularly in the case of the latter, much of the blame for this perceived deterioration was laid at the door of language policy and “politicians meddling around in the national language” (Masuda 2012: 125–126). However, it was only around the mid-1970s that discussions surrounding the topic began to emerge with greater frequency and that the idea appears to have taken root that the language as a whole, rather than specific aspects of it, was falling into decay.

Gottlieb (2011: 147) notes that a poll conducted as early as 1966 showed that the spoken language, rather than the written language, was becoming a matter of concern for nearly 70 percent of respondents. Surveys conducted from the late 1970s and onwards by the NHK, and later the Agency for Cultural Affairs, showed a notable increase in the amount of people considering the language to be in a state of disarray, from 69 percent in 1977 up to 88 percent in the year 2000. Although there has been a downward trend since the turn of the century, with the most recent poll by the Agency for Cultural affairs showing a return to pre-late 1970s levels for the first time in fifty years (*The Sankei News* 2020), a commonly held view continues to be that the language people encounter in their daily lives and in the media leaves something to be desired. The domination of the spoken language, with *ranuki kotoba*, perceived mistakes in *keigo* and young people's language being frequently cited reasons for the perceived deterioration in standards, is noticeable. Discussions pointing to issues in the script system as a source of disarray appear to have occurred with significantly less frequency since the 1970s, which may be due to the fact that language policy after the mid-1960s has mostly concerned itself with revisions of earlier measures rather than reforms similar to the ones that took place in the immediate post-war period (Masuda 2012: 126–127; Gottlieb 2005: 62).

While the amount of people agreeing and disagreeing with the notion of the Japanese language falling into decay has shifted in different groups throughout the years, a few patterns can be discerned. Inagaki & Inoue (1993: 6) observe that older people and those from the higher social classes in society are the ones who are more likely to regard language phenomena that go against established linguistic standards as examples of *midare*. Age has an important bearing on individuals' perception of language change in that as people become older, they often grow more conservative in their language usage and notice more differences between their own language usage and that of younger generations; consequently, they may come to hold the view that standards are being undermined and that the Japanese language is deteriorating (Inoue 2008: 484–486; NHK 2013: 39–40). Furthermore, agreement with the notion of *midare* also tends to be stronger amongst female respondents than male respondents. This supports the hypothesis laid forward by sociolinguists like William Labov about women's linguistic behavior overall being more oriented towards standard linguistic norms as compared to that of men (Eckert 1989: 214–215).²

² However, it is worth noting that women have been shown to lead men in some linguistic changes (ibid: 214–215).

2.3. *Midare* and language change as a symptom of wider problems in society

Campbell & Barlow (2020: 88) write that although language change from a purely linguistic standpoint is not inherently good or bad, sentiments against new or ongoing changes often occur for various socially motivated reasons. These socially motivated judgements may also have significant social consequences, based on whether society assigns a value of stigma or prestige to a certain linguistic phenomenon. Rea (2006) also observes that language change is commonly regarded as a symptom of wider social problems in society; it is frequently associated with terms such as *fragmentation* and *decline*, whereas correct usage is seen as a sign of morality and social order. Commonly, concerns about language not only arise during a time period in which society is undergoing noticeable structural and social changes, but often as a reaction to said changes (Carroll 2001: 78).

In Japan, the idea that deteriorating language standards are indicative of problems on a wider social scale goes back at least as far as the *kokugaku* movement of the late eighteenth century. Harootunian (1988: 62; 70–71) highlights that nativist scholar Motoori Norinaga considered avoidance of misuse of language to be crucial in order to prevent misunderstanding and political disorder from taking place. The nativists considered that clarifying proper linguistic usage would not only improve the state of the language, but also solve other problems in society. A little more than a hundred years later, in a 1939 article discussing issues surrounding writing system standards at the time, the conservative linguist Shinmura Izuru made the argument that upholding writing standards was equivalent to maintaining standards of morality; therefore, language problems had to be considered in the light of tradition, rather than of convenience or efficiency (Gottlieb 1995: 44). The attitudes reflected here – that disordered language is linked to disordered society, and that linguistic stability is indicative of morality and order – have parallels in the discourse surrounding *kotoba no midare*. Lewin (1979: 95–99) attributes the reappearance of the phrase in the post-war period to linguistic changes caused by the social re-orientation of Japan. The country underwent profound social changes as a result of the dismantling of the imperial state and the subsequent political, economic and technological restructuring of the country by the Allied forces, something which was also reflected in the language. On similar grounds, Carroll (2001: 82–83) makes the argument that an important factor in the development whereby the notion of *kotoba no midare* became firmly established in the 1970s was the socioeconomic changes resulting from the influence of the economic boom of the 1960s on people's patterns of communication and sensitivity to language usage. Furthermore, due to the social and

economic problems resulting from the oil crisis of 1974–1975, “change was more likely to be regarded as negative, as signifying breakdown and disorder, rather than development and progress”. For the same reason, the peak in concern about *kotoba no midare* around the year 2000 may have been a reflection of the general pessimism caused by the “lost decade” (Gottlieb 2011: 147).

Carroll (2001: 79) argues that aspects such as *keigo* and young people’s language, which are frequently characterized as being *midarete iru* (in disarray), are connected not only in terms of language change, but also with regard to their association with social relationships and roles and changes relating to those. Inoue (2008: 487–488) observes that *keigo* is currently undergoing a long-term historical change, in the same direction as honorific language in many Western languages. In the past, Japanese honorifics were related to age and used when addressing elderly people in principle; however, in reflection of social changes, a principle of honorific usage based on acquired status rather than ascribed status is becoming prominent. Under such circumstances, the necessity of using *keigo* based on age is decreasing, and usage of honorific expressions when addressing elderly people is increasingly becoming something that is done depending on the occasion, rather than of principle. For elderly people in particular, this trend is difficult to bear as they are not as clearly treated with verbal respect as they were in the past. The trend of not automatically addressing older people with honorifics is particularly prevalent when it comes to the younger generations. In general, the latter are also most frequently blamed for contributing to the “destruction of correct and beautiful Japanese” by their “incomprehensible” usage of the language, due to their usage of different types of slang, loanwords and abbreviated forms (Peng 2010: 5–6). In particular, critics frequently blame young Japanese people for being unable to comply with established patterns of social interaction, much of which is predicated upon the distinction between in-group (*uchi*) or out-group (*soto*), by “carrying the language of friends” into the workplace and thereby failing to distinguish between the public and the private (Wetzel 2004: 110–111). Language change is thus painted as not only something that impedes the language, but also something that has a negative effect on social relationships.

Japan is of course not alone when it comes to concerns being voiced about language change. Aitchison (2001: 3–13) writes that “every generation inevitably believes that the clothes, manners and speech of the following one have deteriorated”, and notes that complaints about deteriorating language have been observed in different countries throughout different ages, including criticism against linguistic phenomena which later came to be

accepted and viewed as examples of correct language which ought to be adhered to. An example of the latter in a Japanese context is given in Inoue (2006), who points to the example of schoolgirls in the late Meiji period, whose language was derided by male intellectuals and media as being a corrupt form of speech. However, a few decades later, many of the expressions previously identified as schoolgirl speech had come to be regarded as authentic women's language. Today, some people mourn the shrinking differences between male and female speech and the disappearance of the very same feminine language which a century earlier was regarded as anything but.

2.4. *Midare* as a target of language policy

Hagège (1996: 195; 207–208) writes that language norms are created both by private and public actors, with the cleavage between them not being absolute. Sometimes, private initiatives may benefit from support from public authorities. Because language is what Hagège calls “a political commodity”, its unity is also of interest to the state. The fact that social change accompanies language planning is not surprising either, inasmuch as language planning, concerned with the management of change, is itself an instance of social change (Cooper 1989: 164). Since its groundwork was laid out during the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, much of Japanese language policy has been characterized by a strong emphasis on the link between nation and language, as well as a focus on measures created to produce deliberate and specific linguistic changes and influences (Otomo 2019: 302–305). With the idea of the slow decay of the Japanese language having become widespread, it is therefore only natural that it has caught the attention of language policy makers.

As detailed by Carroll (1997), Japanese language policy makers initially concerned themselves with the goal of establishing a standard language and subsequently spreading it throughout the country. This was seen as not only necessary for bridging the gap between the spoken and written variants of the language, but also for facilitating the modernization of Japan and its positioning as a nation state of influence. Following the Second World War, focus was predominantly directed towards issues surrounding the script system and establishing standards for *kana* and *kanji* usage, followed by revisions of earlier writing system reforms from the 1960s and onwards. Nonetheless, beginning from the 1980s, focus of official policy had once again been broadened out to consider wider language issues. By the 1990s, around the same period in time that the notion of *kotoba no midare* had been

firmly established as a theme in the debate surrounding language change, the term had also become a target of national language policy. The expression makes its initial appearance in the National Language Council's meetings during the first half of the decade, in discussions relating to "language usage" (*kotobazukai*) (Bunkachō 1993). The final report from 1993 stresses the importance of making certain that examples of "beautiful and rich" language are presented via the media, raising language education standards and cultivating language awareness among the public. The focus lies on broad, indirect measures, something which stands in contrast to the policies which characterized Japanese language planning in its earlier stages. In addition, there is emphasis on the need to take into account that language changes are a result of shifting social circumstances and accompany changes in people's linguistic awareness. Nevertheless, the Council writes in later reports (Bunkachō 1996; 2000) that the state plays an important role in regulating the language environment and ensuring the spread of proper Japanese, as well as making sure that society as a whole works together to cultivate a spirit of "loving and valuing the national language". Furthermore, the link between language and society is also emphasized in the reports. In Bunkachō (1993), the Council makes the argument that recent language changes induced by the progress of information society and internationalization, such as an influx of new and trendy expressions and loanwords, have resulted in widening the language gap between different generations; if language is not used in an appropriate manner, it may not only have a negative effect on communication, but also impair human relationships. The 1996 report (Bunkachō 1996) also states that "words simultaneously belong to individuals and society as a whole", and that acquiring the ability to properly use respectful language depending on the situation is necessary in order to improve relationships with others and lead a better social life. The attitude showcased in these reports is reflected in the actions that have been taken by the government to combat *kotoba no midare*. In 2002, the Ministry of Education conducted a poll which showed that around 80 percent of participants believed that the Japanese language was either "deteriorating" or "strongly deteriorating", and that people's ability to express themselves in writing was declining. In response to this, the government announced that it would establish measures to address the perceived decrease in capabilities (Gottlieb 2005: 97). *Kotoba no midare* is thus not only an idea that exists within the realm of linguistic discussions, but also a concept that is acknowledged and observed on a governmental level.

3. The study

3.1. Methodology

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the extent to which Japanese native speakers view language change as *kotoba no midare*, as well as how they view the connection between midare and language change and social change. With the aims of investigating these outlined areas of interest, an online questionnaire (see Appendix A) was conducted via Google forms from the 23rd of April to the 5th of May 2021. The responses offer an insight into the participants' attitudes towards language and linguistic change in particular, but also social aspects and changes, and the manner in which they interlink the former with the latter. For the sake of facilitating the respondents' participation, as well as being able to easily measure and categorize the answers later, there was a predominance of quantitative (forced choice and five-point scale) questions. Nonetheless, due to the nature of some questions, it was also deemed necessary to include qualitative-type questions (text answers) in order to allow the participants to provide more detailed answers when necessary. In total, the questionnaire contained 24 questions, of which five were either optional and/or asked for the purpose of prompting the respondents to elaborate on their answers.

Before beginning the survey, the participants were asked to provide information about their age, their sex, their level of education and their home region and town. As discussed in section 2.3, there appears to be a clear difference when it comes to the attitudes of different age groups and men and women, so asking about the participants' age and sex seemed relevant to this study. As one's level of education undoubtedly is going to have an influence on this as well, it was also deemed to be relevant to ask about this. Last but not least, this study was also aimed at exploring if there was a difference in the participants' attitudes depending on what type of place they grew up in. The objective was to see if there were any opinion trends that could be detected depending on whether the participants had grown up in a highly urbanized area, a very rural area or somewhere in between. The reason behind this was that it is likely that one's environment is going to have an influence on someone's perception of language and certain notions pertaining to it. Thus, this also became a point of interest.

After the introductory part of the questionnaire, the participants were immediately introduced to the questionnaire itself. In addition to the previously outlined aims, there were a couple of factors that mainly influenced the selection of questions to include in the survey: namely, what questions had been asked in opinion polls concerning *kotoba no midare*

in the past, such as Bunkachō (2020), and what claims had been made in past research about the prevalent concern over *kotoba no midare* and the reasons for its existence. For a few questions, the inspiration can be directly traced back to specific pieces of research, most notably questions 4a and 4b and the claims made in Inoue (2008) and Bunkachō (1993) that there is a language gap between different generations. However, the inspiration for most of the questions cannot be pinpointed to a single or a couple of sources, but is rather an overall assessment of different claims made in previous research regarding *kotoba no midare*. The selected questions were categorized in an order based on their theme. Questions 1 through 7b focus on people's views on language, questions 8a through 9b concern views on social aspects and social change, and finally, questions 10a through 10c deal with the link between language change and social change and people's views on it.

There are a couple of key points that need to be addressed and kept in mind when looking at the results of this questionnaire. Due to time constraints and the limited amount of options I had, in terms of possibilities to distribute the survey, reaching a large enough amount of people turned out to be difficult, particularly in certain age groups. Thus, especially when it comes to people below or past a certain age, it's difficult to arrive at any statistically viable conclusions based on this survey's sample size alone.

Furthermore, although it would have been preferable to limit the participants to answering the questionnaire only once, the fact that enabling this setting would have made the survey off-limits for respondents without a Google account means that it would have ended up restricting the amount of people eligible to participate. In order to minimize the risk of the same person responding to the survey multiple times, the replies were controlled one by one in order to ensure that there weren't any duplicates or any types of fraudulent responses.

3.2. Participants

Since the target of interest was specifically native Japanese speakers, efforts were made to get it distributed among native Japanese speakers. In addition to being shared on Facebook, the survey was also directly passed on by different contacts to friends and acquaintances.

Ultimately, this resulted in 25 responses. As two of the replies turned out to be from the same person (which was clear as the answers were exactly similar and the written replies were worded in the exact same way), I have decided to count them as one single reply; this brings the amount of actual respondents down to 24 individuals.

Table 1. Participants' sex

Sex	Respondents (24)
Female	20
Male	4

First of all, the participants were asked to answer whether they were male or female. An overwhelming majority of responses turned out to be from women, who accounted for over 80 percent of the replies. Due to the uneven ratio between the sexes, this factor will not be discussed in further detail.

Table 2. Participants' age

Age span	Respondents (24)
21–29	4
35–39	3
41–49	13
54–60	4

Following the first question, the respondents were asked to provide information about their age. The youngest participant turned out to be 21 years old, while the oldest one was 60 years old. Due to the fact that the survey was distributed on Facebook, and because one of my contacts had her host mother pass it on to her friends, it was not wholly unexpected that the biggest age group would turn out to be people in their 40s. Nevertheless, I did not expect the dominance of that category to be quite so striking. Furthermore, while I assumed that people in the oldest age group would amount to the smallest in quantity, the total amount of respondents in that category turned out to be on equal footing with the remaining two groups.

Table 3. Participants' educational background

Educational background	Respondents (24)
Graduated from junior high school	0
Graduated from high school	1
Graduated from university/graduate school	23
Graduate from vocational school	0

Subsequently, the participants were asked to provide information about their last obtained degree. This turned out to be the aspect in which the respondents differed the least, as everyone but one of the participants responded that they had attended either university or graduate school. However, due to the wording of the third option (which was listed as 大学・大学院卒 *daigaku/daigakuin* (university/graduated from graduate school) as opposed to 大学

卒・大学院卒 *daigakusotsu/daigakuinsotsu* (graduated from university/graduate school), with the character meaning “graduate” missing after the word for “university”), and judging from the age of a few of the participants, there is a possibility that a couple of them may have misinterpreted it and chosen it even if the second option would in fact have been the correct one. Due to the near complete homogeneity of this group, this particular factor will not be addressed further.

Table 4. Participants' prefecture of origin

Prefecture of origin	Respondents (24)
100~200 inhabitants/km ²	
Fukushima prefecture (福島県)	1
200~300 inhabitants/km ²	
Okayama prefecture (岡山県)	1
300~500 inhabitants/km ²	
Gunma prefecture (群馬県)	1
500~1000 inhabitants/km ²	
Hyōgo prefecture (兵庫県)	2
Kyoto prefecture (京都府)	2
1000< inhabitants/km ²	
Chiba prefecture (千葉県)	1
Fukuoka prefecture (福岡県)	2
Osaka prefecture (大阪府)	4
Saitama prefecture (埼玉県)	1
Tokyo prefecture (東京都)	12

Table 5. Participants' hometown

Size of hometown	Respondents (24)
<10 000	1
10 000–100 000	1
100 000–500 000	4
500 000–1 000 000	1
1 000 000<	9
Unknown	8

Last but not least, the respondents were asked to answer what their prefecture of origin and hometown was. As expected, the most commonly provided answer turned out to be Tokyo

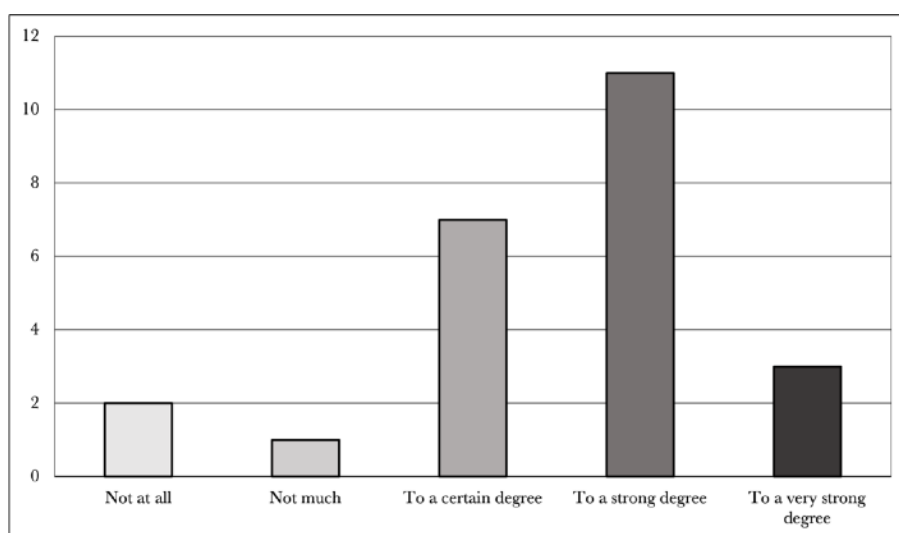
prefecture, which amounted for half of the participants; in contrast, the second most common answer, Osaka prefecture, was provided by only four respondents, and the rest of the prefectures listed in table 4 amounted to either one or two respondents each. A clear majority of the participants were from prefectures with a population density over 1 000 inhabitants per km². The dominance of respondents from densely populated prefectures is further reflected in the number of respondents answering that they live in a city with over 1 000 000 inhabitants, as they too make up the majority of participants. However, an unexpectedly large number of respondents chose either to only provide the name of their prefecture, or to not indicate whether they were referring to a city or to a prefecture. This could either be because they forgot about it, or because they did not want to provide it, for whatever reason. I believe this could have been avoided to some extent if I had split the question into two and asked for their prefecture of origin and hometown separately instead of in the same question. In any event, due to the fact that the data regarding the participants' hometown is incomplete, as well as the fact that the sample group is so unevenly distributed regardless of which factor you look at (thus making it difficult to come to any conclusions regarding regional differences), this too will not be addressed in further detail.

3.3. Results

3.3.1 Question 1

In general, do you care about your and other people's language?

Table 6. (24 respondents)



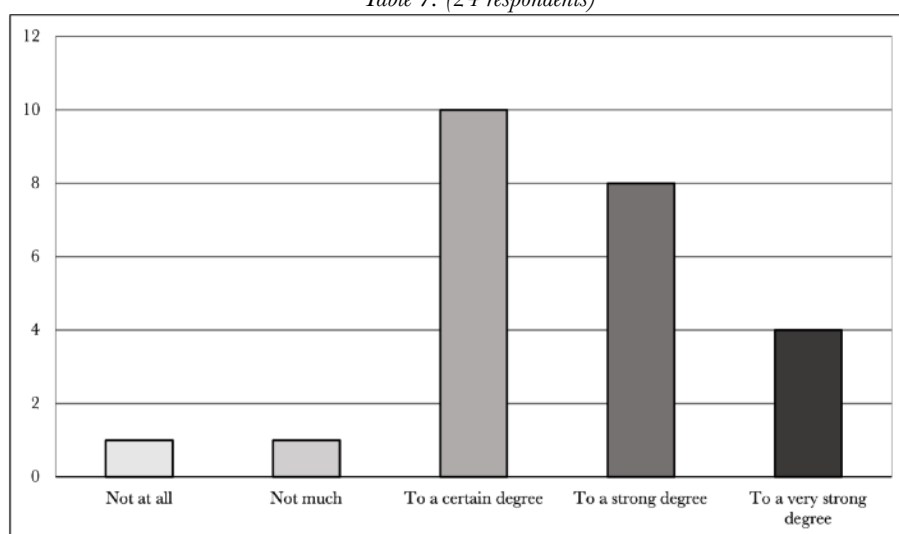
To the vast majority of participants, 21 people, language usage is something that holds at least some importance. Nearly half of the respondents answered that they cared about their own and other people's language "to a strong degree", while seven people reported caring to a

“certain degree” and the remaining three participants answered that they cared to a “very strong degree”. When it comes to the remaining participants, who either did not care much or did not care at all, at least one person mentioned in a later reply (see question 2b) that she was currently living abroad; if contact with other native Japanese speakers in her day-to-day life is limited due to this, there is a possibility that it may have influenced her choice.

3.3.2 Question 2a

Do you feel that the language used by the people that you encounter in your daily life, as well as by people that you see in the media, is falling into disarray?

Table 7. (24 respondents)



22 participants consider that the language they encounter in their day-to-day life, be it in their real-life surroundings or in the media, leaves something to be desired, to the point where it is falling into disarray. Only two individuals in total reported not feeling that it is *midarete iru* at all respectively not feeling this way particularly. The most commonly selected option, which was chosen by ten people, turned out to be “to a certain degree”, followed closely by “to a strong degree” (selected by eight participants). The number of people who answered that they felt that the language was falling into disarray to a great extent amounted to half of those (four participants) who chose the second most popular option.

3.3.3 Question 2b

Which linguistic aspects do you feel are particularly falling into disarray? For those selected “Other”: you may list more than one.

Table 8. (24 respondents)

Options	Number of times selected
<i>Ranuki kotoba</i>	11
<i>Keigo</i>	11
Young people’s language	8
No aspect is falling into disarray	1
Other	9

As a follow-up question, participants were provided with a list of linguistic aspects commonly cited as being in a state of decay and were given the option to select one choice or more, or alternatively, to just choose the option “no aspect is falling into disarray” in case they did not view any linguistic aspects as such. Furthermore, by selecting the option “other”, in which case they were asked to write a short answer in the accompanying writing box, they were offered the possibility to mention other aspects that were not provided in the list. Unsurprisingly, the person who previously answered that he did not consider the Japanese language to be *midarete iru* at all also turned out to be the only person who selected the option “no aspect is falling into disarray”. *Ranuki kotoba* and *keigo* proved to be the most popular choices, as they were selected by eleven respondents each. “Young people’s language” was not as commonly selected as the other two, but still managed to garner eight votes.

The option “other” was selected by nine participants. Out of these, five people provided replies that dealt with aspects of usage of different types of polite language: two people pointed specifically to “excessive” usage of honorific language (in the case of one of the respondents, expressions such as *sasete itadakimasu*). An equal number of respondents answered that they considered *teineigo* (polite language) used by salespeople or in convenience stores to be *midarete iru*. A fifth participant wrote that she considered that people had become incapable of properly differentiating between *keigo* and *teineigo* depending on the occasion, “despite the fact that the mentality behind the two is different”. When it comes to the other replies provided, one respondent from Fukuoka prefecture notably expressed frustration over people dropping the *i* of *i*-adjectives and using the word *yabai* (“terrific”) to describe everything with no regard for its original meaning, as well as people not from the Kansai region using the

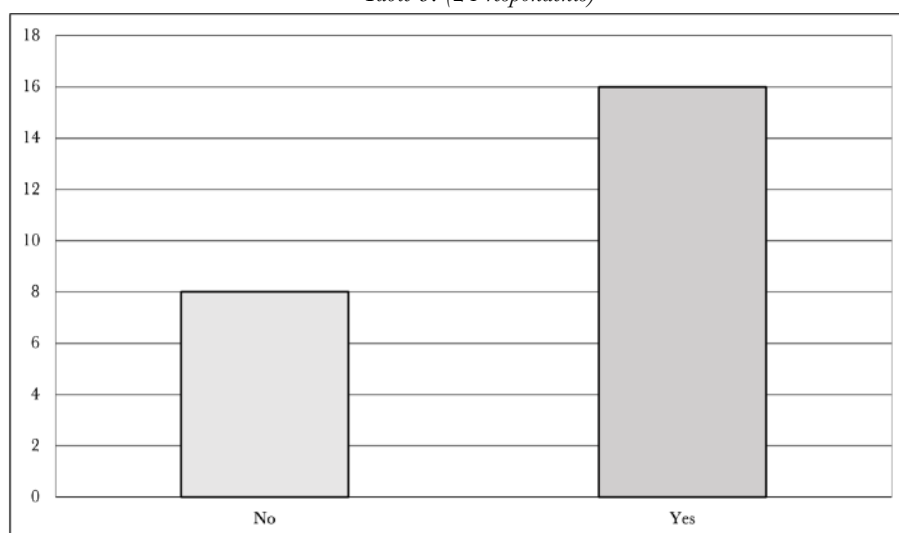
Kansai dialect. Another respondent replied that due to her living abroad, the language (used in Japan) had come to seem strange to her. The rest of the “other” replies dealt with the increase of *gairaigo*, usage of difficult words in combination with usage of horizontal script in news programs, native Japanese speakers’ pronunciation of Japanese and language used on the internet.

One important thing to note is that the list of default options amounted to only three choices, which means that there is a risk that some participants might have forgotten to list certain aspects (for example, new and trendy words). Looking back, it would probably have been better to include a greater amount of options to choose from.

3.3.4 Question 3a

Are there any good linguistic changes?

Table 9. (24 respondents)



When the participants were asked if they considered that there were any good linguistic changes, 16 of them replied that they thought so, whereas the remaining eight respondents said that they did not think there were any.

3.3.5 Question 3b (Optional)

If you answered “yes”, please give an example. (For example, keigo usage, the increase of gairaigo)

The 16 participants who replied that they did indeed consider that there were good linguistic changes were further prompted to specify which changes they viewed in a positive light. One participant appears to have misread the question as “If you answered ‘yes’, can you give an explanation?”, replying simply “because language changes”. However, in the case of the other

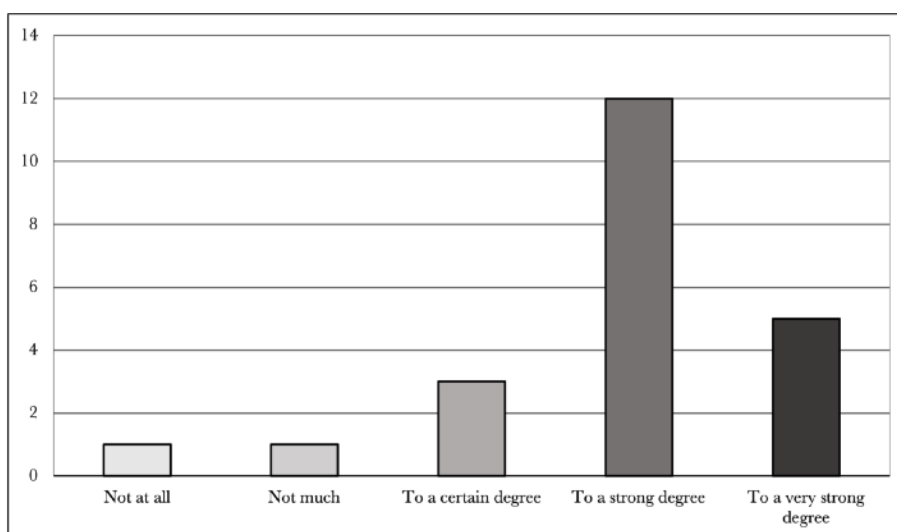
replies, a variety of examples were given.

A recurring theme in multiple replies was the subject of language changing according to the times; a few participants wrote that they considered that the amount of expressions increasing over time was something positive, whereas others chose to emphasize the link between society and linguistic change. In particular, one respondent answered that the fact that *keigo* usage had grown more relaxed over time would also lead to increased openness in society and made the argument that “there is a reason that change occurs, it is necessary. Words are tools, so they have to meet certain needs”. Another person who considered language change depending on the era to be something good pointed to creative words born out of youth culture as an example of a positive linguistic phenomenon. Aside from the theme of language changing over time being evoked as something positive in itself, it was also common for respondents to cite language changes which they considered had lead to increased easiness of use. Two participants brought up abbreviated and simplified forms, whereas another one stated that *ranuki kotoba* had made it easier to differentiate between the passive and potential forms [of vowel stem verbs]. Other linguistic aspects that were mentioned in more than one answer include *gairaigo*, as well as changes in *kanji* readings of certain words.

3.3.6 Question 4a

Do you feel that there is a striking difference when it comes to different generations' way of speaking?

Table 10. (24 respondents)



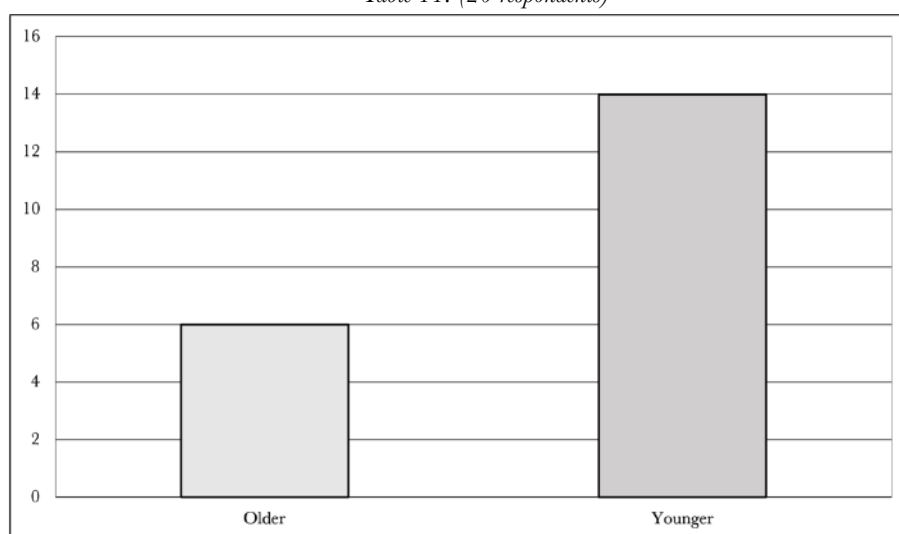
With the exception of two respondents, nearly everyone replied that they considered generational differences to be highly pronounced when it comes to the way people speak. Half of the participants replied that they thought so to “a strong degree”, while the number of

people answering that they believed that to “a very strong degree” or only “to a certain degree” amounted to five respectively three individuals.

3.3.8 Question 4b (optional)

To those who answered “to a certain degree”, “to a strong degree” or “to a very strong degree”: do you think that the difference between your own way of speaking and that of others is the most pronounced on the end of those who are older or younger than you?

Table 11. (20 respondents)

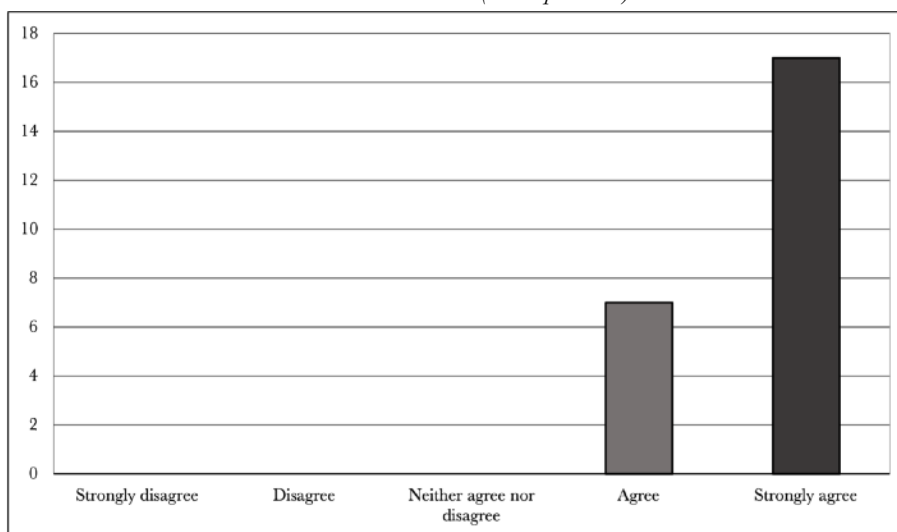


The 22 people who selected that they considered the generational gaps in regards to people’s way of speaking to be striking to at least a certain extent were cued to choose whether they felt that the gap between their own way of speaking and other people’s was the most felt when it came to those who were younger or older than them. However, the total number of respondents in this section is only 20, because two of the people who selected “to a certain degree” or “to a strong degree” in question 4a did not answer this question. This could be either because they did not know, or because they considered the difference to be equally as big on both ends; in hindsight, it would probably have been better to add a “both/do not know” option. When it comes to the participants who actually ended up answering the question, “people younger than me” turned out to be the most common choice by 14 votes, whereas the remaining six answered “people older than me”.

3.3.9 Question 5a

”It is natural that language changes occur as time goes by”

Table 12. (24 respondents)



Irrespective of the participants’ feelings towards certain linguistic changes, there is widespread agreement among them that it is natural that language change occur over time. As many as 17 of them strongly agreed with the statement, whereas the remaining seven respondents agreed at the very least.

3.3.10 Question 5b

What do you think influences language change?

Although one person simply stated that she had no answer, the rest of the participants answered the question accordingly. As in the case of question 3b, there are some recurring themes that can be spotted. A significant number of respondents pointed to either culture or factors pertaining to social conditions, values and one’s social environment as reasons for the occurrence of linguistic changes. Often, the notion of change was evoked in combination with these types of answers, as in “cultural change” or “the progress of things”. Another aspect brought up by different participants pertains to the information society, as media and social media were brought up multiple times. In particular, one person argued that “thanks to the convenience of civilization, it has become possible to obtain a lot of information”.

Furthermore, language itself or language change as a source for other linguistic changes occurring was also brought up in various replies. Two respondents answered that they viewed *gairaigo* as something that influenced language change, whereas a third participant viewed the increase of new words suitable for the times as a source of influence. Among other things,

“the creativity of young people”, “the number of people who use [certain speaking patterns or expressions]” or “coincidence” were also factors that some participants mentioned.

3.3.11 Question 6a

To what extent do you feel that the following factors influence language usage?

Table 13. (24 respondents)

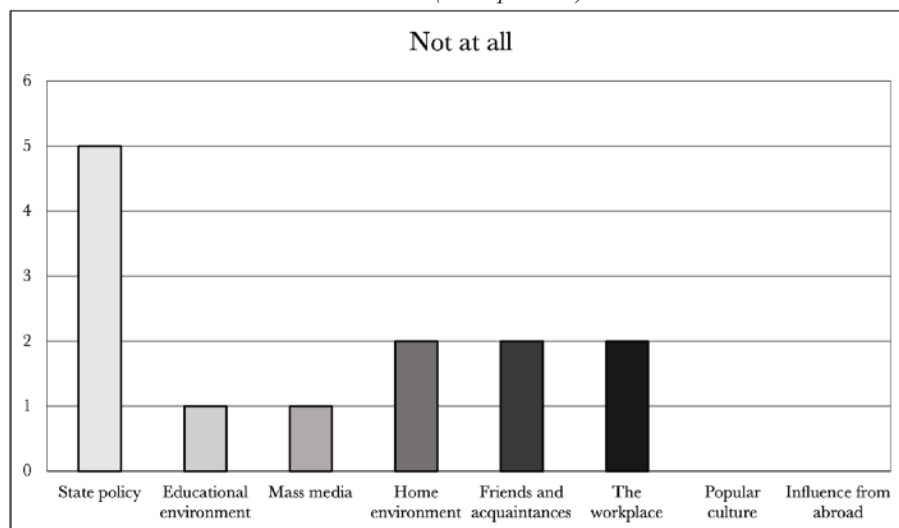


Table 14. (24 respondents)

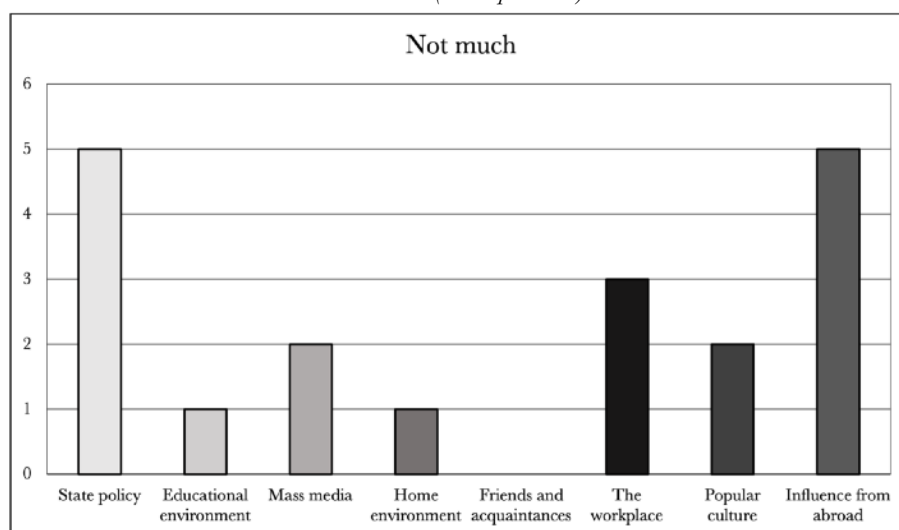


Table 15. (24 respondents)

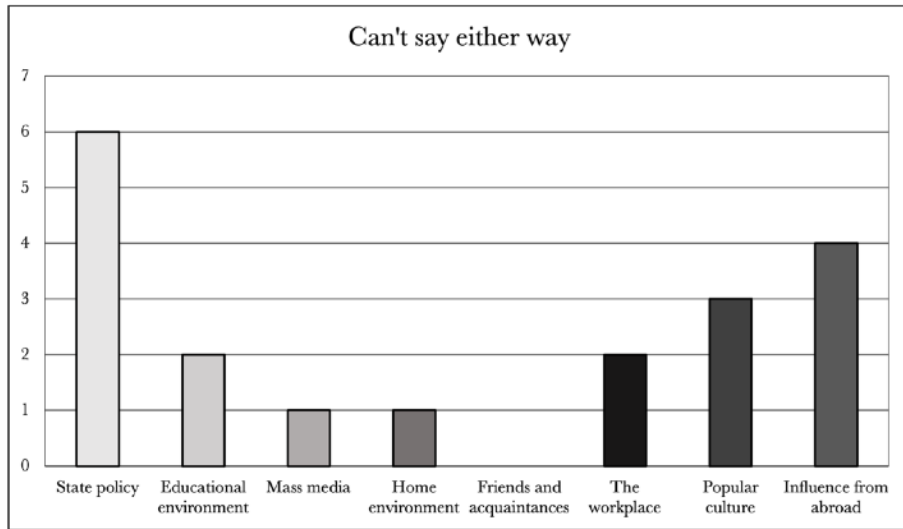


Table 16. (24 respondents)

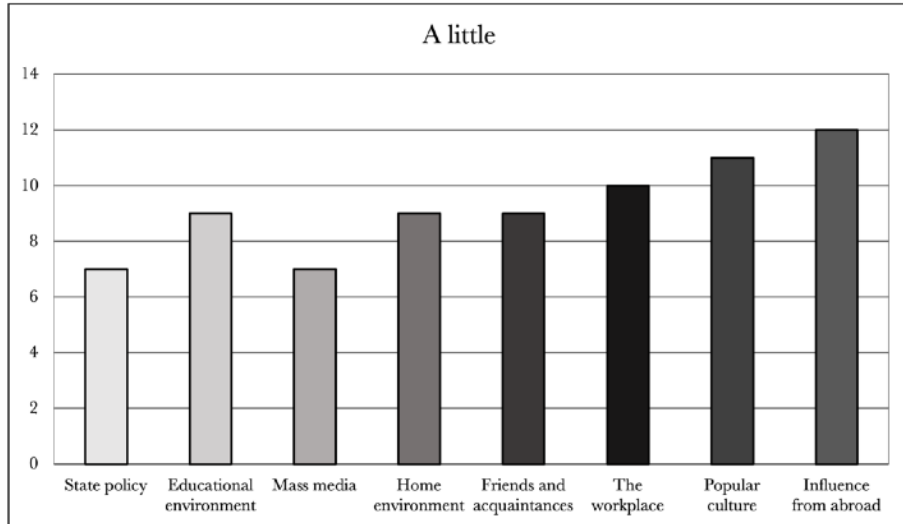
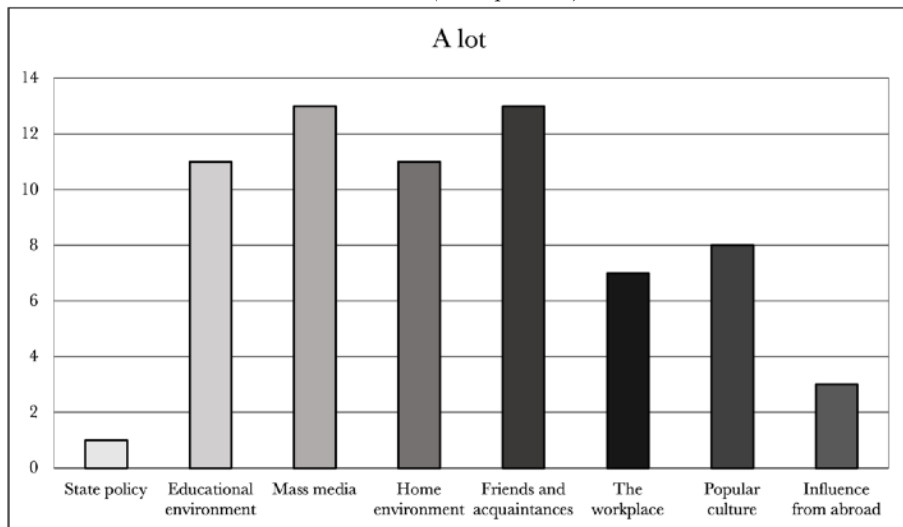


Table 17. (24 respondents)



In this part, the participants were asked to take a stand regarding to which degree they believed that certain factors had an effect on language. All of the options pertaining to the private sphere or public spheres that people directly interact with in their day to day life – the educational environment, one’s home environment, friends and acquaintances and the workplace – were commonly selected as something that they considered affected people’s language usage. Out of these choices, “friends and acquaintances” turned out to be the most frequently selected as a factor that either had “a little” (nine respondents) or “a lot of” impact. It was closely followed by “home environment” which was chosen by 20 respondents overall as an example of what they thought influenced language usage to a small or a strong degree. When it comes to the other factors, “the mass media” turned out to be the most regularly reported as a factor of influence; 13 respectively seven participants answered that they thought it affected people’s language usage to a lesser or a great extent. Conversely, there was only one choice that a considerable number of individuals considered to either have not much influence or none at all, namely “state policy”: although seven people did answer that they considered it had at least a little bit of impact, a significant amount of the participants answered that it either held no influence (5 people), not a great deal of it (same as the previous group) or that they did not feel that they could accurately assess its degree of impact (6 respondents). The reason for this is in all likelihood that in contrast to most of the other factors taken into consideration here, state policy is not something that is felt directly in people’s day-to-day lives; it is either viewed as something that holds a limited amount of influence or a not particularly obvious degree of it. A somewhat unexpected find was that “influence from abroad”, which is not necessarily felt directly in one’s everyday life either, was considered as influential by as many respondents as 15. This makes it only slightly less popular than popular culture, which was selected by 18 respondents as a factor that held at least some impact.

3.3.12 Question 6b

Do you believe that this is a good or a bad form of influence?

Table 18. (24 respondents)

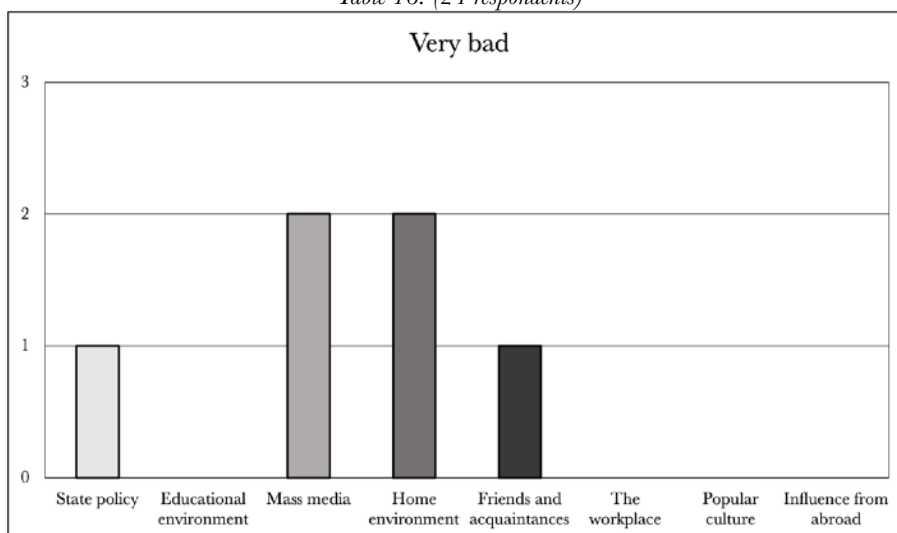


Table 19. (24 respondents)

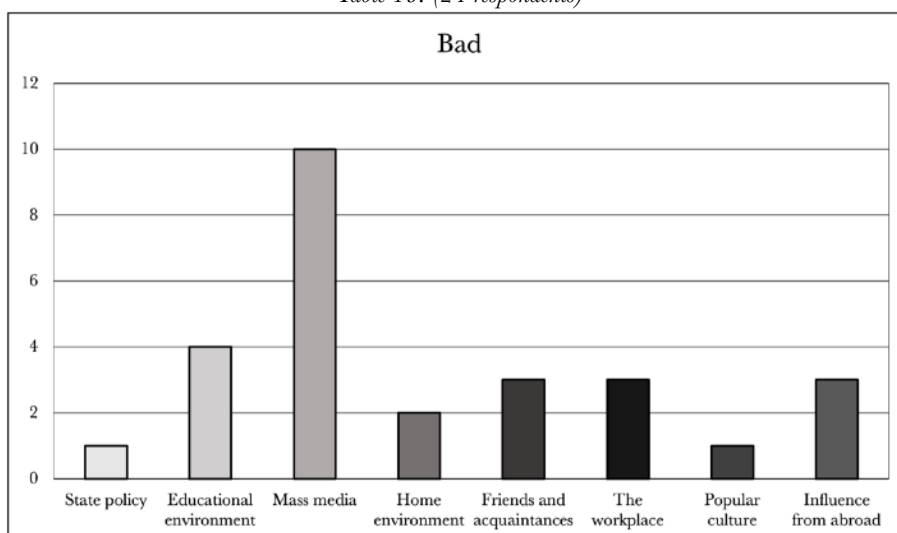


Table 20. (24 respondents)

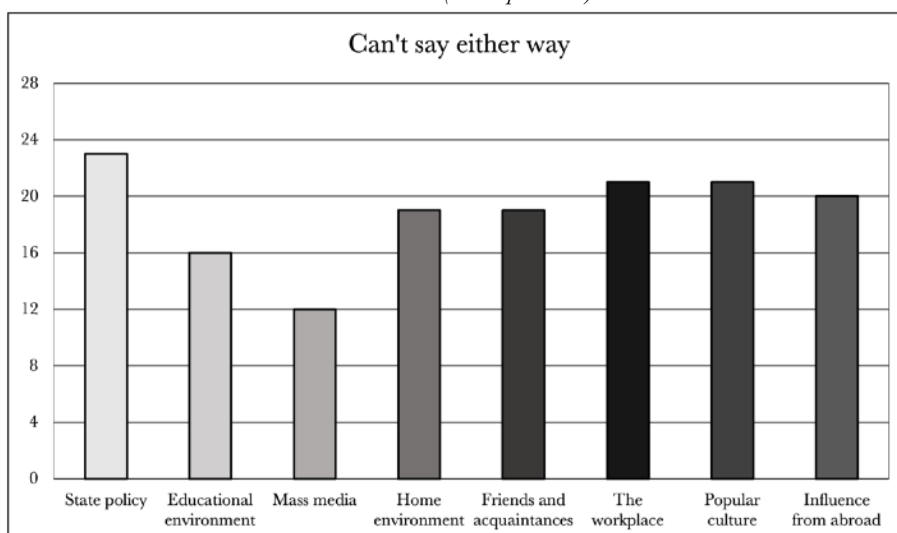
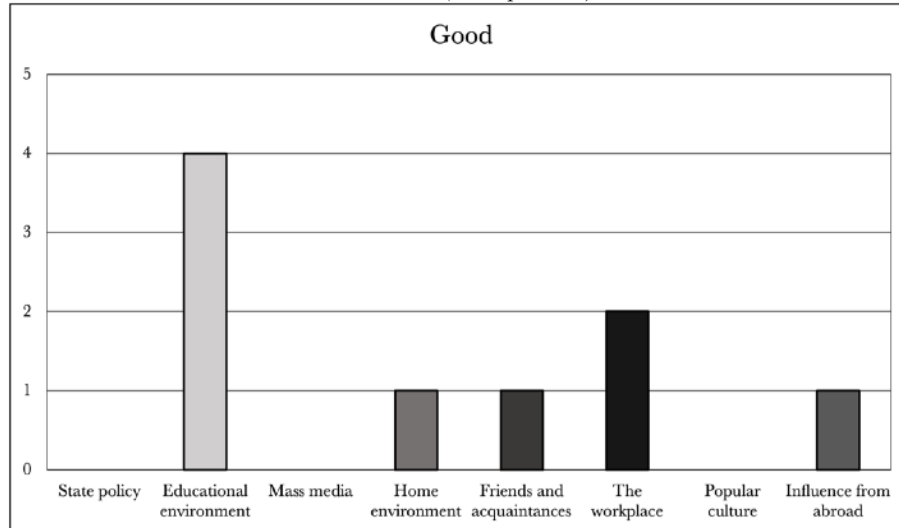


Table 21. (24 respondents)

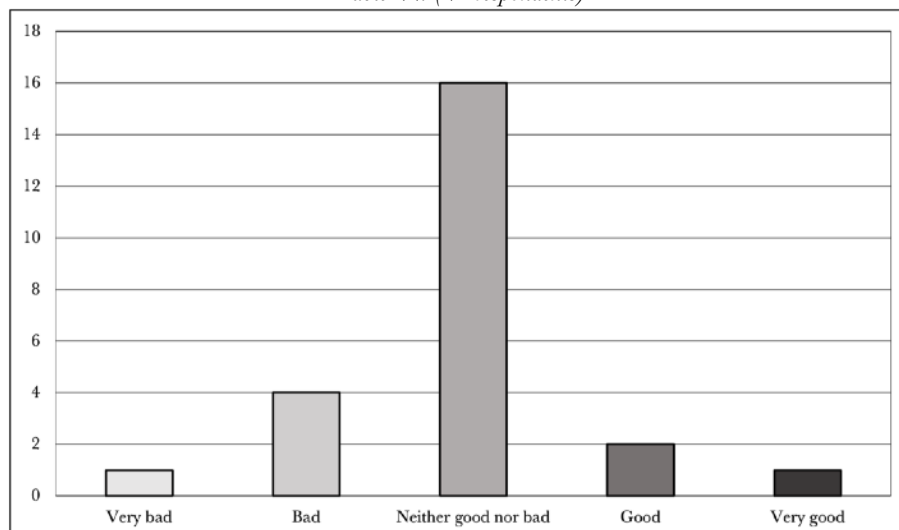


Following question 6a, respondents were asked to answer whether they viewed the influence of the same factors in a positive or a negative light. However, it appears that most people either do not hold any opinion regarding this or have a hard time assessing what type of influence they view as good or bad. For almost all of the listed factors, the overwhelmingly most popular reply was “can’t say either way”, with the amount of people choosing another option, typically ranging between zero and two. Nobody ever answered that they considered a certain type of influence to be of the “very good” kind. Therefore, it is difficult to detect any particular trends. The most notable exception proved to be the influence of the mass media, which ten respondents replied was “bad” and two respondents stated was “very bad”. Furthermore, in the case of the impact of the educational environment, the options “bad” and “good” were selected by four people each.

3.3.13 Question 7a

Do you think that the Japanese language is evolving in a bad or a good direction?

Table 22. (24 respondents)



The majority of the respondents, 16 people, answered that they considered that the Japanese language was evolving neither in a good nor in a bad direction. In a few cases, the people in this group chose this option simply because they did not know (see question 7b for more details). The number of participants who replied that they thought that the Japanese language was evolving in a bad direction was four, which was double the amount of people who considered that it was evolving in a good direction. The options “very bad” and “very good” were selected one time each.

3.3.13 Question 7b

Why do you think so?

Four of the people who answered that they did not consider the Japanese language to be evolving neither in a negative nor in a positive direction gave the reason that they did not think that language change could be judged according to such criteria; two respondents said that this was because linguistic changes inevitably occur, and that it therefore is impossible to judge whether it is good or bad. A few other participants answered that they either did not know or were undecided. One person said that the reason for her indecision was that “the language represents the era, so even now, I don’t think I can decide whether it’s good or bad”. Another respondent stated that she believed that as the consciousness of women and men changed, so would their language, and that changing dynamics in social relationships may eventually lead to usage of *keigo* and *uchi/soto* expressions becoming meaningless; however, she could not judge if this was positive or negative.

Looking at the answers as a whole, communication being impacted was brought up in multiple replies. Those who considered that it would be influenced negatively cited factors such as *gairaigo* and people using words incorrectly due to a lack of understanding of the meaning, leading to obstruction in communication. Conversely, individuals who believed communication would be affected in a rather positive way either chose to emphasize that the increase in the amount of vocabulary would facilitate communication, or that it would improve people’s abilities to express themselves when talking. In particular, one respondent asserted that although it saddened her that the “modesty” and the spirit of Japanese would most probably be lost over time, she also thought that it would become easier for people to assert their opinions and convey their thoughts in a straightforward manner, thus rendering communication more efficient and easier to understand. The link between language and identity was also made in one other reply; however, this particular answer was more negative,

as the participant stated that she believed that influence from foreign languages would cause its identity to grow weak. In a similar vein, other respondents stated that they were worried that “beautiful” Japanese would disappear over time.

3.3.14 Question 8a

Out of the aspects listed below, which ones do you consider to be good aspects of Japanese society?

Table 23. (24 respondents)

Options	Number of times selected
Politics	1
Educational standards	14
Gender gap	0
Generation gap	5
Regional differences	6
Social media / mass media	1
There are no good aspects	5
Other	6

When asked about which aspects they viewed as good parts of Japanese society, the most frequently chosen option was by far “educational standards”, as no other choice came close to being selected by over half of respondents. The second most common choice was “regional differences” with 6 respondents, followed closely behind by “the generation gap”. “Politics” and “social media / mass media” were only chosen one time each, while none of the respondents appeared to view the gap between men and women in a positive light. Five respondents reported that they did not think that there were any good aspects, although one person who chose this option also wrote in the “other” answer box that that she did it because she did not really understand the question.

Excluding the aforementioned participant, the “other” option was selected five times. A majority of answers provided dealt with culture in one shape or another; more specific answers included “cultural and social diversity co-existing” and “traditional culture and food culture”. One of the respondents also reported feeling satisfaction over the way the educational environment was managed. Yet another person chose this option because he thought “everything is average”.

3.3.15 Question 8b

Out of the aspects listed below, which ones do you consider to be bad aspects of Japanese society?

Table 24. (24 respondents)

Options	Number of times selected
Politics	15
Educational standards	8
Gender gap	17
Generation gap	8
Regional differences	14
Social media / mass media	16
There are no bad aspects	0
Other	4

In a similar fashion to the preceding question of this section, the respondents were tasked to choose from the same list of options and to select the aspects which they viewed negatively. In contrast to before, the number of people who ticked at least one of the choices turned out to be much higher in most cases. Furthermore, no one responded that they thought there were no problems whatsoever in Japanese society. With 17 respondents selecting this option, “the gender gap” turned out to be the aspect that the biggest number of respondents viewed negatively. “Social media / the mass media” garnered 16 votes, whereas “politics” received one vote less. Interestingly, the choice which turned out to be the second most popular option of the previous question, “regional differences”, was selected by as many people as 14. This raises the question if the people who selected the option for question 8a did so because they interpreted it differently from the individuals who answered that they viewed it negatively (for example, thinking of it in terms of cultural variety, as opposed to something like wealth differences). For that reason, it might have been interesting to add follow-up questions to questions 8a and 8b where the participants were asked to explain why they voted as they did. Another thing worth noting is that only eight people answered that they viewed the generational differences negatively, despite previous research about *kotoba no midare* often placing emphasis on intergenerational differences as one of the primary reasons for the amount of concern about the language falling into decay. However, whether this has to do with the age range of the sample size or not is unclear. Ultimately, the most popular choice from the previous question, “educational standards”, was one of the options that was selected

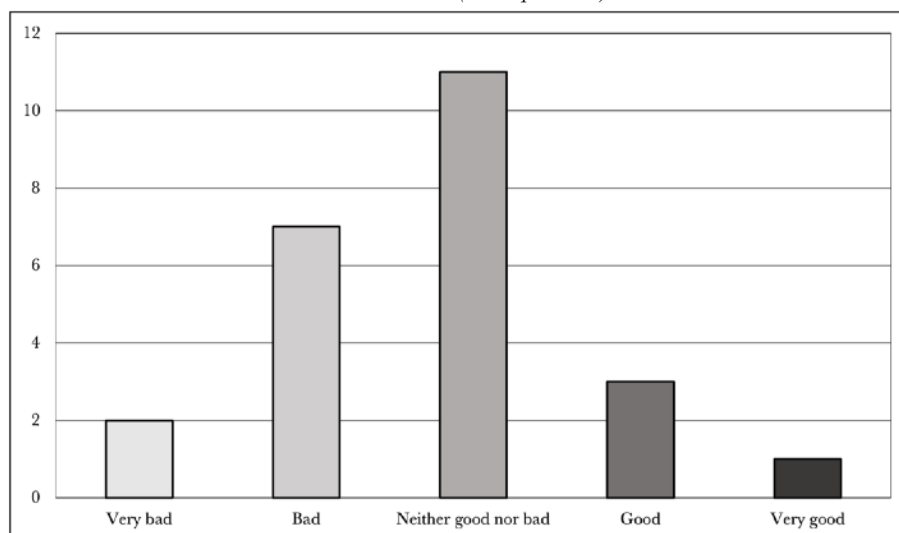
the least (with the exception of the “there are no bad aspects” and “other” choices).

Four participants chose the “other” option. Half of the answers concerned the educational environment. In both cases, this was not because the respondents were unsatisfied with educational standards. The first person said that she thought there was almost no trust between teachers and students. The other reply also concerned teacher-student dynamics and the participant stated that she disliked how some educators still believe that children should be taught to obey adults (at all costs, presumably). As for the other two replies, the first respondent answered “the invisible wealth gap”, whereas the second person expressed dissatisfaction over the countermeasures taken against the falling birth rate.

3.3.16 Question 9a

Do you consider that Japanese society is evolving in a good or a bad direction?

Table 25. (24 respondents)



Nearly half of the respondents answered that they did not think that Japanese society was evolving in a bad or in a good direction. As in the case of question 7a and judging from the replies in the follow-up question, a few people chose this because they did not know what to think. However, compared to question 7a and the number of people expressing negative sentiments over the evolution of the language, a greater number of people viewed the direction in which they thought Japan was proceeding as negative. Seven participants indicated that they thought it was going in a “bad” direction, whereas another two answered that they even believed it was going in a “very bad” direction. The remaining four respondents replied mostly that they considered that Japanese society was proceeding in a “good” direction: only one person answered that she saw the path that Japanese society was taking in a very positive light.

3.3.17 Question 9b

Why do you think so?

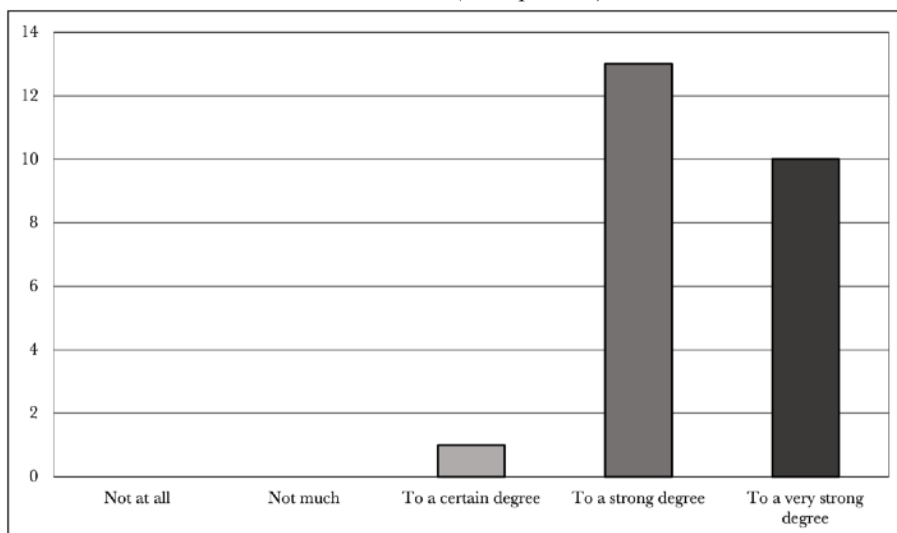
Many people stated that they were uncertain about the future, for one reason or another. The aspect that was mentioned the most often was politics, as half of the replies to this question dealt with politics in one way or the other. Nearly all of them alluded to it in a negative manner, as the respondents commonly expressed distrust in politicians and/or state policy. In the more detailed answers, a reason that showed up multiple times was that the respondents did not feel that politicians were capable of dealing with various problems. For example, one of the participants who answered that she thought Japanese society was going in a very bad direction wrote that “politicians have been incapable of implementing any effective measures against the falling birthrate ever since it became a problem 20 years ago, so it’s unlikely that they will be able to deal with other social problems that are currently occurring like [falling] domino bricks”. Other respondents expressed worry over indifference to politics, either in general or among young people. Another aspect that was mentioned in various replies was the topic of the collective as opposed to the individual. One person felt that group psychology made it difficult for people to voice new opinions. Conversely, a different respondent mourned the loss of the collective, saying that the increasing number of selfish people was causing the disappearance of mutual aid within communities, something which would sooner or later lead to society collapsing.

When it comes to the more positive answers, the notion of change for the better was evoked most of the time. Two respondents answered they thought society was going to become less close-minded over the years. In contrast to the replies which expressed discontent with young people, the participant who replied that she thought society was ultimately going to evolve in a “very good” direction stated that she hoped that society was going to improve once younger generations started taking charge of Japan. Finally, a number of people answered that they either were hopeful or that they wanted to believe that things would get better.

3.3.18 Question 10a

Do you believe that linguistic changes mirror various social changes?

Table 26. (24 respondents)

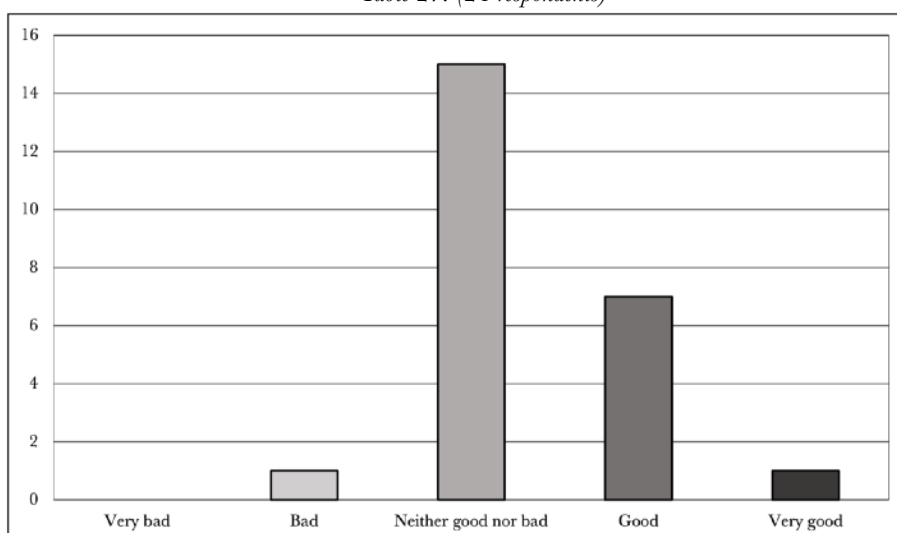


Slightly more than half of the respondents answered that they thought social changes were reflected in linguistic changes to a “strong degree”. The number of participants who answered that they thought they mirrored social changes to a “very strong degree” was also high, amounting to 10 people. Only one person answered “to a certain degree”.

3.3.19 Question 10b

Is that a good or a bad thing?

Table 27. (24 respondents)



After being asked about to which degree they thought language change mirrored social change, the participants were prompted to further specify whether they thought it was something good or something bad. As expected, a high number of people, 15, answered that

they viewed it as neither positive nor negative. The reason for this is in all likelihood that they consider it a necessity to assess this on a case-by-case basis, or that they do not think it can be measured subjectively. A significant proportion also answered that they viewed it as a good thing (7 respondents) or a very good thing (1 respondent). Only one person, who in the previous question replied that she thought linguistic changes mirrored social changes to a high degree, said that it was “bad”.

3.3.20 Question 10c (Optional)

If you have any examples of social changes which you believe are reflected in linguistic changes, please give them.

With only 13 replies in total, this question had the lowest answer rate by a large margin. This is probably because it was optional, and because some of the participants may not have had any examples on hand.

Around half of the answers mentioned something that had to do with communication being affected by technology. Notably, the internet, social media and the spread of smartphones were listed as something many participants considered had impacted the way people talk. Another aspect that was mentioned in multiple replies was the subject of internationalization. In particular, one response brought up interactions with non-native Japanese speakers (one can assume that the respondent thinks those have increased because of the aforementioned factor). This was not the only factor pertaining to interactions with others that was touched upon: other participants mentioned hierarchal relationships in the workplace and social divisions in general, or the fact that people hold increasingly diverse values. Ultimately, big events and happenings were also mentioned multiple times as something that the respondents thought was reflected in language change. In this case, two of the people who answered this specifically referenced the corona virus. Furthermore, one person provided a historical example of a social change that she considered was mirrored in the language, writing “because of the wives of those who became cabinet ministers during the *Meiji* restoration were *geisha*, some of the *geisha* language took root in the language used in Tokyo”.

4. Discussion

4.1. *Midare* and language change

In accordance with the opinion poll results that were discussed in section 2.3, the data from the questionnaire indicate that the majority of respondents view language change as *midare* to at least some extent. In a great number of cases, they even consider it as such to a strong degree or to a degree where they find it outright dismaying. When comparing the results from question 1 and question 2a, we find that there is a rather big overlap in the results, since nearly all respondents who voiced concern about *kotoba no midare* also answered that they cared about their own and other people's language usage. Thus, there appears to be a firm correlation between minding language and worrying about the alleged decay of Japanese. Moreover, six of those who answered that they did not think there were any good languages changes were people who that they considered that the language was in a state of decay "to a high degree" or "to a very high degree". As one would expect, concern about *midare* also entails a higher likelihood of negative feelings towards language change in general.

Looking at what specific linguistic aspects the respondents considered as examples of *midare*, the results confirm the dominance of *ranuki kotoba* and *keigo*; young people's language was not quite as high up on the list, but still selected by a good number of people. More importantly, the results of question 2b further confirm the observations which have been made in the past by researchers like Gottlieb (2011) and Masuda (2012): although a few answers mentioned aspects that pertained to the written language, the overwhelming majority of replies concerned the spoken language, which indicates that it is indeed the latter that is the primary source of concern for most people. That being said, as previously mentioned, there is a possibility that some respondents might have forgotten to list certain aspects due to the small selection of provided default choices.

Notwithstanding the high proportion of participants viewing some linguistic aspects of Japanese as being *midarete iru*, the data of question 5a shows that such concern does not entail the rejection of the notion of language change being natural, as all respondents agreed with this assertion. Furthermore, the results of question 3a also illustrate that most people do not hold all linguistic changes to be negative. In particular, if someone considers that a certain language change has made communication easier and broadened their possibilities to express themselves, they will also view it in a positive light.

4.2. Language change and social change

Similarly to how a large number of participants viewed language changes as *midare* to at least a certain extent, there is high agreement with the idea that there is a connection between language change and social change. Looking at the results from question 5b concerning what factors people considered had an influence on language change, a significant amount of replies named cultural and social changes, or some variant thereof, as something that they believed had an impact on language. Questions 10a through 10c further confirm this, as nearly all respondents answered that they thought linguistic changes mirror various social changes to a strong or very strong degree. Furthermore, a notable number of replies to questions 5b and 10c also named factors pertaining to the information society as examples of elements which they considered influenced language change and were examples of social changes which were mirrored in linguistic changes. In part, their image confirms the prediction made in Bunkachō (1993) that language changes induced by the progress of information society would come to be influential, although perhaps not in the exact manner that they predicted (see section 4.3 for more details)

One area where it is more difficult to come to any firm conclusions concerns questions 6a and 6b. As alluded to by Carroll (2001), many respondents considered that factors that are highly interlinked with social relationships influenced people's language usage. However, it also often appeared difficult for them to say whether a certain factor was a good or a bad form of influence, regardless of their feelings concerning certain linguistic changes and the way they view its link to social aspects. One thing worth noting is that most respondents did not appear to think that language policy greatly impacted people's language usage, despite the statements made in Bunkachō (1996; 2000) about the state playing an important role in regulating the language environment.

When asked about how they felt about the evolution of the Japanese language in questions 7a and 7b, it was also not uncommon for the respondents to state a reason involving the way communication and social relationships would be impacted when explaining why they voted as they did. This further confirms the observations made by researchers such as Carroll (2001). However, some people also stated that they did not consider that the evolution of a language could be measured as being good or bad, irrespective of their feelings regarding *kotoba no midare* and social changes.

4.3. *Midare* and social change

So far, the survey results have indicated that the participants associate *midare* with language change, as well as consider language change and social change to be interlinked, to a high degree. However, when it comes to the way they view the relationship between *midare* and social change, it is not quite as clear. Nevertheless, there are indications that negative sentiments about the state of society translate into concern about *kotoba no midare* to a certain extent.

Comparing the results from questions 2a and 7a, we can see that although many people consider that to a certain degree, the language is in a state of decay, there is also a high amount of uncertainty regarding the direction that this is progressing in. Even so, the participants who answered that the language was in a state of decay to a great or to a very great extent turned out to be more pessimistic about the future prospects of the Japanese language; everybody who stated that it was evolving in a bad or a very bad direction belonged to one of the aforementioned categories. When contrasting the data from those two questions to the results from question 9a, it turns out that people overall have a more negative outlook on the future of Japanese society than on the evolution of their mother tongue. When further examining the data in detail, one can see that the respondents who indicated that the language was in a state of decay to a great extent and would develop in a bad direction were slightly more negative on average. However, there was also a wider distribution of answers in the group of people who did not view it as such or only as somewhat *midarete iru*. Therefore, while the claims put forth by researchers such as Lewin (1979), Carroll (2001) and Gottlieb (2001), about how worries about social change translate into concern about the state of the language, appear to hold at least a partial truth, this is probably only one of multiple important factors.

Looking more specifically at what social aspects people linked to *midare*, the replies from questions 5b, 6a/b and 8b indicate that a large number of the respondents view influence from the mass media and social media to not only be wide, but also negative: both when it comes to their effects on language usage and their effects on society. This stands in contrast to the ambitions laid out in Bunkachō (1993) that the government should ensure that linguistic role models are promoted via the media. Conversely, it confirms in part what was stated about the information society greatly influencing communication and social relationships.

Two aspects where the results from the study go against the hypotheses laid out in previous research have to do with the claim that people consider that educational standards

are being undermined, as well as with their views on intergenerational differences. Even if some of the participants expressed dissatisfaction with educational standards, most of them indicated that they were overall satisfied with them, in response to questions 8a and 8b, including those who previously reported feeling a high degree of concern about *kotoba no midare* and language change. In addition to this, the majority of the participants replied to question 4a that they thought there was a big intergenerational gap in the way people speak. Nevertheless, contrary to what was alluded to in Inoue (2008), this does not seem to necessarily translate into worries about the generational gap. The reason for this is that the number of people who checked that option when answering question 8b was not particularly big and did not differ much from the number who chose it when replying to question 8a.

4.4. Age

Based on the sample size alone, it is somewhat difficult to spot any general trends regarding the way people in different age groups consider language change and its connection to social change. Notwithstanding this, a few tendencies can be detected.

Taking a closer look at the results from questions 3b, 4b and 7b, it turns out that the younger age groups hold more positive attitudes towards foreign loanwords and influence from foreign language on Japanese overall. On the other hand, the respondents in the 41–49 age group who touched on the subject of loanwords in their replies were nearly always negative. The reason for these negative attitudes mostly pertained to the person having trouble understanding them or that they had an unfavorable impact on communication. This confirms the stereotypes described in Peng (2010) regarding young people having a higher predilection for *gairaigo*. Curiously enough, in the case of question 4b, the people who replied that they viewed shortened forms and abbreviations positively both belonged to the 54–64 age group; Peng however describes the aforementioned aspects as also being commonly characterized as young people’s speech (and as something that they use too much). However, because of the small sample size of this age group, it is difficult to measure whether it is a matter of mere coincidence or part of a wider trend.

On top of the aforementioned finding, two more unexpected discoveries were made. The first one was that even the majority of respondents in the younger age groups indicated when answering question 5b that they thought their way of speaking differed more from that of individuals younger than them (as opposed to older people). Secondly, the people who voiced worries about the “beauty” of Japanese being lost over time in response to

question 8b both belonged to the 21–29 age group; paradoxically, the exact same young people who are commonly blamed for unconsciously contributing to the destruction of beautiful Japanese.

5. Conclusion

Up until this point, the majority of studies conducted on *kotoba no midare* have primarily concerned themselves with *what* linguistic aspects Japanese people regard as *midare*. The question of *why* they hold certain attitudes has primarily only been alluded to, rather than put into focus. The intention of this thesis was to bring the commonly neglected question of *why* into the spotlight, through examining Japanese native speakers' attitudes regarding *kotoba no midare* and language changes as a whole, as well as their views on the relationship between the aforementioned subjects and social changes.

In summary, the results from the questionnaire reveal is that the respondents overall associate *kotoba no midare* with linguistic changes to a high degree, and that many of them feel a certain amount of concern over the state of the language. At the same time, the data also indicates that this does not automatically translate into aversion to all types of linguistic changes or resistance to the notion of language change in itself. Moreover, it is also obvious that they acknowledge the link between language change and social change to a great extent. Many of the answers describing the participants' views on how language influences other areas and is in turn influenced by them pertain specifically to social factors and social relationships. This appears to hold true both in the cases where they consider that a linguistic aspect has a negative impact on communication, as well as the cases where they view it in a positive light. What is not quite as clear is to which extent the participants view *midare* as linked to social change. Nevertheless, the results indicate that at least a certain degree of association between the two of them seems to be present in the minds of the respondents. Although worries about social changes do not seem to be the only factor that influences to what extent an individual is concerned about *midare*, the data suggests that it is at least one of the reasons why this widespread concern exists.

As discussed previously, the fact that the total number of participants is rather small, in combination with the disproportionate amounts of respondents in certain sample subgroups, means that the survey cannot be used to make any broader generalizations about the way native Japanese speakers consider these issues. Thus, if any future research concerning this topic were to be pursued, it would be ideal to conduct a study involving a greater number of people. Another option could be to ask the participants to elaborate more in detail concerning certain aspects that were touched upon rather briefly; for example, it might be interesting to ask for more in-depth answers concerning the respondents' views on intergenerational differences when it comes to the way people speak.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire (In Japanese)

言葉の乱れ・言葉遣いを巡るアンケート

私、リヴ・ダンジューは、ルンド大学の日本語学科の学生です。この調査は、言葉の乱れ・言葉遣いを巡る卒業論文を執筆する目的で行われます。

この調査は選択肢・筆答が用いられるもので、それに、15分程度かかります。

調査で得られた個人情報は匿名化され、研究のためのみに使用されます。

よろしくお願いいたします。

1a. 性別 *

- 女性
- 男性

1b. 年齢 [数字] *

1c. 最終学歴 *

- 中卒
- 高卒
- 大学・大学院卒
- 専門学校卒

1d. 出身地 [都道府県と区市町村] *

パート 1

2. 普段、自分と他の人の言葉遣いが気になりますか。*

全然気にならない 1 2 3 4 5 非常に気になる

パート 2

3a. 日々の生活の中で接する人やメディアで見る人の言葉遣いは、乱れていると感じることがありますか。*

全然そう感じない 1 2 3 4 5 非常に感じる

3b. 特に何が乱れていると感じますか。*

「その他」と答えた人：一つ以上書いてもいいです。

- ら抜き言葉
- 敬語
- 若者言葉
- 乱れているところはない
- その他: _____

パート3

4a. 言葉の変化の中には良い変化がありますか。*

- はい
- いいえ

4b. 「はい」と答えたら、例を挙げてください。[例えば、敬語の使い方、外来語の増加]

パート4

5a. 話し方は世代によって著しい差があると感じますか。*

全然そう感じない 1 2 3 4 5 非常にそう感じる

5b. 345と答えた人：それは自分よりも年上に対してですか、年下に対してですか。

- 年上
- 年下

パート5

6a. 「言葉が時代によって変化するのは当然だ。」*

全く同意しない 1 2 3 4 5 全く同意する

6b. 言葉の変化には何が作用していると思いますか。*

パート6

7a. 次の要因が言葉遣いに与える影響はどの程度だと思いますか。*

国の政策	全然 1	あまり 2	どちらとも言えない 3	少し 4	非常に 5
教育環境	全然 1	あまり 2	どちらとも言えない 3	少し 4	非常に 5
マスコミ	全然 1	あまり 2	どちらとも言えない 3	少し 4	非常に 5
家庭環境	全然 1	あまり 2	どちらとも言えない 3	少し 4	非常に 5
友人・知人	全然 1	あまり 2	どちらとも言えない 3	少し 4	非常に 5
職業	全然 1	あまり 2	どちらとも言えない 3	少し 4	非常に 5
ポップカルチャー	全然 1	あまり 2	どちらとも言えない 3	少し 4	非常に 5
外国からの影響	全然 1	あまり 2	どちらとも言えない 3	少し 4	非常に 5

7b. それらは良い影響だと思いますか。悪い影響だと思いますか。*

国の政策	とても悪い 1	悪い 2	どちらとも言えない 3	良い 4	とても良い 5
教育環境	とても悪い 1	悪い 2	どちらとも言えない 3	良い 4	とても良い 5
マスコミ	とても悪い 1	悪い 2	どちらとも言えない 3	良い 4	とても良い 5
家庭環境	とても悪い 1	悪い 2	どちらとも言えない 3	良い 4	とても良い 5
友人・知人	とても悪い 1	悪い 2	どちらとも言えない 3	良い 4	とても良い 5
職業	とても悪い 1	悪い 2	どちらとも言えない 3	良い 4	とても良い 5
ポップカルチャー	とても悪い 1	悪い 2	どちらとも言えない 3	良い 4	とても良い 5
外国からの影響	とても悪い 1	悪い 2	どちらとも言えない 3	良い 4	とても良い 5

パート7

8a. 日本語はこれから先より良く発展すると思いますか、それとも悪くなると思いますか。*

とても悪くなる 1 2 3 4 5 とてもよくなる

8b. なぜそう思いますか。*

パート8

9a. 以下の項目は、現在の日本社会の良い点だと思いますか。他にもなにか良いと思う点があったら書いてください。*

- 政治
- 教育水準
- ジェンダーギャップ
- 世代ギャップ
- 地域差
- SNS・マスメディア
- 良い点は何もない
- その他: _____

9b. 以下の項目は、現在の日本社会の問題点だと思いますか。他にもなにか問題と思う点があったら書いてください。*

- 政治
- 教育水準
- ジェンダーギャップ
- 世代ギャップ
- 地域差
- SNS・マスメディア
- 問題点は何もない
- その他: _____

パート9

10a. これから日本社会が進むのはどちらの方向だと思いますか。*

とても悪い方向へ進む 1 2 3 4 5 とても良い方向へ進む

10b. なぜそう思いますか。*

パート10

11a. 言葉の変化は世の中の様々な変化を反映していると思いますか。*

全くそう思わない 1 2 3 4 5 強くそう思う

11b. それは良いことですか、悪いことですか。*

とても悪い 1 2 3 4 5 とても良い

11c. 言葉の変化に反映されていると思う社会的変化の例があったら挙げてください。

おわりに

ご協力ありがとうございました

Appendix B: Questionnaire answers (In Japanese)

Tidstämpel	1a. 性別	1b. 年齢 [数字]	1c. 最終学歴	1d. 出身地 [都道府県と区市町村]	2. 普段、自分と他の人の言葉違いが気になりますか。	3a. 日々の生活の中で接する人やメディアで見る人の言葉違いは、乱れていると感じることがありますか。
2021/04/24 1:42:06 em EET	女性	41	大学・大学院卒	1 東京都調布市	4	3
2021/04/24 12:21:41 em EET	女性	48	大学・大学院卒	1 東京都	4	3
2021/04/25 2:22:31 fm EET	女性	54	大学・大学院卒	4 岡山	3	3
2021/04/23 12:25:46 fm EET	女性	35	大学・大学院卒	2 京都府京都市	3	3
2021/04/25 7:57:06 fm EET	女性	60	大学・大学院卒	1 東京	3	3
2021/04/26 12:28:58 fm EET	男性	55	大学・大学院卒	1 大阪府和泉市	2	3
2021/04/23 10:01:22 em EET	女性	46	大学・大学院卒	1 千葉県	1	4
2021/05/05 9:29:02 fm EET	女性	22	高卒	2 兵庫県明石市	5	5
2021/04/25 4:17:54 fm EET	女性	56	大学・大学院卒	1 福岡	3	4
2021/04/24 12:40:02 fm EET	女性	29	大学・大学院卒	1 大阪	4	2
2021/04/27 1:50:56 em EET	女性	49	大学・大学院卒	2 京都府京都市	4	3
2021/04/24 11:23:39 em EET	女性	43	大学・大学院卒	5 福島県田村郡小野町	4	4
2021/04/24 4:16:28 em EET	女性	48	大学・大学院卒	1 東京	4	4
2021/04/25 5:17:23 em EET	女性	21	大学・大学院卒	1 東京都港区	4	3
2021/04/24 4:51:45 em EET	女性	42	大学・大学院卒	1 東京都	5	5
2021/04/23 10:45:15 em EET	女性	43	大学・大学院卒	1 福岡県糟屋郡宇美町	3	5
2021/04/22 9:45:13 em EET	男性	35	大学・大学院卒	1 大阪府堺市	1	1
2021/04/27 2:20:26 em EET	女性	42	大学・大学院卒	1 東京都目黒区	5	4
2021/05/03 5:16:54 fm EET	男性	23	大学・大学院卒	3 群馬県	4	4
2021/04/25 5:36:14 fm EET	女性	45	大学・大学院卒	1 東京都	3	4
2021/04/24 12:54:15 em EET	男性	49	大学・大学院卒	1 埼玉県	4	5
2021/04/23 9:39:27 em EET	女性	39	大学・大学院卒	1 大阪府大阪市	3	4
2021/04/28 3:32:12 fm EET	女性	48	大学・大学院卒	1 東京都中野区	4	3
2021/04/30 3:44:18 em EET	女性	42	大学・大学院卒	2 兵庫県加古川市	4	3

3b. 特に何が乱れていると感じますか。	4a. 言葉の変化の中には良い変化がありますか。
敬語;過剰な敬語、カタカナ語の氾濫(特にコロナ以降)	はい
ら抜き言葉	はい
敬語	はい
ら抜き言葉;敬語;若者言葉	はい
過剰な「させていただきます」(「いたします」と言えばいいと思う)「～になる」	はい
敬語	はい
海外に住んでいるので言葉全体が変になってきている	いいえ
ら抜き言葉;敬語;お店の販売員の丁寧語	はい
敬語も丁寧語も、そもそも認識が違って、TPOに合わせた言葉選びができていないように思う。	はい
ら抜き言葉	はい
ネット言葉 コンビニ丁寧語	はい
ら抜き言葉;敬語	いいえ
敬語	はい
若者言葉	はい
ら抜き言葉;敬語	はい
若者言葉;まず! うま! など形容詞のい を言わない。何にでも やばい という。やばいの本来の意味と違う使い方を。関西人でもないのに関西弁を使う。	いいえ
乱れているところはない	いいえ
ら抜き言葉;若者言葉	はい
ら抜き言葉;敬語	いいえ
敬語;若者言葉;日本人の日本語の発音	はい
ら抜き言葉;敬語;若者言葉	いいえ
ら抜き言葉;若者言葉;特に報道番組などでも横文字を用いて 万人が理解しにくい言葉を使って居ることが多くなったように思う。	いいえ
ら抜き言葉	はい
若者言葉	いいえ

4b. 「はい」と答えたら、例を挙げてください。【例えば、敬語の使い方、外来語の増加】	5a. 話し方は世代によって著しい差があると感じますか。	5b. 345と答えた人：それは自分よりも年上に対してですか、年下に対してですか。	6a. 「言葉が時代によって変化するのは当然だ。」
時代にそくして新しい言葉がうみだされること。特に若者文化から生まれる言葉はクリエイティブだと思います。了解をりよ、とか。		4 年下	5
時代にそくした言葉の増加		4 年下	4
簡略化、短縮化された言葉などは、伝わりやすく、効率的だと思います。時と場合によりますか。		5 年下	5
外来語やIT用語など時代に応じた言葉の増加		4 年下	4
「ら抜き」によって受身形と可能形の判別がしやすくなる		4	5
短縮語による簡略化		5 年下	5
		2	5
若者言葉で共感できるものもある		5 年下	5
いますくは、思いいかばないが、たとえば、キュンですとか、いい表現だと思う。		1	5
時代や社会の変化が言葉に反映される。		4 年上	5
敬語を緩やかにして社会の風通しが良くなる。変化には原因があり それは必然である。言葉はツールだからニーズに合わなくてはいけない。		3	5
		5 年下	4
英語の言葉を使っても違和感が減ってきた		5 年上	5
外来語の増加		4 年下	4
時代とともに、表現をあらわすことばが増えていくこと。		3 年上	5
		5 年下	5
		4 年上	5
親近感や使いやすさ		4 年上	5
		3 年下	4
相殺、重複などの読み方の変化		4 年下	5
		4 年下	4
		4 年下	4
言葉は変わっていくものだから		4 年上	5
		5 年下	5

6b. 言葉の変化には何が作用していると思いますか。	7a. 次の要因が言葉通いにも与える影響はどの程度だと思いますか【国の政策】	7a. 次の要因が言葉通いにも与える影響はどの程度だと思いますか【教育環境】	7a. 次の要因が言葉通いにも与える影響はどの程度だと思いますか【マスコミ】
デジタル化や使う道具の変化など取り巻く環境の変化。メディアで使われる言葉、国の基準の変化など	非常に	非常に	非常に
メディア。新聞→ラジオ→TV→SNSなど	少し	非常に	非常に
人間関係、家庭環境、学校などの教育方針、上下関係社会	どちらも言えない	少し	少し
価値観の多様化や時代に応じた新しい言葉の増加など。	どちらも言えない	非常に	少し
偶然 テレビやインターネット（SNSなど）	あまり	少し	非常に
文化の変化 教育の変化 政治背景	少し	非常に	非常に
環境	全然	少し	あまり
社会情勢や流行	全然	少し	少し
社会背景と環境	少し	少し	非常に
若い人たちのノリと創造力、メディア	少し	少し	少し
言葉を使って何をするか(伝達か議論かコミュニケーションか情報収集か)	少し	あまり	あまり
その時の文化や出来事	あまり	少し	非常に
N/a	どちらも言えない	非常に	少し
SNSの利用、モノの進化	あまり	どちらも言えない	少し
メディア、その時代の大量の価値観	少し	非常に	非常に
メディア、外来語	全然	どちらも言えない	非常に
文化	全然	少し	非常に
外国や外国語との距離感や、他者との関わり方	少し	非常に	非常に
時代の変化、メディア	どちらも言えない	非常に	非常に
使う人の人数の多さ	あまり	全然	全然
文化、生活スタイル	あまり	非常に	少し
文明の利器によりたくさんの情報を得ることができるようになった為。	どちらも言えない	少し	どちらも言えない
文化の変化	全然	非常に	非常に
その人が受け取る情報量。特にSNSなどで、多くの人の様々な言葉通いにも影響を受ける機会が増えているからだと思う。	どちらも言えない	非常に	非常に

7a. 次の要因が言葉通いにも与える影響はどの程度だと思いますか【家庭環境】	7a. 次の要因が言葉通いにも与える影響はどの程度だと思いますか【友人・知人】	7a. 次の要因が言葉通いにも与える影響はどの程度だと思いますか【職業】	7a. 次の要因が言葉通いにも与える影響はどの程度だと思いますか【ポップカルチャー】	7a. 次の要因が言葉通いにも与える影響はどの程度だと思いますか【外国からの影響】
非常に	非常に	非常に	少し	少し
非常に	非常に	非常に	少し	少し
少し	少し	少し	少し	少し
非常に	非常に	少し	少し	非常に
どちらも言えない	非常に	非常に	非常に	少し
非常に	少し	少し	少し	どちらも言えない
少し	少し	あまり	どちらも言えない	あまり
少し	少し	少し	少し	少し
少し	非常に	非常に	非常に	少し
少し	非常に	少し	少し	あまり
全然	全然	全然	あまり	あまり
少し	非常に	非常に	少し	少し
非常に	非常に	非常に	非常に	非常に
あまり	少し	少し	少し	少し
非常に	非常に	非常に	非常に	非常に
少し	非常に	少し	少し	少し
非常に	非常に	全然	少し	少し
非常に	少し	あまり	どちらも言えない	少し
非常に	少し	少し	非常に	どちらも言えない
全然	全然	あまり	あまり	あまり
非常に	非常に	少し	非常に	少し
少し	少し	少し	どちらも言えない	どちらも言えない
少し	少し	少し	非常に	あまり
非常に	非常に	どちらも言えない	非常に	どちらも言えない

9b. 以下の項目は、現在の日本社会の問題点だと思いますか。他にもなにか問題と思う点があったら書いてください。	10a. これから日本社会が進むのはどちらの方向だと思いますか。
政治;教育水準;ジェンダーギャップ;世代ギャップ;地域差;SNS・マスメディア	1
ジェンダーギャップ	4
ジェンダーギャップ	4
政治;教育水準;ジェンダーギャップ;世代ギャップ;地域差;SNS・マスメディア	2
政治;ジェンダーギャップ;SNS・マスメディア;教育水準（識字率など）は悪くないが、今でも子供を大人に従わせることがいい教育だと思っている教育者がいるのが良くない	3
政治;教育水準;地域差;SNS・マスメディア	3
ジェンダーギャップ;SNS・マスメディア	3
政治;教育水準;ジェンダーギャップ;世代ギャップ;地域差;SNS・マスメディア	5
政治;教育水準;ジェンダーギャップ;世代ギャップ;SNS・マスメディア	2
政治;ジェンダーギャップ;世代ギャップ;地域差	1
政治;ジェンダーギャップ;SNS・マスメディア;コミュニケーション	4
政治;ジェンダーギャップ;世代ギャップ;地域差;SNS・マスメディア;教育環境。先生と学生の間の信頼がほとんどない。	2
教育水準	2
ジェンダーギャップ;世代ギャップ;地域差;SNS・マスメディア	3
政治;ジェンダーギャップ;世代ギャップ;地域差;SNS・マスメディア	3
政治;教育水準;ジェンダーギャップ;地域差;SNS・マスメディア	2
地域差	3
政治;ジェンダーギャップ;SNS・マスメディア	2
政治;教育水準;ジェンダーギャップ;地域差	2
地域差	3
政治;地域差;SNS・マスメディア	3
ジェンダーギャップ;地域差;少子化対策	3
SNS・マスメディア	3
政治;SNS・マスメディア;見えない貧富の差	3

10b. なぜそう思いますか。	11a. 言葉の変化は世の中の様々な変化を反映していると思いますが。	11b. それは良いことですか、悪いことですか。
あまりにも政治がひどいのに無関心な人が多いので。主催者教育も不十分で、民主主義の危機。	5	3
希望をこめて。	4	4
あらゆる面で多様化し、異国根性が薄れていくと思います。	4	4
現在、未来の日本の政治行政に希望が持てない。	4	3
国外にいますので確信がありませんが、政治家がとても簡単な質問に答え(られ)ない（例えば「なぜオリンピックをしなければいけないのか」）のは言葉に対する信頼や責任感がないからだと思います。この状況を国民が許せば社会はとも悪くなるでしょう。	4	3
自分の意識次第	4	3
なんとなく	4	3
私たちのような若者世代が日本を担うようになる時代は、今よりも良い変化があるはずだと期待したい	5	3
いるいるな点でかなり問題を抱えているから	5	4
少子化が問題となって20年間なにも有効な対策をしてこなかった政治家と実業家が、今ドミノ倒しのように起こっている他の社会問題に対応できるとは思えない。	5	4
人口が減り 風通しが良くなる 前例が適用しなくなり 考えるえざるを得なくなるから	5	3
自分本人の位が増加していること、他人に迷惑をかけないように生きなければならないというのは、社会としての機能が失われつつあり、すでに崩壊が始まっていると思うから。地域社会や近所の中で互いに助け合う「相互扶助」というものがなくなりつつある。また、政治や教育でも信頼が損なわれている、あるいは誰も信用できないということや、今の10代が希望や夢を持ってない状況に危機感を感じるから。	4	2
政策がないから	3	4
どちらとも言えなかったため	4	4
政策を観ていると、期待をしたい気もする一方、期待をかけても変わらないような気もするので。	5	3
若者が選挙に行かないから、年寄りのための政治になっている	5	5
未来のことはわからないから。	4	3
グループ心理が強く、自然発生的に新しい発言や意見が生まれにくい。	4	3
政治に期待できないから	4	3
良くも悪くも政治の動きが鈍い	4	4
判断できない	5	3
どのような政策が為されるかによるのでどちらとも言えない	4	3
わからない	5	3
正真なところ、どうなるかわからない。でも良い方向へ行く潜在能力はあると思う。	5	3

11c. 言葉の変化に反映されていると思う社会的変化の例があったら挙げてください。
コロナウイルスの流行
コロナ、SNSの発展、携帯電話スマホの普及
国際化、価値観の多様化
明治維新で関係になった人の妻たちが芸者だったため、芸者言葉の一部が東京の言葉として定着したこと
会社での先輩後輩の関係性
若者言葉など
コミュニケーションの種類(手紙でなくsms、会わずに電話 電話せずにメール メールも打たず絵文字) 国際化(日本語を外国語として使う人との交流) 社会の分断(同じバックグラウンド、趣味趣向の人とだけ付き合っている)
インターネットとスマートフォンの所有率
グローバル化
文字で会話をする機会が増えたために絵文字で会話するようになった
トイレの表示
メディアで発せられる言葉遣い。
インターネットの普及。地震、事件などの大きな出来事。