

japantoday

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Japan Today's Takanori Kobayashi dropped into Shibuya to ask:

What do you think of the state of the Japanese language?

Currently, books about the Japanese language are selling well with several books on the subject prominently displayed at major bookstores. It is focusing attention on the role of Japan's native tongue.



"Some adults seem to dislike the way our generation uses Japanese, but they are just talking nonsense. I've never had difficulty to communicate with my friends before."

- Jun Teraoka, 16



"When I hear high school or university students talk, it makes me wonder about our language. They often put "cho" (very) or "maji" (really) in front of each sentence. Also, there are too many English expressions coined in Japanese. When I went abroad, I used one of those words because I believed that was English, but in fact it was not. Probably, the more young people use strange Japanese, the more their parents are influenced by it. Unfortunately, such strange Japanese expressions have begun to be recognized as standard words."

- Akihiro Shigematsu, 49



"I'm only 22 but I get irritated when kids talk to me without using an honorific or term of respect. Also, recently, many people shorten words. That's ridiculous. On the other hand, I don't care about the increasing use of English words because some ideas are hard to express in Japanese."

- Takaaki Kamei, 22



"I don't think there's a problem. It's inevitable for languages to change with the times. And since my major at university is English literature, I don't feel odd with the flood of loan words."

- Mai Shimizu, 18



"Actually, my own use of Japanese may not be correct. I often use "uzai" (unpleasant) and "kakkeh" (cool) instead of saying the correct forms "uttoshii" and "kakkoi." I know these changed expressions are not very nice to hear, but I cannot stop using them. It's a sign of the times."

- Chiharu Hayasaka, 19

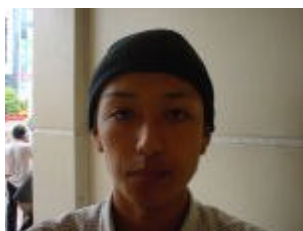
"It may be due to my age, but the Japanese language that young people use is very different from what I've been using. It's not just different words and phrases but also accents differ as well. For instance, they unnecessarily tend to



stress the ending of a word. Sometimes, I cannot understand what young Japanese are saying."
- Tohru Adachi, 63



"I'm from Osaka, but from what I can gather on my business trips to Tokyo, high school students here, especially girls, often use strange phrases. They tend to abbreviate any words."
- Akira Nishiyama, 28



"I have to admit young people including me don't use honorific words and polite expressions anymore when talking to seniors or superiors such as a teacher. I know my speaking Japanese is not good and I should correct it. However, I'm already too accustomed to speaking the way I do, so it's quite hard to fix it."
- Yuhhei Yahagi, 19

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