

# Why is Toru Hashimoto Called ‘a Japanese version of Trump’ or ‘Hitler’? A Linguistic Examination of Hashimoto’s Attack on His Opponents

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## **Abstract**

The former Osaka Mayor Toru Hashimoto is the focus of much public attention in Japan. He is a polarizing figure who is both liked and disliked in equal measures, and his political character, including his argumentative approach, has been widely discussed by the Japanese and international media, as well as within academic research. For example, the *Japan Times* labelled his speech style as ‘a Japanese version of Donald Trump and the former Tokyo mayor, Shintaro Ishihara, said Hashimoto’s speech is like ‘Hitler’s’. This study examines the differences between Hashimoto’s rhetoric and that of other Japanese politicians. Of the various tactics involved in the argumentative strategy of Hashimoto, this study specifically focuses on his attacking of opponents, which is one of the common and important tactics used in political debate. This study analyses the three linguistic approaches used in political debate: the policies or character of the target; the evaluative meanings of attack, and negotiation used to reduce the assertiveness of attack. The data were drawn from a televised political debate, in which Hashimoto was required to debate with three opponents who opposed his points of view. This study demonstrates that the target and the evaluative meanings behind Hashimoto’s attacks were not remarkably different from the other politicians. However, Hashimoto did not use negotiation and he was more assertive in presenting criticisms while the other politicians’ criticisms were mediated by negotiation.

## **1. Introduction**

There are a few politicians who attract public attention both nationally and internationally. The reputation, or notoriety, of these politicians often stems from their characters and speech style. In the past there was a Japanese politician, Toru Hashimoto, whose speech style has gained considerable public attention, not only in

Japan but also throughout the world. For example, numerous books which examine his speech style have been published – e.g. Mukoudani (2013), and Matsumoto (2012). In addition to these publications, the media also has focused on his speech style. For example, the *Japan Times* described him as ‘A Japanese version of Trump’ in the sense that his speech is as ‘shocking’ and ‘offensive’ as the current American President-elect, Donald Trump (Johnston, 2016). The *Japan Times* also published a list of Hashimoto’s memorable statements titled ‘The world according to Toru Hashimoto’ (Johnston, 2012).

A former Mayor of Tokyo, Shintaro Ishihara, in describing Hashimoto Toru, stated in his retirement interview, ‘Mr. Hashimoto is very persuasive. I’ve never seen anyone who can give a public speech like him’ (*Sankee Shimbun*, 2014). The current Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, also admired Hashimoto’s political persona and called for a private meeting with Hashimoto to discuss changing a part of the Japanese constitution (*Asahi Shimbun*, 2016). Such examples demonstrate that Hashimoto, unlike other local politicians, has the ability to make speeches that are clear and comprehensive (Feldman *et al.*, 2015: 82).

This study examines and compares how Hashimoto’s often confrontational strategy used in his speeches differs from that of other Japanese politicians. In contrast to various tactics, such as defending and appraising themselves, this study examines attack on opponents as a method to attract public attention. Attack in political discourse is defined as the use of criticism and negative evaluation of opponents’ policies and characters. Politicians often criticize their opponents in order to attain ‘power’ or ‘authority’, but also to reduce the likability of their opponents and to influence public opinion (Reyes, 2011).

The data used in this study is the first debate held for the local referendum to decide implementation of the Osaka Metropolis Plan that is intended to transform the Osaka prefectural and municipal governments into a united metropolitan government. The Osaka Metropolis Plan was proposed by Hashimoto’s party, the Osaka Restoration Party (ORP), and the referendum was held on 17 May 2015, which, according to *Asahi Shimbun*, was ‘the largest referendum of its kind in Japan’ (2015). Hashimoto had also declared his intention to retire if the Metropolis Plan was rejected, which meant that this referendum would decide not only the implementation of the Metropolis Plan but also the continuity of Hashimoto’s political career.

The major reasons for the plan were, according to Hashimoto, that administrative management was duplicated between the prefectural and municipal governments, which wasted a large amount of the financial resources of Osaka. He also pointed out that many policies were not processed due to the continuous disagreement between the prefectural and municipal governments. He also pointed out that the Osaka system did not allow any wards to implement policies because they were all under the control of the municipal government. In the debate, Hashimoto blamed former politicians, particularly the ones from the Liberal Democrat party (LDP), for these issues because the LDP was the dominant party prior to the formation of the ORP.

**Table 1.** *The targeted contents of attack*

Hashimoto	The opponents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The prior political system that has been implemented by the opponents' parties</li> <li>• The alternative plans of the opponents against the Osaka Metropolis Plan</li> <li>• The political abilities and characters of the opponents including their prior failure as well as their ignorance of the issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The content of the Osaka Metropolis Plan</li> <li>• The current and new policies that have been implemented by the ORP</li> <li>• The political abilities and characters of Hashimoto including the failure of the current political affairs</li> </ul>

The opponents argued that launching the Metropolis Plan would be enormously expensive, and hence would impact current public services to the citizens. They also argued that administrative management was not duplicated, and therefore it was not necessary to combine the prefectural and municipal governments. However, they acknowledged the issue, by which the municipal government had been controlling all the 24 wards, and proposed ‘combining wards’ – what they termed, ‘*soogoo ku*’ – as an alternative plan to the Metropolis Plan. In addition, they also criticized the current policy that the ORP had implemented, which led to criticism of Hashimoto as he had been Osaka prefectural governor from 2008 to 2011 and mayor of Osaka from 2011 to 2015. Table 1 summarizes the general targeted contents of attack on Hashimoto and his opponents.

## 2. Three mechanisms involved in attack

Attack in political debate typically involves three mechanisms: targets of attack, evaluative meanings of criticisms, and degree of negotiation associated with criticisms.

Politicians typically *target* either opponents’ policies or character. Benoit (2014), however, argues that it is likely that policies will be targeted more than character in political debate, as his prior studies of political debates indicate a tendency to attack policies more than character. This is probably because discussing policy issues are central to both the politicians and the audience involved in a debate. Targetting the character of a politician could also lead the debate away from the subject of the debate, and also influence the audience to judge negatively the character of the politician making the attack.

However, there was a case in which attacking character was preferred over attacking policies. Jalilifar and Alavi-Nia (2012) argued that an Iranian presidential candidate, who ultimately won the election, attacked his opponent’s character more than their policy during the political debate. At that time, the Iranian media also described him as a “brave” politician as he did not hesitate to use mudslinging to his advantage in public (Jalilifar and Alavi-Nia, 2012). While attacking character could risk enacting a negative image of a speaker, it also represents the power and authoritative nature of the speaker in

the political context. This leads to the question of whether Hashimoto is more likely to attack the character of his opponents more than their policies.

The second mechanism involved in attack is the *evaluative* meanings behind the criticisms. Martin and White (2005), for example, proposed a taxonomy of evaluative meanings that they call *Attitude*. *Attitude* is a taxonomy of evaluative meanings including three distinctions: *Affect* (emotional reaction), *Judgement* (evaluation of human), and *Appreciation* (evaluation of things). This study utilizes only *Judgement* and *Appreciation*: *Judgement* has to do with attacking opponents' characters and *Appreciation* has to do with criticisms of opponents' policy. *Judgement* has five categories of evaluative meanings: *Capacity*, *Normality*, *Tenacity*, *Veracity*, and *Propriety*. *Capacity* has to do with how competent the person is, *Normality* refers to how different he/she is from the norm, and *Tenacity* has to do with how reliable or brave he/she is. These three categories are, according to Martin and White (2005), associated with the evaluative meanings of 'social esteem', which is evaluation by the community, not dictated by legal regulations (p. 52). *Veracity* has to do with how honest a person is, and *Propriety* refers to how moral/immoral that person's actions are. *Veracity* and *Propriety*, unlike the former three, could be associated more with evaluations based on legal regulations (pp. 52–53). The following extracts from the Osaka Metropolis Plan debate demonstrate how these meanings are triggered by the speaker's criticism

(*Capacity* = incapability): You *could not do anything* for the development of Osaka.

(*Normality* = abnormality): It is a bit *strange* that Mr. Hashimoto compares the Osaka subway system to that of Tokyo.

(*Tenacity* = unreliability): He has *surprisingly cancelled* a meeting before.

(*Veracity* = untrustworthy): Hashimoto mayor *secretly and sneakily* changes this to the problem of the political system,

(*Propriety* = immorality): While you have the source of revenue, it is *inappropriate* to say, 'I don't have money for the Osaka Metropolis Plan'.

*Appreciation* broadly has three categories: *Reaction* (*Impact* and *Quality*), *Composition* (*Balance* and *Complexity*), and *Valuation*, and two of the three categories are further divided into sub-categories. *Reaction* has two dedicated meanings: *Impact*, which refers to the significance of the object and which often, stimulates an emotional reaction such as surprise, and *Quality* which is related to how good or bad an object is. *Composition* also has two distinctive meanings: *Balance*, which refers to the equality or fairness of the object, and *Complexity*, which refers to how difficult or complex it is. The last category, *Valuation* relates to the worth or level of social appreciation. Examples of these categories of evaluative meanings for policies are demonstrated by the following extracts.

(*Impact* = significance): This Metropolis Plan *has a large negative influence* on the citizen’s life.<sup>1</sup>

(*Quality* = quality): The Metropolis Plan *has many drawbacks*.

(*Balance* = equality): With the Metropolis Plan, *one ward gets two benefits, but the other gets only one*.

(*Complexity* = difficulty): The system is *complex and confusing* for the citizens.

(*Valuation* = worthwhile): It is *not necessary* to allocate the (current) 24 wards into the five (new wards).

This study examines whether the types of evaluative meanings associated with Hashimoto and the opponents’ criticism differentiates their argumentative pattern.

The last mechanism involved in attacking opponents is negotiation. The speaker uses linguistic resources to reduce the assertiveness of criticism and to leave space for alternative views. Negotiation is also used to protect the speaker as attacking opponents can lead to the speaker being perceived as unlikable, non-political, or as a mudslinger (Merritt, 1984; Stewart, 1975). Thereby, the politicians could use, what is broadly called *hedging* (Hyland, 2005) or *modality* (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Palmer, 1986) to evaluative criticisms and to negotiate. The lexical realization of these devices often refers to the use of words such as ‘I think’, ‘probably’, and ‘may’, and their use has been widely studied in the political genres (Jalilifar and Alavi-Nia, 2012; Fetzer, 2008). It is also dealt as *Face* work from the perspective of the sociolinguistics (Blas-Arroyo, 2003; García-Pastor, 2008).

This article adopts White’s (1998, 2003) term *Entertain*, which deals with these devices as a tool by which the speaker opens up space for dialogue – i.e. negotiation, while *hedging* often refers to the speaker’s uncertainty or lack of commitment to their statement/proposition (Collins, 1987). White’s account of these devices is as a tool to open up dialogue to anyone who holds opposite, alternative, or different points of view. That is to say, instead of viewing these linguistic resources as cognitive aspects such as certainty/confidence in a proposition, White proposes linguistic resources that open up space for alternative positions, and avoid conflict. This article, therefore, adopts White’s term, *Entertain* rather than *hedging* and investigates to what extent Hashimoto provides space for criticism compared to the other politicians in the debate.

With respect to the lexical realization of *Entertain*, White draws on the modal types proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), which are mental verbs (e.g., *think, assume, believe*), auxiliary verbs (e.g., *can, may, would*), modal adverbs (e.g., *possibly, probably, likely*), and approximators (e.g. *mostly, usually, often*) (p. 620). White also addresses the rhetorical questions which suggest that ‘alternative propositions are

<sup>1</sup> In terms of the classification of *Application*, the literature has addressed different criteria for analysis. In particular, the difference between *Valuation* and *Impact* in political discourse can be controversial. In my analysis, I annotate the text as *Impact* when the attitudinal lexis leads to some negative emotional reaction from the audience such as fear or anxiety.

possible or even likely' (White, 2003: 267–268). However, he also states that rhetorical questions that lead to an obvious answer cannot be construed using the *Entertain* term as they do not provide space for negotiation.

Another lexical realization is tag questions. Lakoff (1975) argues that tag questions, which seek confirmation simultaneously, express the speaker's uncertainty. This suggests that tag-questions demonstrate the speaker's uncertainty regarding a proposition and thus open up space for dialogue. However, Blankenship and Holtgraves (2005) and Blankenship and Craig (2007) argue that the function of tag questions varies based on the speaker's mind-set or attitude, and could enhance the speaker's argument. While rhetorical questions and tag questions could also function as enhancing the speaker's argument, this study annotates the rhetorical questions and tag-questions as *Entertain*, only when they are presented with raised intonation to form interrogatives, as interrogatives typically offer addresses for dialogic space. The list of lexical realizations of *Entertain* are as follows:

1. Mental verbs (e.g., *think, believe, assume, seem, appear*)
2. Modal verbs (e.g., *can, may, must, will*),
3. Modal adverbs (e.g., *possibly, probably, certainly, apparently*),
4. Approximators (e.g. *mostly, usually, often*)
5. Rhetorical questions (White, 2003)
6. Tag questions (Lakoff, 1975)

### 3. The data

The live debate was held on the 29 April 2015 by the Osaka local news show, *Kansai joofoo net, TEN*, which is a regular daily program (on weekdays) on the *Yomiuri* channel. This TV program usually picks up the local and national news, which is discussed with commentators, but the structure of the program, and the commentators were changed for this debate. The show started at the regular time of 15:50 pm, and the live debate lasted an hour and 22 minutes. After the debate, all the participants left, except for the moderator, and the show continued as usual.

The debate had six participants, including four politicians, one journalist and one moderator. The four politicians were from three different parties. One was Toru Hashimoto from the Osaka Restoration Party (ORP), which proposed the Osaka Metropolis Plan. Two politicians, Naokazu Takemoto and Akira Yanagimoto, were from the Liberal Democrat party, which is the party the current Prime Minister, Abe, belongs to. The last politician was Tomoko Yamanaka from the Japan Communist Party (JCP). The LDP and the JCP opposed implementation of the Osaka Metropolis Plan, so the debate is mainly Hashimoto's views versus those of the three politicians.

The journalist Tomoki Yamakawa, who works for the *Yomiuri* TV company and is also a regular commentator on this news show, participated as a commentator to provide his own views on the Osaka Metropolis Plan, but he did not directly participate in the debate with the politicians. At times, Hashimoto corrected "mistakes" made by Yamakawa but such comments or criticism of Yamakawa are not included in this

analysis as this research focuses on the methods of attack used by Hashimoto and the other politicians.

The last participant was the moderator, Ken Shimizu, who was the main broadcaster of this show. During the interview, he played four roles, i.e. introducing the participants, representing the different views of the citizens, providing questions, and ensuring that each speaker had equal opportunity to speak. With regard to the questions he asked, some were prepared in advance, and some were spontaneous or unprepared questions in response to the comments politicians made. His prepared questions were as follows:

1. What are the demerits/merits of the Osaka Metropolis Plan?
2. What do you think of the parallel system of the prefectural and municipal governments?
3. What is your resolution (goal/plan)?

His immediate questions were typically to clarify the content – e.g. ‘you said ‘...’, but can you clarify what it means?’ – or to seek more explanations – e.g. ‘Will the current city halls be kept under the new policy?’. With respect to turn taking, the moderator typically controlled this by subtly leading this discussion – e.g. ‘Now I would like to ask about the duplicating administrative management’ – or making a counterargument between the speakers – e.g. ‘Mr. Hashimoto said ... so what do you think of it, Mr. Yanagimoto?’. Because of his management of turn taking, the politicians made only a few direct responses to each other, and they were likely to be short phrase responses, such as ‘no it’s not’, or ‘hang on’. However, Hashimoto sometimes took over a turn by saying ‘they criticize my plan so I have to give a response to their criticism.’ Therefore, although the style of the debate was not open and turn taking was typically under the control of the moderator, there were a few direct exchanges between Hashimoto and the opponents.

#### 4. The procedure

Firstly, the author recorded the data (TV show) on to a DVD. The data (the speech) were divided into single phrases, which were counted and the instances of criticism, their evaluative meanings and their targets, were annotated in order to calculate proportionality (the following section will provide an explanation of the calculation). The author then noted when the resources of *Entertain* associated with the annotated criticisms was used. The intonation (rise or fall) of the rhetorical questions and tag-questions were defined by the author and another native speaker of Japanese. After all the annotations were complete, the proportions were calculated based on the number of single phrases.

##### 4.1 *The formula of the data*

The frequency of the instances of evaluative meaning was calculated based on the number of single phrases (The number of instances was divided by the number of single phrases). These numbers were then multiplied by 1000 to normalize the frequency, so as

**Table 2.** *The number of phrases*

Hashimoto (ORP)	Takemoto (LDP)	Yamanaka (JCP)	Yanagimoto (LDP)
544	167	133	173

**Table 3.** *The frequency of attack per 1000 clauses*

	Hashimoto (ORP)	Takemoto (LDP)	Yamanaka (JCP)	Yanagimoto (LDP)
Character	137.9(75*)	113.8(19*)	225.6(30*)	57.8(10*)
Policy	167.3(91*)	185.6(31*)	112.8(16*)	156(27*)
Total	306(167*)	299(50*)	345(46*)	214(37*)

Note: \* indicates the actual number before normalization.

to make a comparison among the speakers. The formula for calculating the frequency of the instances is as follows:

The frequency of the instances

= the number of instances divided by the number of single phrases  $\times$  1000.

Table 2 shows the number of single phrases identified for each speaker. The data show that a similar number of phrases were made by Hashimoto and the anti-Metropolis Plan group (Hashimoto: 544 versus Takemoto, Yamanaka, and Yanagimoto: 473).

## 5. Result

### 5.1 Target of attack: character and policies

Table 3 shows the frequency of attack on the policy and character of each speaker. The number shown is normalized by 1000 phrases, and the number in parenthesis is the actual number of annotated instances.

The data collected representing Hashimoto's phrases did not differ much from those of his opponents. The frequency of attack on character and policy was particularly similar to that of Takemoto. Hashimoto and Takemoto generally targeted policy more than character. The data for Yanagimoto also show the same tendency although the gap between character and policy was more significant as policy was targeted much more than character. Compared to these speakers, Yamanaka had an opposing result showing that character outweighs policy. Table 4 shows the proportionality of policy and character, and it is obvious that Yamanaka attacks Hashimoto's character almost as twice as much as his current policies or proposed new policy. Also, the proportionality



**Table 4.** *The proportionality of target: policy and character*

	Hashimoto (ORP)	Takemoto (LDP)	Yamanaka (JCP)	Yanagimoto (LDP)
Personal Character	44.91%	38.00%	65.22%	27.03%
Policy	54.49%	62.00%	34.78%	72.97%

**Table 5.** *The proportionality of each type of Judgement*

	Hashimoto (ORP)	Takemoto (LDP)	Yamanaka (JCP)	Yanagimoto (LDP)
capacity	50.67%(38)	63.16%(12)	3.33%(1)	50%(5)
normality	1.33% (1)	0%(0)	3.33%(1)	0%(0)
tenacity	2.67%(2)	5.26%(1)	0%(0)	0%(0)
veracity	5.33%(4)	10.53%(2)	23.33%(7)	20%(2)
propriety	40%(30)	21.05%(4)	70%(21)	30%(3)

of target also shows that Yanagimoto’s criticism was intensively focused on Hashimoto’s policy rather than his character.

The target of Hashimoto’s criticism was not necessarily associated with his distinctive speech style, as there was no significant difference from his and that of Takemoto. It also followed the same tendency as Takemoto and Yanagimoto, i.e. that policy is targeted more than character. In fact, the data for Yamanaka were much more profound than that for Hashimoto as character significantly outweighs policy in her criticisms, which does not follow the tendency for most countries found by Benoit (2014: 54).

## 5.2 Evaluative meanings of attacking character: Judgement

Having examined the target of attack, this section shows what evaluative meanings are employed for the criticisms of character. The following chart shows the proportionality of five types of *Judgement* (human evaluations); *Normality* (abnormality), *Capability* (inability), *Tenacity* (unreliability), *Veracity* (untrustworthy), *Propriety* (immorality).

Table 5 shows that Hashimoto use of each type of *Judgement* was similar to that of Takemoto and Yanagimoto. These three speakers attacked the opponent’s political capacity, such as failure to resolve political issues, intensively. The following extracts show the way in which Hashimoto attacked his opponents’ political abilities by claiming that they had failed to resolve prior and current political issues in Osaka.

Hashimoto: 「*Giron, giron dake de nani mo kaiketsu dekinakatta hito ga ne, kore kara ittai nan-juuu-nen kakatte yaru no ka*」(1. capacity-) . . .

Extract 1: Hashimoto: How many decades does it take for them (to fix this problem) (1. capacity-) for People, who couldn't solve anything (2. Capacity-) after long discussions, to fix the problems. . .

Hashimoto: 「*Dakara yappari ne, sono mae ni, koremade nan juu nen mo ne, nani mo dekinakatta hito tachi (capacity-) ga, 'korekara yarimasu' 'kore kara yarimasu' tte yuu no wa ne, Oosaka no Oosaka no hatten o ne, mata sogai shimasu ne (propriety-)*」.

Extract 2: Hashimoto: Therefore, as expected, people, who could not have done anything for decades (capacity-), will destroy Osaka (propriety-) because they just say 'we will do it from now on, we will do it from now on' (but they will never take an action).

Hashimoto, in both examples, repeatedly conveyed the political incompetence of his opponents by tagging them as people who could not/do not solve anything and people who only held discussions (but did not take any action). These expressions conveyed the opponents' incompetence in political action, and simultaneously emphasized to the audience that they were not the right politicians for Osaka's future development. In the first extract, Hashimoto also threw a question, 'how many decades does it take for them (to fix this problem)', which sarcastically implied that it would take a long time for his opponents to fix the problem. This indirect question conveyed a criticism of the opponents' competence in resolving the political issues.

In the second extract, Hashimoto claimed that their incapability would destroy the development of Osaka. This criticism implied that their lack of political ability had a negative social impact on Osaka, which conveyed that they were not only incapable politicians but also socially unacceptable. Hashimoto often attacked the political capacity of the opponents, but he also sometimes linked such incapability of his opponents to the social influence, which conveyed impropriety of their political character.

While Takemoto's data show a similar tendency to those of Hashimoto, he actually used a different style of rhetoric to that of Hashimoto. Takemoto is actually the only one who positively evaluated Hashimoto during the debate, yet he often gave a negative evaluation of Hashimoto's character after the positive evaluation. This adversarial rhetorical structure countered the positive character of Hashimoto, and it also led to an emotional reaction of disappointment.

Takemoto: 「*Honrai, gohonnin mo koo yuu koto o yaritai, yutaka ni shitai to iu kimochi ga atta (tenacity+) hazu nan desu ne. Soko o okotatte (tenacity-), koo yuu koto bakkari yatteru (1. capacity-) kara desu ne, konna kekka o manei teru (2. capacity-)*」.

Extract 3: Takemoto: He (Mr. Hashimoto) must have had ambition to do such things and enrich (the Osaka's economy) (tenacity+), but he neglected that ambition (tenacity-), and has been doing only one such thing (the Osaka Metropolis Plan) (1. capacity-). That's why, he has achieved such a (negative) result (the economy) (2. capacity-).

The first sentence in which Takemoto described Hashimoto’s enthusiastic political motivation invoked the reliability of Hashimoto, yet this was immediately countered by the following assertive comment about his relinquishment of ambition. By countering Hashimoto’s positive character, it additionally led to an emotional reaction of disappointment with him. Takemoto actually expressed his disappointment with Hashimoto ‘wasting his ability’ as following:

Takemoto: 「Sekaku hoka no ironna sainoo o omochi no kata na noni, nande konna mono ni wazawaza itsumademo kodawaru no ka na to yuu, soko wa hijoo ni *zannen de naranai* n desu yo.」

Extract 4: Takemoto: Although he has such various talents, why is he obsessed with such a thing (the Metropolis Plan)? I feel really *pity*.

Continuingly, Takemoto attacked Hashimoto’s political ability by claiming that he worked only on this Osaka Metropolis Plan, in which Hashimoto was described as an incapable politician who could focus on only one political event. This negative evaluation was reinforced by the following comment on the current economic deterioration that was even confirmed by the demographics prepared by Takemoto. In contrast, Yanagimoto often indirectly criticized Hashimoto by using ironic questions such as following.

Yanagimoto: 「*Jissai, Yodogawa-Sagan-sen mo, Matsui chiji mo tanjoo shi, Hashimoto shichoo mo tanjoo shi, tomodomo ni yaru to yuu n dattara, kono yonen de dekitete mo okashiku nai* (1. capacity-) *no ni, dekite nai n ja nai n desu ka* (2. capacity-)?」

Extract 5: Yanagimoto: In fact (in the past 4 years), the Hanshin highway—Yodogawa-sagan line was made, and Mr. Matsui (the co-leader of the ORP) was elected as the Osaka governor, meanwhile Mr. Hashimoto was elected as the Osaka city Mayor. So if you say ‘the Osaka municipal and prefectural governor can collaborate (to implement the Osaka Metropolis Plan), *it should have been done in the past four years* (1.capacity-). But *it hasn’t been done yet, right?* (2. capacity-)?

In the extract 5, Yanagimoto did not actually use a specific word to criticize Hashimoto’s ability. However, he first claimed that the implementation of the Metropolis Plan should have already started because the ORP has been dominating the leadership of the prefectural and municipal governments. Then, he threw the question to Hashimoto, ‘but it hasn’t been done yet, right?’. This rhetoric constructs the question as a criticism of Hashimoto’s political capacity rather than serving as a pure question.

Compared to these three speakers, Yamanaka shows a distinctive tendency in the use of *Judgement*. While Hashimoto, Takemoto, and Yanagimoto focused heavily on their opponents’ political ability, approximately 70% of Yamanaka’s criticism consisted of *Propriety*, which evaluated his morality rather than capacity. The following extracts show Yamanaka’s attack on Hashimoto’s character

Yamanaka: 「*Toshi wa, ikimono desu kara ne, watashitachi wa kore o setsudan shite* (1.propriety-), *toshi no kinoo o koroshite shimau* (2.propriety-) *yori mo*

**Table 6.** *The proportionality of each category of Appreciation*

	Hashimoto (ORP)	Takemoto (LDP)	Yamanaka (JCP)	Yanagimoto (LDP)
Impact	60.44%(55)	61.29%(19)	68.75%(11)	74.07%(20)
Quality	37.36%(34)	6.45%(2)	18.75%(3)	7.41%(2)
Balance	0%(0)	9.68%(3)	6.25%(1)	0%(0)
Complexity	0%(0)	3.23%(1)	0%(0)	0%(0)
Valuation	2.2%(2)	19.35%(6)	6.25%(1)	14.81%(4)

*koko wa yappari, shikkari to ikashi nagara, mazu nakami o sakihodo kara osshatte orareru ironna Oosaka no motteiru mondai ga aru kara to itte, koroshite shimau* (3.propriety-). *n ja nakute, naoshi nagara yatteiku.* ㄱ

Extract 6: Yamanaka: Because a city is a creature (living thing), we definitely should use the (the existing) functions at maximum, instead of *cutting off/amputating* (1.propriety-) and *killing/murdering* (2.propriety-) the function of the city.

Even if there are various issues of Osaka city that (Mr. Hashimoto) discusses, we should fix the functions instead of *killing\* murdering it* (3.propriety-).

Extract 6 is an example of Yamanaka conveying Hashimoto's image as a hazardous politician by the use of lexical metaphor. Strategically, Yamanaka called the city as a creature, which construes the city as "being alive" or "living". In following she described the Hashimoto's abolishment of the city as *setsudan shite*, 'cutting off' and *koroshite* 'killing'. Due to the use of such a metaphorical description of the city, these actions of Hashimoto are rather interpreted as *amputating*, and *murdering*, which characterizes Hashimoto as a hazardous and immoral person. Yamanaka often made such metaphorical expressions, so as to portray Hashimoto's character as treacherous rather than incapable.

Examining the features of attack on character, the data on Hashimoto is not necessarily or profoundly different from that of the other politicians except for Yamanaka. Hashimoto, Takemoto, and Yanagimoto had different expressions, yet the attacks of these three politicians were extensively focused on the political ability of their opponents. Compared to these speakers, Yamanaka's way of characterizing Hashimoto was distinctive from those of the others as she focused more on morality rather than capacity.

### 5.3 *Evaluative meanings of attacking the policies: Appreciation*

This section describes the types of evaluative meanings that are associated with attack on policy. Table 6 indicates the proportionality of the each category of *Appreciation* used by the speakers. The data indicate no significant difference between the speakers, yet Yanagimoto and Hashimoto had a slightly different tendency than can be seen from Yanagimoto's heavy focus on *Impact* as well as Hashimoto's relatively more frequent use of *quality*.

The data for *Appreciation* do not indicate a significant difference among the speakers. Most of the speakers focused on *Impact* more than any other categories. Yanagimoto, for example, did not give much focus to any other evaluative meanings, including attack on character, but his criticism mostly consisted of the negative impact of Hashimoto’s policy. The following data show Yanagimoto’s criticism construing the negative impact of the Hashimoto’s policy.

Yanagimoto: 「*Ee, ima, wazawaza* (1. valuation-) *desu ne, wazawaza to yuu no wa desu ne, demeritto o kashite* (1. impact-) *made, juumin no minasama ni furieki* (2. impact-) *ya, hutan o kashite* (3. impact-) *made itsutsu ni muriyari wakeru hitsuyoo ga nai* (2. valuation-) *to yuu. . .*」

Extract 7: Yanagimoto: Ah, now, it is *unnecessary* (1. valuation-). ‘Unnecessary’ means that it is *not necessary* (2. valuation-) to forcibly split (Osaka city) by *causing demerit* (1. impact-), such as *imposing disadvantage* (2. impact-) and *burden* (3. impact-) on the residents . . .

Extract 7 shows that Yanagimoto repeatedly evaluated the Metropolis Plan based on Valuation and Impact. He claimed a lack of necessity for the Metropolis Plan, and then provided a reason by explaining the possible negative impact of the Metropolis Plan on the Osaka residents. The use of Impact, in fact, could cause the audience some emotional reaction such as fear or anxiety, which could explain why all of the speakers focused on Impact for evaluating the policies.

However, while the other politicians focused mostly on the Impact of the policy, Hashimoto’s criticism was focused on both Impact and Quality. Hashimoto frequently refers to the negative quality of the prior and current system that needed to be abolished or revised.

Hashimoto: 「*Osaka-fuchoo to Osaka-shi-yakusho no hanashi ga matomamarazu ni desu ne, kore, zenzen tetsudoo no netto-waaku ga hirogaranai.*」

Extract 8. Hashimoto: *The argument between the Osaka prefectural and municipal governments has never been ended (quality-), and see, the rail network has not been extended at all (quality-).*

Extract 8 shows the way in which Hashimoto criticized the quality of the current system of Osaka that has been administered by the opponent parties. He pointed out the issue of the continuous disagreements between the prefectural and municipal governments. He then referred to the poor quality of Osaka’s rail system caused by the deadlock that existed due to the argument between the two governments.

It can be noted that only Hashimoto attacked the quality of the current system under control of the LDP and any other politicians involved in the prior assembly. This can be explained by the fact that it was essential for Hashimoto to criticize the quality of the policy, just to appeal the importance of and need for the Metropolis Plan to the audience.

Therefore, it can be said that Hashimoto’s use of quality-based evaluative meaning was contextually inevitable and not necessarily an individual style or distinctive feature

**Table 7.** *The proportionality of criticism coded by Entertain devices*

	Hashimoto (ORP)	Takemoto (LDP)	Yamanaka (JCP)	Yanagimoto (LDP)
Entertained	0.6%(1)	28%(14)	36.96%(17)	27.03%(10)
non-Entertained	98.8%(165)	72%(36)	63.04%(29)	70.27%(26)

of his speech. This suggests that Hashimoto's frequent attack on the policy does not play a role in distinguishing his speech from that of the others.

#### 5.4 *The negotiation for the criticism: Entertain*

The last section discusses to what extent *Entertain* (linguistic resources for negotiation) is used for criticism. Table 7 shows the proportionality of criticism coded by *Entertain*.

The use of *Entertain* shows a remarkable difference between Hashimoto and the other speakers. Hashimoto uses almost no *Entertain*, while approximately 27–37 % of the opponents' criticisms are negotiated by *Entertain* devices. The following extracts show Hashimoto's criticism, which avoids any *Entertain* devices.

Hashimoto: 「*Yanagimoto san ga iwareta no wa ookina machigai wa ne . . .*」

Extract 9: Hashimoto: Such a *big mistake (capacity-)* that Mr Yanagimoto said . . .

Hashimoto: 「*Sore wa monosugoku shoomonai sayuu o itte iru wake de . . .*」

Extract 10: Hashimoto: (In response to Yanagimoto) that is, (Mr. Yanagimoto) is *talking about the extremely useless/stupid differences (-capacity)*.

Extract 9 is Hashimoto's response to Yanagimoto's argument for the current system of Osaka. He called a Yanagimoto's statement as *ookina machigai*, 'a big mistake', which is a nominalized label of his proposition. As some scholars argue, such nominalization of a proposition typically construes the proposition as a fact, and it removes any negotiability of the proposition (Martin and Rose, 2003; Martin and White, 2005; Schleppegrell, 2004). That is to say, Hashimoto presented his criticism not as his personal view, but as a fact that has no space for alternative positions.

Similarly, extract 10, Hashimoto criticism of Yanagimoto's comment, '*talking about the extremely useless/stupid differences*' had no *Entertain*. Without using any *Entertain* devices, this criticism was also assertively presented, which constructed his criticism more as fact than as his personal point of view. Almost all of the Hashimoto's criticisms were presented in this way, which made the tone of criticism more assertive and aggressive. In contrast to Hashimoto, the other speakers used *Entertain* moderately in their criticisms of Hashimoto. In particular, Yamanaka, who described Hashimoto as a hazardous character, coded approximately 37 percent of her criticism by the device

of *Entertain*, which was the highest proportion among those speakers. The following extracts show Yamanaka’s use of *Entertain* in her criticism.

Yamanaka: 「*Masani zidai ni gyakkoo suru koto o ima yaroo to shiteiru (capacity-) to yuu fuu ni omoimasu.*」

Extract 11. Yamanaka: I think that (*Mr. Hashimoto*) is going to do the things that will be **retrograde** to this era (capacity-).

Yamanaka: 「*De, shikamo kekkyoku, Hashimoto shichoo wa, kore, shikumi no mondai ni surikaeteiru (1.propriety-) kara, Oosaka-shi o tsubushita (3.propriety-) ue de, sono zaigen o totte itte (2.propriety-), kekkyoku, yumejima ni kajino o yuushi suru da toka, Kankuu kara Umeda made gofun dake hayaku naru (valuation-) kansai-namba-suji-sen toka, onazi koto o ne, kekkyoku, kurikaesoo to shiteiru (capacity-) to watashi wa omoimasu ne.*」

Extract 12. Yamanaka: And also the Mayor Hashimoto surreptitiously *sneakily switches* (1.propriety-) this (issue) to the issue of system so he can *steal the revenue* (2.propriety-) after *shattering the Osaka city* (3.propriety-). After all, I think along this line that (*Mr. Hashimoto*) will *repeat the same things* (capacity-) such as making a casino in the Yumejima area, making the Kansai–Namba train line *which is (only) 5 minutes faster* (valuation-) from Kansai airport to Umeda, etc.

Extract 11 is Yamanaka’s criticism of Hashimoto’s future political action. Her criticism was coded by what is typically called, the epistemic modality, *omoimasu* ‘I think’, which typically construes the speaker’s subjective position toward the proposition. By means of using *I think*, Yamanaka presented her criticism as her subjective opinion, which allowed different points of view to be expressed. In addition to *omoimasu* ‘I think’, Yamanaka utilized other additional linguistic tools to increase the degree of negotiation, which could only function in the Japanese language. In the extract 11, Yamanaka used an atypical construction of the propositional phrase in Japanese; *to + yuu fuu ni + omoimasu*. Typically *omoimasu* is accompanied only with the projection marker, *to* in Japanese, yet Yamanaka additionally inserted *yuu fuu ni*, ‘kind of/sort of’ between *to* and *omoimasu*. This insertion of *yuu fuu ni* seems to make a proposition even more negotiable as *yuu fuu ni* ‘kind of/sort of’ reduces the assertiveness of the proposition and additionally blurs the content of the proposition. In Extract 12, Yamanaka used an additional tool to expand the dialogue, which is the use of subject, *watashi wa* ‘I’. Typical Japanese structure omits the subject, *watashi wa*, ‘I’ as it is not syntactically required in the Japanese language (Kanaya, 2004; Ueno and Kehler, 2010). This suggests that the use of subject in the Japanese language implies an additional meaning, which I argue gives emphasis to the speaker’s subjectivity of the proposition. It is because in Japanese *omoimasu* typically needs morphological change, i.e. *omotte imasu* when the proposition is presented as the thought of a second or third person. If the speaker presents a proposition coded by *omoimasu*, that proposition is usually presented as his/her own opinion. Therefore, the subject ‘I’ in most contexts

can be triggered without articulating it in Japanese. That is why, as in Yamanaka's case, by additionally inserting *watashi wa*, it could stress the speaker's subjective position on the proposition and it seems to open up the dialogue to alternative points of view.

With respect to the device of *Entertain*, the data of Hashimoto show a considerable difference from that of the other politicians. When Takemoto, Yanagimoto, and Yamanaka criticized Hashimoto or his policy, they still used negotiation tools to code their criticism, which made their speech less aggressive and avoided conflict with Hashimoto or alternative viewers. Compared to these speakers, when Hashimoto criticized his opponents or their policies, he almost entirely closed up any space for further dialogue and put at risk any solidarity with them and the opponent supporters. This suggests that Hashimoto's lack of, or perhaps avoidance of, use of *Entertain* devices could be one of the features that distinguishes his speech from that of the other politicians.

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

Examination of the linguistic features on attacking opponents shows some considerable distinctions between Hashimoto's speech and that of other politicians. The target of criticism and the evaluative meanings of the criticisms, however, show that Hashimoto's speech is not necessarily different or 'outstanding' from that of the other politicians. With respect to these mechanisms, Yamanaka's data actually show much more remarkable features than that of Hashimoto as she was the only one who attacked Hashimoto's character more than his policy, she was also evaluating Hashimoto's morality rather than his political ability. From this observation, it is difficult to define any distinctiveness in Hashimoto's speech with regard to the target of attack and evaluative meanings of the criticism as his data were not necessarily remarkable compared to those of Takemoto and Yanagimoto. Hence, the target of attack and evaluative meanings seem not to be involved in manifesting his distinctive speech.

However, unlike the evaluative language, the use of *Entertain* shows a remarkably different tendency between Hashimoto and the others. All speakers except for Hashimoto delivered their criticism with moderate use of *Entertain*, and it was also seen that more the speakers attack their opponents, the more they use *Entertain*. For example, Yamanaka, who used criticism at the highest rate, used the *Entertain* devices at the most frequent rate. However, this tendency did not apply to Hashimoto. The frequency of his criticism was second among the speakers, yet his use of *Entertain* was drastically less than any other speaker. In fact, he used an *Entertain* device only once out of 166 criticisms, which indicates that almost no criticisms of his were entertaining for alternative viewers and his opponents. This considerable difference in the use of *Entertain* suggests that his speech does not allow any space for dialogue with those who hold opposing point of views, and thus, Hashimoto seems not to be concerned with maintaining solidarity with his opponents or alternative viewers. Such a lack of



negotiability in his speech may be positively perceived as powerful but also may be negatively seen as arrogant by those who hold different views from Hashimoto.

This article does not suggest that the use of *Entertain* is the only actual factor that differentiates his speech from other politicians as speech also involves various mechanisms, including multi-modal aspects such as intonations and body language. However, by examining three mechanisms of attack in the political debate, the *Entertain* device, which is closely associated with maintaining solidarity, is not involved in his attack, and this was remarkably different from that of the other politicians. Thereby, this study suggests that the assertiveness of his speech, which the lack of *Entertain* manifests, could contribute to the distinctiveness of Hashimoto’s discourse, and this characteristic may be the reason why the *Japan Times* describes him as the ‘Japanese version of Trump’ or why the former Tokyo Mayor Shintaro Ishihara says ‘Hashimoto is like Hitler’ (*Sankee Shimbun*, 2014, December, 16).

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