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Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi

Yet another endangered variety on Okinawa?

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Abstract

This thesis concerns the variety known as Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, spoken on the island of Okinawa and smaller surrounding islands. By discussing mainly historical, political, and social factors, the aim is to elicit the processes which affect its vitality and consequently are instrumental in the formation of its future. As complements to the already existing material relevant to the subject, a survey was conducted, and an interview carried out with an Okinawan informant. The survey was aimed mainly at investigating the degree of usage of, and attitudes held towards Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi among young Okinawans. The vitality of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is finally problematized from the three discourses identity, ideology and outside influences, concluding that passive influences from standard Japanese are still affecting the lexical stability of it, but the existence of a distinct Okinawan variety is not threatened.

Keywords: Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, Okinawa, Japanese, language vitality, language shift, language attitudes, language ideology

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Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	ii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	iii
<i>Conventions</i>	vi
<i>Abbreviations</i>	vii
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Purpose	1
1.2 Methodology and disposition	1
2 Historical overview	3
2.1 The history of Okinawa and the Ryukyu Islands	3
2.2 Language policy	5
3 The vernacular and Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi	9
3.1 Linguistic situation on the Ryukyu Islands	9
3.2 The Okinawan language	12
3.3 Defining Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi	15
3.3.1 Contents	15
3.3.2 Label	17
3.4 Characteristics of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi	18
3.4.1 Lexicon	18
3.4.2 Phonology	22
3.4.3 Grammar	23
3.4.4 Particles	26
3.5 Summary	27
4 Future outlook of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi	29

4.1 The threat from standard Japanese	29
4.2 Language attitudes and identity	32
4.3 Okinawan cultural appreciation and alleged signs of stabilization	34
4.4 Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi and language revitalization	37
4.5 Summary	38
5 Survey	40
5.1 Methodology	40
5.2 The survey	42
5.3 Summary	56
6 Conclusion	58
7 Closing remarks	60
8 Future research	61
References	62
Appendix	66

Conventions

Glossing

The glossing used in this paper is based on the Leipzig Glossing Rules. A list of abbreviations is given below.

Romanization

Long vowels appearing in Japanese words will be transcribed with macrons, with the exception of long *e* and long *i*, which will be transcribed as *ei* and *ii* respectively. In contrast to this, words of Okinawan origin will not be transcribed using macrons but with double letters; this is also true for long *e* which will be transcribed as *ee*. This choice is based on the procedure used by other linguists, and it furthermore adds an extra level of distinction between the two languages. Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi words follow this same procedure. Moreover, words that are now considered part of the English lexicon, such as place names, have been transcribed as is customary, that is, usually without indicating long vowels.

Typographical conventions

Italics have been used to mark non-English vocabulary, excepting the words Uchinaaguchi and Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi. Translations have been denoted with single quotes, unless they appear within a word table.

Other conventions

For the sake of easy readability and uniformity the transcription of the word “Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi” has been changed in quotes where it differed from the manner adhered to in this paper.

Example sentences taken from other works have been adapted to fit the conventions of this paper.

To avoid confusion “Okinawa” always refers to “the island of Okinawa”. In case the prefecture is the subject, this will be clearly stated.

Abbreviations

ACC	accusative	INT	interrogative
ADN	adnominal	IPRF	imperfective
ALL	allative	LOC	locative
COMP	comparative	NEG	negative
CON	conjecture	NOM	nominal
DAT	dative	NOMI	nominalizer
DIM	diminutive	NPAST	nonpast
DUB	dubitative	PASS	passive
FOC	focus	PRED	predicate
FP	final particle	PROG	progressive
HON	honorific	QP	question particle
INF	infinitive	TOP	topic particle
INS	instrumental	VOL	volitional

1 Introduction

From the time the island of Okinawa was annexed by the Japanese state in 1872, the vernacular language has been undergoing attrition as the result of policies aimed at assimilating the population to become Japanese nationals. During the last century proficiency in the language thus quickly came to deteriorate with every generation to the current point where real proficiency is only found among the elderly. A consequence of this has been the emergence of a new variety called Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, or Okinawan Japanese. This is a form of Japanese which incorporates elements of the Okinawan language and has come to be widely used among people of all ages on the island (Takaesu 1994; Ōsumi 2001).

1.1 Purpose

The vitality of the Okinawan language is unquestionably at a critical point and has been the subject of a wide debate. Most scholars agree that it is doomed to extinction within a foreseeable time if drastic measures are not taken. In the shadow of this discussion the question of the vitality and future of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi has passed fairly unattended. When given attention it is mostly as a parenthesis in the discussion concerning the Okinawan language. A few linguists have nevertheless dedicated efforts to describing the variety and some statements have been made about the future it is likely to face. The purpose of this paper is, through a new assessment:

- To elicit the current condition of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi.
- To cast further light on the factors affecting it.
- To make a statement about the future outlook of it.

1.2 Methodology and disposition

The discourse is built upon two parts, the first being analysis and expansion of previous research and the second being a survey conducted for the sake of this paper which investigates mainly the degree of usage of, and attitudes held towards Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi among young Okinawans. It was conducted to cast light on the current situation, and moreover to get

further basis to build argument upon. By matching previous research with the findings of the survey the hope is to be able to give an updated statement about the future outlook of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, and furthermore to explain the factors through which the future of it is formed. It must in all sincerity be pointed out that the modest number of participants in the survey leaves the result of it insufficient to prove an actual tendency; it will nevertheless be used to build a hypothetical statement presented at the end of the paper. An Okinawan informant was moreover interviewed once and also consulted at several occasions to get deeper insight into the linguistic situation on the island. The informant is a 23 year old woman from the city of Itoman, although she has been living in mainland Japan for the past four years. She speaks Japanese as her first language and has only a slight understanding of the Okinawan language. However, with friends and family on the island, Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is used. The interview and all other consultation were carried out through a chat program.

This paper is divided into four main chapters, this introduction excluded. The first chapter will give the historical background and explain the language policies that Japan instigated during the last century. This is of import to the discussion at hand as the process whereby Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi emerged has to be explained from a historical and political perspective. The second chapter is aimed at introducing and explaining Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi to make the discussion more tangible. To give a broader perspective the linguistic situation in the Ryukyuan archipelago in which Okinawa is located will furthermore be sketched up and a short introduction to the Okinawan language will be provided. In the third chapter, based on earlier research, the future outlook of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi will be discussed at length from a broad perspective mainly based on cultural, sociolinguistic, and political factors. The chapter following will be a presentation of the survey.

2 Historical overview

In order to understand the process whereby Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi came into existence and what possible future paths might lie ahead, it is imperative to have some knowledge of past political and social events in Japan and the Ryukyu Islands. Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is not something that has come into existence through a natural process, but rather the result of a strict language ideology resulting in a forced language shift. In the first part of this chapter I will give a summary of the history of the Ryukyu Islands and especially Okinawa to cast further light on the relationship with Japan. Attention will be given the era before Japan extended its influence towards the islands only when it is of import to the discussion at hand. In the second part of this chapter Japanese language policies from the Meiji restoration and onwards will be discussed since these are the direct cause of language attrition on the Ryukyu Islands, which eventually lead up to the current linguistic state where varieties like Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi have come to exist.

2.1 The history of Okinawa and the Ryukyu Islands

The first inhabitants on the Ryukyu Islands are believed to have moved from the Japanese archipelago to the northern islands. It is possible that Japanese and the Ryukyuan languages had already begun to separate before this emigration. It is furthermore believed that the first major emigration from Okinawa to the Miyako and Yaeyama Islands occurred in the 13th century, and if any indigenous people already existed they were either assimilated or decimated (Shimoji 2010: 4). Before the formation of the Ryukyu Kingdom, Okinawa Island was divided into the three separate kingdoms *Hokuzan*, *Chuuzan*, and *Nanzan* (Sakihara 1987: 99-102). All the three kingdoms had tributary relationships to China; a relation which was upheld even after the Ryukyu Kingdom was formed in 1429. This continued relationship resulted in good trade connections and a strong economy, which eventually drew the attention of the Japanese Shimazu clan of the then existing Satsuma province (Ōsumi 2001: 71).

Any relation between Japan and the Ryukyu Kingdom did not formally exist until 1609 when an army from the Satsuma province invaded the kingdom, forcing them to swear an oath of eternal loyalty to Satsuma. More interesting however is that the notion of ‘eternal’ extended in both directions on the time line, stating that this relationship between the kingdom

and the ruling Shimazu clan in fact had always existed, thus in a sense alternating history (Smits 1999: 15-16). This is of interest since claims of Japan's and the Ryukyu Islands' common historical past, as Smits points out referring to Takara, occur even today among Japanese historians. This is based on the view that members of the same ethnic group must share a common political history (1999: 159). Despite this new influence from Japan, the kingdom officially remained independent (Ōsumi 2001: 71). The initial prospect by the Shimazu clan was to incorporate the Ryukyu Islands into their domain. The strategy, much like the one adopted by the Japanese government a few hundred years later, was establishing prohibitions against customs and practices which differed from those of Japan; this was done to eliminate opposition. Such plans were however quickly interrupted by the military government after trade negotiations with China had failed. The Ryukyu Kingdom was seen as a means to conduct indirect trade, but this could only be done under the appearance that the kingdom was free from Japanese influence. Differences from Japan consequently came to be highlighted and Japanese names, clothes and customs were banned; travel restrictions were furthermore established to prevent Japanese people from visiting the kingdom (Smits 1999: 18-19). Japan could thereby acquire Chinese goods, and the Shimazu clan could tap into the kingdom's profits by demanding tributes (Heinrich 2012: 84).

This balance was sustained until 1872 when the newly created Japanese Meiji government claimed full hegemony over the Ryukyu Islands. The nobles of the kingdom were by this time split into two factions, one supporting cooperation with the Satsuma province and one opposing it which came to be an advantage to Japan (Smits 1999: 143-144). In 1879 king Shoo Tai of the kingdom was forced into exile in Tokyo as the Meiji government designated all islands south of the Amami Islands as Okinawa Prefecture, and the duty to integrate the islands into Japan was given to the chief secretary of the Japanese Home Ministry (Heinrich 2004: 156; Heinrich 2012: 84-85).

Okinawa then came to suffer greatly during the battle of Okinawa in the Second World War, and during the aftermath as well. The civilians were subjected to cruelty not only from the invading American forces but also from the Japanese army (Hein & Selden 2003: 14). This negligence shown by the army meant to protect them has often drawn the focus from the Americans' role in the battle. Attention being drawn away from America's involvement is furthermore explained by the view among Okinawans that Japanese militarism brought about the deadly battle, and the fact that the Americans after the battle proved not to be as horrible as they had been made to believe. They did not, as the Japanese military officials had warned, rape and torture the population; although, they did suffer maltreatment of other kinds which

came to be sources of dissatisfaction (Hein & Selden 2003: 18). It is estimated that 130,000 to 140,000 civilians died during the twelve weeks of fighting, that was more than one-fourth of the entire Okinawan population (Hein & Selden 2003: 13).

In the direct aftermath of the war most of the Okinawan population was detained in camps, some for as long as two years. Many discovered upon release that their homes or even their entire villages were gone, standing in their place were now American military facilities (Eiko 2003: 228-229). The next consternation came in 1952 when Japan bargained its independence with Okinawa as offer, leaving it behind in American hands. It became a strategically important point for the American armed forces in Southeast Asia (Hein & Selden 2003: 19). During the occupation, which lasted until 1972, the population had to suffer through careless treatment by the American administration which showed but little interest in their welfare (Hein & Selden 2003: 18). Eiko also argues that the American occupation was the final deathblow to some parts of traditional Okinawan culture as sacred village forests were cut down, and sites used for worship were restricted to American personnel and made into firing ranges or used for other military activity. Environmental destruction further forced them to rethink their lifestyles (2003: 228-232). With these physical impediments the traditional Okinawan lifestyle died away.

The unjust treatment by the American administration brought about strong pro-Japanese sentiments as a return to Japan was seen as a way to rid the islands of the Americans. However, when the islands were finally returned in 1972 it did not bring what the Okinawans desired as terms were negotiated between the Japanese and American governments for the continued maintenance of the American bases (Hein & Selden 2003: 21). Even though the Japanese government has addressed most of the problems on the islands and living standards are today high, the bases still remain and are still sources of Okinawan discontent (Hein & Selden 2003: 21-22).

2.2 Language policy

The creation of the new Japanese Meiji state brought with it a language policy meant to unite all the people of Japan under one language and one culture which is evident in the slogan ‘Standard language – uniting a hundred million hearts and minds’ (*ichioku no kokoro o musubu hyōjungo*) which was used in pre-war times (Heinrich 2012: 59, 91). This was not

only a measure to secure the loyalty of the people, but it was also seen as important in gaining the respect of the “civilized” western countries, where a prejudice existed that languages other than those having emerged in Europe were too primitive to be developed. Accordingly, creating a national language (*kokugo*) was thought to prove Japan’s power and worthiness (Heinrich 2012: 3-9).

On the Ryukyu Islands, one of the early measures taken was the banning of the usage of Ryukyuan languages from schools in 1907 (Heinrich 2004: 158). This was arguably one of the most powerful tools for conducting the language shift in its early stage, as it created an environment where only Japanese was allowed to be used and Ryukyuan was being continuously discredited. This was accomplished, for example, through morning assembly songs containing lines such as ‘using dialect is the enemy of the country’, and through symbolic cleansings of Ryukyuan words that had been used by students during the day, as reported by Nishimura and Tanaka respectively in (Heinrich 2004: 159). Another widely reported conduct was the use of so called dialect tags which were hung around the neck of a student using Ryukyuan, and passed along if another student accidentally uttered something in the wrong language. Students using Ryukyuan too often were admonished (Heinrich 2012: 90; Sanada & Uemura 2007: 358).

Japanese language acquisition was at first slow which was explained by low school enrollment and strong Ryukyuan ethnicity. But as school attendance increased, reaching 98% of the children in 1927, and devious schemes to humiliate speakers of Ryukyuan languages were instigated, the people of the Ryukyu Islands began partaking in the standardization movement, thus rapidly increasing the use of Japanese in all domains (Shinzato 2012: 286-288). The Japanese state incited the process with measures such as the creation of the ‘Movement for Enforcement of the Standard Language’ (*hyōjungo reikō undō*) and slogans encouraging the use of Japanese (Heinrich 2004: 160). Nationalistic radio broadcasts also contributed in the spreading of Japanese sympathy and the use of the Japanese language (Shinzato 2012: 297).

In Shinzato (2012: 296-297), Dorian reportedly challenges the role that the school system played in claiming that it per se should not be over exaggerated. The status of the ethnic group is the dominant factor in a language shift; even though school might act as a strong tool through which this status can be formed. If belonging to a certain ethnic group is acceptable then bilingualism is more likely to emerge. However, if the ethnicity, as was the case on the Ryukyu Islands, is not seen as acceptable, then language attrition will occur. This is reflected very well in the heightened measures to eradicate Okinawan cultural traces during

war time when clear Japanese ethnicity was seen as something of great importance. Since the Ryukyu Islands had formed an autonomous kingdom until only a few decades earlier and, as stated by Shinzato, the population traditionally had stronger sentiments towards China (2012: 285-286), their loyalty was put to the test in a much stronger sense when Japan began waging war on their former trade partner. Shinzato further states that identification with Japan was in fact low at first as the old relations with China split the people's loyalty. This however changed quickly as the Japanese victory in the Sino-Japanese war heightened pro-Japanese sympathy (2012: 285-286).

During the battle of Okinawa matters reached the most extreme point as people using the vernaculars were considered as spies by the Japanese army and risked being executed (Heinrich 2004: 161). The American occupation of the Ryukyu Islands following the Second World War heightened pro-Japanese sentiments as a return to Japan was viewed as a way to rid the islands of the American military presence and to improve living conditions. The Americans on the other hand tried to highlight differences between the Ryukyu Islands and Japan, and also to promote the use of the vernaculars (Heinrich 2004: 163-166). This however was seen through as a strategy to legitimize their presence on the islands, resulting in even stronger efforts from the population to promote the use of Japanese as a countermeasure (Barion & Heinrich 2007). To quote Bairon et al. (2009), "The [Ryukyuan] languages were sacrificed in hope for a better future."

Grenoble & Whaley points out that there often is suspicion towards multilingualism in monolingual speech communities (2006: 30). Japan can hardly be seen as traditionally having been a monolingual country since, as Twine explains, dialectal differences had been refined partly due to travel restrictions making it hard for people in one region to encounter other speech communities in other regions (1988: 434-435). Although, when new values were imposed by the Meiji government, varieties strongly diverting from the newly established norm of monolingualism were treated with extraordinary measures towards assimilation. The speakers of Ryukyuan languages were furthermore treated with stronger measures than speakers of Japanese dialects. In fact the 'Dialect Regulation Ordinance' (*hōgen torishimari rei*), created in 1907, banning the use of the vernaculars in public was only set to use on the Ryukyu Islands (Heinrich 2012: 89-90). The use of local dialects in school was moreover not banned everywhere on the main islands; children in Kumamoto were reportedly allowed to use dialects (Ōta 1997: 154).

Japanese language policies have shifted from being directly hostile towards dialects to showing some support for them since the return of the Ryukyu Islands to Japan in 1972

(Shinzato 2012: 299); but even as that is the case, there has not been any serious debate promoting the reestablishment of the vernaculars. This might to a great extent be due to the fact that, as Heinrich points out, there by the time of the return had emerged a Japanese monolingual generation (2004: 167). It is also argued that Japanese identity has come to be too closely associated with the use of standard Japanese to embrace the possibility of bilingualism, and that the fundamental ideology of the homogeneous Japan is yet to be seriously challenged. These points will be discussed further in *4.2 Language attitudes and identity*.

3 The vernacular and Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi

The main point of this chapter is to give an introduction to the variety Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi as this paper sets out to explore the vitality of it. Before turning to Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi a summary of the linguistic situation on the Ryukyu Islands followed by a short introduction to the Okinawan language will be given. Turning to Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, the definition of the variety will be discussed and some of the differences from standard Japanese will be sketched out to make the subject more tangible.

3.1 Linguistic situation on the Ryukyu Islands

This section gives an overview of the linguistic situation on the Ryukyu Islands. I will only touch briefly upon the other languages existing throughout the Ryukyuan archipelago to give a broader picture and put it in context. Before introducing the Ryukyuan languages let us first consider whether they are dialects of Japanese or languages of their own. The common tendency thus far has been for Japanese linguists to consider them as the former, whereas linguists of other nationalities consider them as the latter. This debate is however, as pointed out by Shimoji (2010: 1), socio-political and ideological rather than linguistic.

The idea to consider the Ryukyuan languages as dialects of Japanese sprung from the wish to create unifying factors throughout the Japanese nation after the Meiji restoration in 1868 (Heinrich 2010). The early Japanese linguists had to struggle to fit the Ryukyuan languages into the Japanese language frame. The arguments lifted forth to justify this classification were mainly that Japan and the Ryukyu Kingdom shared a common past, that the languages are genealogically related to Japanese¹, and that the Ryukyu Islands belong to Japan. Recognizing them as languages would furthermore jeopardize the image of the homogeneous Japanese nation (Bairon & Heinrich 2007; Heinrich 2012: 85-86). Had the annexation of the islands never taken place, the very idea of classifying the Ryukyuan languages as Japanese dialects would most likely have seemed profane to most modern linguists, considering the great internal variation which they comprise, and as Heinrich (2005: 62) states “none of the varieties of Ryukyuan allows for mutual intelligibility with any variety

¹ This relation was first suggested by Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850-1935), the first linguist ever to investigate the Ryukyuan languages (Heinrich 2012: 86).

of Japanese.” Indeed, the difference between Japanese and the Ryukyuan languages has been described as greater than that between the Romance languages (Heinrich 2012: 85). In short, from a linguistic point of view it seems more appropriate to recognize what is spoken throughout the Ryukyu Islands as languages, rather than dialects of Japanese. This is also the stance which will be adhered to in this paper.

The Ryukyuan languages belong to the Japonic Family and are in sister relationship to Japanese (Shimoji 2012: 351). They can be further classified in several different ways; it is however common to divide them into two major groups: Northern Ryukyuan and Southern Ryukyuan. These two groups are in turn subdivided into five languages. Thus, Northern Ryukyuan is divided into Amami and Okinawan; whereas Southern Ryukyuan is divided into Miyako, Yaeyama and Yonaguni (Shimoji 2012: 351). However, Heinrich & Bairon point out that some recognize as many as eleven languages and others merely two (2007). Although further subdivisions can be pursued, it is hard to arrive at a standard convention as to whether these should be considered as separate languages, or as dialects of the aforementioned languages. According to Lawrence the Yaeyama and Miyako languages alone can be divided into around 20 and 35 varieties respectively (the three varieties of Yonaguni mentioned by Izuyama (2012: 412) is included in Yaeyama in this definition) (2012: 381). Worth mentioning is that these subdivisions in some cases vary quite extensively in terms of phonology, grammar etc. (Shimoji 2010: 1-2), and, as stated by Ōsumi, can even be unintelligible to people of the same language (2001: 70). Ōsumi further explains that the great language diversity in the region might perhaps partly be due to the fact that people lived in separated communities until the 12th century (2001: 71). For a more detailed discussion of the typology of the Ryukyuan languages readers are referred to Shimoji & Pellard (2010) and Tranter (2012).

Due to a lack of statistical data, the number of speakers of Ryukyuan languages is unknown (Shimoji 2010: 2). Furthermore, a drastic reduction in Ryukyuan language proficiency between every generation can be observed. Unless measures are taken they will face extinction within just a few generations (Heinrich 2010: 35). Sugita states concerning the Okinawan language that you often have to look to the group of people above the age of 75 to find speakers of full proficiency (2010: 52). The level of proficiency in Ryukyuan languages does however vary with region and language. Ōsumi (2001: 73-74) claims that people in the rural areas of Okinawa seem to be less proficient in Okinawan than people living in the cities. The hypothesis provided is that there is more confidence and pride in the Okinawan language in traditionally culturally strong areas like the city of Naha which comprises the former city of

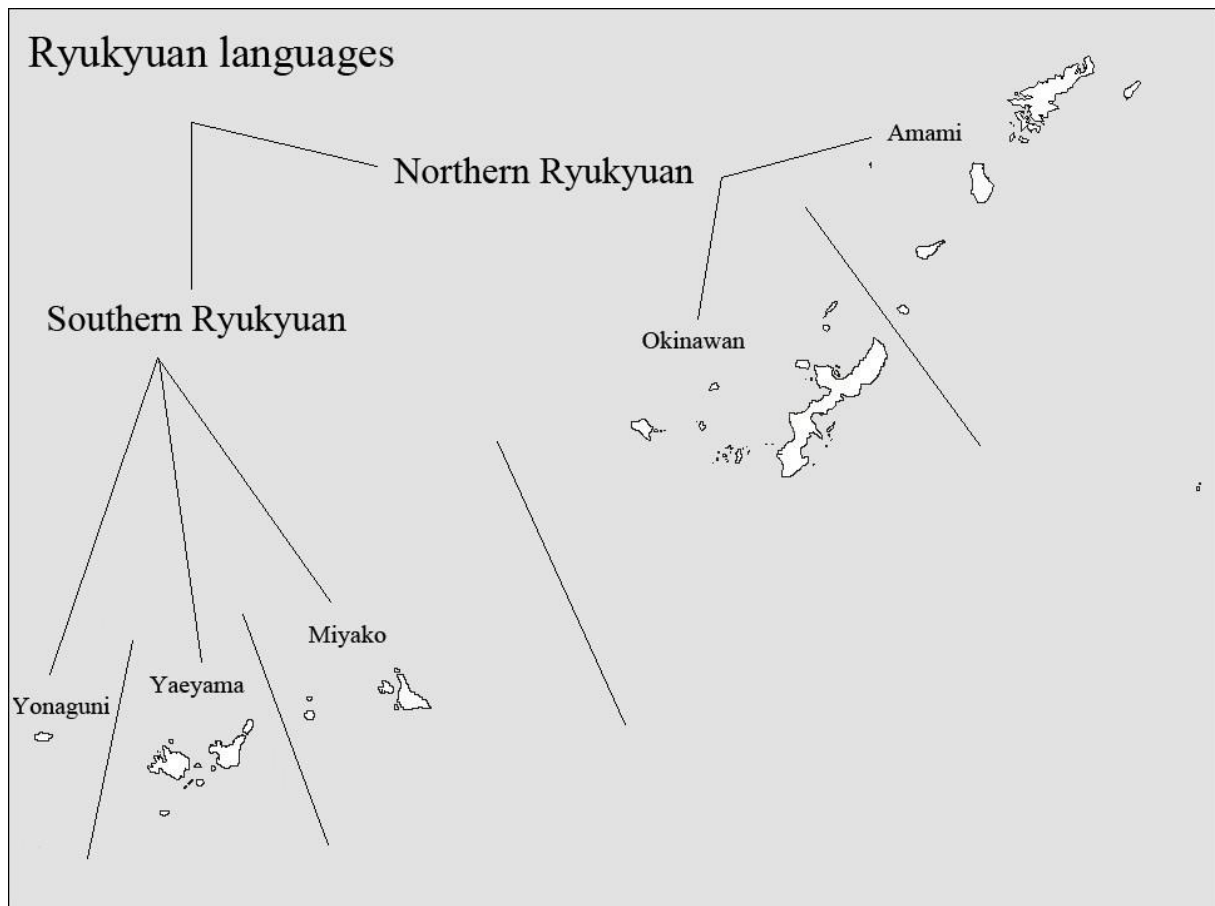
Shuri which was the old capital of the Ryukyu Kingdom. People living in rural areas on the other hand were more willing to acquire standard Japanese since they had less confidence in their Okinawan dialects which differed from the prestigious one in Shuri. Japanese consequently came to be viewed as a means to acquire a variety seen as superior to the one spoken in the former capital. Further investigation would be needed to confirm Ōsumi's hypothesis as it was based on her experiences rather than scientific research, but it is indeed not farfetched to assume that the people in the old influential areas have been less eager to recognize standard Japanese as legitimate. Ōsumi (2001: 73-74) adds that this same tendency can be seen in the Kansai region on mainland Japan as well, where old influential cities like Kyoto and Nara are located.

The geographical distribution of the five commonly recognized languages is divided as follows:

- Amami: Amami Island and neighboring islands, including Kikai and Tokunoshima Islands
- Okinawan²: Okinawa Island and neighboring islands
- Miyako: Miyakao Island and neighboring islands
- Yaeyama: Yaeyama Islands (Yonaguni Island excluded)
- Yonaguni: Yonaguni Island

(UNESCO 2013)

² Okinawan is sometimes divided into two languages, Okinawan and Kunigami, with Okinawan being spoken on the southern and central parts of Okinawa Island, whereas Kunigami is spoken on the northern part of the island (UNESCO 2013).



Map showing the geographical distribution of the five commonly recognized Ryukyuan languages.

3.2 The Okinawan language

As this paper will deal with a variety on the island of Okinawa which has evolved from the meeting between the Okinawan and Japanese languages a short introduction of the Okinawan language will be given to illustrate a few of the many differences from Japanese. The most basic typological features are similar between the two languages since they are closely related; focus will therefore mostly be on some of the aspects where the languages differ. Some features still present in the Okinawan language of today existed in older varieties of Japanese (Shinzato 2012: 299); some of these features are also incorporated in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi. The following description has been based on the Shuri dialect due to the prestigious position it holds (Shibatani 1990: 194).

Firstly, Okinawan is an agglutinative subject-object-verb language with postpositional grammatical markers, and inflected auxiliaries follow the main verb (Hoffer 1969: 2). Case is

marked through particles, and the language furthermore has an elaborate honorific system and is written with a mix of Japanese kana characters and Chinese characters (Shimoji 2012).

Following here is a summary of some points of interest in the Okinawan language adapted from Shimoji (2012), for a more elaborate description readers are referred to the aforementioned source. Concerning phonology he states that it has a pitch accent system and is characterized by glottalized nasals and glides, and furthermore that geminate onsets and pre-onset glottal stops occur, the former exemplified in words like /kkwa/ ‘child’ and the later in /ʔwaa/ ‘pig’; a combination of both can occur if the consonant is a nasal as in /ʔmmee/ ‘grandmother’. The vowel inventory consists of the five vowels /a/ /i/ /u/ /e/ /o/, although /e/ and /o/ can only occur as long vowels. There is furthermore a two mora minimality constraint on words, meaning that all one-syllable words must consist of at least two mora.

A topic marker exists similarly to Japanese but it consists of several allomorphs changing with the final segment of the noun phrase. There is in addition a special topic marker for the first person pronoun; and if the noun phrase ends in *i* or *u* the final vowel of the phrase undergoes change, *tui* ‘bird’ consequently becomes *tue* if followed by a topic marker and *utu* ‘sound’ becomes *uto*.

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------|
| • First person pronoun: | <i>nee</i> | <i>wan nee</i> (I-TOP) |
| • Ending with long vowel: | <i>ya</i> | <i>chuu ya</i> (today-TOP) |
| • Ending with nasal: | <i>oo</i> | <i>in oo</i> (dog-TOP) |
| • Ending with <i>a</i> : | <i>a</i> | <i>irana a</i> (sickle-TOP) |
| • Ending with <i>i</i> : | <i>e</i> | <i>tui</i> → <i>tue e</i> (bird-TOP) |
| • Ending with <i>u</i> : | <i>o</i> | <i>utu</i> → <i>uto o</i> (sound-TOP) |

Case marking is characterized by unmarked transitive objects and the two dative case markers *nkai* and *kai*; the latter do not combine with the agent of a passive sentence. Furthermore, the two nominative case markers *ga* and *nu* are used depending on a system of animacy hierarchy where *ga* is used for proper nouns, pronouns and other human related terms and *nu* is used in all other areas. Voluntary focus marking is also used with *du* marking declarative and interrogative sentences and *ga* marking dubitative sentences. Imperative sentences are unmarked.

- (1) ari ga ga yum-u-ra
 (s)he NOM FOC read-IPRF.DUB
 'I wonder if (s)he reads.'

Unlike Japanese, mood is expressed through an obligatory verb inflection. In other words, a finite verb always has to indicate if it is indicative, interrogative, dubitative etc. Moreover, to form a relative clause the verb has to be inflected to an adnominal form, something which is not done in modern Japanese. The below sentence illustrates interrogative mood inflection as well as adnominal inflection.

- (2) kurikaa nkai miikuni chukur-at-ta-ru
 around this place DAT newly make-PASS.PAST.ADN
 subayaa shicch-oo-misee-mi
 noodle restaurant know-PROG.HON.INT
 'Do you know the noodle restaurant that was newly established around here?'

Adjectives function much in the same way as verbs, they are however distinguished by the stem *-sa* which appears right after the root, e.g. *maa-sa-n* 'tasty'. Like verbs they always inflect for tense and mood which can be seen in the final *-n* indicating indicative mood, nonpast tense is however unmarked. The infinitive form of the adjective changes the *-sa* stem to *-ku*. When negating an adjective, the stem is changed to a topicalized infinitive and the negative auxiliary *-neen* is attached which inherently carries unmarked indicative mood and nonpast tense.

- (3) maa - ko - o nee - n - Ø - Ø
 tasty-INF TOP not exist-NEG.NPAST.IND
 '(It's) not tasty'

The lexicon consists mainly of native words but as a result of old relations with Japan and China, Japanese loans, Sino-Japanese loans and Chinese loans have entered the language; Sino-Japanese loans mainly appear in written language. In addition, some English loans have entered as a consequence of the American occupation (Shimoji 2012: 378-379).

According to Bairon the dialects of Naha and Shuri mixed and grew into what is called *shibaikutuba* 'stage language' in a period before the Second World War. It spread throughout the entire island through theater, folk songs, and radio and in a sense became the Okinawan equivalent of standard Japanese; it did however not eradicate other dialects but was acquired besides them (Bairon & Heinrich 2007); this perhaps makes the term 'regional common

language' more appropriate at present as it is a regional variety used for cross-communication between different speech communities, yet without contesting standard Japanese as the language of wider communication (Long 1996: 119-120). Heavy regional variations and dialects exist within the island. Bairon & Heinrich (2007) further elaborate that tangible dialectal differences exist in such close proximities as between the cities of Naha and Itoman, and that people from the south part of the island only understand people from the north-central part to some degree. The language in the northern part is classified as the separate language Kunigami by UNESCO (2013).

3.3 Defining Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi

Roberson (2003: 204) states that “The creative mixing of Okinawan and Japanese (and English) languages, known as *Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi*, has been analyzed by Ōta, who importantly contends that this new language champuru³ should itself be considered as a newly emergent and authentic Okinawan language creation.” If we consider this quote, then questions arise about further classification and clarification of this “newly emergent language creation”. As one looks into the matter, it becomes clear that it is not at all clear. Let us therefore explore some of the thoughts that have been presented in other works.

3.3.1 Contents

There is general agreement among linguists that Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is standard Japanese tinged by the Okinawan language (Takaesu 1994) which is genealogically related to Japanese (Shimoji 2010: 2). Furthermore, based on the newspaper column *uchinaa-yamatoguchi o kaisetsu* ‘Explaining Okinawan Japanese’ by Takaesu which appeared in the Okinawa Times 2008-2009, it would also be defined as Japanese in which influences from the Okinawan language frequently occur. Moreover it is characterized as containing word formations unique to the variety in that morphological structures of the two languages from which it is derived have been mixed, and it furthermore contains unique borrowings from English (Karimata 2008: 59-62; Ōsumi 2001: 88-89). It is spoken on the island of Okinawa and surrounding

³ Champuru (also chanpuruu) is a term that originally referred to a popular Okinawan dish which originated after the Second World War and was made by mixing available ingredients together. It has since then also come to denote the mixed culture found on Okinawa (Ōta 1997: 150).

smaller islands, and as Karimata points out, although similar varieties can be found elsewhere throughout the Ryukyu Islands, these differ in form from Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi since other languages are spoken on other islands (2008: 56); thus the correspondence in those cases is between standard Japanese and the language spoken in the particular group of islands.

Karimata goes on to say that only the variety found on Okinawa and the one found on the Amami Islands, called *Ton Futsuugo*, have been labeled with names. There is furthermore no general denomination for this language phenomenon found throughout the Ryukyu Islands (2008:56). The term Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is derived from the Okinawan words *Uchinaa*, which is the word for the island of Okinawa, and *Yamatuguchi*⁴ which is the word for the Japanese language (Takaesu 2005: 266); it could thus be translated as ‘Okinawan Japanese’.

There is nevertheless some confusion surrounding the term, indeed, not even my informant was completely certain as to where the line is between Uchinaaguchi ‘Okinawan language’ and Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi ‘Okinawan Japanese’. The very fact that a column in the local newspaper was seen as needed somewhat proves the lack of knowledge surrounding the term. The confusion seemingly arises from the fact that the Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi used by the elderly differs strongly from that used by the youth, and it seems as if the varieties used by the two groups are not always thought of as being the same. As understood from Takaesu, unlike that of the youth, the Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi of the elderly is heavily influenced by Okinawan on the points of accent and pronunciation. Furthermore, a heavier influence on grammar is seen (1994; 2008-2009), and according to my informant, a wider usage of unchanged Okinawan words is common. In contrast, newly created expressions neither seen in Okinawan nor in standard Japanese, as can be discerned from Ōsumi (2001: 88), are limited to younger generations; this point is also backed up by my informant. Adding to the confusion are statements like “[The] speech patterns of [young Okinawans] are highly creolized in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi” and “Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, the lingua franca of young Okinawans.” by Ōta (1997: 158, 159), which give an impression of it being the variety of the youth, excluding the even more heavily Okinawan influenced variety spoken by the elderly.

If we summarize all the definitions given it would be: a variety used by people of all ages on the island of Okinawa and surrounding smaller islands where the Okinawan language is (or was traditionally) spoken. It is neither Okinawan nor pure standard Japanese but rather a form of Japanese with influences from Okinawan. It furthermore contains English borrowings

⁴ The word in Okinawan is *Yamatuguchi* (the Okinawan ‘tu’ mora is not to be confused with the Japanese ‘tsu’ mora). However, it is commonly transcribed as *Yamatoguchi* which I have chosen to adhere to for the sake of uniformity.

not seen in standard Japanese and word forms found in neither Okinawan nor in standard Japanese.

3.3.2 Label

There has been some discussion as to what Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi should be classified as, but no consensus has been reached as of yet. Karimata advocates that it is a creole language based on the view that it was formed through the encounter between standard Japanese and Okinawan, and because it contains some forms which are unique, not appearing in either of the languages from which it is derived (2008: 58-59). Bairon et al. (2009) makes a valid point opposing this view by stating that:

Creole languages emerge in contact situations in which two speech communities do not share a language, and hence create on the basis of their respective languages a third language for the sake of communication.

Indeed, Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is not used as a means of communication between people on Okinawa and other parts of Japan. This being the case, they rather advocate the application of the term ‘mixed language’ which they, based on Kaye & Tosco (2003: 22), explain as being a variety “purposefully formed for the sake of setting their speakers apart from other speech communities”. I would however like to oppose this view of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi as being “purposefully formed” by drawing on the statement by Ōsumi (2001: 83) that “[Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi] is partly the result of efforts of the older generation to imitate standard Japanese without much formal training.” Based on this it would rather seem that Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi came to exist spontaneously as the result of efforts to acquire proficiency in standard Japanese. Even more important is the fact that these efforts to acquire standard Japanese were brought about by external forces with the very opposite goal, namely to assimilate the people of Okinawa and eradicate their ethnic identity. Albeit, if the line “purposefully formed” is set apart, the term ‘mixed language’ does work well in the case of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi. By Kaye & Tosco’s definition it is a language variety not used as lingua franca which has evolved in a bilingual community, it furthermore contains grammatical mixture and perhaps most importantly, it works as an identity marker (2003: 21-23). It has in recent years been argued that Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, even though it was not created with the specific purpose of being an identity marker, has come to be a means to intentionally uphold Okinawan identity. This is supported by answers in a survey by Ōsumi

(2001: 78-79) where informants claimed that the use of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi gave them a sense of Okinawan identity; this point will be discussed at greater length in 4.2 *Language attitudes and identity*. To conclude, if the formation process of a mixed language not necessarily has to be intentional, then Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi fits this frame well. In the absence of better terminology it is the one that will be advocated in this paper.

3.4 Characteristics of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi

In this chapter I will give a brief introduction to some of the features of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi. This introduction can but encompass some of the many distinct traits observable, but it does nevertheless offer a vivid understanding of some of the current differences from standard Japanese. For a more detailed discussion on the grammar, phonology, lexicon etc. of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, readers are referred to Ōsumi (2001), and readers with proficiency in Japanese are furthermore referred to Takaesu (1994) and Karimata (2008).

At present it might be hard to perceive the special speech forms and patterns observed in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi as standardized. Takaesu makes clear that some forms are solely observed amongst elderly speakers, whose command of standard Japanese is not as well developed, resulting in a heavier influence from Okinawan. However she furthermore states that some characteristics often related to elderly speakers in rare cases can be observed among young speakers as well; e.g. confusion between *r* and *d* reportedly still occurs among junior high school students (2008-2009). Many of the forms differing from standard Japanese thus seem to vary between individuals, and the frequency of some of them is also closely related to age. Regional variations in degree of usage and in vocabulary also exist according to my informant. Because of these points the characteristics presented here are by no means used by all speakers of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, or in some cases not even known to all speakers. They can however at present time still be observed, but sometimes only in rare cases.

3.4.1 Lexicon

Takaesu (1994: 284) mentions four different categories of words within Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, which are as follows:

- Okinawan words which have taken standard Japanese forms, these are words which do not exist in standard Japanese.
- Words which appear the same in Okinawan and standard Japanese, but use the Okinawan semantics which differ from those of standard Japanese.
- Standard Japanese words which have been given a wider range of meanings.
- Words which have no relation to Okinawan and are presumed to be from dialects in other regions such as Kyushu.

This categorization does not capture the entire spectrum of the types of words found in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi. Firstly it should be pointed out that speakers of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi mainly use standard Japanese words but also Okinawan words which have been brought in completely unchanged. Moreover not mentioned by Takaesu are standard Japanese words which have been mixed with Okinawan forms (Karimata 2008: 62). Also appearing are some words which have come to be used due to influences from the American military presence; such words are for example *tuunaa* ‘tuna’, *washimiruku* ‘condensed milk’ and *paaraa* ‘stall’ (Karimata 2008: 62; Ōsumi 2001: 89)⁵.

The Okinawan language contains Japanese cognate words which differ in meaning. The difference sometimes goes unnoticed by speakers of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi who use them under the impression that other Japanese speakers will perceive them in the same way (Ōsumi 2001: 82). The word *chiri* is, as shown in the table, interchangeably used for ‘trash’, this semantic confusion has resulted in words like *chiribako* meaning ‘trash can’, as opposed to the standard Japanese word *gomibako* (Takaesu 2008-2009).

Okinawan term	Japanese cognate	Actual semantic equivalent
<i>wata</i> (belly)	<i>wata</i> (guts)	<i>hara</i>
<i>chiri</i> (trash)	<i>chiri</i> (dust)	<i>gomi</i>
<i>nishi</i> (north)	<i>nishi</i> (west)	<i>kita</i>
<i>ganjuu</i> (strong, healthy)	<i>ganjō</i> (strongly built)	<i>kenkō</i>
<i>jootoo</i> (good)	<i>jōtō</i> (excellent quality)	<i>ii</i>
<i>nakami</i> (guts)	<i>nakami</i> (contents)	<i>motsu</i>

Examples adapted from (Ōsumi 2001: 82)

⁵ All English translations for example sentences and vocabulary taken from Takaesu (1994) and Karimata (2008) in this section have been provided by myself, I take full responsibility for any mistakes.

A gap between some onomatopoeic expressions has also come to exist due to influences from Okinawan; e.g. the sound of raindrops falling can be expressed as *chonchon* rather than *botabota*, which is used in standard Japanese. However, not only standard Japanese onomatopoeia are affected by this gap, in some cases things normally not expressed through onomatopoeia can be expressed with such words borrowed from Okinawan; e.g. *hara ga tatsu* ‘to get angry’ can be expressed as *wajiwajii suru* when speaking Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi (Takaesu 2008-2009).

Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi	Standard Japanese	English
<i>chonchon</i>	<i>potapota</i>	dripping sound
<i>baabaa</i>	<i>byūbyū</i>	strong wind
<i>ohohoho</i>	<i>gohogoho</i>	cough
<i>wasawasa</i>	<i>zawazawa</i>	noisy
<i>muchamucha</i>	<i>betobeto</i>	being sticky
<i>wajiwajii suru</i>	<i>hara ga tatsu</i> (non-onomatopoeic expression)	to get angry

Examples adapted from (Takaesu 2008-2009; Karimata 2008: 58)

Another prominent feature is Okinawan adjective and verb word stems combined with Japanese inflections. The adjectival ending *n* (denoting indicative mood) which appears in Okinawan is replaced with the conjugating *i* ending of some Japanese adjectives, as in *anmasan* ‘troublesome’ which becomes *anmasai*. The Okinawan word has in some cases undergone simplification, e.g. *chimugurasan* ‘poor, pitiable’ has been shortened to *chimui* (Karimata 2008: 60). My informant claims that the adjective is sometimes used in its original Okinawan form as well. This is seemingly only a question of the speaker’s preference for each word. According to Ōsumi, the incorporation of standard Japanese inflections into Okinawan words is often a way for the youth to create new expressions (2001: 89), such as the ones in the table below. These new developments show that there are forces pushing the language use away from full assimilation to standard Japanese.

Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi verbs	English
<i>hogasu</i>	to dig a hole
<i>niriru</i>	to get tired
<i>yamasu</i>	to hurt
<i>shikabu</i>	to be surprised
<i>hingiru</i>	to escape
<i>achirasu</i>	to warm
<i>fukasu</i>	to boil

Examples adapted from (Ōsumi 2001: 89; Takaesu 1994: 286)

Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi adjectives	English
<i>umusai</i>	interesting
<i>yaasai</i>	hungry
<i>duugurushii</i>	feeling uneasy
<i>anmasai</i>	troublesome
<i>magisai</i>	big
<i>hagoi</i>	dirty
<i>chimui</i>	poor, pitiable

Examples adapted from (Ōsumi 2001: 89; Karimata 2008: 60)

Some nouns can take suffixes not seen in standard Japanese. Ōsumi (2001: 79) reports about the Okinawan *-aa* suffix which denotes a kind of person. A few examples of standard Japanese words combined with that suffix are given below; note that the last one is an English loanword.

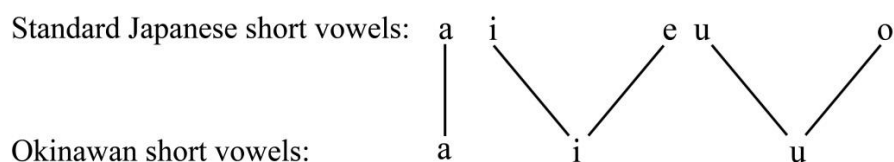
Standard Japanese word	Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi word	English
<i>uso</i> (lie)	<i>usosaa</i>	liar
<i>bukatsu</i> (club activity)	<i>bukachaa</i>	student participating in club activities
<i>naichi</i> (mainland)	<i>naichaa</i>	person from mainland Japan
<i>inchiki</i> (fake, scam)	<i>inchikaa</i>	trickster
<i>kuruma o motsu</i> (to own a car)	<i>kuruma mucchaa</i>	car owner
<i>ricchi</i> (rich)	<i>ricchaa</i>	rich person

Examples adapted from (Karimata 2008: 62; Ōsumi 2001: 89)

Takeasu mentions a standard Japanese word set which has been narrowed down to contain fewer words. In standard Japanese the three demonstrative pronouns *kore* ‘this’, *sore* ‘that, close to the listener’, *are* ‘that, away from both the speaker and the listener’ are used to express the location of an object. In Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi *kore* can be used both to point towards something close to speaker or something close to the listener, and *are* can similarly be used to point towards something away from the listener and the speaker, or something close to the listener (1994: 285). In Curry (2004: 269), the equivalent to the Japanese *sore* is reported to be pronounced as /ʔuri/ in the Shuri dialect of Okinawan. This is only conjecture, but the new role of *are* in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi might have come to exist as the result of /ʔuri/ being generalized as *are* and then having had the meanings of both *sore* and *are* incorporated. It is moreover unclear from Curry if the Okinawan language has an exact equivalent to *are* as he translates /ʔuri/ as “sore, (are?)” Why *kore*, pronounced as /kuri/ in Okinawan (Curry 2004: 260), also acquired a broader function is unclear.

3.4.2 Phonology

Pronunciation and accent in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi has been subjected to influences from Okinawan. In contrast to standard Japanese which has the five short vowels /a/ /i/ /u/ /e/ /o/ which can also be lengthened, most Okinawan dialects only have the three vowels /a/ /i/ /u/ which can be either short or long, and the vowels /e/ and /o/ which are always long (Shimoji 2012: 352), four vowels can however be observed in some dialects (Ōsumi 2001: 83); consequently generalization and confusion between vowel sounds can be observed (Ōsumi 2001: 83). Heavy influences on pronunciation are however only seen among speakers of the older generations that acquired the vernacular as their first language (Takeasu 1994: 248). This means that the greater phonological differences from standard Japanese are bound to disappear within a foreseeable time.



There is a tendency to overgeneralize the usage of *e* and *o* in standard Japanese words which normally would be pronounced with *i* and *u* (Takaesu 2008-2009). E.g. *udewa* ‘bracelet’ can thus be mispronounced as *odewa* and *shiwa* ‘wrinkle’ as *shewa* etc. (Takaesu 1994: 248).

Confusion between consonants can similarly be heard among the elderly. For example the phonemes [ɕ] and [s] which are allophones in Okinawan are sometimes mixed resulting in pronunciations such as *kaisa* instead of *kaisha* ‘company’ and *sujutsu* instead of *shujutsu* ‘operation’. Similarly [z] can be mispronounced as [dz], e.g. *zettai* ‘absolutely’ becomes *jettai* etc. (Takaesu 1994: 249). The glides and pre-onset glottal stops of Okinawan can sometimes also appear; /otoko/ ‘man’ can consequently come to be pronounced as /wotoko/ and /inu/ ‘dog’ as /ʔinu/ (Takaesu 1994: 251).

The Okinawan two mora minimality constraint has come to be reflected in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi as well (Shimoji 2012: 353), resulting in standard Japanese words like *ki* ‘tree’ being pronounced as *kii* and *ha* ‘tooth’ as *haa*; Takaesu (2008-2009) claims this kind of vowel lengthening to still be common among young people as well.

The accent is influenced by the vernacular but is developing in the direction of assimilation to that of standard Japanese. Takaesu (1994: 251-253) explains that speakers from the older generations often retain an Okinawan accent whereas the younger generations tend to have acquired the standard Japanese accent to varying degrees. As exposure to standard Japanese accent has increased, a systematic accent distinction has come to be acquired by this speaker group. Standard Japanese accent is furthermore more commonly found in two mora words than in one mora words. Among the middle aged group accent distinction seems to have collapsed, resulting in variations in accent on the same word in different situations. Takaesu nevertheless makes clear that there is no one-to-one correspondence between age and accent; the line between these three accent groups is somewhat blurred.

3.4.3 Grammar

Some grammatical structures differ between Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi and standard Japanese; there are furthermore some structures which have no equivalent in standard Japanese. Let us first take a look at the verb negation paradigm.

Negative consonant verb conjugations as well as vowel verb conjugations differ from standard Japanese. The conjugations for these two types of verbs and the irregular verbs *suru*

‘to do’ and *kuru* ‘to come’ are shown in the table below. Note that *suru* are negated in the same way in both standard Japanese and Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi.

	Standard Japanese	Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi	English
Consonant verbs	(<i>kaku</i>) <i>kakanai</i>	(<i>kaku</i>) <i>kakan</i>	to write to not write
Vowel verbs	(<i>taberu</i>) <i>tabenai</i>	(<i>taberu</i>) <i>taberan</i>	to eat to not eat
Irregular verbs	(<i>suru</i>) <i>shinai</i> (<i>kuru</i>) <i>konai</i>	(<i>suru</i>) <i>shinai</i> (<i>kuru</i>) <i>kon</i>	to do to not do to come to not come

Examples adapted from (Takaesu 1994: 260)

A proposition not to do something can be expressed by negating the verb and adding *-koo*. This is of extra interest since, according to Takaesu (1994: 263), no exact equivalent of this grammatical form exists in standard Japanese where other ways have to be found to express it. The negative volitional form *mai* in standard Japanese does seemingly not cover the meaning ‘let’s not’ which *-koo* expresses; a native Japanese speaker with whom the usage of *mai* was discussed supported this interpretation. At any rate is *mai*, as expressed by Makino & Tsutsui (1995: 163) “basically a written form.” The two sentences below illustrate the usage of *-koo* and a standard Japanese alternative to expressing the same meaning; the top one being Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi and the bottom one being standard Japanese:

(4) kyoo wa toshokan ni ik-an-koo
today TOP library ALL go-NEG.VOL
‘Let’s not go to the library today.’

(5) kyō wa toshokan ni iku no wa yos-ō
today TOP library ALL go-NPAST NOMI TOP cease-VOL
‘Let’s not go to the library today.’

Examples adapted from (Takaesu 1994: 263)

The positive volitional in combination with the sentence final particle *ne* can be used in a way diverging from standard Japanese as it does not extend an invitation. Consider the following sentence in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi:

- (6) saki ni kaer-oo ne
 ahead of retun home-VOL FP
 ‘I’m going home ahead of you.’

Example adapted from (Takaesu 1994: 264)

A speaker of standard Japanese would interpret this sentence as an invitation to go home together but if a speaker of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi would have uttered it the intention would be to go home alone (Takaesu 1994: 264).

In Okinawan, the suffix *-gwaa* can be attached to nouns, adverbs etc. as a diminutive, or to express that something is sweet or lovely. In Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, this suffix can be attached to words of Okinawan origin as well as standard Japanese words as in *tanagwaa* ‘small shelf’ (Ōsumi 2001: 81). This form is in the city of Itoman according to my informant associated with elderly speakers; if it is limited to elderly speakers in all parts of Okinawa is however unclear.

- (7) ame gwaa fut-te-iru yo
 rain DIM fall-PROG.NPAST FP
 ‘It’s raining lightly.’

Example adapted from (Takaesu 1994: 283)

One form which is confusing to people speaking standard Japanese is the modal expression *hazu* which is used interchangeably with *darō*. The standard Japanese *hazu* is assumptive but takes on the conjectural role of *darō* in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi. *hazu* in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi thus fills the function of both *darō* and *hazu* and can be used without having a basis for the guess or assumption (Takaesu 1994: 262).

- (8) moo juuji daarukara tabun ai-te-ru hazu yo
 already 10 o’clock therefore probably open-PROG.NPAST CON FP
 ‘It’s already 10 o’clock so it’s probably open.’

Example adapted from (Takaesu 1994: 262)

The suffix *-jiraa* can be added to nouns and verbs to express physical resemblance or resemblance in behavior; it can furthermore express that someone is pretending. It functions similarly to the standard Japanese suffix *-mitai*, although it is not interchangeable in all

situations. *-jiraa* is a form which is unique to Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi and is used mainly by young people (Karimata 2008: 62).

Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi	English
<i>naichaa jiraa</i>	someone looks like a mainlander
<i>sensee jiraa</i>	someone is behaving like a teacher
<i>naiteru jiraa</i>	someone is pretending to cry
<i>shitteru jiraa</i>	know-it-all

Examples adapted from (Karimata 2008: 62)

3.4.4 Particles

Case particles in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi are mostly the same as in standard Japanese but some of them differ in form or in function. There is also a difference in form in some sentence final particles.

The *kara* particle has come to incorporate a much wider range of functions than it has in standard Japanese due to it being used in slightly different situations in Okinawan. In Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, other than the functions it has in standard Japanese, the *kara* particle can furthermore be used to mark means of transportation, non-human sources of information, and the place in which a movement takes place. Other particles are used in these instances in standard Japanese (Takaesu 1994: 256). In the first two sentences below the particle *de* would be used in standard Japanese and the particle *o* would be used in the third sentence.

- (9) obaachan wa basu kara ki-ta
 grandma TOP bus INS come-PAST
 ‘Grandma came by bus.’
- (10) sore o shinbun kara yon-da
 that ACC newspaper INS read.PAST
 ‘I read it in the newspaper.’
- (11) taroo wa kooen kara sanpo shi-te-iru
 tarō TOP park LOC walk do-PROG.NPAST
 ‘Tarō is taking a walk in the park.’

Examples constructed by the author based on examples by (Takaesu 1994: 257)

The *yori* particle used for comparison in standard Japanese functions in the same way but has taken the form *yorika* in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi. This is due to influences from the Okinawan *yaka* particle (Takaesu 1994: 258).

- (12) yaeyama wa okinawa yorika atsui
 yaeyama TOP okinawa COMP hot.PRED
 ‘Yaeyama is hotter than Okinawa.’

Example adapted from (Takaesu 1994: 258)

Very prominent among the sentence final particles are *baa* and *saa* which corresponds to *no* and *yo* in standard Japanese. The function of *baa* is to mark a question and *saa* adds emphasis.

- (13) nani shi-te-ru baa
 what do-PROG.NPAST QP
 ‘What are you doing?’

- (14) iku saa
 go-NPAST FP
 ‘I’ll go!’

Examples based on information from the informant

3.5 Summary

In this chapter we have seen that the linguistic situation on the Ryukyu Islands is complex with a multitude of languages and varieties spoken on the different island groups (Lawrence 2012; Shimoji 2012); although all of the languages are currently in an alarming state facing extinction within a few generations (Heinrich 2010: 35). We have also noted that many of these varieties are mutually unintelligible and that none of them are intelligible to people from mainland Japan (Ōsumi 2001: 70; Heinrich 2005: 62); consequently we have disputed the classification of the languages as dialects of Japanese since it is based purely upon old political decisions and has no basis in linguistics.

A short introduction to some aspects of the Okinawan language was given, and some characteristics of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi were sketched out to make the subject at hand more

tangible. Furthermore we have concluded that Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi at present is best defined as a mixed language. What is encompassed in the variety has been elucidated, but clarification has also been made concerning some fundamental differences between the Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi of the young and that of the elderly; these are differences that sometimes result in confusion as to what Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is, not only among linguists but also among Okinawans themselves.

4 Future outlook of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi

In this chapter different factors affecting Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi and earlier statements about its future will be discussed. Firstly the threat which further influences from standard Japanese poses will be treated. Moreover, the process whereby Okinawan culture has again risen to respected status among young Okinawans and the effect it has had on their identity and attitude towards Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi and the vernacular will be explored. Signs allegedly pointing towards cultural and linguistic stabilization on Okinawa will be discussed and considered in relation to statements about the linguistic future of the island. I will lastly argue for the importance that Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi holds for the maintenance of an Okinawan cultural uniqueness.

4.1 The threat from standard Japanese

Speculations have been made about the future of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi and not least about the Okinawan language. Based on the social situation on the island and in Japan, historical events, and on comparisons to similar cases, several conclusions have been presented in other papers. Let us mainly explore some of the thoughts surrounding the future of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, as the future outlook of the Okinawan language has been discussed at length by Heinrich (2012; 2010) among others. Ōsumi (2001: 87) states concerning the situation that:

[...] it must be stressed that language use in Okinawa today is far from stable. *Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi* is subject to assimilation to standard Japanese through the effects of the standardised education system, the mass media, and expanding contact with mainlanders.

She compares the process on Okinawa to de-creolization in which a creole language develops towards assimilation with the colonizers' language and is consequently rapidly changing (2001: 87); such a process has up until recent years undisputedly been occurring on Okinawa. It is easily observed in the difference between the Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi used by the youth and the elderly. On the one end we find heavy influences from the Okinawan language and on the other end we find an increase in pure standard Japanese influences.

Ōsumi is not alone in pointing out mass media as an agent in the spreading of standard Japanese influences. Grenoble & Whaley explain that new linguistic domains are created

through the internet, newspapers, television etc. and when they are besieged by dominant languages like Japanese, languages and varieties like the vernacular and Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi lose ground and the intruding language finds its way into new social spaces further spreading its influences (2006: 9). It has in contrast been argued by Ōta (1997), Ginsburg (1997), and Sugita (2010) that mass media can prove to be powerful tools favorable to language revitalization and upholding varieties, both in the case of Okinawan and Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi. The argument put forth is that radio, blogs, internet based forums etc. create new borderless spaces in which members of a speech community can find like-minded people with whom they can communicate; and it moreover forms a platform through which information can be spread for those interested in a language. Grenoble & Whaley elaborate on the other hand that the existence of media platforms like web sites, radio broadcasts and newspapers in a local language does not in itself guarantee vitality if mass media in general is dominated by another language. A web site in Okinawan becomes no more than a symbol as long as the people turn to Japanese web sites for the most part (2006: 9-10). In the case of Okinawa, Roberson (2003) and Shinzato (2012) among others do however highlight that mass media has helped in restoring confidence in Okinawan identity among younger generations which has heightened appreciation of the vernacular and Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi; which in turn translates into a healthier environment for such varieties.

The educational system was as we have seen before an influential factor on language development and, according to Ōsumi, still is; even though it is not used to discredit the vernacular anymore. Having standard Japanese as the language of education inevitably makes it the language of important matters and adult life, further restricting the domains in which the vernacular is used (Heinrich 2004: 171). However, Bairon has stated that Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is not used together with polite forms (2013: email to the author), and as both Japanese and Okinawan are languages with elaborate honorific systems this consequently inevitably restricts Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi to the private domain. A variety being used in fewer domains is a sign of yielding vitality according to Grenoble & Whaley (2006: 9); but as Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is inherently incompatible with formal situations the case is different. The further assimilation to standard Japanese which has been observable up until recently does moreover not necessarily precipitate a loss of domains in which Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is used as it has never been used in all domains at any time before and such intentions have never existed. Often discussed points of import to the continued usage of a language such as a stable orthography and education are thus rendered less relevant to the question of maintained usage of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi. The relevant point is that it is continuously favored above

standard Japanese in the domains in which it is currently dominant; which in turn is dependent upon the Okinawans finding value in the continued usage of it.

Shinzato (2012: 302) argues that Okinawan ethnicity in the last decades has turned positive and become appreciated among most Okinawans themselves as well as other Japanese nationals; this has resulted in a pride in their culture and language which she claims counteracts further language assimilation. It is furthermore argued by Ōta that the mixed culture found on Okinawa of which Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is part has created a new space from which Okinawan people can articulate an identity meaningful to themselves (1997: 163); this is a space different from the traditional Okinawa and the modern Japan. Ōsumi (2001: 88) adds that “[Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi] reflects the young people’s desire to assert their identity as Okinawans.”

From these points it would seem that Okinawans find value in continued usage of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi as it offers a way to maintain an Okinawan identity which they have come to value; and which furthermore has come to be valued on the mainland as well through Okinawan music, cuisine and literature (Heinrich 2004: 173). Nevertheless, Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi has undergone further assimilation to standard Japanese, at least up until the late 1990s. With the loss of the generations that have proficiency in the Okinawan language and furthermore speak a more conservative variety of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, influences from the vernacular are bound to further decrease, but they might not completely disappear. The youth find new expressions through music and theater according to (Shinzato 2012: 302); these are areas in which the vernacular is likely to prevail (Shinzato 2012: 304). By using Okinawan influenced morphological devices the youth can moreover create new expressions from standard Japanese words, which means that the assimilation towards standard Japanese is not unidirectional (Ōsumi 2001: 88). Although the pure Okinawan influences might be decreasing, the possibility that Okinawans have to create new expressions unique to their social sphere without having to look to the vernacular results in new possibilities to uphold a linguistic difference from mainland Japan. E.g. by adding the *-aa* suffix (discussed in 3.4.1 *Lexicon*) Okinawans can denote a kind of person, as in *kuruma mucchaa* ‘car owner’. This can most likely be successfully applied to a great variety of words and still be comprehensible to any young or middle aged Okinawan. These kinds of simple morphological devices allow them to express things through means that other Japanese nationals do not possess, and they can through this differentiate their language use. Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi has, in other words, the potential to develop in a direction different from both Okinawan and standard Japanese.

4.2 Language attitudes and identity

Language attitudes in Japan have been formed by the ideology adopted by the Meiji government; this is an ideology which intertwines ethnicity, nationality, and language, forming an inseparable bond between them. The result of this Heinrich (2010: 47-48) claims, is that because ethnicity and language are so closely linked it is not possible to speak another language and be Japanese. By speaking Okinawan one inevitably deprecates Japanese ethnicity which is linked to Japanese nationality. The Japanese nation is perceived as mono-ethnic and existing for the sake of ethnic Japanese nationals; consequently, if one speaks Okinawan one cannot be ethnic Japanese and is thus denied being a Japanese national. However, few Okinawans today harbor the wish of an independent Ryukyu nation which leads to Heinrich's final point that it is of great importance to separate ethnicity and language if any revitalization attempts of the Okinawan language are to succeed as the prize of denying being Japanese nationals are considered too high to pay. It can be of some interest to note in this connection that other Japanese pre-war colonies like Taiwan and Micronesia which like the Ryukyu Islands were subjected to Japanese language policies maintained their native languages as they gained independence (Shinzato 2012: 304).

Even though the prevalent ideology does inhibit Okinawan identity, it does not completely restrain it. Recent years have seen a rise in awareness and appreciation of Okinawan cultural uniqueness both on Okinawa and the mainland. Indeed, one does not have to look long to find clear signs that the passé ideology has slowly begun to crumble in its corners, although any bigger changes have yet to come. Shinzato (2012: 301) reveals that "According to NHK's nation-wide survey, Okinawans always rank ahead of other prefectures in their strength of consciousness of local ethnicity." This is interesting in contrast to Heinrich's claim that one cannot be Okinawan-Japanese. If a consciousness of local ethnicity exists, then it could mean that they perceive themselves as being ethnically different from other Japanese, or in other words that they could perceive themselves as being Okinawan-Japanese. Paulston however adds that a sense of ethnicity is not enough to save a language (1992: 71); in the light of this it would mean that Okinawan ethnicity is currently not strong enough to propagate for language revitalization, but as Shinzato points out, it could be strong enough to maintain a portion of the language (2012: 304), that is, through the maintenance of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi.

That Okinawan identity is prevailing could partly be the result of Japanese negligence in the past and to some extent today. The multiple betrayals and failures on the behalf of Japan during the 20th century to protect and care for the people of Okinawa did nothing but reveal weakness and tear down the image of a superior united Japan. During the American occupation the Okinawans found themselves in an all too familiar situation where a minority group sees association with another group as a means to improve their living conditions. Shinzato takes Occitan in France as a similar example of a people that, due to the view “that French was the key for upward mobility”, ceased to pass on their language to their children. Just as Shinzato points out, this was the approach taken in Okinawa as well (2012: 293-294), and it was further amplified during the suffering under American administration.

At this point I would however furthermore like to claim that the very failure of Japan to acknowledge the Okinawan people’s needs when the reversion took place in 1972 holds some significance in explaining why Okinawan culture and identity has prevailed to the present degree. They came to realize that further mobility toward Japan had nothing to offer thus bringing further intentional cultural assimilation to a halt. Indeed, upon the realization that the American military presence would remain, many who had strongly advocated a reversion to Japan changed their stance and anger was directed at the Japanese government and society (Hein & Selden 2003: 21). Japan has however done much to improve conditions for Okinawans since then (Hein & Selden 2003: 21), which might explain why very few adhere to the idea of an independent Ryukyuan nation. It might be seen as a condition where full association with Japan is unwanted, but nor does a full reversion to the past seem to offer enough that is desirable. As for language choice, a state of bilingualism with Japanese and Okinawan would be an obvious possibility which would not infringe on the current hybrid condition. Answering why that possibility seems to not have been seriously considered by the Okinawans is no easy task. However, as for the middle aged and elderly, Heinrich provides that earlier language discrimination has strengthened the position of Japanese, making it the legitimate language in their eyes (2004; 2010). Indeed, these are generations that actively made the choice to abandon the vernacular as they were discredited by the government. Former discrimination is in other words still fresh in their memory. Sugita makes the point that there still is no room for other languages in the Japanese school system (2010: 59), which becomes a hindrance on a governmental level. Moreover, a fear of Okinawan bilingualism having a negative effect on grades has also been reported as a reason for not transmitting the language (Heinrich 2004: 166-167; Shinzato 2012: 303).

As for young Okinawans, Grenoble & Whaley (2006: 24) state that the lack of interest among young people in revitalization programs often can be explained by the lack of obvious rewards. Bairon et al. (2009) as well as Grenoble & Whaley (2006: 19-20) also claim that cultural diversity is an important reason for revitalization. In agreement with Ōta's (1997: 163) argument that the Okinawan mixed culture (*chanpuruu*) has created a space from which the youth can articulate an identity that are meaningful to them, I would like to suggest that the youth of Okinawa might experience that they have already achieved a satisfactory amount of cultural and identical differentiation from Japan through this mixed culture, which Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi can be seen as part of. This would thus render Okinawan language revitalization needless in their eyes. The parts of Okinawan culture which were stigmatized ceased to be transmitted before the present young generation came to be, and their lifestyles have consequently been closer to that of mainland Japan than the Okinawan lifestyle which their grandparents experienced (Hein & Selden 2003: 28); the result of this is that the Okinawan culture of before seems alien to them. Grenoble & Whaley (2006: 171) states that "the desire to revitalize [can represent] more of a nostalgia toward the past than a vision for the future." It is however hard to see how nostalgia toward the past can exist among a generation whose grandparents and sometimes parents made the choice to part with it. Cultural aspects that did survive, as previously mentioned arguably partly due to Japanese deceit, and continued being passed down the generations have on the other hand come to be cherished as the young generation has not, as Shinzato (2012: 302) proclaims, experienced stigmatization and discrimination in the same way as their parents and grandparents did. In other words, even though the young generation is partly detached from the past, they find pride in their origin. Ōsumi moreover provides that a nationwide upswing in appreciation of Okinawan culture seen in the past years has also further boosted confidence in their identity (2001: 91). The mixed Okinawan-Japanese culture and language that they know has thus become their trademark, their way of self-identification.

4.3 Okinawan cultural appreciation and alleged signs of stabilization

The very fact that Ryukyuan languages and culture have come to receive attention through cultural exports to mainland Japan elevates Okinawan pride. Heinrich (2004: 173) reports that "Ryukyuan music, literature, arts, crafts and cuisine have become much admired in the

Japanese mainland.” Attention to the languages was further increased through the television series *Ryūkyū no kaze* in the early 1990’s which was in the Okinawan language with Japanese subtitles (Shinzato 2012: 299). Radio broadcasts in Okinawan or on the subject of Okinawan also elicit the linguistic situation on the island both for local listeners and people tuning in from the mainland (Sugita 2010: 56). Of some symbolic value is furthermore the Japanese emperor’s interest in Ryukyuan culture, he reportedly holds an interest in Ryukyuan poetry (*ryūka*) (Shinzato 2012: 300). Many universities offer Ryukyuan language courses which are popular, and a center for research on the Ryukyuan languages has been established (Heinrich 2004: 173).

Recent years have also seen an increase in groups and organizations concerned with the promotion and maintenance of Ryukyuan languages and culture; Heinrich reports that there by the mid 1990’s existed such organizations in more than half of the communities of Okinawa prefecture (2004: 173). Conservation of the Ryukyuan languages is however not a recent idea; between 1940 and 1941 the dialect debate (*hōgen ronsō*) occurred during which some argued that Japanese-Okinawan bilingualism should be considered an advantage. This was put against the dominant view that it was a handicap from which they should be liberated (Heinrich 2004: 161-162). Even earlier challengers of the language policy and language shift had existed since the time the first Ryukyuan graduates from universities on the mainland (Heinrich 2005: 67). What differs today is that advocating maintenance of the Ryukyuan languages is not controversial to the same extent, albeit interest in it is low among the general public.

Ideas of maintenance of local culture and identity are often based on a traditionalistic premise; Daiku Tetsuhiro⁶ however proposes that “pride in Okinawan language and culture does not necessarily mean a denial of change is important.” (Roberson 2003: 199). Ōta (1997: 165) has argued likewise claiming that “[Young Okinawans’] cultural difference undermines the notion that cultural mobilization always needs to invoke the authentic Okinawan tradition.” This means that although Okinawan culture still might be moving from its traditional essence Okinawan identity is not necessarily destabilized but rather enhanced through the addition of new aspects to it. To illustrate this with an example I quote Roberson (2003: 195) “[Okinawan pop music] is one kind of cultural practice that is involved in the creation of local Okinawan identities [...]” Through the complementation of other means than local tradition the Okinawans can in other words further assert their identity in a way befitting the 21st century.

⁶ A Ryukyuan musician from Yaeyama Island.

An identity not Okinawan in the traditional sense and not pure Japanese furthermore detaches young Okinawans from past stigmatization which their grandparents experienced but still opens for the possibility to cherish their origin. This new kind of ethnical mobilization might have stabilizing effects on language use as Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi becomes an instrument through which the new Okinawa can be flourished.

To evaluate the linguistic situation on Okinawa one cannot neglect to consider the situation from a nationwide perspective as well as appreciation of Okinawan culture and identity are not the only signs that a linguistic situation more indulgent to diversity are on the rise in Japan. A heightened awareness of both ethnic and linguistic diversity challenging the homogeneous view on the nation has been brought about, partly due to increased immigration. Among these immigrants are moreover Japanese returnees, descendants of people who emigrated from Japan during the first part of the last century, who prove a challenge to the Japanese language ideology in that they are Japanese descendants who do not fit the framework due to their imperfect command of Japanese and the diverging cultural heritage they bring with them (Heinrich 2012: 150-151). The recognition of Ainu as a minority people by the Japanese government in 2008 furthermore proves that old ideologies of homogeneity are slowly being reevaluated. A nationwide upswing in appreciation of dialects has also been observable (Jinnouchi 2007).

Concerning the future linguistic situation on Okinawa with Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, Ōsumi (2001: 93) states that “The language of Okinawa has [...] entered a new phase, reflecting greater self-confidence.” She further claims that recent language developments on the island have given Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi “great vitality” (2001: 93-94). This could be interpreted as Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi being on the onset of stabilization, that might be true but it is still very uncertain as forces not linked to the concept of identity can facilitate further attrition. As discussed in *4.1 The threat from standard Japanese*, influences from the mainland through the school system, mass media and an influx of mainland Japanese people poses a different threat as standard Japanese influences are brought in diluting Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi. Considering the decline in usage of pure Okinawan expressions which has been observable between generations, other statements like “at least some research reports the maintenance of acquisition of Okinawan by the younger generation [...]” produced by Shinzato (2012: 302) based on a source from 1986, and “The form most likely to survive as a medium of communication [on Okinawa] will be a hybrid of Okinawan and Japanese.” (2012: 304) are of uncertain validity at the present. In an effort to cast further light on current

attitudes towards Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi and the future of it, older statements will be contrasted with the findings of my own survey in the next chapter.

4.4 Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi and language revitalization

Ōta (1997: 156) reports that some middle aged and elderly Okinawans have a negative view towards the usage of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi amongst the youth. Ōsumi (2001: 88) puts forth similar claims saying that middle aged and elderly Okinawans dislike the new forms appearing in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi as they are neither Okinawan nor Japanese. In a survey conducted by her (2001: 79) informants above the age of 40 proved this statement by expressing views like “I can’t stand their language. It’s neither Okinawan nor Japanese. [...]” and “The Okinawan language used by the youth is not right. They should not try to use it at all if their knowledge of it is imperfect.” This negative view towards imperfect usage of the Okinawan language is also shared by Fija Bairon, a language activist and teacher of the Okinawan language, and furthermore, a prominent person in the revitalization movement. In an interview (Bairon & Heinrich 2007) he states “sometimes I meet some old classmates but they speak with these accents. [...] it’s stupid the way they speak! It would be better if they spoke Japanese.”

An argument was previously put forth claiming that the lack of interest in revitalization of the Okinawan language among the youth can partly be explained by the sufficient comfort provided by Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, yet it is hard to see that decreased usage of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi would translate into increased support of the Okinawan language. The appropriate approach for anyone wishing Okinawan revitalization should be a positive attitude for all things highlighting difference from Japan as an environment supportive of Okinawan distinctiveness is more likely to bring about deeper interest in the language. It could moreover be argued that Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is an asset to current and future revitalization attempts; scolding people now for mixing Okinawan and Japanese, or for their imperfect command of Okinawan does nothing else than erase more sources of information on the language. The fact that the youth is interested in retaining some of the Okinawan uniqueness is a step in the right direction. If the goal is revitalization, then the appropriate approach should be to cherish every portion of the language still remaining. The forms which differ from both standard Japanese and Okinawan mostly have at least some basis in the Okinawan language, and the fact

remains that the youth moreover utilize pure Okinawan word forms to some degree; by discrediting the part of their Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi not seen as pure the risk of standard Japanese being favored over the pure Okinawan forms as well is imminent. Grenoble & Whaley claims that semi-speakers and what they call ‘rememberers’, people who only know fixed expressions, can prove to be useful in revitalizing a language (2006: 19). There are languages that have been revived after having disappeared in its spoken form all together, as was the case with Cornish (Grenoble & Whaley 2006: 46-47); such a language will however not be the same in its reinvented form. That being the case, if a revitalized state true to the variety as it was before attrition began is strived for then every bit of information becomes vital in achieving that goal.

The boost in confidence and appreciation of Okinawan identity in recent years and the pride in cultural heritage that the youth demonstrates make it clear that Okinawan identity and culture is something that is viewed in a positive light among them. It would then seem counterproductive to repudiate bits of it simply on the basis that they are not viewed as pure. That kind of discrediting conveys a sense of hostility towards Okinawan expressions and language use, and through that, towards Okinawan culture and identity as perceived by the youth. It is important to remember that the Okinawan culture of the past, still in the memory of the elderly, have not existed in the life times of the younger generations; their perception of Okinawan identity is a different one. Okinawa has been put through much during the last century which has left deep marks on both culture and language. This must inevitably be taken into consideration when planning cultural and linguistic revitalization. If the goal with language revitalization on Okinawa is to save the identity and cultural uniqueness of the people, then appreciation of newly invented cultural traits separating them from mainland Japan is important as well, because setting out to bring the culture back to the 19th century is not only untenable, but unwanted by most.

4.5 Summary

In this chapter we have discussed the fact that Okinawan culture and identity have come to be appreciated not only among young Okinawans themselves but also among people in mainland Japan (Heinrich 2004: 173). This is in part due to mass media highlighting Okinawan uniqueness (Roberson 2003; Shinzato 2012), but more importantly due to historical and

political factors making further identification with Japan unwanted. Albeit, the appreciated Okinawan culture is a newly emergent hybrid which differs from the traditional culture, as such has not been part of the middle aged and young Okinawans' lives. Part of this hybrid culture is Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi which consequently has come to be a way of upholding an Okinawan identity.

Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi avoids a collision with Japanese language ideologies by being restricted to the private domain through not being used together with polite forms. This renders the discourse of ideology less important to the question of the vitality of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi. Even so, claims have been made by other linguists that the situation is unstable as standard Japanese is continuously influencing Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi on a lexical level. The main points of this chapter will be further discussed and contrasted to the findings of the survey presented in the following chapter.

5 Survey

In this chapter a survey conducted specifically for the sake of this paper will be presented. In previous chapters the linguistic situation on Okinawa and future outlook has been discussed at length from a historical, political and sociolinguistic point of view. Factors allegedly strengthening or weakening the position of varieties other than standard Japanese have been contrasted and considered. Based on previous research Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is likely to remain as the spoken form of choice in the private domain. Moreover has a process of polarization between the Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi of the youth and the elderly been observed in that the elderly uses forms more true to the Okinawan language whereas the youth has come to mix grammatical properties to a greater extent, consequently creating word formations neither truly Okinawan nor truly Japanese. This is the effect of a continued assimilation towards standard Japanese which is likely to continue to an unknown extent.

The goal of the following survey was to cast further light on the current situation and reevaluate the future outlook of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi. Research and investigations focusing specifically on the vitality of this variety on Okinawa has been limited in the past, although not nonexistent (see Ōsumi 2001). With this survey language choice will be put in a broader context including mainly social but also political and economic factors, allowing us to see how both internal and external factors come into play. Attitudes towards, and knowledge of the vernacular was also taken into account as concern for tradition is of relevance. The survey was constructed around points which are thought to be influential on language choices and affect language shift both specifically on Okinawa and in general; some questions were moreover based on a survey by Ōsumi (2001).

5.1 Methodology

The choice of a survey as research method was preferable as quantity of answers is of import when investigating attitudes and choices of a large group of people. To discern the current situation and future outlook of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi it was based around fifteen questions (some with follow up questions) dealing with a broad range of factors such as social, political, and economical. Observations by the participants as well as their attitudes and perceived new

developments were furthermore taken into account. The results were finally contrasted with the statements and hypotheses presented and discussed in previous chapters.

The focus group of the survey was people ranging from 15 to 25 years of age, born and raised on the main island of Okinawa or surrounding smaller islands sharing the same traditional language. People from other island groups within the Ryukyuan archipelago were of no interest as they do not speak Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi. The choice to exclusively include people of young age was based on the fact that attitudes of the previous generations have already been examined and discussed by other scholars. The aim was moreover to contrast the answers received with statements based on older research to discern if any changes in attitude and usage have occurred. The survey was distributed as an online form with the help of two Okinawan-born persons accumulating 53 participants. They were all asked to state age to assure them being within the desired age group. Gender and whether or not they are currently residing on Okinawa were moreover inquired as these are factors which were thought to possibly be of relevance. However, no general tendency in answers could be discerned from these two factors and will therefore not be discussed any further in this paper.

Total number of participants:	53	
Age span:	18-24 years of age	
Men:	13	(24.53%)
Women:	40	(75.47%)
Currently living on Okinawa:	34	(64.15%)
Currently not living on Okinawa:	19	(35.85%)

Other than the above presented statistics the participants were also inquired about their native town. Regional variation within the language as well as whether they grew up in a rural place or in close proximity of an American military base might affect attitudes and language use. Regrettably, a mistake was committed in formulating the question; it became ambiguous between place of birth and place of current residence. A few participants thus answered locations off Okinawa and it is furthermore uncertain whether the recorded locations on Okinawa are the place in which they grew up or the place of current residence. Moreover, the modest extent of the investigation and the fact that the greater part of the municipalities on Okinawa which were noted are in the same southernmost region left speculations about regional variation unanswerable.

One problem one faces when conducting a survey is the problem of extracting truthful answers from the informants; if their opinion is considered controversial or taboo the answers will consequently be given from a socially acceptable perspective. This is an obstacle hard to get around when investigating attitudes and experiences as the participants cannot account for other people in such matters. The method of directing the question at people in their social sphere was however utilized when applicable. Rather than asking directly about the participant's own language use the question is directed at other peoples' language use since self-distance in such matters is impossible.

It should also be said that the lack of insight into who the survey was distributed to opens for the risk of the results being biased. It is possible that it was only sent to people of the same opinion as the persons who distributed it, or that people holding negative sentiments towards Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi and the Okinawan language generally did not care to answer it.

Due to the risk of misconception of the term Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi (discussed in *3.3.1 Label*) great precaution was taken in specifying what it denotes in this survey. It was not only specified initially but also in direct connection to questions where it stands in opposition to the Okinawan language. This is not reflected in the translations of the questions given below for the sake of easier readability, and as the reader of this paper have already been introduced to the definition it seemed unnecessary to repeat it.

Participants were in two of the questions asked to write down Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi words and expressions. Questions similar to these two were asked by Ōsumi (2001) in a survey conducted in 1996. The point in re-asking these questions was to see if any new expressions would be widely reported. This method however proved unsuitable as regional variation might come into play, and participants in this kind of survey cannot sketch up the entire picture of the vocabulary. The words and expressions which were received are nevertheless given in the appendix as it provides some insight to the forms currently in use.

The results of the survey are presented below in English; the original survey in Japanese is provided in the appendix.

5.2 The survey

In this section each question included in the survey will be presented together with the calculated results. Data on the total number of participants who answered each question are

also provided; most of them were however answered by all. The follow up questions were mostly limited to people providing a certain answer on the previous question, the total number of answers received out of the number of people eligible to answer are thus provided in those cases. The results of each question have in this section been commented individually; the findings of the survey will be summarized in *5.3 Discussion of results*.

Question 1A:

Do you think there are words and expressions unique to the island of Okinawa which are solely used by high school students or people below that age?

Answers:	50(53)	(94.34%)
Yes:	23	(46.00%)
No:	27	(54.00%)

The intention with this question was to discern if there have been new developments in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi among young people during recent years. If so is the case it would point towards development of new forms which would be a sign of vitality. A weak majority believed that no such words and expressions exist, although the relatively close amount of answers received by the two alternatives leaves this question unanswered. That new developments have occurred among the Okinawan youth in the past has however been reported by Ōsumi (2001).

Question 1B:

If you answered “yes” on question 1A: please write down such words and expressions and provide their meaning in standard Japanese.

A similar question was asked at the end of the survey where the participants were asked to write down words and expression they hear people of their own generation use. I do realize that I made a mistake in formulating these questions since university students and high school students belong to the same generation. Consequently, nearly all of the words and expressions provided in this question appeared at the end as well. Because of this all answers appearing in both questions have been merged at the end, and those which solely appeared as answers to this question have been provided separately. It is furthermore important to remember that

there is no guarantee that the words and expressions which were provided for this question are new creations. To answer if such has come to be, another form of investigation would be required as a survey proved to be unsuitable for this purpose. The words and expressions which were noted down are however provided as they give some insight into the vocabulary used in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi. The words and expression are summarized in the appendix alongside English translations.

Question 2:

Do people in the ages around 35-40 use more Okinawan and Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi words and expressions than people in your own generation?

Answers:	49(53)	(92.45%)
They use it a lot more:	6	(12.24%)
They use it more:	17	(34.69%)
They use it a bit more:	24	(48.98%)
They use it about as much as my own generation:	2	(4.09%)

It is clear from this that usage of Okinawan and Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi words and expressions have declined from the previous generation. Even though this reveals that the inventory of the variety is still diminishing it does not necessarily mean that it is losing ground as the preferred variety in the private domain. Finally, it as to be said that this question has a flaw which is the lack of the alternative “They use it less”. This might explain why four participants chose not to answer. However, as most of the participants acknowledged higher usage, the existence of a fifth alternative would most likely not have resulted in a drastic difference in results.

Question 3:

Which do you use when speaking with friends?

Answers:	53(53)	(100.00%)
Standard Japanese:	7	(13.21%)
Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi:	43	(81.13%)
Okinawan:	3	(5.66%)

People using Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi are in a clear majority which tells us that it is still widely used and preferred in the private domain. Although there seems to be a decline since Ōsumi's 1996 survey was conducted in which all responded that they generally use Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi when speaking with friends (2001). Speculations surrounding this decrease will be given in 5.3 *Summary*. In another survey about the usage of mixed languages throughout the Ryukyu Islands which Heinrich has referred to, merely 43% of the participants below the age of thirty answered that it was the preferred variety in the private domain (Bairon & Heinrich 2007). The very different result can perhaps be explained by the fact that the situation might be different in island groups other than Okinawa or that the concept of 'mixed language' was presented differently. Interesting in that survey was however that people above the age of thirty used it less, which at the same time as the overall usage was reported as lower shows an increase in the younger generations.

All three who answered that they use Okinawan marked either low understanding or some understanding of it in *question 5*, it is thus unlikely that they would actually speak it with their friends. Despite the precaution taken in formulating the questions to avoid confusion of the term Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, some misconception seems to have occurred.

Among the seven who use standard Japanese there was a clear tendency to use it at home as well.

Question 4:

Which do you use when speaking with your family?

Answers:	53(53)	(100.00%)
Standard Japanese:	10	(18.87%)
Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi	41	(77.36%)
Okinawan:	2	(3.77%)

Also in this domain did a majority answer that they use Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, although standard Japanese is slightly more common. Some of the people who use standard Japanese at home did however answer that they use Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi with friends which possibly indicates that their parents hold slightly negative sentiments towards it. As earlier reported do some middle-aged and old Okinawans hold a negative view against the Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi

used by the youth (Ōsumi 2001: 88; Ōta 1997: 156). Another possible explanation could be that their parents are not Okinawan, this was however not inquired.

Question 5:

To what degree do you understand Okinawan?

Answers:	53(53)	(100.00%)
Perfect understanding:	0	(0.00%)
Good understanding:	4	(7.55%)
Some understanding:	22	(41.51%)
Low understanding:	25	(47.17%)
No understanding:	2	(3.77%)

As expected did very few claim a good understanding of the Okinawan language. Sugita states that Okinawans below the age of forty are monolingual Japanese speakers who only know certain words and phrases (2010: 52). But as even fewer claimed no understanding of it, it becomes clear that influences from the language are still strong as nearly everyone understand at least some of it. Surprising was that 7.55% claimed good understanding, it is likely that these people have grown up together with grandparents speaking Okinawan, thus passively picking up understanding but not learning to speak the language themselves. A final remark is however that what is perceived as good understanding might be individual.

Question 6A:

Do people tend to use less Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi with age? For example, have your friends begun using less Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi since you were children?

Answers:	53(53)	(100.00%)
They use it a lot less:	8	(15.10%)
They use it slightly less:	15	(28.30%)
They use it as much now as then:	30	(56.60%)

About half of the participants thought that people tend to use it less with age, although a majority of them stated that there is only a slight decline. It would thus seem as if people in general do not completely cease to use it when getting older even though it might develop further in the direction of standard Japanese.

Question 6B:

If they have come to use it less, what do you think is the reason?

Some reasons were widely reported; one of which was that people have more and more come to leave Okinawa and therefore do not have the chance to speak Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi. Many also reported that it is considered unsuitable in a more adult environment as it does not mix well with polite language; as discussed earlier, Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is not used with polite forms, which makes it unsuitable in more public domains. That some then come to use it less when making career does not seem unlikely. This seems to have impact on the private domain; it is however unclear if the people who come to use it less completely cease to use it. It was similarly stated that it is perceived by some as sounding rough, dirty or impolite. Some participants furthermore claimed that it is hard for other Okinawans to understand the speech of young Okinawans who as a reaction to that conform to more standardized Japanese.

Several of the answers received were not directly age related but gave some confirmation about the diluting effect that mass media and an increased influx of mainland Japanese people have on Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi. That old people with proficiency in Okinawan and who use a heavier Okinawan influenced Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi are on the decline was also seen as a contributing factor. One participant also stated that it sounds rural and therefore felt it to be embarrassing.

Question 7:

What do you think is the reason that you use Okinawan words and expressions and Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi? More than one alternative can be chosen.

I feel like an Okinawan:	24
I can express myself well:	30
We most protect or traditional language:	7
No reason. That is just the way I talk:	21
Other:	2

People tend not to contemplate their language choice and it is doubtful that Okinawans are any different, in other words, speaking in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is not an active choice and it has no motive. Yet by asking this question we are able to probe their own feelings towards the way they speak and also see what they perceive as the reason for unconsciously choosing Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi over standard Japanese.

The reason which received the highest vote was that they can express themselves well; this does not reveal much about attitude but hints that they find it comfortable to use. Also widely claimed was that it makes them feel Okinawan which shows that there is a wish to keep a local identity, partly through language use. This goes in line with statements by Ōta (1997) among others that Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi gives the youth a point from which they can assert a unique Okinawan identity. A need to protect their language was also expressed; concern for the vitality of Okinawan was however more thoroughly tested in *question 10*. As also expected did many answer that they do not acknowledge any particular reason for speaking Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi.

Question 8A:

Have you ever been scolded for using Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi?

Answers:	53(53)	(100.00%)
It happens often:	1	(1.89%)
It happens occasionally:	9	(16.98%)
It has happened a number of times:	3	(5.66%)
It has happened 2-3 times:	0	(0.00%)
It has never happened:	40	(75.47%)

People being scolded for using Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi as reported by Ōsumi (2001), Sugita (2010), and Ōta (1997) and discussed in *4.4 Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi and language revitalization* is relatively rare according to these results. This is not surprising considering the more appreciative stance towards dialects which has been seen not only on Okinawa but in Japan in general (Jinnouchi 2007). The answers to this question moreover strengthens Shinzato's (2012: 302) statement that young Okinawans have not been subjected to discrimination towards their language use in the same way as the older generations have.

Question 8B:

If you answered that it happens / has happened: what was the situation?

As seen in question 8A one fourth of the participants reported that they have been scolded for using Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi, one even claiming it to happen often. Several commented that middle aged and elderly do not use the newer Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi expressions which they, as discussed earlier, perceive as bad language use and sometimes think of as even sounding rough, dirty, and harsh; consequently they scold younger persons who speak in that way. This situation is not in any way unique to Okinawa as similar language developments in other parts of Japan are met with the same disapproval from the same generations (Sanada 1985: 129-130). Such sentiments among the elderly can probably be found in virtually any speech community, the relevance of this is therefore lowered, although it might have slight effect. There was one report of having been scolded for using Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi when speaking to a person in a superior position.

There were one comment of special interest; it was stated that the person had been scolded for using Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi when people from the mainland were close by. It would thus seem that some Okinawans still feel ashamed about the way they speak and that the earlier view reported by Heinrich (2010: 41) that Japanese is superior can still be seen. Indeed, Shinzato refers to statistics revealing that people in Okinawa prefecture at least before 1992 were most embarrassed about the interference of their local accents in their standard Japanese (2012: 308). Although the survey in this paper and other previous research concerning young Okinawans show that such embarrassment seems to have decreased, it appears to still exist to some degree, most likely among the generations of the elderly.

Question 9:

Can you see negative attitudes towards Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi on Okinawa?

Answers:	53(53)	(100.00%)
You see it a lot:	0	(0.00%)
You see it occasionally:	7	(13.21%)
You seldom see it:	19	(35.85%)
You never see it:	27	(50.94%)

Even though young Okinawans according to the previous question do not experience much negative attitudes first hand it appears that more of them sense it in other situations to a slightly higher degree. Albeit it seems to be rather rare as most of those who claimed that it can be seen marked the lowest alternative stating that it is seldom seen.

Question 10A:

Do you think there is a risk that the Okinawan language will go extinct?

Answers:	53(53)	(100.00%)
Yes:	43	(81.13%)
No:	10	(18.87%)

The majority of the participants were aware of the eminent risk of extinction which the Okinawan language is facing. Grenoble & Whaley (2006: 162) state that locals often are unaware of the risk of extinction which their traditional language is facing and that informing them about it can be important to stir up active support for its preservation. We do moreover not know about awareness among other generations which could be much lower. It is nevertheless alarming that most young Okinawans seem to be aware of the risk yet have not heightened efforts to preserve and care for it.

Question 10B:

If you answered “yes” on question 10A: does it bother you?

Answers:	43(43)	(100.00%)
Yes:	40	(93.02%)
No:	3	(6.98%)

Out of the 43 participants who believe that the language is facing extinction a strong majority also claims to be bothered by that fact. This reveals concern for a part of their culture which is dying away, and also appreciation of tradition. Yet as no active efforts are taken to reverse the language shift Bairon seems to be right in claiming that interest and motivation in actually saving the language is low (Bairon & Heinrich 2007). It is easy to express concern, and it

might even be considered most appropriate to do so, but the concern is not necessarily strong enough to stir up active efforts to change the negative trend. I have also claimed in 4.2 *Language attitudes and identity* that young Okinawans might find sufficient differentiation from the mainland through Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi which renders revitalization superfluous.

Question 10C:

If you answered “no” on question 10B: explain why it does not bother you.

It was motivated with the statements “It simply does not matter”, “Because I almost do not understand any of it and I cannot speak it” and “Because I do not use it and I do not like it”. The general attitude here is that it is perceived as redundant since they cannot make use of it themselves; although one statement leapt out as especially strong by claiming a dislike to it. Two out of these three used standard Japanese with friends which furthermore makes it seem like they also take a negative stance towards Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi.

Question 11A:

Do you think that an increased usage of Okinawan would affect Okinawa’s relations with Japan negatively?

Answers:	53(53)	(100.00%)
Yes:	3	(5.66%)
No:	50	(94.34%)

It would seem, concerning relations to Japan, that very few imagine an actual problem in using more Okinawan. This is an interesting contrast to the efforts made to spread standard Japanese during the American occupation to highlight association with Japan. At that time the Okinawan language was seen as distancing them but as they now have become a natural part of Japan the use of their traditional language is not believed to contest this status.

These results somewhat contest Heinrich’s theory that it is not possible to be Japanese and at the same time speak another language. He claims that speaking Okinawan within the modernistic ideological framework would be to denounce your Japanese nationality (2010: 47-48), but the results of this question rather tell us that a great majority of the participants believe that an increased usage of Okinawan would not affect their role as Japanese. That

Okinawans at present are better integrated into the Japanese society than any time in the past provides a secure space from which they can explore their cultural duality according to Hein & Selden (2003: 4).

Question 11B:

If you answered “yes” on question 11A: if you can, please explain why you think so.

Only one participant could give a clear motivation claiming that it hampers communication and sounds like a foreign language to other Japanese people. This statement fits well into the classic mono-ethnic view of Japan which highlights cultural uniformity as important (Hein & Selden 2003: 2-3).

Question 12:

How do you think an increased usage of Okinawan would affect Okinawa’s economy?

Answers:	51(53)	(96.23%)
Positively:	13	(25.49%)
Negatively:	2	(3.92%)
Unaffected:	36	(70.59%)

Grenoble & Whaley suggest that economic factors often can be a basis for language choice (2006: 23). Speaking Okinawan in some business interactions are profitable as it wins trust according to Shinzato (2012: 302). This would however only be true for business interactions at the local level, and Okinawan economy has not reached a self-sustaining level which has made them heavily reliant on outside investment (Hein & Selden 2003: 6). The unemployment rate for Okinawa prefecture was in 2000 the highest in Japan with 7.9% compared to the national rate which was at 4.7% and it has been higher than the nationwide average every year since the reversion (Hein & Selden 2003: 6).

One of the pillars of Okinawan economy are since the late 1990s large governmental stimulus packages meant as compensation for carrying the burden of the American military bases. This has come to be the cause for much frustration as the economy of Okinawa prefecture has come to be reliant on the bases which the local population strongly dislike; but as there are no other sufficient economical substitutions they have no choice other than

accepting them (Hein & Selden 2003: 8; Yonetani 2003: 248-250). Such stimulus packages do however not require much interaction with mainland Japan and would not be affected by the use of Okinawan, in other words is it hard to see how a shift to Okinawan would affect that particular point in Okinawan economy; albeit alternatives to the stimulus packages are highly desired among the local population.

Even if the Okinawan language would not damage the economy, would it contribute to its growth? From an economic viewpoint it would only be profitable to shift back to Okinawan if such was the case. One out of four of the participants of this survey believed that it would be profitable to speak Okinawan, but if that actually is the case will have to go unanswered for the time being.

Question 13A:

Do you think that Okinawans ought to stop using Okinawan and Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi? In other words, do you think it would be better if they only used standard Japanese?

Answers:	53(53)	(100.00%)
Yes:	2	(3.77%)
No:	51	(96.23%)

The support for the vernacular and Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is strong with only 3.77% of the participants expressing negative sentiments. This shows that they do not share much of the negative sentiment found among some middle aged and elderly. Standard Japanese is used in the private domain by the two who took a negative stance to the use of other varieties.

Question 13B:

If you answered “yes” on question 13A: why do you think so?

The motivation given by one of the participants was that it is hard for people from outside Okinawa to understand their speech. This argument is easily contested with the fact that all Okinawans can speak standard Japanese as well, although people of higher age tend to have an imperfect command of it (Heinrich 2010: 41). This means that there does not have to be any interference when speaking with people from outside Okinawa. Sugita also argues that a bilingual environment is preferable and that a state of Okinawan monolingualism is untenable

(2010: 56), thus furthermore suggesting that being able to communicate unobstructed with other Japanese nationals is important even if they were to reintroduce the vernacular as the language of everyday use on Okinawa.

Question 13C:

If you answered “no” on question 13A: do you feel that there is a need to learn Okinawan as well besides standard Japanese or do you feel that it is sufficient with Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi?

Answers:	51(51)	(100.00%)
Okinawan is also needed:	42	(82.35%)
Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is sufficient:	9	(17.65%)

It is interesting that a strong majority feel that the Okinawan language is needed at the same time as proficiency and knowledge of it up until now have been steadily decreasing. The ambitions are seemingly higher than the motivation to actually realize them. This is however not necessarily something completely negative; with ambitions aiming for something far beyond the preservation of certain traits of a language, actual preserved traits might stand a higher chance of continued usage. To uphold the current linguistic environment which is perceived in a positive light by most people is effortless whereas reintroducing the language would take the utmost commitment from the entire Okinawan population. Such efforts would meddle with the lives of the current generations, causing unwanted interference. Grenoble & Whaley reminds that people often are too busy living to engage in a language shift (2006: 58). Even though it is highly unlikely that the current generations would shift to Okinawan, strong positive sentiments for the language could result in a wish and even an active campaign for a reassessment of the future language situation for their children.

Grenoble and Whaley (2006: 86-94) discuss the Mohawk immersion program in which the Mohawk language in Canada have been successfully reintroduced to the young generation by making it the language of education at a total immersion community school. This has however left the community with a lost generation of parents who do not know the traditional language whereas the young and the old can speak it. The success can to a great extent be attributed to the generation of parents whose commitment to, and love for their culture made them decide on putting their children in a Mohawk school instead of an English one, thus making way for the possibility for coming generations to learn the language in a home

environment. What speaks against this happening on Okinawa is the fact that a sudden realization of the eminent danger which the Mohawk language faced was the triggering factor of the revitalization efforts. Most young Okinawans on the other hand are as we have seen well aware of the danger of extinction which the language is facing, albeit we do not know about the level of awareness among the middle aged. Some awareness is however likely to be found among them as well and yet this has not resulted in any commitment to reverse the language shift. Perhaps is the sentiment rather that it is the deplorable faith of the language.

Question 14:

Do you think that bilingualism affects school grades negatively?

Answers:	53(53)	(100.00%)
Yes:	2	(3.77%)
No:	51	(96.23%)

Heinrich reports that the belief among Ryukyuans that the vernaculars interfere with achievements in school has earlier been wide-spread which further accelerated efforts to eradicate those languages (2004: 166-167). The result of this survey does however show that such beliefs have gone almost non-existent over the years, consequently creating an environment where it is easier for the vernaculars and newer varieties such as Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi to thrive.

Question 15:

Please write down examples of Okinawan and Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi expressions you often hear used by people in your own generation. Please provide their meaning in standard Japanese as well.

The words and expression are summarized in the appendix alongside English translations.

5.3 Summary

The results of the survey generally confirmed what other linguists have stated on most points; there were however some interesting findings. Let us first discuss the questions concerning actual usage. We understand that Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is still the most widely used variety amongst the participants in the private domain. We can however observe that the word forms of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi are still moving towards further assimilation with standard Japanese in that nearly all participants claimed to use less of it than the generation above them. It would thus seem that the statement by Ōsumi in 2001 about the linguistic situation being far from stable still holds true (2001: 87). The reason for it having not stabilized was by the participants mainly believed to be the same as those reasons also put forth by Ōsumi (2001: 87), namely that influences from standard Japanese through mass media and migration to and from the island has increased further in recent years, and also that people with proficiency in the vernacular are decreasing.

Never examined before to my knowledge is the correlation between advancement in age and usage of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi. The results were perhaps not surprising considering the informal nature of the variety, but they were nevertheless interesting. Even though the participants have just entered adult life or have yet to do so, about half of them reported that people around them have come to use Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi less since they were children. One reason which many reported was as expected related to the inappropriateness of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi in formal situations. Also reported was pressure from people older than themselves to stop using some expressions. A final remark on this point is that this question should more appropriately have included middle aged people as well since they have more experience of being in situations where Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is considered inappropriate.

Turning to attitudes it became clear that attitudes towards both Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi and the Okinawan language are generally very positive. A strong majority even claimed a wish to learn the Okinawan language. We furthermore understand that Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is appreciated amongst the young generation; some expressions used by this generation are however as stated above disliked by people older than themselves. If this has to do with the special circumstances surrounding Okinawa or if it is the common case of young people being considered to talk roughly by middle aged and elderly is however unclear. Many participants moreover believed that they could express themselves better in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi and that it provides a sense of Okinawan identity. Bilingualism having negative effects on

learning was furthermore repudiated by nearly everyone. The conclusion to be drawn is that the linguistic environment on Okinawa at present is in a state positive to the vitality of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi.

Debated at length by Heinrich (2010; 2012) is that current language ideologies in Japan are inhibiting dualistic identities such as Okinawan-Japanese. He states that “there truly exists no frame allowing one [...] being Japanese but speaking or identifying (additionally) with [Okinawan], a language distinct from Japanese.” (2010: 48). Despite this, very few of the participants thought that an increase in the use of Okinawan would affect Okinawa’s relations with Japan. Most of them even expressed a wish to reintroduce the language. They do in other words not seem to consciously perceive a problem in being Okinawan-Japanese. However, the fact that none of them speak Okinawan and are not taking up the struggle to save the language might prove Heinrich’s point. This is only conjecture but the Okinawan’s might unconsciously sense the inappropriateness this constitutes within the ideological framework which simply inhibits the very thought of advocating language rights.

6 Conclusion

As the data collected from the survey presented in this paper is not sufficient to prove a tendency, I can do no more than provide a hypothesis concerning the future of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi; but given that those results were representative, and based on previous research it would nevertheless seem as it is still moving towards assimilation with standard Japanese. The reason for this can however not be explained from the discourses of identity and language ideology. Let us again consider these two points.

During the first half of the 20th century Okinawan identity was seen as negative due to assimilation policies instigated by the Japanese government. The American occupation furthermore brought about heightened assimilation efforts now instigated by the Okinawans themselves as a strategy to rid the islands of the American military presence through a return to the Japanese nation. The fact that the continued maintenance of the military bases was negotiated between the American and Japanese governments upon the return to Japanese governing was seen as a deceit and consequently put an end to further internal assimilation policies. The end to discrimination made it possible for young Okinawans to take pride in their origin, once again making Okinawan culture respectable in their eyes. The many years of assimilation has however left the island in a state of mixed culture which has become a way for them to assert a new identity dislodging them from the past yet differentiating them from the mainland. Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi being part of this culture has consequently become an important identity marker. Export of traditional as well as modern Okinawan culture in recent years has resulted in acknowledgment and appreciation on the mainland which in turn has further boosted confidence in Okinawan identity and thus also in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi.

Modern Japanese language ideology has in general undergone little change since it was established by the Meiji government; this poses a problem to revitalization of the Okinawan language. Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi on the other hand is dodging a clash with the ideology by not intruding on the domains which it is restricting. By being inherently incompatible with polite language Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is in itself restricted to the private domain and thereby does not interfere with education and other public domains. The consequence of this is that it steers clear of challenging the role of standard Japanese as the variety of important matters and can thus be freely used in the private domain.

Through this we can see that the threat to Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is neither ideological nor linked to identity; it is rather brought about by passive influences from standard Japanese

through exposure to it. The threat can be seen from two perspectives, the first being the threat to the domains in which it is used and the other being the threat to the lexical and grammatical stability. The major threat seemingly concerns the latter as Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is still being further influenced by standard Japanese. One factor contributing to the influence is mass media, however more important is probably the high influx of mainlanders and the high number of Okinawans who leave the island; as much as 35.85% of the people who participated in the survey were at the time living off the island. Such migration to and from the island not only increases exposure to standard Japanese but also decreases situations in which Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi can be used. The fact that it comes to be used less with age when formal situations, in which it cannot be used increase, also results in higher exposure to standard Japanese. This in turn might become an indirect threat on domain as people who seldom have the opportunity to use Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi simply might abandon it as it becomes superfluous. This however seems uncommon as most participants reported either no decrease or only a slight decrease related to age advancement. Moreover evident from previous research and the survey is that negative attitudes towards the Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi of young people is still held by middle aged and elderly Okinawans to some extent. The level of effect this actually has is yet unclear. This might not be a strong threat as older generations taking dislike to the way young people speak is indeed nothing new or unique to the situation on Okinawa, although it does on the other hand not help to improve the situation.

Despite the threat Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi is facing from exposure to standard Japanese the fact remains that it is still the widely preferred variety in the private domain. The threat towards its position in this domain is moreover minimal at present as it does not clash with language ideologies. A strong majority of the participants of the survey expressed appreciation of both Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi and the Okinawan language and many furthermore implied that Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi allows them to express themselves better and also that it conveys a sense of Okinawan identity telling us that there is a wish to maintain it. We have also seen that Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi in a sense has become self-sustaining as it has some tools which readily can be used to coin new words. Although standard Japanese influences will continue to affect Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi towards further assimilation, and pure Okinawan word forms will decrease along with the current older generations it is likely that the Japanese language on Okinawa will stabilize sustaining a distinct tint as Okinawan culture and identity have come to grow strong and appreciated and have consequently turned into something positive, not only amongst themselves but also in the eyes of other Japanese nationals.

7 Closing remarks

Although the matter of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi vitality is already from the outset complex, the more one investigates it the more complex it appears. To my dismay, many points of interest consequently had to be left unconsidered due to the limited time at hand. It is nevertheless my hope that this paper added some new perspective on the matter which can be used as a basis for a future more developed large-scale investigation.

8 Future research

During the writing process of this paper some points which have seemingly not been addressed before were brought to light and will be listed here as subjects of future research which could offer further knowledge on the linguistic situation on Okinawa.

- Regional variations in Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi.
- The extent to which pure Okinawan expressions can be used in polite Japanese speech.
- The use of Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi in online communities, chat conversation and SMS.
- The mixed languages of the Miyako and Yaeyama island groups.
- Comparison between Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi and dialects in other countries which have been formed through a similar process.
- Gender differences in usage of, as well as attitudes towards Uchinaa-Yamatoguchi.

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Appendix

Vocabulary from question 1B:

pinkui fuku (pinku no fuku) 'pink clothes'
jinchaa (okanemochi) 'rich person'
noopaa (baka) 'idiot'
deccho (otaku, dasai) 'geek, unstylish'
gachimai (ōgui) 'gluttony'
haniru (harikiru) 'to be in high spirits'
hajikasaa suru (hazukashigaru) 'to be shy'
abiru (okoru) 'to get angry'
usumasa (totemo) 'very'

fani (totemo) 'very'
shika (totemo) 'very'
chikee (chikai uchi) 'anytime soon, before long'
aiya 'expression used when surprised'
nuu 'expression used when provoked'
hassabyoo 'expression used when angry or shocked'

Vocabulary from question 15:

Nouns:

naichaa 'person from mainland Japan'
uchinaanchu 'person from Okinawa'
minkaa (yoku kikimachigaeru hito) 'a person who often mishears'
tanchaa (tankimono) 'short tempered person'
nachibuu (nakimushi) 'cry baby'
yanawaraba (warugaki) 'unruly kid'
furaa (baka) 'moron, fool'
uttuu (kōhai) 'younger student'
shijjaa (senpai) 'older student'
niinii (oniichan) 'big brother'
neenee (oneechan) 'big sister'
kiga (otoko, kareshi) 'man, boyfriend'
inagu (onna, kanojo) 'woman, girlfriend'
dushi (tomodachi) 'friend'
yaaruu (yamori) 'gecko'
shiibee (shōjōbae) 'fruit fly'

oobee (ōkii hae) 'big fly'
juntaku (oshaberi) 'chat, talk'
shimaa (awamori) 'Awamori, an alcoholic beverage from Okinawa'
jirii (onaidoshi) 'same age'

Verbs:

kasakasaa suru (ugokimawaru) 'to move around'
chii googoo shiteru (chi ga deteru) 'to bleed'
shikamasu (odorokasu) 'to surprise'
shikamu (odoroku) 'to be surprised'
tappirakasu (yattsukeru) 'to deal a defeat to'
aran (chigau) 'to differ'
kansandoo (aishiteru) 'to love'

Adjectives:

jootoo (ii) ‘good’
chimui (kawaiō) ‘poor, pitiable’
ijaa (arienai) ‘highly improbable’
chippiru (chiisai) ‘small’
magii (ōkii) ‘big’
yanaa (warui) ‘bad’
hiisa (samui) ‘cold’
anmasai (mendokusai) ‘troublesome, bothersome’
nirii (mendokusai) ‘troublesome, bothersome’
niirita (darui) ‘sluggish, listless’
afaa (kimazui) ‘unpleasant’
teegee (iikagen) ‘careless, irresponsible’

Adverbs:

deeki (totemo) ‘very’
shini (totemo) ‘very’
shitta (totemo) ‘very’
bannai (totemo) ‘very’
yonnaa (yukkuri) ‘slowly’
ichanda (ichiichi) ‘one by one’
amaa (acchi) ‘over there’

Pronouns:

waa (watashi) ‘I’
wan (jibun) ‘oneself’
yaa (anata) ‘you’
yattaa (omaetachi) ‘you’
du (jibun de) ‘myself, one-self’

Other word classes and expressions:

urii (hora) ‘look!’

agaa (itai) ‘ouch!’
jiraa (nanchatte) ‘just kidding!’
haaya ‘used when surprised’
daaru (sōsō) ‘that’s right!’
yashiga (dakedo) ‘however’
daaru baa (sō na no) ‘is that so?’
dakara saa (sō da yo ne) ‘sure, yeah’
jiraa (...mitai na) ‘...like’
da baa (...na no) ‘marks a question’
yannii (...janai no) ‘isn’t it?’
shini ukeru (totemo omoshiroi) ‘very interesting’
anchi (sonna ni) ‘like that’
hiji (daijōbu) ‘all right’
ushieteru (chōshi ni noru) ‘to get carried away’
yassaa (...na no yo) ‘used when asserting a statement’
yakkee (yabai) ‘cool, awesome’
shikanda (odoroita) ‘expression used when surprised’

Greetings:

mensoore (irasshaimase) ‘welcome’
haisai (konnichiha) ‘hello, good day’
chaa birasai (genki desu ka) ‘how are you?’
yutashiku unigee sabira (yoroshiku onegaishimasu) ‘expression used when showing gratitude or making a request’
matachi misoore (mata kite ne) ‘please come again’
nifeedeebiru (arigatō gozaimasu) ‘thank you very much’

沖縄本島と離島のうちなーやまとぐちとうちなーぐちについての調査をしています。ご協力いただけたらうれしく思います。どうぞよろしく願いいたします。

このアンケートでは、

「うちなーぐちとは（日本語の言葉を含まない、戦争の前に使っていた、今も老人たちがたまに使っている沖縄方言（沖縄語））」

「うちなーやまとぐちとは（沖縄方言の影響を受けた日本語）」

「標準語とは（沖縄方言の影響がみられない日本語）」

女・男

_____歳

市：

現在沖縄本島に住んでいる はい・いいえ

（「いいえ」と答えた場合、何年間沖縄の外に住んでいるか _____年間）

1 A. 高校生以下で使われている、沖縄本島だけに見られると思われる語彙や表現はありますか。

1. はい

2. いいえ

1 B. Aの質問で「はい」と答えた人は、その語彙や表現の例と、標準語での意味も書いてください。

2. 35－40歳ぐらいの人は、あなたと同じ年代の人よりもうちなーぐちや、うちなーやまとぐちの語彙や表現を使うと思いますか。

35－40歳ぐらいの人は：

1. とてもよく使うと思う

2. よく使うと思う

3. 少し使うと思う

4. 自分の年代と同じぐらい使うと思う

3. あなたは友達と話すとき、どれを使いますか。

1. 標準語（沖縄方言の表現や語彙を含まない言語）

2. うちなーやまとぐち（沖縄方言も日本語もの語彙や表現を含む言語）

3. うちなーぐち（日本語の語彙や表現を含まない言語）

4. あなたは家族と話すとき、どの言葉を使いますか。

1. 標準語（沖縄方言の表現や語彙を含まない言語）

2. うちなーやまとぐち（沖縄方言も日本語もの語彙や表現を含む言語）

3. うちなーぐち（日本語の語彙や表現を含まない言語）

5. うちなーぐちをどのくらい理解していますか。

1. 全部理解している

2. よく理解している

3. 少し理解している

4. あまり理解していない

5. ぜんぜん理解していない

6 A. 人は年齢とともにうちなーやまとぐちを使わなくなっていくという傾向が見られますか。例えば、子供の頃と比べると、友達が使用するうちなーやまとぐちは減ってきましたか。

1. とても減った

2. 少し減った

3. 以前と変わらない

6 B. 使用が減ってきた場合、なぜそう思いますか。理由を書いてください。

7. うちなーぐちの表現や語彙とうちなーやまとぐちを使用する理由は何だと思えますか。
複数選択可。

1. 沖縄人だと感じている
 2. それを使用すると、うまく表すことができる
 3. 私達の伝統的な言語は守らなければならない
 4. 理由はない。私の話し方
 5. その他書いてください
-
-
-

8 A. うちなーやまとぐちで話している時、それによって誰かに叱られることがありますか。

1. よくある
2. たまにある
3. 数回あった
4. 2—3回あった
5. 一度もない

8 B. 「ある | あった」と答えた場合、どの状況でしたか。理由を書いてください。

9. 沖縄本島でうちなーやまとぐちに対して否定的な態度がみられますか。

1. よくみられる

2. たまにみられる
3. あまりみられない
4. ぜんぜんみられない

1 0 A. うちな一ぐちは消滅していく危険があると思いますか。

1. はい
2. いいえ

1 0 B. 「はい」と答えた場合、それは気になりますか。

1. はい
2. いいえ

1 0 C. Bの質問で「いいえ」と答えた人、どうして気にならないのか。理由を書いてください。

1 1 A. うちな一ぐちの使用が増えていった場合、日本との関係に悪影響を及ぼすと思いますか。

1. はい
2. いいえ

1 1 B. Aの質問で「はい」と答えた人は、理由もあれば、書いてください。

1 2. うちなーぐちの使用が増えていった場合、沖縄にとって経済的にどのように影響すると思いますか。

1. 良い影響
2. 悪影響
3. 影響なし

1 3A. あなたは沖縄出身の人が、うちなーぐちや、うちなーやまとぐちの使用をやめたほうが良いと思いますか。つまり、標準語だけで話したほうが良いと思いますか。

1. はい
2. いいえ

1 3B. 「はい」と答えた場合、なぜそうと思いますか。書いてください。

1 3C. 「いいえ」と答えた場合、標準語の他に、うちなーぐちを習得する必要があると思いますか。それとも、うちなーぐちの影響を受ける日本語（うちなーやまとぐち）で充分だと思いますか。

1. うちなーぐちも必要
2. うちなーやまとぐちで充分

1 4. 多言語使用は学校の成績に悪影響を及ぼすと思いますか。

1. はい
2. いいえ

1 5. あなたと同じ年代の人で、よく聞こえるうちなーぐちや、うちなーやまとぐちの語彙や表現の例を書いてください。標準語での意味も書いてください。

ご協力ありがとうございました。