

# **A NEWLY EMERGING POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN JAPAN: THE DEBATE BETWEEN NAOKI HYAKUTA AND AKARI IIYAMA**

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## **Abstract**

In recent years, systems that facilitate communication over the internet—commonly referred to as social networking services (SNS)—have garnered considerable attention in Japan. These platforms appear to be exerting a significant influence not only on political discourse but also on communication practices more broadly. Among such platforms, YouTube, launched around 2005, has emerged as a prominent video-sharing service that allows individuals and organizations to upload a wide range of video content. It has attracted widespread public interest, particularly as an increasing number of people now rely on online sources for information in place of traditional media such as television and newspapers. This paper investigates the ways in which internet-based information-gathering practices shape the communication strategies of the Japan Conservative Party, a recently established national political party. Specifically, it examines how the party's messaging—alongside videos produced by Naoki Hyakuta and former party member Akari Iiyama—is perceived and interpreted by the public, and how such content may influence broader patterns of political communication. The study also explores potential trajectories for the future development of these communication styles.

## **Keywords**

Communication, Internet, Japanese Politics

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Around the world, U.S. President Donald Trump has brought about significant political and economic shifts, creating a major impact on the global stage. One notable example is his self-proclaimed title of “Tariff Man,” which reflects his aggressive stance on international trade. These changes are likely to reshape the world in unexpected ways—something many would agree on. Meanwhile, in Japan, a similar wave of political and economic transformation has been unfolding over the past several years.

In particular, a system that enables communication over the internet (commonly known as social networking services, or SNS) has recently been receiving a great deal of attention in Japan. It appears that this is beginning to have a significant impact not only on the world of politics but also more broadly on communication in general. Among these, a channel called YouTube, which started around 2005, is a video-sharing platform where individuals and companies can upload a wide variety of videos. It has attracted widespread interest from the public. In particular, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of people who now gather information online rather than by watching television/newspapers. According to one theory, the revenue generated from advertisements on the internet far exceeds that from monthly subscription fees for television, highlighting how much people are now relying on the internet for information.

In this paper, I will examine how, through internet-based information gathering, the communication styles of the Japan Conservative Party—recently established as a national political party—along with videos by Naoki Hyakuta and those by Akari Iiyama, a former party member, are understood, interpreted, and how they influence the general public. I will also consider how these styles may evolve and develop in the future.

First, regarding the Japan Conservative Party, this is a new political organization established in 2023, led by the prominent novelist Naoki Hyakuta and centered around journalist Kaori Arimoto as Secretary-General. It has since succeeded in electing three members to the House of Representatives, thereby becoming a national

political party (*Kokusei Seitou*) for the first time. The party's principles emphasize Japan's traditions, culture, and conservative values. As the name "Conservative Party" clearly indicates, it aims to be Japan's first truly conservative national political party. Its specific policies include strengthening national defense, educational reform, and constitutional revision. The party is widely believed to have originated from its public opposition to the LGBTQ legislation spearheaded by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and others.

## The LGBT Bill

The contents of the so-called "LGBT bill" are generally understood to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals, and the acronym is seen as representing the "diversity" of people related to sexual orientation and gender identity. This concept is strongly influenced by the respect for fundamental human rights and is based on a firm belief that all people (i.e., all citizens) are "equal." It is believed that by strongly embracing such "diversity," society as a whole will become far more inclusive than before, fostering an environment in which many people can live authentically. Furthermore, by widely sharing these ideals throughout society, it is expected that unwanted discrimination and prejudice will be reduced, helping to improve issues such as social isolation. In this sense, the ideology behind the bill can be considered idealistic and widely acceptable. Concepts like "diversity" and "equality" are thought to be values that receive broad support from many citizens.

On the other hand, some challenges are emerging that deserve consideration. For example, ideas such as homosexuality or being transgender may be seen by some as incompatible with Japan's traditional values. Additionally, there are concerns about how these LGBT-related ideals—especially those emphasizing equality and diversity—should be effectively introduced and promoted in the context of school education. With rapid social change and transformation, it's likely that some individuals may feel a sense of psychological or societal "anxiety." For political parties that highly value Japan's strong traditional culture and aim to "strengthen and enrich" the nation—specifically the Japan Conservative Party—this bill is likely to be difficult to support. In fact, the Japan Conservative Party was founded in opposition to the LGBT bill.

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) supported the LGBT bill—formally known as the "LGBT Understanding Promotion Act"—and it was passed in June 2023. Of course, not all LDP members supported it. There were quite a few lawmakers who did not explicitly endorse the bill, which led to its language being softened. For example, instead of using the phrase "prohibit discrimination," the bill was revised to state that "unjust discrimination shall not be tolerated." This wording was adopted in an effort to ease concerns among opponents. Although the LDP supported the bill's passage in June 2023, internal debates continued, and some conservative members voiced opposition or raised concerns.

One particularly notable critique was that the phrase "understanding promotion" lacked clarity and effectiveness, making the bill seem vague and lacking in enforceability. Because it does not include explicit anti-discrimination provisions or penalties, some argue that it cannot be considered a fully developed LGBT law. Among the specific critics within the LDP were Akiko Santo, Shigeharu Aoyama, and Masamune Wada, all of whom received formal warnings from the party. Nevertheless, the bill passed with majority support.

Former Prime Minister Kishida, who advocated for the bill, is believed to have been motivated by several factors: maintaining international trust (especially in relation to the G7 Summit), responding to changing domestic attitudes (particularly among younger generations), and balancing various views within the party. As a result of these considerations, the "Understanding Promotion Act" was advanced, settling on the somewhat ambiguous phrase "unjust discrimination shall not be tolerated" as a compromise across different perspectives.

## Naoki Hyakuta

Here, let us briefly touch on Naoki Hyakuta, the representative of the Japan Conservative Party. Hyakuta is a well-known Japanese novelist and is also recognized as a political commentator. Because of this, evaluations of him vary widely. Below, we will introduce both positive and critical opinions about him in more detail.

One of Hyakuta's representative works is *The Eternal Zero*, a novel that depicts the lives of Japanese kamikaze pilots during World War II, which moved many readers deeply. The author of this text also found it to be an engaging read, with its characters' psychology and backgrounds portrayed with great skill and sensitivity. Another notable work, *A Man Called Pirate*, is a novel that follows the struggles of a businessman who contributed to Japan's postwar economic development in the petroleum industry (modeled on Sazo Idemitsu, the founder of Idemitsu Kosan). This story centers around the protagonist's strong leadership in the face of international competition and adversity, and how he played a powerful role in developing Japan's economy. This work also strongly resonated with readers and became a major bestseller. These works go beyond mere entertainment; they emphasize traditional Japanese values and spirit, resonating deeply with readers who cherish Japanese identity, and earning their admiration and respect.

On the other hand, while Hyakuta is highly regarded as a novelist, his political statements have often stirred controversy. For example, his negative comments regarding LGBT issues have provoked backlash from progressive readers. Notably, his statement suggesting that "women should have their uterus removed after turning

30” was reported in over 40 countries and sparked a major societal issue due to its misogynistic nature (Asahi Shimbun 2024, Hokkaido Shimbun 2024, etc.).

Moreover, many people have expressed opposition to Hyakuta’s historical views, especially his conservative stance, pointing out that they may negatively affect relations with neighboring countries, such as South Korea. His comments can at times be particularly extreme, and his perceived insistence on pushing his personal views strongly has made some people uncomfortable. Concerns have been raised that rather than promoting “dialogue,” his approach may deepen “conflict.”

Overall, Hyakuta’s behavior and novels tend to be heavily imbued with conservative elements, which often become a source of criticism. Nonetheless, as a novelist, he wields significant influence. While he is subject to criticism, he can generally be considered a powerful communicator with a strong command of language. He is one of those authors who continues to move many readers. In summary, Hyakuta can be seen as a charismatic, bold, and captivating figure—but at the same time, one who is often criticized for being dogmatic and extreme.

### **Akari Iiyama**

Let us also introduce Akari Iiyama, a researcher who continues to be a powerful voice on YouTube. Iiyama is a scholar specializing in Islamic thought, holding a Ph.D. from the University of Tokyo. In addition to her academic work, she is active as an Arabic interpreter and author, with notable books including *"The Logic of Islam"*, *"Rethinking the Middle East"*, and *"Under the Egyptian Sky"*.

She runs a YouTube channel called "Akari Iiyama Channel", where she shares information primarily about Islam and Middle Eastern affairs, but in recent times, she has also frequently commented on issues related to the Japan Conservative Party. In fact, she ran as a candidate in the April 2024 by-election for Tokyo's 15th district in the House of Representatives, where she ultimately finished in fourth place.

Following disagreements within the party, she left the Japan Conservative Party and has since been actively promoting her own policies and views, mainly through her online platforms. Thanks to her extensive knowledge and wide-ranging experiences—including studying abroad in the Middle East and Asia—she has attracted attention not only in academia but also in the political sphere.

Among her outreach efforts, "Akari Iiyama Channel" stands out as particularly impactful. It has gained significant attention as a platform where Iiyama, as an Islamic studies scholar, speaks freely on topics including politics, society, diplomacy, international issues, and even everyday life. Recently, the channel has featured a number of critical commentaries on the Japan Conservative Party, with which she has had a falling-out.

As of December 2024, the channel had approximately 190,000 subscribers and a total of around 86 million views. While the channel enjoys a high level of support, it has also drawn some criticism and skepticism regarding its management and content. There are both passionate supporters of Iiyama’s work and vocal critics of her statements and actions, resulting in polarized public opinion. For example, counterarguments from sources like "Japan Conservative Party – Dissemination Channel 2025" illustrate the mixed reactions.

In short, Iiyama is a highly divisive figure, especially when it comes to her criticisms of Naoki Hyakuta, the leader of the Japan Conservative Party, and his work. She is both admired and criticized, depending on the perspective.

## **What is the Japan Conservative Party?**

As briefly mentioned earlier, the Japan Conservative Party is a political party in Japan that was established on October 17, 2023, by novelist Naoki Hyakuta and journalist Kaori Arimoto. The party is estimated to have around 60,000 to 70,000 members currently. It advocates for protecting Japan's national character and traditional culture, which is central to its founding philosophy.

In terms of policy, the party promotes a range of strongly conservative positions, including:

- Reduction of the consumption tax
- Simplification of the tax system
- Strengthening ties with countries that share similar values
- Proactive engagement in human rights issues (for example, taking a **negative stance on immigration**)
- Cutting political party subsidies
- Lowering lawmakers' salaries to the level of the average citizen
- Abolishing subsidies for electric vehicles
- Revising the textbook screening system

Through these policies, the party aims to preserve Japan’s unique culture, traditions, and national identity. Despite being a small and newly formed party with just over a year since its establishment, the Japan Conservative Party gained significant traction by winning three seats in the 2024 House of Representatives election, thereby

meeting the requirements to be recognized as a national political party. However, due to its strong conservative views and claims, it has also come under intense public scrutiny.

The party's activities and policies have drawn mixed reactions. Looking ahead to future elections—especially the House of Councillors election scheduled for summer 2025—public attention is focused on how much influence the party will wield and whether it can achieve its policy goals.

As for public outreach and communication strategies, the party actively utilizes online platforms, such as the "Naoki Hyakuta & Kaori Arimoto's Morning News Live at 8AM" (Hyakuta & Arimoto, 2024b) and the "Naoki Hyakuta Channel" on YouTube. In addition, the two founders co-authored a book titled "Japan Conservative Party: Making Japan Stronger and More Prosperous," (Hyakuta and Arimoto, 2024a) which has reportedly sold over 120,000 copies.

Now then, this brings us to consider: what can be said about the role of online platforms (such as YouTube) in modern political activity when viewed as a tool of communication?

### **Reflections on YouTube**

Needless to say, the internet is a relatively new research tool—one that scarcely existed 20 or 30 years ago—as a means of conducting research using computers. As such, it presents both highly effective aspects and certain negative, cautionary points. Below is a list of some of its advantages and disadvantages.

#### ***Advantages:***

1. Users can access a wide range of news not only from Japan but from around the world, boldly and in real time.
2. It allows people to directly hear the opinions, assertions, and insights of experts and intellectuals.
3. Content creators can communicate their thoughts and opinions directly to their audience.
4. Speakers and listeners can share common interests and hobbies, fostering mutual understanding and development.
5. It can serve as a form of publicity, enabling messages to be widely disseminated to audiences.
6. Speakers and listeners can share common feelings, emotions, and opinions—essentially forming a shared set of values and perspectives.

These effective aspects suggest that the internet, including platforms like YouTube, can play a significant role in building shared understanding and forming communities. However, there are also some important concerns that must be considered. For example:

#### ***Disadvantages:***

1. There is a risk of spreading false information, fake news, and misleading content.
2. The anonymity of speakers may lead to slander, baseless rumors, or harmful speech.
3. Content may be seen as socially or psychologically inappropriate.
4. Excessive time spent online can lead to decreased productivity.
5. Exposure to others' success or glamorous lifestyles may generate feelings of jealousy.
6. Listeners may only engage with content that aligns with their interests, leading to a narrowing of perspectives.

In summary, while YouTube and other internet-based platforms are highly effective and capable of gaining wide support and sympathy, if not used carefully, they can become highly personal and subjective tools without one realizing it. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that users handle such platforms with the utmost care, always verifying the accuracy of the information and the validity of the facts.

With that in mind, let us now take a closer look at the case of Hyakuta's language-based activities as a particularly noteworthy example of YouTube-based political engagement.

### **In a Campaign Speech, Party Leader Hyakuta Repeatedly Sings His Own Songs**

This report focuses on a remarkable incident that took place during a street campaign speech in the 2024 Tokyo 15th District House of Representatives by-election. Unusually, instead of the expected repetition of the candidate's name, the supporting speaker, party leader Naoki Hyakuta, started singing an old song from the Showa era. This occurred on April 24, 2024, right in the middle of the election campaign.

Both Akari Iiyama (the candidate) and Hyakuta were on the campaign car, delivering speeches. To everyone's surprise, Hyakuta himself began singing loudly. The video footage from that time has a clear quality (a

nearly 20-minute video posted on the *Hyakuta Naoki Channel 2024b*). Notably, during the Tokyo 15th District by-election, Akari Iiyama was the candidate, and Hyakuta was expected to support her by repeatedly calling out her name to rally voter support. Indeed, the video shows Hyakuta clearly shouting, "Iiyama!" multiple times.

However, what followed was shocking. Not only did Hyakuta chant Iiyama's name, but he also began singing an old enka ballad, "*Futari no naka no ame*" (*Two in the Rain*), a nostalgic song released in 1966 by Yukio Hashi. This wasn't just casual humming—it was a full-blown performance through a microphone while riding in a moving campaign vehicle.

Again, this wasn't a typical campaign speech where the speaker shouts the candidate's name to attract attention. It was an odd sight—Hyakuta belting out a Showa-era tune from a moving car. This scene is clearly documented in Akari Iiyama's *Ikari Channel* video released on December 22, 2024 (also referenced in *Hyakuta Naoki Channel 2024b*). A portion of the speech is shown below:

### **Hyakuta**

"We've stopped at a red light. We obey traffic laws. Everyone, safety first! Please support Akari Iiyama. There's a comment saying, 'Don't make a gaffe,' but that's part of the Japan Conservative Party's policy. If I feel a gaffe coming, I sing a song. Singing is great, right? As they say, 'Songs reflect the times, and the times reflect songs.'

Yes, it's raining a bit. I don't really know the words, but... 'If love were pearls, it would be pink roses'... This is from Yukio Hashi's *Two in the Rain*. That's the one. So I'm going to sing it now."

Inside the campaign car, holding a microphone in one hand, Hyakuta sang a song completely unrelated to politics. Repeating for emphasis, during an election campaign, he loudly sang a non-political enka song from a moving campaign vehicle. Such behavior raises serious questions.

According to Japan's Public Offices Election Act, when using loudspeakers in election campaigns, the content must be limited to the candidate's name or explanations of the party's platform. Singing unrelated songs over a loudspeaker could very likely be considered problematic under this law. Furthermore, for noise regulation purposes, sound (including songs) from vehicles must not disturb the public. Broadcasting a nostalgic, unrelated song like Yukio Hashi's *Two in the Rain* is likely to be deemed inappropriate and impermissible.

Public responses to Hyakuta's singing can vary. On the positive side, singing during a street speech might grab attention, potentially appealing to passersby or making the candidate more relatable—especially when performed by a famous novelist like Hyakuta. It may also help differentiate the candidate from others through a more creative approach.

However, criticism is also valid. If a campaign speech focuses too much on songs and performance, it can overshadow the policies and political stances that should be conveyed, thus undermining the essence of the campaign. The songs themselves have no connection to politics, and when they seem frivolous—as in this case—they can leave voters with a negative impression. Moreover, considering the Public Offices Election Act, there are specific regulations on content, and singing or music may cross legal lines if viewed as non-campaign-related entertainment.

At the core, the question is whether using songs in speeches genuinely contributes to the transmission of political messages or merely serves as shallow entertainment. If it's the latter, the appropriateness is highly questionable. So how did the actual candidate, Akari Iiyama, conduct her speech?

At one point, the campaign car carrying Hyakuta stopped in front of the campaign office in Monzennakacho, Koto Ward, Tokyo. Iiyama entered the vehicle from the street and gave a short but intense speech—completely different from Hyakuta's *enka* (*old fashioned Japanese song*)-filled performance. Her delivery was passionate and to the point.

### **Hyakuta:**

"Akari Iiyama has just gotten in the car. You can catch a glimpse of her. This is candidate Akari Iiyama..." (Iiyama quickly takes the mic from Hyakuta and begins speaking.)

### **Iiyama:**

"To everyone gathered in front of our office, our fans, instead of just waving your hands, go and get us a vote! We are counting on you. Ask your friends in Koto Ward—don't just bring in one vote, bring two, three, five, or even a hundred! Please help us get a hundred votes!" (She hands the mic back to Hyakuta.)

### **Hyakuta:**

"Yes, yes, thank you very much." Although brief, Iiyama's speech is charged with energy and determination, in stark contrast to Hyakuta's leisurely performance. Her words reflect a serious approach to the election, completely unlike Hyakuta's casual demeanor. The closing part of the speech features Hyakuta wrapping up:

**Hyakuta:**

“My hand is getting tired, so I’ll end this triumphant broadcast now. Thank you for listening. This was the Japan Conservative Party’s campaign car, with me, Naoki Hyakuta, holding the mic for the first time. Hold on a second, I need to turn this off. How do I do that? Goodbye! Bye-bye! See you later. Boing!” (The mic is turned off as the car drives away.)

Despite the interruptions, this was essentially a live broadcast of their campaign return. It began with a nostalgic enka song, continued with a passionate speech from Iiyama, and ended with Hyakuta’s goofy sign-off. The contrast between the two could not be more striking.

This raises significant questions about what makes a campaign speech effective. While Iiyama fought desperately in the heat of a serious election, Hyakuta’s lighthearted antics—with no clear policy messaging—seemed to undermine that effort. At one point, Hyakuta also made remarks focusing inappropriately on a female candidate’s appearance:

**Hyakuta:**

“There’s a car from the Sanseito Party ahead of us now. That’s Rina Yoshikawa’s car. She’s quite the beauty, isn’t she?”

The conversation continues with unrelated chatter, with no mention of policies. These comments may have come off as offensive or disrespectful, especially when completely disconnected from the political context. As a public figure, Hyakuta’s remarks raise serious questions about appropriateness.

In summary, it can be said that the Japan Conservative Party, and particularly its leader Hyakuta, may not have sufficiently fulfilled their duty to properly and responsibly communicate their policies to the public. This is especially concerning for a national party that receives public funding through taxes.

### Hyakuta’s “Troublesome Maggots” Remark

Hyakuta Naoki is known for making controversial and problematic remarks in various public forums. One notable example can be found in the online program *“Hyakuta Naoki & Arimoto Kaori’s Morning News Live at 8 AM,”* which was streamed on December 31, 2024. Based on a recording of the broadcast, the following exchange between Arimoto and Hyakuta was confirmed:

**Arimoto:**

“In many ways, I want us to keep moving forward with positivity, cheerfulness, and energy—without being bound by the concept of regulations.”

**Hyakuta:**

“And we’ll just crush the troublesome maggots, one after another. Yeah.”

While this may be interpreted as a metaphorical expression, the phrase “troublesome maggots” is undeniably extreme and aggressive. Depending on one’s perspective, it can be seen as an attempt to suppress legitimate debate and criticism through violent imagery. The fact that such a statement was made openly on YouTube by Hyakuta—who serves as the representative of the Japan Conservative Party—makes it a matter of serious concern.

Hyakuta, in his roles as a novelist and public commentator, has occasionally made inflammatory remarks. The interpretation of such expressions as “the people” or “vermin” (*mushikera*) depends heavily on context, but his statements often contain emotionally charged or sharply critical language aimed at specific topics. This has frequently sparked both support and backlash.

In particular, the “vermin” comment has been divisive. Depending on the interpretation, it may be viewed as extremely inflammatory—some may consider it an insult to the public as a whole, or an unnecessarily emotional outburst. Hyakuta’s rhetorical style often leans toward the provocative and emotional, which may garner a certain level of support but also invites criticism and resistance. It’s possible he aims to provoke discussion, but when such remarks go too far, they risk alienating the audience and diverting attention away from the core issues to the comments themselves.

Another similarly contentious moment came during a live broadcast on December 29, 2024, when Hyakuta performed what could be considered a highly problematic act involving a Japanese sword. During the stream, he chanted “Evil spirits, begone,” and, while never mentioning Iiyama Akari by name, appeared to imply a forthcoming criminal complaint against her. He then proceeded to unsheathe and resheathe a real Japanese sword not once, but three times on camera. This act far exceeded the bounds of acceptable theatrics and could be interpreted as dangerously suggestive, especially when disseminated nationwide via YouTube. Such behavior raises serious concerns.

## Akari Iiyama's Critique of the Japan Conservative Party

Akari Iiyama, an expert on Middle Eastern issues, has pointed out various problems and challenges related to the Japan Conservative Party in her YouTube channel, "*Akari Channel*," among others. Whether all these points are entirely accurate or have factual misunderstandings will be clarified by various critics and observers in the future. However, for reference, here are some specific issues that have been raised on *Akari Channel*:

- They do not issue receipts for donations.
- It was claimed that Arimoto would run for Tokyo Governor (but in reality, she did not).
- When individuals associated with the controversial Tsubasa Party arrived, Iiyama was asked to handle them.
- Arimoto told a blatant lie about being in front of Hasegawa, a campaign speaker, during an election.
- For the 15th District by-election, there was no election headquarters.
- In the "Coco Curry Incident," Iiyama was treated as an outsider.
- A woman working a cleaning part-time job was not paid.
- A boycott of Iiyama's recent book (which could be seen as a form of "suppression of free speech").
- Hyakuta Naoki's statement about women over 30 needing a hysterectomy.
- Hyakuta suggesting that "Japanese people may one day start a riot," or that "a revolution is necessary."
- At a speech in Osaka, Hyakuta said, "Should I go punch the person who heckled?"
- Both Hyakuta and Arimoto repeatedly express misogynistic views.
- In the Japan Conservative Party's executive committee, there are essentially only Hyakuta (the leader) and the secretary-general.
- It was promised that the party congress would be held once a year, but even after a year, it has not been held.
- The party's platform states that it will create a republican society, but the specifics remain unclear.
- Arimoto stated on her YouTube channel, "My concept is to be thoroughly sly and cunning."
- Hyakuta remarked, "If you deceive 10% of the good fools, you can become a member of parliament."
- Hyakuta also said, "Voters are just a collection of idiots."
- Hyakuta stated, "If cancer recurs, it's over."
- The Japan Conservative Party's platform states it will "stop making being a legislator a family business," but, for example, Hyakuta's account is managed by his son.
- Hyakuta promised to reduce the salary of members of parliament to the level of an ordinary citizen, but this has not been realized.
- Hyakuta also promised to reduce state subsidies for political parties by about half, but this has not been implemented.
- Hyakuta refers to Iiyama as a "revenge-oriented YouTuber."
- Hyakuta calls Iiyama the "lowest trash woman."

These are just a few examples, and it's likely that many more issues could be raised both by Iiyama herself and by those who watch her YouTube channel. For more details, please refer to Iiyama's statements on her channel (Iiyama 2025d, Iiyama 2025e, Hasegawa 2025b), etc. One point to note is that some individuals have started to express opposition to the Conservative Party. For example, Nobukatsu Fujioka, a professor at the University of Tokyo and an essayist for the magazine *Seiron*, pointed out in an online discussion on December 26, 2024, that the Japan Conservative Party was a "grand scam" (for example, Iiyama Akari 2025f, Iiyama Akari 2025h, etc.).

## Future Outlook

So far, we have examined various statements made online (on YouTube) related to politics. From the perspective of communication through language, the political, social, and psychological pros and cons can be interpreted in many ways. There are advantages and disadvantages, undoubtedly. In any case, there are certainly many ways to understand these topics.

One point to confirm here is a caution about *confirmation bias*. Simply put, this is a bias where many people, unknowingly and often intentionally, prioritize gathering information that aligns with their existing beliefs and opinions. Conversely, it refers to a psychological tendency where people disregard or ignore the beliefs and opinions of others. In other words, it is a tendency to think in terms of oneself and not listen to other opinions.

This is a tendency that applies to most people, as is often the case. If we consider this specifically, Hyakuta, of course, thinks of his own opinions from his perspective, and Iiyama also thinks of her opinions from her perspective. Each of them trusts only the information sources that align with their beliefs and forms their opinions quickly based on that content. Furthermore, it's likely that each will gather only information that supports

their beliefs and ignore opposing views and evidence. In other words, confirmation bias is something that can happen to anyone and is a psychological "trap" that is easy to fall into in the political world, even unintentionally. Therefore, understanding this trap accurately and making an effort to develop objective, fact-based, and multifaceted opinions is extremely important.

With this in mind, one must always be aware of confirmation bias and make accurate and sound judgments while understanding and interpreting policies. For example, someone with a conservative approach should not ignore liberal viewpoints but actively listen to them as well, and the opposite should also be true. This "flexible" and "inclusive" approach will likely become even more necessary in political communication going forward. In a web broadcast, Hasegawa has explained the importance of "tolerance" in supporting Iiyama Akari, as the program suggests. Both Iiyama and Hyakuta should deepen their discussions with "tolerance" and "elegance."

Seiji Makino, an expert in Japanese language education and a linguist, is a well-known scholar who studies the structure of languages such as Japanese and English. In his 1996 work, Makino explains the "inside and outside" (ウチとソト) concept in language and culture. Unlike English, Japanese has a significant distinction between "inside" (ウチ) and "outside" (ソト), which is evident in syntax, vocabulary, and phonology. For example, in English, the singular pronoun "I" is essentially the same across all relationships, but in Japanese, pronouns like 私 (watashi), 僕 (boku), 自分 (jibun), 俺 (ore), 手前 (temae), and 私 (watakushi) reflect different levels of social relationships, making it more complex for English speakers to understand.

This distinction also manifests in the political world. Groups and political parties must always pay attention to both their "inside" (internal members) and "outside" (such as tax-paying citizens). The ultimate goal of politics is to serve the public, the listeners. This concept becomes crucial when considering how political figures and organizations communicate effectively.

Yukihiro Hasegawa, a prominent political commentator and former deputy editor of *Tokyo Shimbun* and *Chunichi Shimbun*, has accurately described Prime Minister Ishiba using the Japanese term "indecisive" (優柔不断). This term refers to someone who cannot make quick, clear decisions due to a lack of strong conviction. How will Ishiba and the political figures involved in Japan's political world confront this description? How will it resonate with them and affect the future development of Japan's communication style in politics? (e.g., Azuma 2022, 2023, 2024)

Social linguist Deborah Tannen (2013) pointed out five key elements in business communication, which include recognizing one's own mistakes, giving appropriate feedback, avoiding direct criticism, refraining from strongly asserting one's opinions, and using indirect language. These elements, of course, change depending on the cultural background, gender, age, and profession, and they suggest the importance of careful consideration of how to speak and communicate effectively. As Tannen points out, these practices lead to confidence, trust, ability, and suitability for both speakers and listeners.

Furthermore, Tannen (1989) suggests that incorporating "personal experience," repeating similar expressions, and telling "stories" can smooth communication and make it more effective. These examples can enhance communication, making it more fluid and impactful. Tannen also emphasizes that communication skills are important not just for academics, but for the general public as well. This applies to both spoken and written language.

## Political Communication in the Global Context

Around the world, significant political changes are occurring, including in the Middle East, particularly in Syria, Iran, Israel, and Hamas, as well as in Russia, China, North Korea, and countries like the UK, France, Italy, and Canada. It's essential to observe the political communication and styles that involve words influencing large numbers of people in these countries and regions. What will happen to Japan, among others, in the future? We should closely monitor and anticipate further understanding, perspectives, and developments.

In the current global context, the G7 (comprising the US, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Canada, Japan, and the EU) remains a key forum. However, with China's rise, there is also the suggestion of a G2 (US and China), focusing on these two countries' relations. There is even a growing view that the idea of a single dominant world leader, such as the US, may be disappearing. This view suggests that the international order, once led by the US, is now becoming multipolar, with countries like China and emerging economies rising without a clear leadership role (Bremmer 2012).

Given these changes, what will be increasingly important is the presence of politicians and countries with strong communication skills. These individuals may play a key role in guiding international politics in the future. It is crucial to focus on political communication in this evolving global environment.



## Ideal vs. Reality in Political Speech

Finally, let's touch on the "ideal" vs. "reality" in the speeches of Hyakuta and Iiyama. Both individuals hold strong opinions on Japan's politics and society, and their statements attract attention. Hyakuta is a prominent novelist who emphasizes Japan's history, culture, and conservative values. However, his idealistic statements are often questioned in terms of how they translate into practical policies. On the other hand, Iiyama actively communicates ideas aimed at realizing a fair and equal society, though there seem to be challenges in applying these ideas within financial and social constraints.

One key point to highlight is that Iiyama has raised over 100 practical questions about the Japan Conservative Party on her "Akari Channel." In contrast, Hyakuta has not responded to any of them and simply ignored these concerns. This shows that while Iiyama is asking questions based on "reality," Hyakuta is focused solely on expressing his "ideal" without confronting the practical aspects.

In Japanese, there's a term called "dog whistle," referring to sounds that humans can't hear but are audible to dogs. In the political world, it's essential to focus not only on the "ideal," which might seem deceptive, but also to accurately face the "reality" based on facts. Going forward, political figures, including Hyakuta and Iiyama, are expected to fuse "ideal" and "reality" and make statements that stimulate practical discussion.

It is important to observe that contemporary debates in internet communication have increasingly transitioned toward a written format, favoring textual discourse over spoken dialogue. A pertinent example can be found in the article "*Nihon Hoshuto to no Tatta Hitori no Tataikai*" ("A Lone Battle Against the Japan Conservative Party"), authored by Middle East specialist Akari Iiyama and journalist Yukihiro Hasegawa, and published in the April 2025 issue of the monthly journal *WILL* (2025). In this piece, the authors articulate a critical perspective on the Japan Conservative Party, thereby contributing significantly to the broader political discourse concerning the party and its opposition. Furthermore, Nobukatsu Fujioka, a former professor at the University of Tokyo, published an article titled "*Nihon Hoshto e no Kokai Shitsumonjo*" (*Open-Question Reports Against the Japan Conservative Party*) in the monthly journal *Gekkan Hanada* (Gekkan Hanada, 2025). Similarly, a group called *Mamoru Kai* (officially, *Nihon Hoshto no Genron Danatsu kara Higashia o Mamoru Kai*) held its first press conference in April 2025 to express strong opposition to the Japan Conservative Party (e.g., Iiyama, 2025in, Hanada Channel 2025, Hasegawa 2025c). In summary, it is important to note that dissenting opinions and ideas against the Party have been emerging in contemporary Japan as a form of "social movement." Their continued engagement with this issue promises to further enrich the public discourse.

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