Torima, Sutabaru?

A Quantitative Study on Current Japanese Youth Language

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

In this thesis, several current and former trends of Japanese youth language are examined through the perspective of age-appropriate speakers, following previous scholarly arguments that youth language research is fraught with judgements made by non-members of the relevant age group. By the means of a quantitative online questionnaire, the study seeks to find examples of expressions that Japanese individuals from their late teens to their early twenties consider to be youth language, items they feel are particularly contemporary or obsolete, and the types of youth language expressions they make frequent use of themselves. The specific expressions looked at in the present thesis include both previously researched youth language items and ones obtained through group interviews conducted in connection with the study. The gathered data revealed several expressions that are particularly representative of contemporary youth language, as well as expressions previously referred to as youth language that are no longer recognized as such, fulfilling the aims of the study. It also showed that many previously researched items were unheard of to today's youth. However, the closed nature of the quantitative methodology and subsequent lack of distinction between different registers (i.e., spoken or online) makes it difficult to draw conclusions regarding the use of some of the examined expressions, which is why it is recommended that future research within this topic take a more qualitative or register-focused approach.

Keywords: *Japanese language, youth language, slang, wakamono kotoba, wakamonogo*

Conventions

Typographical conventions

Non-English words in the running text and example sentences are written in italics. Single quotation marks are used to show translated meanings. Examples of youth language featured in the study use bolded letters to indicate the youth language element(s).

Romanization

This thesis uses a modified version of the Hepburn System, wherein double letters are used instead of macrons to show long vowels, and *n* is written as *n* before all consonants. Examples sourced directly from previous research have been modified to fit this convention.

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1. Introduction

Young speakers have been described as "the linguistic movers and shakers" (Eckert, 1997, p. 1), the driving force behind language change and the emergence of new expressions. For that reason, the language of young speakers is an important field of sociolinguistics, albeit one where data can quickly become obsolete, with Japanese being no exception. The purpose of this thesis is therefore to provide a glimpse of the current[1] state of Japanese youth language (also known as *wakamonogo* or *wakamono kotoba*), focusing specifically on the perspective of native Japanese speakers from their late teens to their early twenties. Taking a quantitative approach consisting of an online survey, the study aims to find examples of expressions that the aforementioned age group would label as youth language, expressions that they use frequently, and expressions previously classified as youth language that they consider to be outdated.

Some previous research on the topic of Japanese youth language is covered in the background chapter, beginning with issues regarding its definition as observed by Kuwamoto (2003) and Cao (2022). Several studied features of Japanese youth language are also summarized, ranging from lexical ones, such as the colourful vocabulary and innovative word creation processes studied by Barešová & Zawiszová (2012), to more grammatical features, such as non-standard uses of *mi*-nominalizations, which was researched by Seraku (2021).

The present study's methodology first consisted of a set of group interviews to obtain contemporary examples of youth language to be examined alongside those sourced from previous research. These expressions were put into an online questionnaire created using google forms, wherein participants were asked to share their opinions on the featured aspects, including whether or not they are familiar with them, how much the featured expressions seem like youth language, how up to date they are, and how much they use them, assigning the three latter aspects a numerical value of 1 to 5. Participants were also asked to contribute additional examples of contemporary youth language, on top of the examples featured in the survey.

The results of the study are presented with the aid of several bar charts displaying each expression's average ratings. Based on the gathered data, it is argued in the Discussion

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[1] Here and throughout the study, "current" and "contemporary" refer to the time around its publication, i.e., the early 2020s.

section that the present study was able to give a satisfactory answer to all of its research questions. An unexpected pattern of answers displayed by some participants is also brought to light, possibly indicating that some factors were not able to be accounted for due to the closed nature of the questionnaire. Some limitations of the study are mentioned, namely the limited amount of youth language items that could be examined, the fact that the demographics of the participants were not particularly varied, and the lack of deeper insight into the use of youth language owing to the present study's quantitative approach. It is subsequently suggested that more qualitative research is necessary to gain a greater understanding of the field of Japanese youth language.

2.   Background

This chapter covers some previous research conducted on the topic of Japanese youth language. It first takes a look at some of the difficulties regarding the definition of youth language as a concept, after which several lexical and grammatical features characterized as being used by young speakers are presented.

2.1.   Difficulties in defining youth language

Kuwamoto (2003) relates the concept of youth language to two other terms, *sesoogo* ('language of the times') and *ryuukoogo* ('popular phrases'). The former refers to words and phrases that allude to the events, happenings, and societal changes of a given time period; the latter, short-lived expressions popularized due to commenting on said events, using hyperbole for entertainment value, or producing a novel way of speaking. He explains that as youth culture is naturally influenced by current events and popular culture, phrases popular among the youth of a given age often fall in and out of fashion as a result of social trends. Conversely, some popular phrases may become engrained in youth culture to the point that they outlast the circumstances or broader cultural trends that created them. Therefore, while youth language is often based on *sesoogo* or *ryuukoogo*, it can still be distinguished as its own concept.

Regarding the definition of youth language, Kuwamoto also identified three issues. First, one must define the group referred to as *youth*, i.e., what ages mark the upper and lower limits, and whether or not other social factors, such as whether one is working or studying, should be taken into account. In his definition, in the context of youth language, *youth* refers to high school and university students or working members of society of the same age. However, he also acknowledges that there will be some individual differences, as one's default way of speaking is not likely to abruptly change as one enters high school or graduates from university. Of course, one might need to adapt a new way of speaking when entering the workplace, but some individuals' vocabulary may still be rich with youth language in non-work-related contexts, meaning that a firm line cannot be drawn at the end of university age, for example.

Second, he acknowledges that youth culture is hardly homogenous, meaning that what youth language any one individual is familiar with or uses on a daily basis will be determined by a myriad of factors, such as what groups they associate with, their hobbies, or other personal interests. As a result, it is difficult to ascertain which expressions are the domain of

particular subgroups, and which are ubiquitous among the vast majority of youth language speakers.

Third, he points out that some expressions used by young people manage to permeate to older generations, questioning whether or not that can still be referred to as youth language. With these issues in mind, Kuwamoto offers a tentative three-point definition of youth language (p. 114), as seen below.

- It is mainly used by speakers in their late teens to early twenties, although individual outliers may occur.
- It should not be biased towards language used by a specific interest group.
- It may become popular enough to be used by older generations, which does not invalidate its classification as youth language.

Even when one accounts for individual differences, as in this tentative definition, Cao (2022) takes issue with the terminology used. The traditionally broad definition of youth language as non-standard language propagated in youth communities is, in her view, "an outsider's evaluation by someone who does not belong to 'youth'" (p. 123). Since the implication is that youth language is not widely known to older individuals, scholars may be tempted to label any unfamiliar language they encounter as such.

However, this does not always match the young speakers' own understanding. She found that expressions classified as top-ranking youth language words by several websites and magazines were used by young speakers (in the case of her informants, aged 20-30) who were unaware of their classification, some of whom considered themselves not to use youth language at all. Despite the lack of knowledge as to what is and is not youth language, and negative impressions regarding those who use youth language, the top-ranking youth language words she examined saw very widespread use across online platforms.

Another discrepancy she notes is that the number of speakers who are aware of a particular youth language item may not necessarily match the number of speakers who report the use of said item. That is, not all who are aware of it choose to use it in their own utterances. The simple definition of youth language as popular expressions used by young speakers can therefore be considered insufficient, as expressions may be propagated on platforms with users of all ages who are unaware of their classification as youth language, and young speakers who are aware of it may nevertheless choose not to use the expressions.

2.2. Previously researched items and processes

2.2.1. *Poi*

Poi (or *ppoi*, when gemination occurs) has two forms according to Akiha & Seraku (2019). In standard Japanese, it is used as an adjectivizing suffix, as seen in *aburappoi* 'oily' (*abura* 'oil' + *ppoi*). However, in youth language, it can have the function of an "[a]uxiliary-like [p]redicate" (p. 1) with the meaning 'it seems'. Whereas the adjectivizing form only attaches directly to nouns and the stems of verbs or adjectives, this auxiliary form can be observed at the end of any predicate or clause regardless of polarity, tense, or aspect, as in the example (1), wherein *ppoi* follows a finite verb.

(1)   *Kare wa okotteiru-ppoi*

                'It seems that he is angry'

                (Adapted from Akiha & Seraku, 2019, p. 1)

While this may seem like a modal expression, they also observed that it can follow modality forms, as seen in (2), one of their examined sentences (in which the writer answers a question regarding the effect a G7 meeting will have on traffic).

(2)   *Koosoku ga kisei kakaru no kamoshirenai-**ppoi** desu ne.*

                'It seems that the express way may be regulated.'

                (Adapted from Akiha & Seraku, 2019, p. 5)

    Furthermore, they uncovered two previously undocumented ways of using *poi*: the repeated use and the standalone use. Moreover, the repeated use takes three different forms of its own. The first form is the triple use of *poi* as a type of rhythmic "language play", as seen in (3), where the writer is happy to find a bad smell has disappeared after purchasing a special fan. They also theorize that aside from conveying a sense of playfulness, this may have the effect of increasing the otherwise low level of certainty in a *poi* clause.

(3)   *O, nandaka nioi ga kieteru-**ppoi**, **poi poi**.*

                'Oh, it seems that the smell has somehow gone.'

                (Adapted from Akiha & Seraku, 2019, p. 6)

The second form, as in (4), is perhaps less confusing, given that *poi* has been shown to occur regardless of polarity, tense, aspect, or modality. In this excerpt, wherein the writer doubts the alleged fully booked nature of a beauty salon, it is simply applied more than once to the same statement, furthering the degree of uncertainty and/or vagueness.

(4)   *Sonna hanjoo shiteru **ppoku**nai **ppoi** youna.*
           'It seems that the salon was not flooded with customers that much.'
           (Adapted from Akiha & Seraku, 2019, p. 7)

The third form is more akin to a phrase, 'X-*ppoi-tcha* X-*ppoi*' (-*tcha* being short for '*to ieba*', 'speaking of/if you were to say'*),* roughly conveying that while X holds true, there is a sense of doubt. This is shown in (5), where a successful experiment was carried out, yet the writer sees room for improvement.

(5)   *Jikken ga seikoo shita-**ppoi-tcha** shita-**ppoi** ndesu kedo, amari ii kekka ga*
           eraretemasen.
           'It seems that the experiment was successful, but the result was not particularly good.'
           (Adapted from Akiha & Seraku, 2019, p. 7)

As for the standalone use of *poi*, Akiha & Seraku found that *poi* can be used on its own as a type of affirmative response to a proceeding statement or idea, provided that the context is strong enough. In one example, the writer explained the English term 'couch potato', providing a definition followed by images of an anthropomorphic potato sitting in a couch. As a final remark, comparing the definition to the images, the writer stated '*iyaa, **ppoi** desu ne'* ('well, it seems [that the images nicely conceptualize *couch potato*]').

2.2.2.   *Mi*-nominalizations

Seraku (2021) also describes the use of the nominalizer *mi* in youth language, which is only used for a select set of adjectives in standard Japanese, such as *amami* 'sweetness' (c.f. *amai* 'sweet'). He argues that in youth language, apart from being used with other adjectives (such as *kowami* 'scariness', which is not standard), *mi* acts as the head of a nominalized predicate.

To explain this, Seraku adopts the framework of nominalization recently developed by Shibatani (e.g., 2018), which divides nominalization into two categories: lexical nominalization (where the nominalized entity is a word-like item) and grammatical nominalization (where it is a structure larger than a single word)[2]. Seraku contends that *mi* fits into both categories, creating "lexical and grammatical nominalizations with varying degrees of nouniness" (p. 287). In other words, the nominalized entities sometimes behave like nouns, and other times do not.

The cases of lexical nominalizations were the ones most similar to *mi* in standard Japanese, being attached to the stems of adjectives. Examples include the aforementioned *kowami*, but also *kawaimi* 'cuteness', *shiawasemi* 'happiness', and *hansamumi* 'handsomeness'. Furthermore, Seraku found an instance where *mi* followed another nominalizer (*-sa*), *amasami* 'sweetness' (lit. '*sweetness-ness', as it was nominalized twice), which also behaved like a noun. In instances like these, Seraku believes that the pragmatic function of *mi* is that of making a statement "cuter" or to reduce a potentially negative reading (as shown in [5], where '*hontoo ni tsurai*' might evoke a more serious interpretation).

(6)   *Yasumi ake no shigoto, hontoo ni tsura**mi** ga fukai.*
         'A work which I have to do after holidays is really depressing.'
         (Adapted from Seraku, 2021, p. 279)

As for grammatical nominalizations, he found that *mi* could function as the head of a predicate or noun phrase that conveys a feeling. This was briefly compared to *–kan* 'feeling', another suffix with a noun phrase heading use, which occurs in standard Japanese. Seraku sees this as having the same general function of conveying cuteness, describing one's emotions in an indirect way, or downplaying an otherwise negative statement. A few of his examples are shown in (7a) and (7b) (the latter of which was a caption to a picture taken with friends), where the predicates headed by *mi* are underlined.

(7)   (a)   *Oekaki shitasa aru kedo nemutasa mo aru shi kadai <u>yaranakya**mi**</u> mo kanjite shinderu.*

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[2] An example of the former is *yasashisa* 'kindness' (from *yasashii* 'kind' + *sa*), with *boku ga uso o tsuiteita koto* 'the fact that I was lying' (from *boku ga uso o tsuiteita* 'I was lying' + *koto* 'fact') being an example of the latter.

'I want to draw a picture, but I am sleepy. I also feel the obligatoriness of doing school assignments and I am so exhausted.'

(Adapted from Seraku, 2021, p. 291)

(b)   *Tanoshikatta**mi** ga fukai.*

    'It was so enjoyable.'

(Adapted from Seraku, 2021, p. 288)

2.2.3. Singular use of *tari-suru*

Suzuki (2008) examined the use of the *tari-suru* construction to convey a sense of vagueness, which she linked to youth language. This construction is often seen in standard Japanese as X *tari* Y *tari suru* (wherein X and Y are verbs), an inexhaustive listing of activities like X and Y. As seen in (8), sometimes only one verb is listed, with the strong implication of other, non-listed ones.

(8)   *Kii ga nukete**tari suru** chuukohin na no desu ga...*

    'It is an old computer which has defects such as missing keys...'

    (Adapted from Suzuki, 2008, p. 159)

However, the instances of *tari suru* Suzuki examined were unusual in the sense that their contexts made it clear that the author was only making a statement about one specific activity. In (9) we can see one of the examined sentences, the author of which was only making a statement about their decision to bake French bread.

(9)   *Furansupan o yai**tari shite** mita.*

    Lit. 'I tried doing things like baking French bread.'

    (Adapted from Suzuki, 2008, p. 158)

Through a series of interviews, Suzuki found that the meaning conveyed by this use of the construction is that of vagueness or downplaying, receiving elaborations such as that "the reference to French bread sounds elitist and snobbish, so in order to not sound boastful, one can tone it down by using *–tari suru"* (p. 160).

2.2.4. Frequent use of Hedges

Lauwereyns (2002) examined the impact that age, sex, and formality have on the use of hedges, which she defined as "expressions of uncertainty, possibility, or tentativeness, all of which convey a sense of vagueness" (p. 239). Overall, she found that speakers aged 17-18 use these expressions roughly twice as frequently as those aged 50-69 (at a mean rate of 69.74, compared to 34.52, per 1,000 words). More specifically, the expressions *toka* 'or something' and *nanka* 'like' (which can also be used as a filler word) were used more than three times as often by the younger subjects (their rates being 20.04 and 11.67, as opposed to 4.69 and 2.48, respectively). She also observed that many of these uses are semantically redundant, albeit with the pragmatic purpose of further conveying "indirectness, downplaying, and self-protection" (p. 255), which agrees with the findings of Suzuki (2008) mentioned above.

Japanese is evidently not the only language in which this kind of observation can be made, however. Examining linguistic variations in American English based on age, Barbieri (2008) found that *like* occurs far more frequently in the utterances of younger individuals. While *like* has more use cases than *nanka* (as a quotative, for example), both of them can function as hedges, fillers, and discourse markers, suggesting that a heavy reliance on such lexical items may be a crosslinguistic trend when it comes to young speakers. Based on Lauwereyns' (2002) findings, *toka* and *nanka* appear to be most representative of this potential trend in the case of young speakers of Japanese, although they are not necessarily youth language expressions in and of themselves.

2.2.5. Word creation

Barešová & Zawiszová (2012) describe the word formation processes utilized in the creation of youth language expressions as a "scalar phenomenon, ranging from slight modifications of the standard word formation processes […] to employing word formation processes which are not found in the standard language at all" (p. 158). Compounding, blending, clipping, alphabetisms, derivations, syllable inversions, and Chinese character (kanji) neologisms were observed to be seven particularly common word formation processes in Japanese youth language, although they are not necessarily unique to either Japanese or youth language (likely with the exception of kanji neologisms). Examples can be found in (10)-(16), taken from the study.

Compounding ([10a]-[10g]) refers to a process by which two or more words are combined to create one word, with its own meaning. This process is quite common in standard Japanese

when it comes to Sino-Japanese words, including compound verbs using *suru* 'to do'. In youth language, however, compounding occurs regardless of a word's origin, even mixing vocabularies in nonstandard ways ([10a]-[10c]). Adjectives can also be compounded ([10d]), whereas standard Japanese only makes use of compound nouns and verbs. A word may also compound with itself, referred to as reduplication, often resulting in a mimetic word that describes a psychological state ([10e]). In other cases, it can be a stronger version of the base word ([10f]), or just a playful expression with no apparent change in meaning ([10g]).

(10) (a) ***obasan*** (native, 'a middle-aged woman') + ***suru*** > ***obasan suru*** ('to behave like a middle-aged woman')

   (b) ***risupekuto*** (Eng., 'respect') + ***suru*** > ***risupekuto suru*** ('to respect')

   (c) ***chikin*** (Eng., 'a chicken') + ***hada*** (native, 'skin') > ***chikin hada*** ('goose bumps')

   (d) ***kimo****i* ('sickening) + ***kawaii*** ('cute') > ***kimokawaii*** ('ugly but cute')

   (e) ***uki*** ('buoyancy') > ***ukiuki*** ('cheerful feeling')

   (f) ***uma****i* ('yummy') > ***umauma*** ('really yummy)

   (g) ***keshi****gomu* ('an eraser') > ***keshikeshi*** ('an eraser')

   (Adapted from Barešová & Zawiszová, 2012, pp. 159-160)

Blending ([11a], [11b]) is similar to compounding in the sense that it combines two or more words. However, whereas compounding leaves the original words intact, blending removes part of one or more of the component words. The second example illustrates the playfulness of youth language, as it is considered far less insulting than its components suggest (in this case, a stupid couple).

(11) (a) ***tsui****ttaa* ('Twitter') + *ai****doru*** ('idol') > ***tsuidoru*** ('Twitter idol')

   (b) ***ba<u>ka</u>*** *na* ('stupid) + ***<u>kappuru</u>*** ('a couple') > ***bakappuru*** ('a couple kissing in public')

   (Adapted from Barešová & Zawiszová, 2012, pp. 160-161)

Clipping ([12a]-[12d]) is when elements of a word or expression are removed to shorten it, without combining or forming a new meaning. This can occur with various sources, including phrases and clauses ([12c], [12d]).

(12)   (a)   *kissaten* ('a café/tearoom') > ***saten***

      (b)   *kimochiwarui* ('sickening') > ***kimoi***

      (c)   *akemashite omedetoo gozaimasu* ('Happy New Year!') > ***akeome***

      (d)   *wan chansu* (Eng. 'one chance') > ***wanchan***

      (Adapted from Barešová & Zawiszová, 2012, p. 162)

Alphabetisms ([13a], [13b]), abbreviations using roman letters, see some use in standard Japanese, almost always as the abbreviations of company names and other proper nouns with foreign origins. This is not the case in Japanese youth language, where abbreviations are also made from romanizations of Japanese expressions. Counter-intuitively, letters may sometimes stand for a word's meaning in English, as opposed to the Japanese romanization ([13b]).

(13)   (a)   *kuuki yomenai* > ***KY*** ('unable to understand the situation/mood')

      (b)   *choo kawaii [cute]* > ***CC*** ('extremely cute')

      (Adapted from Barešová & Zawiszová, 2012, p. 164)

Derivation ([14a]-[14c]) in Japanese youth language often features the use of English suffixes (e.g., *-ing*, *-ist*, *-tic*, etc.), whether or not the base word is of English origin (if it is, the suffix need not conform to its use in standard English), to create related meanings. The resulting word may be of a different class ([14a]) or have a lessened effect ([14c]).

(14)   (a)   ***gaman*** *suru* ('to endure') + ***-ing*** > ***gamaningu*** ('enduring')

      (b)   ***kushami*** ('a sneeze') + ***-ist*** > ***kushamisuto*** ('a frequent sneezer')

      (c)   ***hansamu*** *na* ('handsome') + ***-tic*** > ***hansamuchikku*** ('somewhat handsome')

      (Adapted from Barešová & Zawiszová, 2012, pp. 164-165)

Syllable inversion ([15a]-[15c]), in the context of Japanese, is when the mora or compound elements of a word (sometimes changing the lengths of vowels) are rearranged, a wordplay-like phenomenon not observed in the standard language. The results of this process display no apparent change in meaning from the source word.

(15)   (a)   ***sen|pai*** ('an older schoolmate') > ***paisen***

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(b) *sure|n|daa* (Eng. 'slender') > ***dansuree***

(c) *Gin|za* (a Tokyo district) > ***Zagin***

(Adapted from Barešová & Zawiszová, 2012, p. 167)

Kanji neologisms ([16a], [16b]) refers to a similarly playful language use based on the written medium. This can be accomplished by deriving katakana characters from kanji based on superficial resemblance ([16a]). In other cases, the kanji of a common word may be replaced with a different kanji that has an identical reading, creating a sort of pun that only works in writing (16b).

(16) (a) 公衆トイレ (*kooshuu toire*, 'public toilets') > ハ (*ha*), ム (*mu*) + ト (*to*) > ハムト (*hamuto*, 'public toilets')

(b) 労働 (*roodoo*, 'labour' + 'to work') > 老働 (*roodoo*, 'an elderly' + 'to work' > 'a pensioner who has to work to make ends meet')

(Adapted from Barešová & Zawiszová, 2012, p. 168)

2.2.6. Innovative verbs

Tsujimura & Davis (2011) took a closer look at innovative denominal verbs, which are verbs derived from a noun by the addition of the *–r(u)* morpheme, sometimes co-occurring with clipping. This process, seen as "one of [the] important features that characterize youth language" (p. 821) due to its seeming popularity among young speakers, results in an r-ending consonant verb with a meaning associated with the base noun. Several examples of such verbs are given throughout their article, some of which are shown in (17a)-(17d).

(17) (a) *kopii* ('a copy') > ***kopiru*** ('to make a copy')

(b) *jiko* ('an accident') > ***jikoru*** ('to have/cause a traffic accident')

(c) *nikoniko* (a mimetic word describing a smile) > ***nikoru*** ('to smile')

(d) *sutaabakkusu* ('Starbucks') > ***sutabaru*** ('to go to Starbucks')

(a-c adapted from Tsujimura & Davis, 2011, pp. 800-801; d from p. 816)

Furthermore, it is explained by Tsujimura & Davis that innovative denominal verbs sometimes have highly contextual meanings that may not be intuitively obtained by reading

into the source noun, although these verbs may be specific to a particular group of speakers. For instance, they interviewed young female college students who reported the use of *kafeoreru* (from *kafeore* 'café au lait') to mean 'to have a café au lait stain', rather than 'to drink café au lait' (a more intuitive reading in their opinion).

The same phenomenon was observed by Barešová & Zawiszová (2012), who believe the reason for the creation of such niche expressions is that "words of limited comprehensibility to non-members of the particular in-group […] promotes the sense of belonging and intimacy among the group members" (p. 168).

3. The study

This chapter concerns the present study, detailing its research questions and methodology, including the structure of the questionnaire that was used in the study. The results of said study are then displayed and discussed. Some limitations of the study are also brought up, leading to the suggestion of further research.

3.1. Purpose and research questions

Inspired by Cao's (2022) assertion that youth language research often represents "an outsider's evaluation" (p. 123), with resulting classifications not always matching the opinions of young speakers, the purpose of the present study is to focus on the perspective of the Japanese youth. Through a quantitative methodology, it aims to collect their own intuitive evaluations, seeing how they stand in relation to the previous scholarly findings, and what they themselves consider to be current youth language. This aim gave rise to the following research questions:

- What expressions would Japanese people, around twenty years of age, classify as youth language?
- What if any items, previously classified as youth language, are no longer recognised as youth language, or have become outdated? Are there any that are unknown to them?
- Which current youth language items would they use themselves, and which ones would they choose not to use, despite being aware of them?

3.2. Methodology

3.2.1. Pre-survey interviews

In order to answer the first (and by extension, the second) research question, it was necessary to obtain examples of words or phrases that the target age group considers to be currently relevant youth language. To accomplish this, two brief interviews were conducted. In order to minimize individual differences of impression and opinions, as well as disagreements based on regional differences, the decision was made to conduct them in small groups with informants from the same general region of Japan. The first interview was with a group of three informants from the greater Tokyo area, and the second was with two informants from

Shikoku. All five informants were university students in their very early twenties, and due to limited availability when selecting informants, all of them were female.

The informants were asked whether they were familiar with the general concept of youth language, which they were, at which point they were subsequently asked to provide their own simple definition. The reason for this was to establish a baseline of what criteria the informants used for their own youth language classifications, which did not differ greatly from Kuwamoto's (2003) tentative definition. Next, they were asked to discuss what youth language expressions they believed to be currently relevant, and provide their own explanation as to their meaning, yielding the examples in (18a)-(18h). To facilitate the retrieval of these items, open-ended questions such as "do you have any examples of words that you feel represent contemporary youth language?" and "how would you define the meaning of that expression?" were asked. For the sake of promoting a discussion, the informants were asked to name the three most current expressions out of those mentioned in the interview, but all examples were considered for this study.

(18) (a) ***Sorena***, an empathetic response similar to the English "right?".

   (b) ***Torima***, a blending of "***toriaezu, maa***" ('well, for the time being').

   (c) ***Kusa***, 'grass', used to express amusement, owing to the fact that repeated use of "w", standing for *warau* ('to laugh'), can be used in text-based contexts to indicate laughter and resembles grass in certain fonts.

   (d) ***-Niki/-neki***, clippings of "***aniki***" ('older brother') and "***aneki***" ('older sister'), used as suffixes to derive characteristics of male or female individuals, respectively, from other nouns, as in "*asoko no jitensha-**niki**"* ('the bicycle-guy over there')

   (e) ***Pien***, an onomatopoeic word mimicking the sound of crying, used to indicate that one is sad about something.

   (f) ***Pien koete paon***, 'more like *paon* than *pien'*, a phrase that in a jocular fashion ups the sadness level by exchanging *pien* for *paon*, an onomatopoeic word for an elephant's trumpeting sound.

   (g) ***Basaki***, a clipping of "***baito-saki***" ('place of part-time employment').

   (h) ***Ri***, a clipping of "***ryookai***" ('roger').

3.2.2. The survey

In order to analyse the impressions of the Japanese youth, an attitude survey was subsequently carried out using google forms (a full copy of which is enclosed in Appendix A, along with an English mock-up of the basic question structure). In the central part of the survey, respondents were shown various youth language items and asked to assign them a value of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest, on three separate aspects, explained below.

- *Wakamonokotoba-pposa* ('youth language-ness'): how appropriate it would be to refer to the given term as youth language.
- *Imadoki-pposa* ('modernness'): how currently relevant, or outdated (if the rating is low), the expression is perceived to be.[3]
- *Jibun ga tsukau kanoosee* ('probability of own use'): to what degree the respondent believes themselves to make use of the expression.

In order to minimize individual differences regarding what groups are thought of as *youth*, and the meaning of the term *youth language*, a simple explanation of the term in line with Kuwamoto's (2003) definition was given in the instructions as a point of reference for the first aspect. Since the purpose of the present study is only to record young speakers' impressions about certain expressions, rather than ascertain how they would personally define youth language, the offering of such a definition should not be a problem. In addition to the scale, an option labeled *kiita koto ga nai* ('never heard of it') was given to allow respondents to indicate expressions unfamiliar to them, in lieu of giving a rating. Due to limitations of the software used for the survey, this option had to be given for each aspect, with the respondents being instructed to use this option on all three aspects if an expression was unknown to them. Consequently, respondents who did not follow the instructions were able to give their impression of one or two of an expression's aspects even if they had not heard of it previously, an issue which is brought up again in sections 3.3 and 3.4.

As for the youth language items themselves, to prevent the study from being too long, the decision was made to limit it to a total of 30 expressions. With the group interview having

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[3] It is worth to note that *imadoki-pposa* was originally conceptualized as *shigo-pposa* ('obsoleteness'), but the decision was made to rephrase the value into something that sounded less suggestive in relation to the research questions.

yielded 8 expressions, the remaining 22 were taken from the previous research articles discussed in section 2.2. It should be noted that this study did not in any way attempt to account for speech style differences other than youth language, meaning that it may have included examples of different registers, such as spoken and online (this limitation is discussed further in section 3.5). Specifically, the following items were utilized in the survey:

- From Akiha & Seraku (2019): (1), (3), and (5), three very different uses of *poi*, allowing one to see how they rate in relation to one another.
- From Seraku (2021): (6) and (7b), to include an example of both lexical and grammatical *mi*-nominalizations.
- From Suzuki (2008): (9), a simple example of *tari suru* being used for vagueness.
- From Lauwereyns (2002): *Toka* and *nanka*, due to the correlation found between the frequent use of these hedges and young speakers. As mentioned in section 2.2.4, these words are not necessarily youth language per se, and one can in fact see similar words be popular among the young speakers of other languages, suggesting a crosslinguistic tendency. Nevertheless, the decision was made to include *toka* and *nanka* to see how they would be rated by the participants, with the expectation that they would likely rank low in *wakamonokotoba-pposa.*
- From Barešová & Zawiszová (2012): (10b), (10d), (10g), (11a), (12b), (12d), (13a), (13b), (14a), (14b), and (15a), representing at least one example from each word creation method they researched. Some items were selected in related pairs (e.g., [10d] and [12b], [13a] and [13b]), allowing one to see to what extent they differ in ratings. While there were admittedly a lot of examples taken from their study, it is a natural consequence of its width and particular focus on vocabulary, which aligns well with the purpose of the present study.
- From Tsujimura & Davis (2011): (17a) and (17d), two examples of innovative verbs.

Because some of the expressions included in the survey have a standard use that differs from how they are allegedly used in youth language (such as *poi*, *tari suru,* and *toka*), it became necessary to provide example sentences where they were shown in the intended context. Subsequently, example sentences were written for all items in the name of consistency (see Appendix A.3). These example sentences were constructed with the aid of a Japanese supervisor, Rika Hayashi, in a casual and conversational style matching the usual context

where youth language occurs. In the case of items used from previous studies, the original example sentences were preserved, if any were available. After the ranking task, respondents were also given the opportunity to write any number of youth language expressions they know and consider to be currently relevant, allowing for further discoveries of new items on top of those yielded from the interviews. However, this final step was left optional.

Before the main task of the survey, the respondents were also asked a series of background questions, specifically inquiring about their age, gender, nationality, occupation, and the prefecture of Japan in which they permanently reside (considering that some respondents may permanently reside outside of Japan, this final question was left optional). Their age and nationality were asked in order to confirm that they were a part of the desired group, as while the survey was conducted in Japanese, one could not eliminate the possibility that a person of another nationality with sufficient language proficiency could respond to the survey. As for gender, occupation, and prefecture, these characteristics were inquired about to understand if other sociolinguistic categories (such as gendered speech or regional dialects) bore any correlation with certain youth language items, provided that the number of respondents was large enough for such a comparison to be reliably made.

3.3. Results

This section presents the results of the survey, starting with demographics, followed by the ratings of the main task, and finally a presentation of the various answers given to the final question. A total of 35 individuals participated in the survey, all of whom were native Japanese speakers. While one respondent had to be excluded due to being outside the target age range, all remaining 34 were aged 18-23, nicely suiting the purpose of the study. Out of the 34 participants whose answers were analysed, 27 were female, and only 7 were male. As for occupation, 32 answered that they were university students, whereas 2 were office workers. The participants' regions of residence were similarly one-sided, with 26 residing in the greater Tokyo area, and 8 generally centred around Osaka and Shikoku. Since all of the demographic data was too biased towards one majority to establish multiple groups, and the original intention was to only examine one specific age group (late teens to early twenties), the decision was made to not separate the answers based on any factors other than age.

Continuing to the focus of the study, let us first view the data regarding which expressions the respondents were familiar (or unfamiliar) with, since it may greatly impact the reliability of some of the ratings. As explained in the previous section, participants were instructed to

mark all aspect with the *kiita koto ga nai* ('never heard of it') option if the expression was unknown to them. However, there were a few instances where participants still gave one or two ratings when the expression had been marked as unfamiliar, which is an unexpected pattern. With the assumption that the participants nevertheless had some basis for the ratings they assigned, the decision was made to include the aspects that were rated in these instances when calculating an expression's average ratings. Figure 1 shows the total number of participants who answered that the respective expression was unfamiliar to them (in accordance with the instructions), excluding the expressions where no such answer was recorded.

Figure 1

Number of answers indicating that an expression was unfamiliar to the respondent
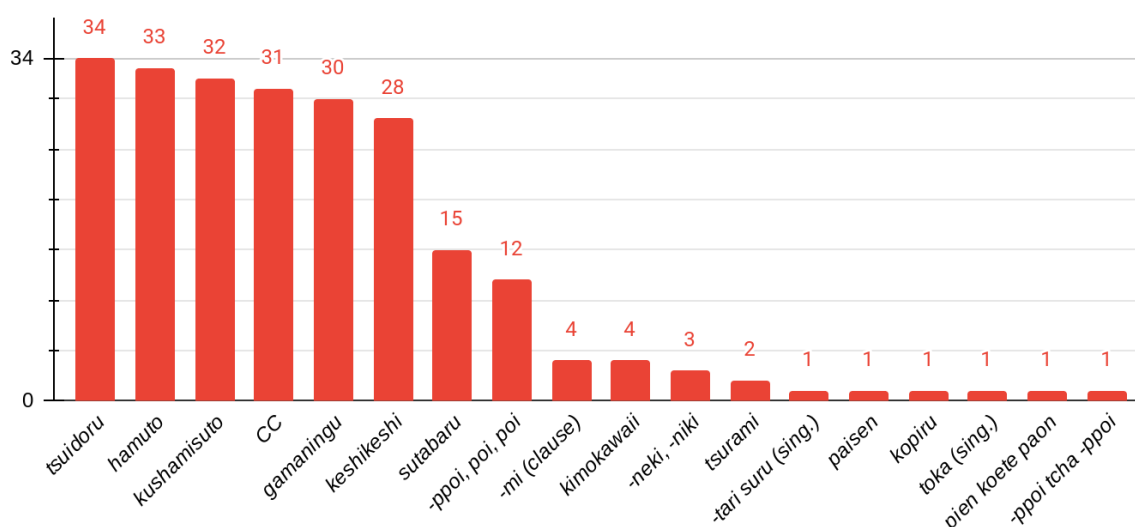
As mentioned in the previous section, it was also possible for the respondents to answer one or two of an expression's aspects with *kiita koto ga nai* while still assigning the others a numerical value, despite contrary instructions. Across all expressions, aspects, and respondents, this unexpected pattern occurred a total of 85 times. In 10 of those instances, the aspect marked with *kiita koto ga nai* was *wakamonokotoba-pposa* 'youth language-ness'; in 21 instances, it was *imadoki-pposa* 'modernness'; and in 54 instances, the unrated aspect was *jibun ga tsukau kanoosee* 'probability of own use'(a table showing all instances of this pattern and on which expressions they occurred can be found in Appendix B). In other words, when respondents rated aspects of an item which they indicated that they had not heard of, the tendency was to rate its youth language-ness and modernness, suggesting that they were nevertheless able to form an impression of the item in regard to those aspects. Alternatively, some of the respondents may have used the *kiita koto ga nai* option as a "0" on the rating scale. Considering the possible explanations for this unexpected pattern, the numerical ratings offered in these instances were considered valid when analysing the results (see section 3.4 for further discussion regarding this issue).

As for the three aspects and their ratings, an average rating was calculated for each expression by simply adding the answers together and dividing the resulting sum by the number of participants who gave a numerical rating, rounded to two decimals for ease of displaying them in a graph. Considering that some expressions were unfamiliar to most participants, made evident in figure 1 above, the decision was made to exclude them when calculating the averages, as the low number of respondents who gave a rating would render

the data too unreliable. Specifically, the excluded expressions are *tsuidoru, hamuto, kushamisuto, CC, gamaningu,* and *keshikeshi*. Furthermore, while *sutabaru* and the triple use of *poi* had relatively high unfamiliarity ratings, the number of numerical responses was still great enough to include them in the analysis, albeit marked by an asterisk to show that the data may be slightly less accurate than for the other expressions. Figures 2, 3, and 4 show the average ratings of the *wakamonokotobapposa*, *imadokipposa*, and *jibun ga tsukau kanoosee* aspects, respectively, ordered from highest to lowest.

Figure 2
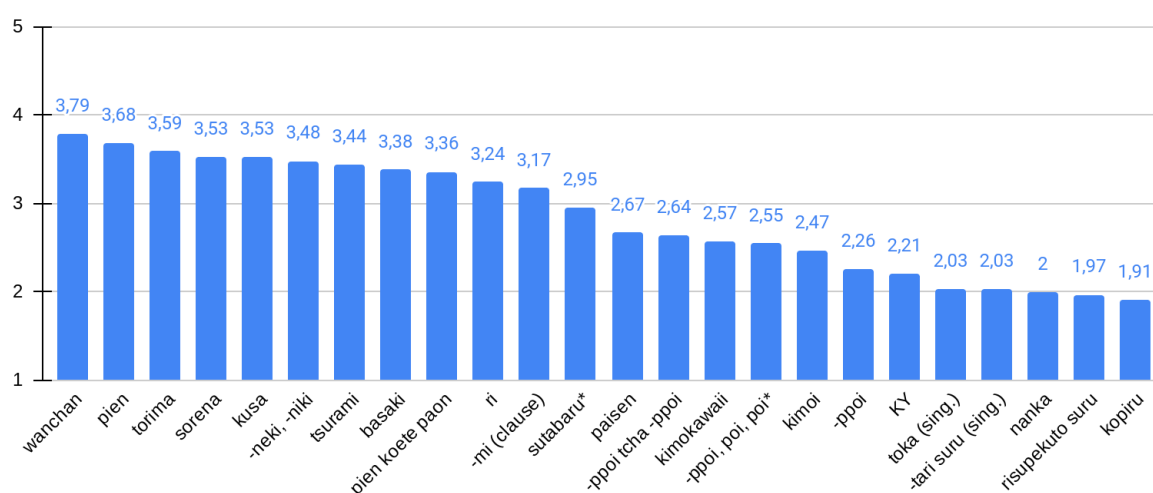
Average ratings for wakamonokotobapposa, *'youth language-ness'*

Figure 3

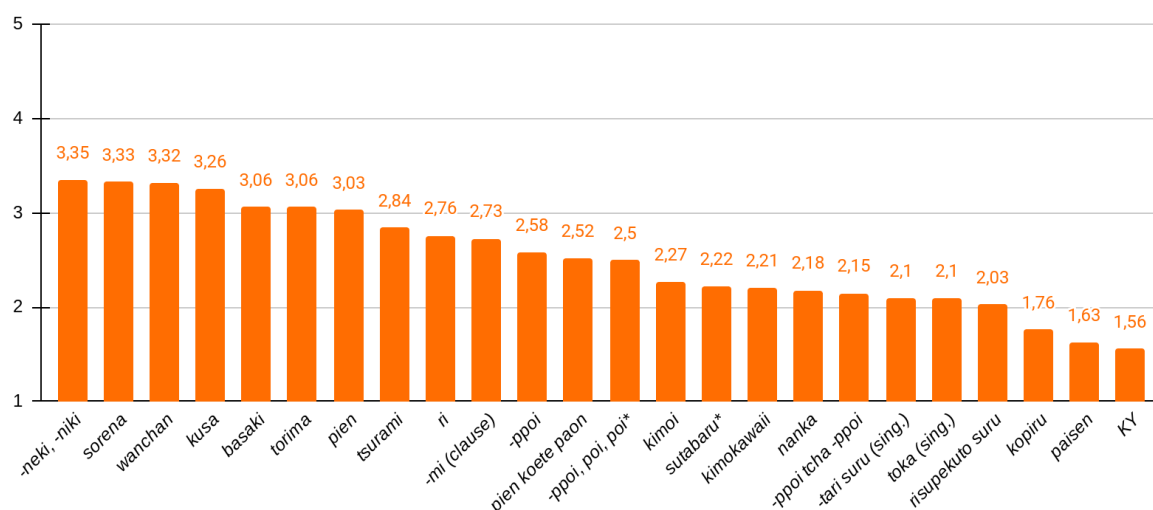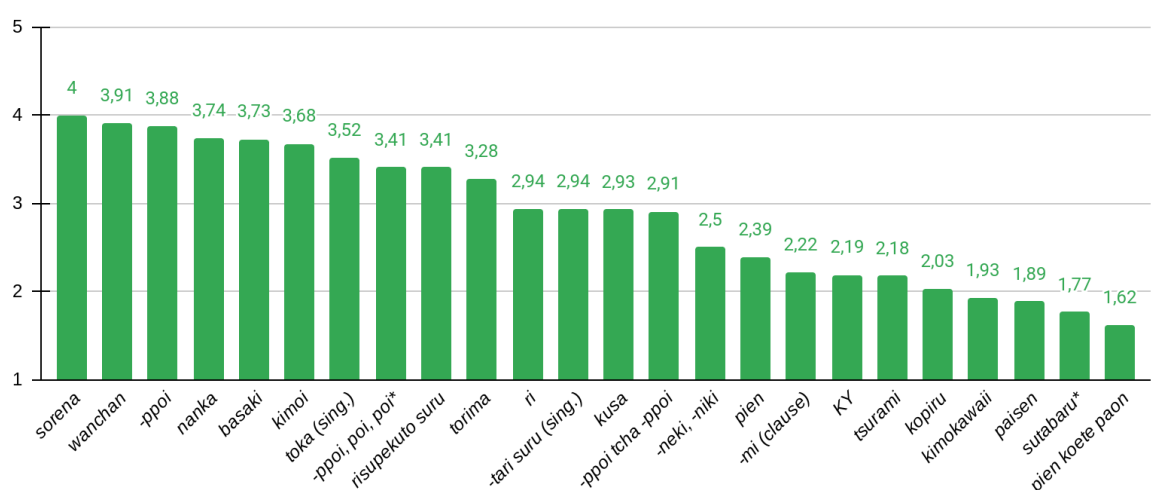*Average ratings for* imadokipposa, *'modernness'*


Figure 4

Average ratings for jibun ga tsukau kanoosee, *'probability of own use'*

To give a more comprehensive view of the results, these three figures have been combined into one in figure 5, where we can more easily see how the ratings of a given item's different aspects stand in relation to one another.

Figure 5

Average ratings of all 3 aspects for each item, presented in alphabetical order
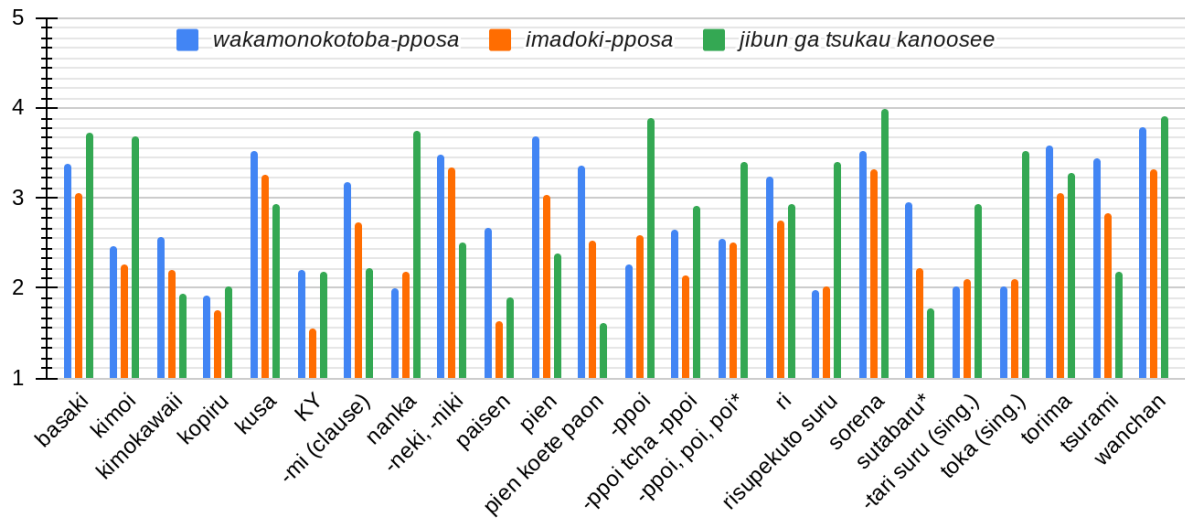
In the final question of the survey, where participants were asked to optionally list any amount of currently relevant youth language items not featured in the previous rating task, a total of 31 expressions (excluding duplicates) were obtained, shown and explained in (19). In some instances, the participants explained the expressions themselves; for the rest, the meaning was obtained by reaching out to some of the informants of the pre-survey interviews.

(19) (a) ***Shinu*** (lit. 'to die'), used to express amusement (cf. English 'dying of laughter').

    (b) ***Naeru*** (lit. 'to become weak'), losing interest in an activity due to another person's lack of enthusiasm.

    (c) ***Baeru***, 'to make for a good photo' (originally *haeru* 'to look nice', with *rendaku* applied in the compound expression *insuta-**bae**,* 'instagrammable', now used independently).

    (d) ***Momiage shuriken*** (lit. 'sideburn throwing star'), the name of a hand gesture associated with the popular idol group Johnnys.

    (e) ***Hanya***, an exclamation of confusion similar to "huh?" or "what?".

    (f) ***Asease***, used to describe a panicked or anxious state (from ***aseru***, 'to be anxious/panicked').

    (g) **X *shika katan***, 'X is the best' (lit. 'only X can win').

    (h) ***Otakatsu***, a clipping of "*otaku **katsu**doo"*, the activities of fans of Japanese otaku culture (which includes anime, video games, idols, etc.).

(i) **Nunkatsu**, a clipping of "*afuta**nuun**tii **katsu**doo",* the activity of drinking afternoon tea at a hotel.

(j) **Hao**, 'to like/love', from the Chinese pronunciation of the kanji 好 (used in *suki*, 'to like/love').

(k) **Genkai** X (lit. 'limit X'), used to describe a person who only barely falls within a certain category. For example, a university student who only studies the bare minimum amount to get a passing grade could be referred to as **genkai daigakusee** ('barely a university student').

(l) **Emoi**, an adjective used to describe something that stirs up emotions of nostalgia or melancholy (from **emo**oshonaru, 'emotional').

(m) **Gakuchika**, something one put particular effort into during university (in the context of job-hunting).

(n) **Naruhaya**, 'ASAP' (from **naru**beku **haya**ku, 'as soon as possible').

(o) **Uchukuchii**, alternative spelling of *utsukushii,* ('beautiful').

(p) **Kawachii**, alternative spelling of *kawaii* ('cute').

(q) **Sukipi**, a person who is the object of one's affection (from **suki**, 'to like/love')

(r) **Kinipi**, a person in whom one is interested (from **ki ni** iru, 'to be interested in'), less serious than *sukipi.*

(s) **Chirui**, an adjective describing a place or thing that is relaxing, or a person who is relaxed (from English "chill").

(t) **Ryo**, another clipping of **ryo**okai ('roger'), similar to *ri.*

(u) **Maji**, 'seriously' (from **maji**me, 'serious').

(v) **Age**, an increase of excitement or hype (from *tenshon ga* **aga**ru, 'to be hyped').

(w) **Sorobochi**, used when it is about time for one to do something, such as leave a gathering (from **soro**soro and **bochi**bochi, both meaning 'soon/shortly').

(x) **-Piiman** (lit. 'paprika'), following an adjective that normally has a *-shii* ending, turning it into a playful exclamation. E.g., ure**piiman** ('I'm happy'), kana**piiman** ('I'm sad').

(y) **Baku**, from **baku**shoo ('a roar of laughter'), used to express amusement (cf. English LOL, 'laughing out loud').

(z) **Jiwaru**, 'to gradually become more interesting' (short for **jiwa**jiwa omoshiroku naru).

(aa) **_Tsunda_**, an exclamation expressing frustration over something not going well.

(ab) **_Rebechi_**, 'on a different level' (from **_reberu ga chigau_**), e.g., of two people's abilities.

(ac) **_Shindoi_**, 'tired/exhausted'.

(ad) **_Warota,_** an expression of amusement (derived from _waratta_, 'laughed').

(ae) **_Shabai_**, adjective used to describe an awkward or annoying person or set of circumstances.

3.4. Discussion

In this section, the findings of the present study are discussed, providing answers to the research questions and considering other implications. With the figures and examples presented in the previous section, it is possible to provide a conclusive answer for each of the three research questions posed in section 3.1.

The first question, "what expressions would Japanese people, around twenty years of age, classify as youth language?", is answered by Figure 2, where we can see that _wanchan, pien, torima, sorena, kusa, -neki/-niki, tsurami, basaki, pien koete paon, ri,_ and clausal _mi_ nominalizations have an average _wakamonokotoba-pposa_ ('youth language-ness') rating of above 3, suggesting that most Japanese individuals in their late teens or early twenties would consider these expressions representative of youth language. Furthermore, the expressions submitted in (19) show direct examples of items that the participants considered to be representative of current youth language.

The second research question, "what if any items, previously classified as youth language, are no longer recognised as youth language, or have become outdated? Are there any that are unknown to them?", is perhaps easier to answer if we first divide it into its three sub-components. As for what is no longer recognized as youth language, the lower end of Figure 2 highlights several examples of expressions previously classified as youth language that the participants gave a low _wakamonokotoba-pposa_ rating, such as _kopiru, risupekuto suru, KY,_ and _kimoi._ As mentioned in the motivations behind the inclusion of _toka_ and _nanka_ found in section 3.2.2, they are special in the sense that they are perfectly ordinary words that merely see an increased use among young speakers, which means that a low _wakamonokotoba-pposa_ rating is not out of line with the expectations for those expressions. Regarding what items are considered to be outdated, the right-hand side of Figure 3 show the expressions that ranked

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lowest in *imadoki-pposa* ('modernness'), including *KY, kopiru, paisen,* and *risupekuto suru*. As for the expressions that were unknown to the target age group, Figure 1 shows that the vast majority of the participants were unfamiliar with the expressions *tsuidoru, hamuto, kushamisuto, CC, gamaningu,* and *keshikeshi*.

The third and final research question, "which current youth language items would they use themselves, and which ones would they choose not to use, despite being aware of them?", is answered by Figure 5, where one can compare the *wakamonokotoba-pposa* and *jibun ga tsukau kanoosee* ('probability of own use') ratings to find examples of youth language the respondents make frequent use of (such as *basaki, sorena, torima*, and *wanchan*), as well as expressions they acknowledge as youth language, but do not use as much (such as the instances of *mi* nominalizations and *pien* featured in the survey). This data appears to match Cao's (2022) assertion that the knowledge of a youth language item does not necessarily guarantee its frequency of use.

There were, however, also some unexpected results. As explained in section 3.3, there were instances where respondents replied with *kiita koto ga nai* ('never heard of it') to one or two of an expression's aspects, while giving the others a numerical value. Of course, if they were truly unfamiliar with an expression, they would likely not be able to evaluate it at all, which may suggest that these respondents made use of the *kiita koto ga nai* option to indicate that they were for some reason unable to assign a value to the aspect, using it as an improvised "0" on the numerical scale. For example, if they believed the expression to be a basic or timeless part of the Japanese language, it may have been impossible for them to conceptualize it as being either modern or outdated. Alternatively, this answer pattern might imply that the respondent truly was unaware of the expression but was somehow able to form an intuitive impression that gave them the confidence to assign a value to its youth language-ness or modernness, or how likely they would be to use it in the future now that they are aware of it. As an example of this idea, *pien koete paon* received 7 such unexpected answers to its *jibun ga tsukau kanoosee* aspect, while the other aspects were rated normally (see Appendix B). This might mean that although none of these seven respondents have never heard the phrase used, and therefore would not use it themselves, because it contains the word *pien*, which is in and of itself a youth language item, they can intuitively interpret the phrase as a youth language expression. The same may perhaps also be true of *paisen* and *sutabaru*; while they do not contain youth language items per se, the methods by which they were created (syllable inversion of *senpai*, 'one's senior', and an innovative denominal verb of

sutaba, an abbreviation for Starbuck's, respectively) may be transparent enough and have a strong enough connotation with youth language to have allowed for a confident rating. Interestingly, one can notice that the *jibun ga tsukau kanoosee* aspect was the most frequent recipient of this unexpected answer pattern. It could perhaps be the case that these participants were trying to convey that while they are aware of the expression in question, they have never heard it actually used in person (if it is something mainly used on the internet, such as *kusa*).

The findings of this study go to show that youth language is a complex and ever-evolving part of the field of Japanese sociolinguistics, its wide array of lexical and grammatical features made evident by the list of various answers offered in (19), which would likely only grow longer if there were more participants. It should, however, be noted that it is dubious to what degree these items can be recognized as youth language under Kuwamoto's (2003) definition, as a few of the listed items appear to have obvious connections with a particular interest group (notably, *momiage shuriken, otakatsu,* and *nunkatsu* are clearly related to a specific hobby, the first having been specifically called out as non-youth language by the informants consulted for its meaning). As for the evolving nature of youth language, the data reflects that previously researched youth language patterns and expressions may quickly become obsolete, with many items taken from former research receiving low ratings. Correspondingly, the items obtained from the pre-survey interviews showed a tendency to be highly rated in *wakamonokotoba-pposa* and *imadoki-pposa,* as one would expect. When it comes to items sourced from previous research, it is even possible to see a rough correlation between the year of publication and the featured items' average modernness rating. Arranging the averages in order of oldest to most recent publication yields the following list: 2,14 (Lauwereyns, 2002), 2,1 (Suzuki, 2008), 1,99 (Tsujimura & Davis, 2011), 2,17 (Barešová & Zawiszová, 2012), 2,41 (Akiha & Seraku, 2019), 2,785 (Seraku, 2021). However, this list may be a little misleading, as Barešová & Zawiszová (2012) featured both *KY* and w*anchan,* which respectively rated lowest and highest in modernness out of all the items sourced from previous research, making it hard to establish a reliable average for their study. On the other hand, the fact that *wanchan* rated so highly can also be seen as evidence in support of the idea that a youth language expression may occasionally stand the test of time and achieve a longer-lasting popularity.

3.5. Limitations and further research

It should be noted that this study by no means represents an exhaustive look at Japanese youth language. For practical reasons, the survey had to be limited in the number of researched items, but as the long list of items presented in (19) shows, there is no shortage of other youth language expressions ripe for examination, and the possibility that some of them might have ranked higher than the items featured in the present study can certainly not be denied.

Furthermore, as previously stated, research on the topic of youth language tends to become obsolete as youth language changes. As this study merely presents some current opinions on the researched youth language items, it is unlikely that it will prove to be an exception, with most of the obtained data surely becoming inaccurate in the coming years.

Another limitation of this study is that it is entirely based on a quantitative approach that only focuses on three dimensions: to what degree an expression is considered youth language, how up to date it is, and how often it is used. As a result, the data is unable to account for other factors. Notably, the study made no attempt to differentiate between vocal or online registers, which limits the conclusions that can be drawn from some of the data. For example, none of the participants had heard of the expression *tsuidoru* ('Twitter idol'), which could mean that it is an extremely unpopular expression, but it could also mean that none of the participants were frequent users of the platform Twitter, where it seems most likely to be used. Therefore, while the study shows some expressions that are favoured by today's youth, it fails to answer why the expressions are favoured, in what situations they are used, why certain expressions are thought of as outdated, and other more qualitative questions.

Additionally, the weighted nature of the demographics of the participants of the study means that one cannot eliminate the possibility that other factors have influenced the data. For example, since the majority of the participants were female, it may be possible that some of the items rated highly in *jibun ga tsukau kanoosee* ('probability of own use') are more related to the phenomenon of gendered speech, as opposed to youth language, made even more plausible by the fact that all of the informants in the pre-survey interviews were women. Similar possibilities exist for the regional demographics, as the popularity of some expressions could potentially vary among geographic regions, which would not be reliably discernible from the data of the present study.

With these limitations in mind, and considering the rapidly changing nature of youth language, it is clear that more research is necessary for a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. This further research could entail investigating the new expressions listed in (19)

or conducting studies that compare the data of multiple demographic groups. As the interviews and survey of the present study were heavily biased toward female speakers, it might be necessary to conduct a study with more varied gender-demographics, or one that targets male speakers, to see to what degree youth language intersects with gendered speech. It may also be interesting to see how some of the items featured in the present study hold up in the future, as while most of them will no doubt fall out of favour, others might become ubiquitous enough to remain within the vocabulary of the next generation's youth. Furthermore, the instances of unexpected answers described at length in the previous sections hint at information that was rendered unobtainable by adapting a more quantitative, forced approach, which unfortunately left a lot of questions unanswered. For that reason, I suggest that a more qualitative examination of youth language from the perspective of young speakers is needed to better understand the underlying patterns of this sociolinguistic category. Alternatively, future studies can be better tailored to account for specific factors, such as whether a particular youth language expression is mostly used online or offline.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of the present study was to, through a quantitative approach, better understand the opinions held by the Japanese youth regarding youth language, inspired by Cao's (2022) description of youth language research as often being based on an outsider perspective. The aims were thus to find examples of expressions that native Japanese speakers in their late teens to early twenties would classify as youth language, highlighting some of the most popular items, as well as the ones that have fallen out of popularity.

In order to accomplish these aims, a quantitative questionnaire was conducted, where a total of 30 youth language expressions were examined. These expressions included items uncovered in previous youth language research, as well as new expressions obtained through a set of group interviews with native speakers. The participants of the questionnaire were asked to evaluate the expressions on if they can be considered youth language, if they are currently relevant, and if the participant personally makes use of them. They were then asked to contribute additional examples of current youth language on top of those featured in the study.

The results compiled into Figures 1-5 was able to answer all of the study's research questions. Specifically, the first question was answered by Figure 2, which showed several examples of expressions the participants classified as youth language, along with the expressions in (19). The second question was answered by Figures 1, 2, and 3, showing expressions that were mostly unheard of, expressions that are no longer considered to be youth language, and ones seen as outdated. Finally, the third question was answered by Figures 4 and 5, where it was revealed which youth language expressions are frequently, and rarely, used.

There were, however, some limitations to the study. For practical reasons, the number of expressions that could be examined was limited, which means that the study does not necessarily represent Japanese youth language as a whole. Also, because the participants were also not particularly diverse, it cannot be refuted that other sociolinguistic factors may have influenced the results. Finally, the closed nature of the methodology meant that it was not able to account for different environments, such as whether an expression is mainly used on the internet or in person. Due to these limitations, it was suggested that further research on the topic of Japanese youth language take a more qualitative approach, alternatively adapting its methodology to better account for specific factors. Nevertheless, the present study was able to contribute to the field of Japanese youth language research by uncovering the expressions in

(18) and (19), some of which appear to be highly representative of modern-day youth language.

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A. Questionnaire & Stimuli

A.1 Copy of the full questionnaire (in Japanese)

https://forms.gle/Dc66BKQZXRDr7JVd8

A.2 English mock-up of the basic question structure

[Youth language item]
[Example sentence]

	[Never heard of it]	1 [low]	2	3	4	5 [high]
[Youth language-ness]	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
[Modernness]	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
[Probability of own use]	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

A.3 Example sentences

Basaki	僕のバ先はマクドナルドだ。
	*Boku no **basaki** wa makudonarudo da.*
	'My place of part-time work is McDonald's.'
CC	そのスカート、**CC**！
	*Sono sukaato, **CC**!*
	'That skirt is really cute!"
Gamaningu	失恋したけど、チョコでなんとなく**ガマニング**をしている。
	*Shitsuren shita kedo, choko de nantonaku **gamaningu** o shiteiru.*
	'I'm heartbroken, but chocolate has been helping me endure.'

Hamuto	トイレに行きたいけど、**ハムト**は嫌だなあ。
	*Toire ni ikitai kedo, **hamuto** wa iya da naa.*
	'I need to go to the toilet, but I don't like public restrooms.'
Keshikeshi	うわ、漢字を間違えた。**けしけし**を貸してくれない？
	*Uwa, kanji o machigaeta. **Keshikeshi** o kashite kurenai?*
	'Darn, I screwed up this kanji. Can I borrow your eraser?'
Kimoi	彼って**キモくない**？いつもニヤニヤしてて...
	*Kare tte **kimokunai**? Itsumo niyaniya shitete...*
	'Isn't he creepy? Always grinning like that...'
Kimokawaii	蜘蛛が苦手だけど、タランチュラはなんだか
	キモ可愛いと思う。
	*Kumo ga nigate dakedo, taranchura wa nandaka **kimokawaii** to omou.*
	'I don't like spiders, but I think tarantulas are kinda cute, in a creepy way.'
Kopiru	この写真を**コピって**くれる？
	*Kono shashin o **kopitte** kureru?*
	'Could you make a copy of this photo?'
Kusa	えーー、本当にテーブルの上で踊ったの？**草**！
	*Eee, hontoo ni teeburu no ue de odotta no? **Kusa**!*
	'No way, did you really dance on the table? LOL!"
Kushamisuto	花粉症のせいで、春は**クシャミスト**になってしまう。
	*Kafunshoo no see de, haru wa **kushamisuto** ni natteshimau.*
	'My pollen allergy turns me into a sneezer in the spring.'
KY	一郎はいつも変な冗談をいっていて、**KY**だよ。
	*Ichiroo wa itsumo hen na joodan o itteite, **KY** da yo.*
	'Ichiro can't read the mood, always telling weird jokes.'
-Mi (clause)	あの時が楽しかった**み**が深い。
	*Ano toki ga tanoshikatta**mi** ga fukai.*
	'That time was so enjoyable.'

Nanka	なんか、このTシャツどう思う？
	Nanka, kono T-shatsu doo omou?
	'Like, what do you think of this T-shirt?'
-Neki/-niki	ヤバっ、あそこのバイク**ニキ**かっこいいよね。
	*Yaba, asoko no baiku-**niki** kakkoii yo ne.*
	'Omg, that bike-guy is so handsome, right?'
Paisen	バレンタインに好きな**パイセン**がチョコをくれた。
	*Barentain ni suki na **paisen** ga choko o kureta.*
	'A senior I like gave me chocolates on Valentine's Day.'
Pien	めっちゃ遊びたいけど、あさって試験があるから勉強
	しないと。**ぴえん**！
	Metcha asobitai kedo, asatte shiken ga aru kara benkyoo
	*shinaito. **Pien**!*
	'I really wanna hang out, but I've got an exam in two days,
	so I have to study. I'm so sad!'
Pien koete paon	好きな番組をミスってしまった。**ぴえん超えてぱおん**
	だよ。
	*Suki na bangumi o misutte shimatta. **Pien koete paon** da yo.*
	'I missed my favourite TV-show. This is unbelievably sad.'
-Ppoi	彼はどうしたの？怒っている**っぽい**。
	*Kare wa doushita no? Okotteiru-**ppoi**.*
	'What's up with him? He seems angry.'
-Ppoi-tcha-ppoi	実験が成功した**っぽい**っちゃした**っぽい**けど、あまり
	いい結果が得られてませんでした。
	*Jikken ga seekoo shita-**ppoi-tcha** shita-**ppoi** ndesu kedo, amari*
	ii kekka ga eraretemasen.
	'It seems that the experiment was successful, but the result was
	not particularly good.'
-Ppoi, poi, poi	お、なんだか匂いが消えてる**っぽい**、**ぽい**、**ぽい**！
	*O, nandaka nioi ga kieteru-**ppoi, poi, poi**!*
	'Oh, it seems that the smell has somehow gone!'

Ri	A: 明日、３時半に集合するね
	Ashita, sanji han ni shuugoo suru ne
	'We're meeting up at half past 3 tomorrow, okay?'
	B: り！
	Ri*!*
	'Roger!'
Risupekuto suru	あんな適当な人は**リスペクトできない**。
	*Anna tekitoo na hito wa **risupekuto dekinai***.
	'I can't respect such a care-free person.'
Sorena	A: 最近、めっちゃ暑くない？
	Saikin, metcha atsukunai?
	'Hasn't it been super-hot lately?'
	B: それな。
	Sorena.
	'Totally.'
Sutabaru	バイトが終わったら、**スタバる**？
	*Baito ga owattara, **sutabaru***?
	'Wanna go to Starbucks after work?'
-Tari suru (sing.)	A: 昨日何やってた？
	Kinoo nani yatteta?
	'What did you do yesterday?'
	B: フランスパンを焼い**たりしてみた**！
	*Furansupan o yai**tari shite** mita!*
	'I tried doing things like baking french bread!'
	（状況：Bは他に何もしませんでした）
	(Jookyoo: B wa hokani nanimo shimasendeshita)
	(Context: B did nothing else)
Toka (sing.)	私、フランス**とか**行きたい。
	*Watashi, furansu **toka** ikitai.*
	'I wanna go to France and such.'

Torima	桃子は遅れちゃうって。**とりま**、カフェに入っとく？
	*Momoko wa okurechau tte. **Torima**, kafe ni haittoku?*
	'Momoko said she's gonna be late. Wanna enter the café for now?'
Tsuidoru	「たゐよー」という**ツイドル**にハマっちゃった。
	*"Taiyoo" to iu **tuidoru** ni hamatchatta.*
	'I got really into this Twitter idol called "Taaaiiiyooo".'
Tsurami	休み明けの仕事、本当に**つらみ**が深い。
	*Yasumi ake no shigoto, hontoo ni **tsurami** ga fukai.*
	'A work which I have to do after holidays is really depressing.'
Wanchan	明日なら**ワンチャン**いける。
	*Ashita nara **wanchan** ikeru.*
	'If it's tomorrow, it might be doable.'

B. Unexpected *kiita koto ga nai* answer pattern

This table shows the number of times an aspect was answered with kiita koto ga nai *'never heard of it' while the same respondent gave other aspects of the expression a numerical rating, specifying which aspect (youth language-ness [YLN], modernness [MN], or probability of own use [PoU]) received the non-numerical answer. Note that the numbers presented in the table refer to the total number of occurrences, not to be confused with the numerical ratings.*

Item	YLN	MN	PoU
basaki			1
CC	1	1	1
gamaningu	2		1
hamuto			1
keshikeshi		1	2
kimoi		1	
kimokawaii		1	1
kopiru			2
kusa			4
kushamisuto	1		

KY		2	3
-mi (clause)			3
nanka	1	1	
-neki, -niki			5
paisen		3	5
pien			3
pien koete paon			7
-ppoi		1	
-ppoi, poi, poi		2	
ri	1	1	
risupekuto suru			2
sorena		1	
sutabaru		1	6
-tari suru (sing.)	2	2	1
toka (sing.)	2	2	
torima			2
tsurami		1	4