Benrina Yatsu

A Quantitative Corpus Study of the Usage of the Japanese Nominaliser *Yatsu* Together with Adjectives

Robin Weinemo

Abstract

Yatsu has both been described as an 'abusive' version of the nominaliser *mono*, as well having properties not shared with *mono*. In this paper, the Japanese nominaliser *yatsu* was examined using the written corpus Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese (BCCWJ) created by the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics (NINJAL). The research questions were as follows: "To what extent is *yatsu* used compared to the nominaliser *mono*?" and "How is *yatsu* used contextually?" Firstly, it was shown that *mono* is used much more extensively than *yatsu*. Secondly, examining the adjectives which appeared in front of *yatsu*, it was shown that there appear to be a negative connotation with the use of *yatsu*; this was evident when looking at the structure Noun + *yoo na yatsu*, in which there were no observed instances of a positive context; contrasting Noun + *no yoo na mono* in which there were no observed negative instances. The selection could however likely be a factor for this result.

Keywords: Japanese, nominalisation, *yatsu*, written corpus

Conventions

In this thesis, a modified version of the Hepburn system was used when writing Japanese using the Latin alphabet. When writing long vowels, double vowels will be used instead of macrons, for example *saikoo* instead of *saikō*.

Abbreviations

GEN   Genitive

Table of Contents

Figures

Tables

1. Introduction

The study of Japanese nominalisers and their use is broad. As explained by Maynard (1999), "the Japanese language describes the world as a changing state as a whole, while the English language describes active events where an agent acts on or with others" (p. 62). This can be achieved using nominalisation (Maynard, 1997b, p. 35). However, the choice of nominalisers can be based on the target of nominalisation (whether the action is a concrete situation of a cognitional one (Hasegawa, 2015, p. 189)), or the social situation (Maynard, 1997a, p. 397).

While there are multiple studies regarding *no* and *koto* (Horie, 1997; Hara et al., 2013; Maynard, 1997a; Maynard, 1999), studies regarding *yatsu* are few (Iijima, 2011;2012). *Yatsu* (奴) has three different translations:

1. (Derogatory or familiar) fellow; guy; chap
2. Thing; object
3. (Derogatory or familiar) he; she; him; he (WWWJDIC, 2023)

Additionally, as put by Morita (as quoted in Iijima, 2011, p. 17), while originally used to refer to inferiors, *yatsu* does possess a negative connotation. This is like Martin's (1988) description of *yatsu*: an "abusive word for *mono*" (p. 718). Iijima (2012), however, shows that this description is insufficient, as there are cases in which *yatsu* can be used while *mono* cannot, as well as the other way around, meaning that *yatsu* is no mere synonym of *mono*. With these definitions in mind, the aim of this study is to investigate how *yatsu* is used naturally using data from a corpus.

Following this introduction, previous research of nominalisation and *yatsu* will be explored. Then, the research questions and methodology of the study will be presented. Lastly, the findings will then be presented and discussed.

2. Previous Research

In this chapter, nominalisation will firstly be introduced with its two sub-groups: lexical nominalisation and grammatical nominalisation. Following this, previous research regarding *yatsu* will be introduced.

2.1. Nominalisation

Nominalisation is the process of changing a clause or a word (sometimes another noun (Shibatani, 2018, pp. 433-4)) into a noun (Hasegawa, 2015, p. 188; Shibatani, 2018, pp. 432-3). This can be done two ways: Lexical nominalization, which creates nouns, and grammatical nominalization, "yielding structures larger than words" (Shibatani, 2018, p. 433). Thus, "as products, nominalizations are like nouns by virtue of their association with an entity-concept denotation; both denote thing-like concepts" (Shibatani, 2018, p. 432). Rather than describing the action (eating cake), nominalisation turns the action into a concept (cake-eating).

As mentioned above, nominalisation is categorised into lexical and grammatical. Based on what is being nominalised, nominalisation is further divided into two groups: V-based nominalisation, which consists of verbs and adjectives, and N-based nominalisation, consisting of nominals (Seraku, 2021, p. 282). This is summarised in the table below from Seraku (p. 282):

Lexical nominalization	V-based	*sing > singer*
	N-based	*London > Londoner*
Grammatical nominalization	V-based	*sing cheerfully > singing cheerfully*
	N-based	*Ken > Ken's*

Table 1 Classifications of nominalisation

In the above table we can see that we can nominalise a word which is already a noun. An example of this in Japanese is that of *shoosetsu-ka* 'novelist' (Shibatani, 2018, p. 434).

2.1.1. Lexical Nominalisation

As mentioned above, lexical nominalisation *renders* a noun. Two nominalisers which are used to nominalise adjectives are *-sa* and *-mi*, with *-sa* nominalisation used to convey a more abstract meaning, whereas *-mi* nominalisation conveys a more concrete meaning (Hasegawa, 2015, p. 83; Shibatani, 2018, p. 435). Researchers are not in agreement regarding which adjectives *-sa* and *-mi* can be applied to, however. Hasegawa (2015, p. 83) and Shibatani (2018, p. 435) state that, while *-sa* can attach to both *i*-adjectives and *na*-adjectives, *-mi*

cannot be used to nominalise an *na*-adjective. Martin (1988, p. 909), on the other hand, states that, while more limited than -*sa*, -*mi* can be used to nominalize *na*-adjectives, for example *shinken-mi* (from *shinken*, 'earnest') and *shinsetsu-mi* (from *shinsetsu*, 'kind'). Why this discrepancy exists however, is unclear. Although Hasegawa (2015) does not go into depth of the etymology, Shibatani (2018, p. 436) sheds light on the fact that -*mi* could originate from the stem of the verb-form which some *i*-adjectives possess (*tanoshi-* 'joyful,' *tanoshimu* 'to enjoy'), which *na*-adjectives does not possess, and would explain why -*mi* nominalisation of *na*-adjectives are not considered by some. However, the connection between -*mi* nominalisation and the verb-forms of *i*-adjectives is also mentioned by Martin (1988, p. 911). As it is outside of the scope of this thesis, the discrepancy of -*mi* will not be further investigated here.

A recent study of -*mi* in relation to *wakamono kotoba* (youth language) found usages of -*mi* which were even used on words other than adjectives when analysing the use of -*mi* on Twitter (Seraku, 2021). Examples were found where users on Twitter applied -*mi* not only to stems of *i*-adjectives (labelled native adjectives by Seraku), but also *na*-adjectives (*Shiawase-mi* 'happiness', from *shiawase* 'happy' (p. 287)) and loanwords (*hansamu-mi* 'handsomeness,' from *hansamu* 'handsome' (p. 288)), verbs, (*neru-mi* from *neru* 'sleep' (p. 290)), nouns (*ikai-mi* from *ikai* 'spiritual worlds' (p. 292)), proper nouns (*majotaku-mi* from *majotaku*, the informal abbreviation from the Japanese title of *Kiki's Delivery Service* (p. 292)), as well as onomatopoeia (*kirakira-mi*, from *kirakira* 'sparkling' (p. 295)). Seraku also observed -*mi* being used to create grammatical nominalisation (*Saakuru-no hime-mi*, from *Saakuru-no hime* 'princess of a club' (p. 293)) as well as applied to words which were already nominalised (*ama-sa-mi*, from *ama-sa* 'sweetness' which in turn comes from the adjective *ama-i*, 'sweet' (p. 293)). An example was even found where -*mi* was attached to the emoji of the Turkish flag (p. 295), and even a case where, instead of the stem of an *i*-adjective, -*mi* was attached to the finite form (*ureshi-i-mi* (p. 288)). The extensive use of -*mi* on Twitter, Seraku argues, can be explained with -*mi* inheriting a function of cuteness which -*sa* does not possess (p. 294).

A productive nominalizer for verbs is that of *kata*, 'way of doing', which is a nominalizer in the form of verbal infinitive suffix (Martin, 1988, p. 911; Makino & Tsutsui, 1986, p. 183). The *kata* nominaliser is quite productive as it can be attached both to the stem of the verb (*tabe-kata*, way of eating), voice-converted verbs (*sase-kata*, 'way of making one do'), as well as when an auxiliary is attached to a verb (*shi-tsuzuke-kata* 'way of continuing to do it') (Martin, 1988, p. 912). When *kata* nominalisation is applied, the base verb's adjuncts

tend to be adnominalized, for example *kabe no kozuki-kata* 'the construction of the walls,' compared to *kabe o kizuku* 'they construct the walls' (pp. 911-912). This, however, is the case when *kata* is used as a lexical nominaliser. When instead used as a sentential (grammatical) nominaliser, this change is not made. For example: *"Tokoro-de, || Taroo no | yuumei ni nari-kata wa || ippu | kawatte ita* 'Now, Taro's way of becoming famous was quite odd'" (Martin, p. 913).

In his paper, Kishimoto (2006) studies how the nominaliser *kata* 'way' functions from a syntax perspective (p. 771-772). In the paper, Kishimoto argues that, while there are some similarities between the properties of lexical nominals and *kata*-nominals, the latter is a more productive structure, since, for example, one can say *tabe-kata* (way of eating), but not *tabe alone (pp. 774-775) (for further discussions regarding verb stems, see Shibatani, 2018). Furthermore, while some lexical compounds can contain multiple meanings, 'syntactic nominals,' as labelled by Kishimoto (2006), have a much clearer meaning. For example, "the lexical compound *kata-tataki* (shoulder patting) can carry an opaque idiomatic meaning like 'making someone quit a job' as well as its literal meaning 'patting shoulders'", whereas "*kata-no tataki-kata* (shoulder-GEN pat-way) has only the literal meaning 'the way of patting shoulders'" (p. 775).

Another nominaliser in the form of verbal infinitive + suffix is that of *kake*, taking the meaning of something half-done, for example *tabe-kake no gohan* (half-eaten food) (Martin, 1988, p. 443). In their study regarding that of the *kake* nominaliser, Tsujimura, and Iida (1999) argue that *-kake* has two different meanings: the 'halfway' interpretation and the inception reading, and that this difference depends on telicity (p. 109). Tsujimura and Iida write that an event can either be telic or atelic; "if an event has an endpoint which delimits the actions, it is telic; otherwise, it is atelic" (p. 111), giving *John ate apples for an hour* as an example of an atelic event where it would be incorrect to say **John ate apples in an hour*, and *John ate an apple in an hour* as an example of a telic event where it would be incorrect to say **John ate an apple for an hour* (p. 111). Examples of the halfway interpretation are *nomi-kake-no miruku* (milk, half drunk), *tabe-kake-no pan* (bread, half eaten); examples of the inception reading are *shini-kake-no byoonin* (a patient, almost dying), *kie-kake-no hi* (fire, almost extinguished) (examples taken from Tsujimura & Iida, 1999, p. 110). What is needed for *kake* to hold the halfway interpretation is that of an endpoint of the action (pp. 112-113). In the following examples, we can see that (1) denotes a state which cannot be deverbally nominally modified; meaning that the verb *shinjiru* cannot be turned into a noun (*shinji*) to then be modified with *kake* (p. 113), while (2) instead has an inherited endpoint:

(1) *shinji-kake-no   uwasa
    believe-KAKE-Gen   rumor
(2) yomi-kake-no   hon
    read-KAKE-Gen   book (examples taken from Tsujimura & Iida, 1999. p.
pp. 112-113)

The verb itself does not denote whether the halfway interpretation can be made, however. For example, while *aruki-kake-no Taroo (walk-KAKE-Gen Taroo) is incorrect, kooen-made aruki-kake-no Taroo (park-until walk-KAKE-Gen Taroo) is correct thanks to the delimiter kooen-made 'to the park' (p. 116). Similar holds for the inception reading, where it can either be interpreted with the verb alone, or with the help of context (p. 126).

2.1.2. Grammatical Nominalisation

Grammatical nominalisation, as opposed to lexical nominalisation, yields constructions bigger than a single word. As explained by Shibatani (2018):

> Grammatical nominalizations denote either abstract concepts like processes or activities, and concepts closely related to them, including such abstract ones as facts and propositions, or concrete substantive entities such as event participants and resultant objects, just as lexical nominalizations denote these in a more codified manner. (p. 450)

The two common nominalisers which distinguish between the abstract nominalisations and the more concrete nominalisations are that of koto and no, respectively. As explained by Hasegawa (2015), "no is used to reference a concrete situation (i.e., action, event, or state) perceivable by the five senses, whereas koto pertains to situations that involve abstract cognition" (p. 189).

The claim that koto cannot refer to concrete events, however, has been challenged. In their study, Hara et al. (2013) argue that koto can in fact also refer to an event, making the previous distinction between no and koto incomplete. With the help of the construction koto ga aru, expressing that one has the experience of having done something, Hara et al. argue that, if koto in the sentence Watashi-wa Dobai-ni itta koto-ga aru (Lit. 'As for me, having gone to Dubai exists') were to be used to refer to an abstract concept rather than the event of having gone to Dubai, it would not make much sense (Hara et al., 2013, p. 264). Hara et al. conclude that, depending on what koto attaches to, the "sentential koto-nominal can denote not only an abstract proposition but also a concrete event" (p. 285), showing that koto has a more nuanced meaning than that of only referring to abstract concepts. This is echoed by

Horie (1997). Regarding the fact that *no* refers to a concrete event, Horie poses the question whether *no* "really encodes *directness/concreteness* by itself" (p. 887), and that it instead depends on what *no* is attached to.

Regarding the semantic differences between *koto* and *no,* in a study regarding news anchors and reporters' use of nominalisation, Maynard (1997a) found a clear distinction of use of nominalisers based on the 'role' the host was taking. In her study, Maynard divided these roles into two different "staged speech contexts": "On the one hand, anchors and reporters "announce" the news, i.e., TV Announcements; on the other hand, the anchors, reporters, and other participants on the screen carry on "talk" among themselves, i.e., TV Talk" (p. 383). When the use of nominalisation in these two contexts were analysed, Maynard found that, in TV Talk, while nominalisation was more prevalent in general, *no* was most often used, whereas during TV Announcements, *koto* was the nominaliser most frequently used (pp. 387-388). This was summarised by Maynard: "In general, proximal framing is more suited for unplanned discourse, such as conversation, while distal framing is more useful for planned discourse, such as reading from a prepared script" (p. 391).

Furthermore, when analysing where *no* and *koto* occur in a sentence, Maynard found that, during TV Talk, *no* occurred more frequently as a nominal predicate in comparison with TV Announcements, whereas *koto* occurred more frequently as a nominal predicate in TV Announcements than in TV Talk (p. 391-392). This, Maynard argues, can be explained by the fact that "in *no* nominalisation, one's personal attitude is expressed in such a way that the immediacy of experience is communicated," whereas "in the context of TV Announcements, addressed directly to an imagined audience, require fewer such linguistic expressions" (p. 392), showing that the speaker's use of nominaliser has a great effect on how what is said is being presented.

Similarly, Maynard (1999), with data from letters appearing in *Asahi Shimbun*, a Japanese newspaper, as well as the novel *Yukiguni (Snow country)*, together with its' English translation, studied how that of nominalisation together with the *da* predicate can convey a "speaker's aesthetic and attitudinal expressivity" (p. 57). In her study, Maynard identified two different structures of how the nominalisation is functioning which she labelled *mono* focus and *koto* focus: "The *mono* focus occurs in modifying clause-noun combination, while the *koto* focus occurs in explanatory as well as nominalizer clause-noun combinations" (p. 68). In other words, the former focuses on the agent of the clause, whereas the latter instead focuses on the event itself (p. 62). What Maynard found was that "rhetorical manipulation of nominalization makes it possible to combine a sense of movement within a still frame,

bringing to Japanese text the kind of rhetorical effects echoing the Japanese aesthetic appeal" (p. 71) This is similar the ideas of Langacker (as cited in Hasegawa, 2015, p. 195), which is that the process of nominalisation creates the concept of summarizing a string of events as a single frame, which he denotes summary scanning (in contrast to that of sequential scanning, which presents the events more as individual sequences which together create the whole event).

2.2. *Yatsu*

As mentioned in the introduction, Martin (1988) translates *yatsu* to "damn one (=thing/person)" and refers to *yatsu* as an "abusive word for mono" (p. 718), and falls under that of grammatical nominalisation, as no new word is created using *yatsu*. That *yatsu* only can be referred to as an 'abusive version of mono' is not completely true, since *yatsu* possesses some functions which *mono* does not. Iijima (2012, p. 97) gives the following two definitions:

(i)　　*Yatsu* can, between the speaker and the receiver of information, assume the target of the shared knowledge, and specify the target.

(ii)　　*Yatsu* cannot refer to unspecified objects or goods.[1]

An example of (i) is in the context of being presented with a choice, *yatsu* can then specify which one is the target, as given by the following sentences:

(3) A: *tooten ni wa, A kara C no esutekoosu ga arimasuga, honjitsu wa, dore ni nasaimasuka?*

'In this store, you can choose beauty treatment plans from A to B. Which one would you like to do today?'

B: *C no [yatsu/*mono]de onigaishimasu.*

'I would like C, please.' (Iijima, 2012, p. 104, my translation

While *yatsu* is the correct choice here to specify which beauty treatment one would like, *mono* lacks this function. A sentence which exemplifies (ii) is the following:

(4) *Dansei ni shitsumon desu. Kanojo to osoroi no [mono/*yatsu] o mottemasuka?*

'A question for the man. Do you have anything that matches with your girlfriend?'

These definitions are translated and summarized from the following:

(i) 「やつ」は、話し手が情報の受け手との間に、ある対象についての共通の認識が存在することを想定して、対象を指定することができるが、「もの」はこの機能を持たない。

(ii) 「もの」は内包と外延の両方を表すことができるが、「やつ」は基本的に外延のみを表す。したがって、文脈によって規定されていない不特定の「物体・物品」の意味として、「やつ」を用いることはできない。

(5) *Akusesarii de, kanojo to osoroi no [mono/yatsu] o mottemasuka?*

'With accessories, do you have something that is matching with your girlfriend?'

(Iijima, 2012, pp. 97-98, my translation)

As shown in the example sentences above, when discussing something too general ("anything that matches"), *yatsu* cannot be used. However, by being more specific and specifying matching accessories, *yatsu* can be used.

In his study, comparing *yatsu* to other nominalisers labelled as *keishikimeishi* (formal noun), Iijima (2012) argues that *yatsu* is strictly referential. While grammatically interchangeable in many cases, *yatsu* is purely a substitute-specific word (p. 108). This is exemplified in the following sentence:

(6) *Kaaneeshon wa, haha no hi ni okuru mono/yatsu da.*

'Carnation is one you give on Mother's Day' (p. 99, my translation)

Iijima argues that, when using *mono¸ haha no hi ni okuru* is describing the attribute of *mono*, whereas in the sentence using *yatsu*, *haha no hi ni okuru* is instead specifying that carnation is that one you give on Mother's Day. In other words, the noun phrase which *yatsu* is part of is merely *pointing towards* what a carnation is, rather than *describing* what kind of flower it is.

Iijima gives a similarity to the difference of the predicational sentence and the inverse specificational sentence. In a predicational sentence, with the structure '*A wa B da*', A is the designated target of the descriptor B, whereas in an inverse specificational sentence with the same structure, A is instead the descriptor of the designated target B. Looking at the example sentences using *mono* and *yatsu,* we can then see that, while they appear to be similar structurally, the roles of the items are in fact different.

3. Methodology

In this section, the research questions and the methodology of the study will be presented.

3.1. Research Questions

With the previous chapter as a background, while it is mentioned that *yatsu* solely acts referentially, it is not discussed whether *yatsu* tends to refer to particular items, or if yatsu has a certain connotation. While Martin (1998) labels *yatsu* as an "abusive word for mono" (p. 718)*,* with the definition from Iijima (2012) it is clear that there are cases where *yatsu* can be used but *mono* cannot, as with the example of being presented with multiple choices. Furthermore, compared to *mono,* which *yatsu* is often likened to, to what extent is *yatsu* used?

With this, the research questions of this thesis are the following:

1. To what extent is *yatsu* used compared to the nominaliser *mono*?
2. How is *yatsu* used contextually?

As to keep the scope of this thesis reasonable, to answer RQ2, adjectives which appear before *yatsu* will be observed and analysed, i.e., how is *yatsu* used to describe what it is referring to.

To answer these questions, a written corpus was used. Why a corpus study was chosen to answer these questions, an introduction to the corpus used, as well as how it was utilised will be presented in the following sections.

3.2. Corpus Study

With the help of a corpus, one can investigate how a language is used in practice (Jones & Waller, 2015). Using a corpus as the source of the data for this study will then help give insight into the usage of *yatsu* by viewing a large source of data. This in turn will allow patterns to emerge, giving insight into how *yatsu* is utilised. Thus, a descriptive approach was done (pp. 8-9). However, while useful, a corpus cannot tell us, among other, what the writer or speaker had for intentions regarding word choice. Moreover, a single corpus, or multiple corpora, cannot give an 'absolute' answer to how language is used, but rather a snapshot (p. 15). This being the case, a corpus, big or small, can give insights into how the language functions (Gries & Newman, 2013, p. 259). Additionally, a corpus study can only answer three different questions:

a. How often and where does something occur in a corpus?
b. How often do linguistic expressions occur in close proximity to other linguistic expressions?

  c. How are linguistic elements used in their actual contexts? (Gries & Newman, 2013, p. 274).

While question c is not relevant for this study, question a and b act as the basis of the research questions. With research question 1 (RQ1), question a) will be the focus to give an indication of how often *yatsu* is used in relation other words which possess a similar ability. With research question 2 (RQ2), what kinds of words are used together with *yatsu* was focused on.

3.3. The Corpus Used

The corpus used in this study is the Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese (BCCWJ) created by the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics (NINJAL). The corpus consists of approximately 100 million lexical items collected from printed and published sources (newspapers, books, magazines, textbooks, internet forums, PR documents, and reports) mainly being dated between 1976 and 2006 (Maekawa, 2015.). To get access to the corpus, one needs to register and be considered eligible before being able to access it. The data of the corpus can be accessed and searched through via chunagon; a search engine created for the corpus made by NINJAL. In the corpus, all lexical items are morphologically tagged, and this info is available when searching through the corpus. Thus, one can search for particular part-of-speech or add restrictions to a search, which will be explained in the following sub-section.

3.3.1. Usage

As mentioned above, the corpus and its data were accessible online, and the collection of the data was thus done using the integrated search engine of the BCCWJ, chunagon. There are two main ways to search the corpus: using short units or long units. A search with short units would interpret *saamon pinku iro* as three units: *saamon* (salmon), *pinku* (pink) and *iro* (colour), while a search using long units would interpret it as a single compound: *saamon pinku iro* (salmon-pink colour) (Maekawa, 2015, p. 5). Searches using long units were used in this study to give more context to the words that appear in front of *yatsu*. For example, while *ii* by itself means 'good', *ii* is also part of many compounds such as *kakkoii*, meaning good-looking, stylish, or cool, and *kimochiii*, meaning feeling good or feeling pleasant. In these cases, with short units, only *ii* would appear as the word in front of *yatsu* and would thus be overrepresented in the data[2].

---

[2] While this is the case, when looking through the data, there were a few cases in which *ii* was treated as its own token despite being part of a particular expression. More on how this was treated in 4.1.2

How it was done in this study was to search using the phonetic reading of the lexeme to find the instances where *yatsu* is written using kanji, hiragana, or katakana. In the case of *mono*, however, another requirement was added to the search. Like *yatsu*, *mono* can both refer to things as well as people, but there is also the sentence-ending particle *mono* which is not related to the topic of this thesis. Furthermore, unlike *yatsu*, the kanji of *mono* differs from when objects or people are referred to: when referring to objects, the kanji 物 is used, but when referring to people, 者 is used instead. This distinction is also done in the corpus, and 物 and 者 are thus treated as separate lexemes. Because of this, when searching for *mono* in the corpus, two searches were made: one for *mono* referring to people, and one for *mono* referring to objects.

When looking for adjectives, a particular requirement was added to the search. Firstly, the chosen keyword was required to be an *i*-adjective. Secondly, one spot after this adjective, we want the word *yatsu* to be present. This then yields all the occurrences of *i-adjective + yatsu*. For *na*-adjectives, an additional requirement was made, where the adjective had to be followed by *na* (derived from the copula *da*), which in turn as followed by *yatsu*. This same procedure was done for *mono*.

After a search had been conducted, the data was downloaded as an Excel document, where the data was further analysed using pivot tables to group the entries, as well as labelling the data. When making comparisons between *yatsu* and *mono* (see 4.1.2.1), because *mono* is used much more frequently than *yatsu*, a random sample of the items of *mono* was made to match the sample size of *yatsu*; n=23 for Noun + *no yoo na yatsu/mono*, and n=112 for Noun + *mitai na yatsu/mono*.

3.4. Labelling of data

With the collected data, the entries were then labelled as positive, neutral, or negative. While the intention of the speaker is unknown (Jones & Waller, 2015, p. 15), it can still be perceived, albeit inherently subjective (p. 16).

Positive in this study means that the word has a positive connotation or is used in a context where it is supposed to invoke a positive feeling. This is exemplified by the following excerpt:

(7) *Tokushu na mono desu kara, naka ni wa shokuninngei no yoo na mono mo gozaimasu*

'Because there are unique items, within are those of craftmanship as well.'

In this sentence, craftmanship gives the feeling that these items are of high quality: a positive trait.

For words labelled as neutral, they are either simply descriptive and not meant to be perceived neither negative nor positive, or, if it is difficult to determine from the current context.

(8) *Tatoeba murasakiiro o shita mimizu no yoo na yatsu*

'For example, a purple earthworm looking one.'

In this sentence, the discussion appears to be about insects, and the speaker is making a comparison to a purple earthworm.

For words labelled negative, either the word of interest itself possesses a negative connotation or used in a negative context. An example of an occurrence labelled as negative:

(9) *Shootai wa onara no yoo na yatsu sa.*

'Their true character is a fart-looking thing.'

In this sentence, 'fart' is used to describe someone's true character; something which is very negative.

4. Results and discussion

In this chapter, the results will be presented and examined, followed by a discussion connecting the findings to previous research.

4.1. Results

In the corpus, there is a total of 293 387 appearances of *mono* (261 373 instances of *mono* (thing), and 32 014 instances of *mono* (person)), with only 10 143 appearances of *yatsu*. By this, it is obvious that *mono* is used a lot more frequently than *yatsu*.

Given that adjectives fall into two groups, *i*-adjectives, and *na*-adjectives, two individual searches were done, and will thus be presented separately before they are compared and discussed.

4.1.1. *I*-adjectives

In total, there were 1 315 combined items of *i*-adjective + *yatsu*. In the following table are the 10 most frequent *i*-adjectives:

Lexeme reading	Meaning	Appearances
Yoi/ii	Good	231
Nai	Non-existent	172
Warui	Bad	137
Tsuyoi	Strong	39
Sugoi	Amazing	31
Wakai	Young	30
Chiisai	Small	28
Hidoi	Cruel	25
Kawaii	Cute	23
Omoshiroi	Interesting	21

Table 2: I-*adjectives with* yatsu

The *i*-adjectives used together with *yatsu* tend to be more positive, with words like *yoi/ii, sugoi,* and *kawaii*. However, as can be seen, negative words are also present with *warui*, *hidoi*, and even *nai*. Worth noting is also the large drop between *warui* (137) and *tsuyoi* (39). While *ii/yoi* in general is positive and possesses the meaning of *good* and *well*, to make sure that these were in fact not part of an expression, they were looked at individually.

While there were instances in which *ii* was part of an expression, these exceptions were however very scarce. Of the 231 appearances of *yoi/ii,* there were only 10 exceptions in

which *yoi/ii* was used as part of an expression. Of these, only three items could be considered negative: *doo de mo ii* (2) and *shine ba ii,* with two being neutral; *shita hoo ga ii* and *omotte reba ii* (see table 3). Of the positive cases, there were *kakkoii*[3], *choo do ii*, and *kimochi ii* (3). Thus, of the 231 total appearances of *yoi/ii*, 221 are considered positive.

Expression	Translation	Appearances	Connotation
Shita hoo ga ii	Had better to do…	1	Neutral
Doo de mo ii	Trivial; Whatever	2	Negative
Kakkoii	Cool; Good-looking	1	Positive
Choodoii	Just right	1	Positive
Kimochi ii	Feeling good	3	Positive
Shineba ii	…better dead	1	Negative
Jibun dake de omotte reba ii	… should keep to yourself	1	Neutral

Table 3: Exceptions of ii

While it may not be surprising that *yoi/ii* is used in a positive manner, a more challenging problem appears with the adjective *nai*, which in itself means 'non-existent', but is also part of several expressions, such as *tonde mo nai*, unthinkable, absurd, and *shoo ga nai*, 'can't be helped', to name a few. Furthermore, without knowing *what* is non-existent, it is impossible to determine whether the usage is positive or negative, and thus the items must be examined individually.

Of the 172 appearances of *nai*, 12 (7%) are positive, 41 (24%) neutral, and 119 (69%) negative (see Figure 1). Among the negative, the 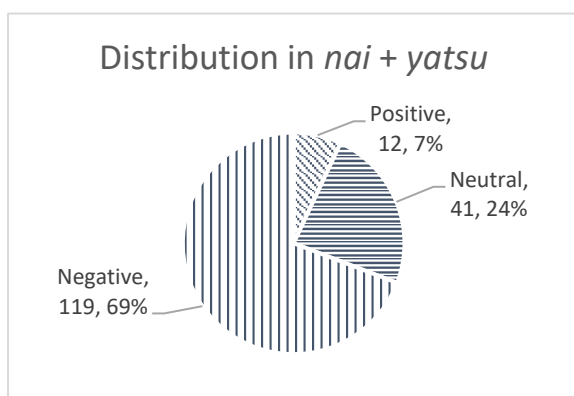most common expressions which appeared with *nai* were *tondemonai* (19), meaning unthinkable, absurd, and *shoo ga/no/mo nai* (14), meaning annoying or troublesome. Other than these, there is a tendency to use *nai* together with qualities which are considered positive, such as common sense (*jooshiki*), which was referred to a total of eight times, learning ability (*gakushuu nooryoku*), and ideals (*risoo*), to name a few. Thus, with *yatsu*, these were *jooshiki no nai yatsu,* one without common sense,

Figure 1: Distribution in nai + yatsu

---

[3] *Kakkoii* also appeared 4 times as an item in the data.

gakushuu nooryoku no nai yatsu, one without the ability to learn, and *risoo no nai yatsu*, one without ideals.

In the cases in which something positive is conveyed, the most common expression is no ordinary person (*tada no mono ja nai*) (4), followed by the expression *nukeme no nai* (3), which translates to *cunning*. Excluding the cases which *nai* is part of a particular expression, *nai* is used to express the lack of positive qualities.

In total, 308 (42%) items were labelled positive, 140 (19%) were labelled neutral, and 283 (39%) were labelled negative among the *i*-adjectives (see Figure 2). While the majority is positive, it is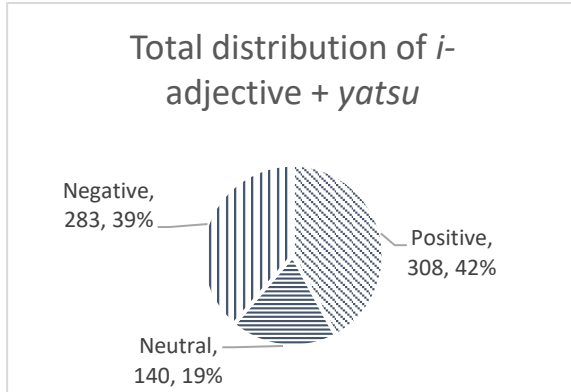 not uncommon to use *i*-adjective + *yatsu* negatively. In fact, it appears that, when using *yatsu*, the speaker prefers to take a stance whether the topic brought up with

Figure 2: Total distribution of i-*adjective* + yatsu

yatsu is positive or negative, rather than take a neutral stance.

4.1.2. *Na-adjective*

There were a total of 1,033 occurrences of adjective + *na yatsu*. In the following table are the ten most commonly occurring *na*-adjectives:

Lexeme reading	Meaning	Appearances
Yoo	Appearing	153
Mitai	Resembling	142
Iya	Disliking	96
Hen	Weird	83
Baka	Idiot	41
Soo	Seeming that	26
Suki	Like	23
Dame	Hopeless	19
Kawaisoo	Pitiable	10
Kirai	Hate	10

Table 4: Na-*adjective* + yatsu

The adjectives used are in general quite negative, such as *iya, baka*, and *dame* among others, with only *suki* being positive. Worth noting, however, is that the two most common

adjectives[4] are *yoo* and *mitai*, which are difficult to label unless one knows what word they are combined with. To then understand how they are utilized, they need to be analysed separately; specifically, the construction noun + *no* + *yoo* + *na* + *yatsu* and *noun* + *mitai* + *na* + *yatsu*. Looking at the nouns which are used together with *yoo* and *mitai*, a picture of what kinds of things *yatsu* is used to replace will emerge.

4.1.2.1. *Noun + Mitai + Na + Yatsu* and *Noun + no + yoo + na + yatsu*

Instances of the construction *noun + no + yoo + na + yatsu* were 23, with instances of *noun + mitai + na + yatsu* were 112, indicating that nouns are more frequent with *mitai + na + yatsu* in comparison with *yoo + na + yatsu*.

For *yoo*, of the 23 items, 0 were positive, 12 were neutral, and 11 were negative (see Figure 3).

Instances which were considered neutral were either simply used to describe the properties of the *yatsu*, or when the given context was not enough to determine wether it was use positively or negatively.

(10)   *Hamushi wa koochuurui desu ne. chiisakute hosoi tentoomushi no yoo na yatsu desu.*

‘Leaf beetles are beetles, right? Small, thin ladybug looking ones.’
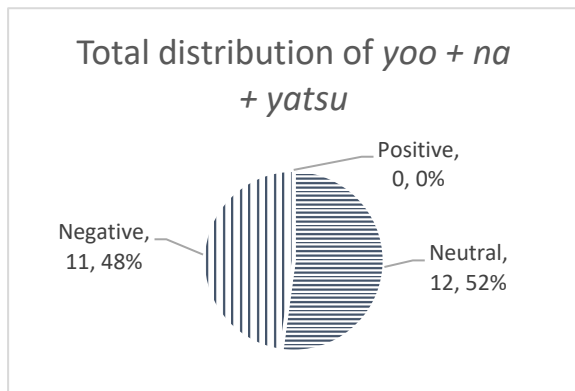

Figure 3: Total distribution of yoo + na + yatsu

In (10), the key word is used to simply describe the resemblance to something else; making a comparrison to a certain kind of bug.

For the instances where the keywords were deemed negative, there were instances where both the word in itself had a negative connotation, as well as the words being used in a negative context. Examples of this is being given below:

(11)   *Oni aruiwa onigo wa oni no yoo na yatsu, to iu imiai*

‘Demon, or rather demon-child, is a demon looking one, is the implication.’

(12)   *Keisatsu naibu ni mo, jyoohoo o riiku suru no ga shumi no yoo na yatsu ga iru mono da*

‘Within the police as well, it is that there are ones who are leaking information freely.’

(13)   *Anna onna wa ore no tsuma de aru dokoroka, kyuuteki no yoo na yatsu da*

---

[4] While being modal expression rather than adjectives, as *yoo*, *mitai,* and *soo*, are treated as adjectives in the corpus, they will also be treated as adjectives in this paper.

'That woman is, rather than my wife, someone like my bitter enemy'

In these instances, we can see that *yatsu* is used in contexts where either the topic is being something negative, such as leeking information from the police, or making a similarity between one's wife and one's bitter enemy, or discussing things being demon-like. In (12), we see that *mono* appeared as well. What these *yatsu* and *mono* are referring to are a bit different, however. What *yatsu* is referring to are the people doing the leaking of information, whereas as *mono* refers to the fact that these people exist.
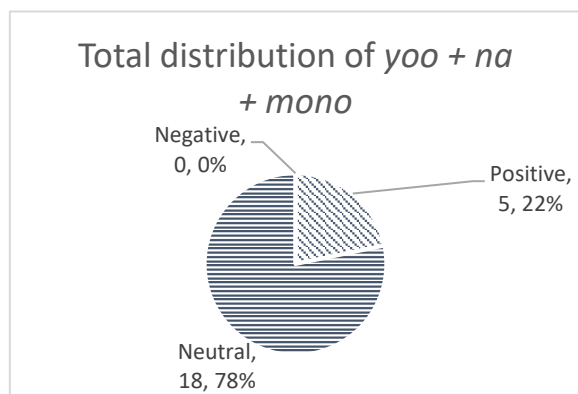

Figure 4: Total dostribution of yoo + na + mono

Comparing this with the use of *mono*, we can clearly see a difference. For the case of *yoo na yatsu*, there were no cases which were deemed positive, whereas in the case of *yoo na mono*, there were no cases which were deemed negative (See figure 4). Of the 23 randomised cases, 5 were positive and 18 neutral. Here the construction is used much more frequently to simply describe the property, and the instances where it is used positively, a positive simile is done. This can be seen in the following examples:

(14) *Yuuya wa tokiori, poketto kara kopiiyooshi no yoona mono o toridasu*

'Ocasionally, Yuuna takes out a copying-paper looking thing from their pocket'

(15) *Baniraessensu no yoona mono to omotteitara*

'When thinking of vanilla essence-like things'

In these instances, the similies are simply that something looks like copying paper. In the positive case, a similarity is made to vanilla essence.

While there is a more striking difference between the usage of *yatsu* and *mono* when paired with *yoo*, this difference is not as striking when paired with *mitai*. In the case of *yatsu,*
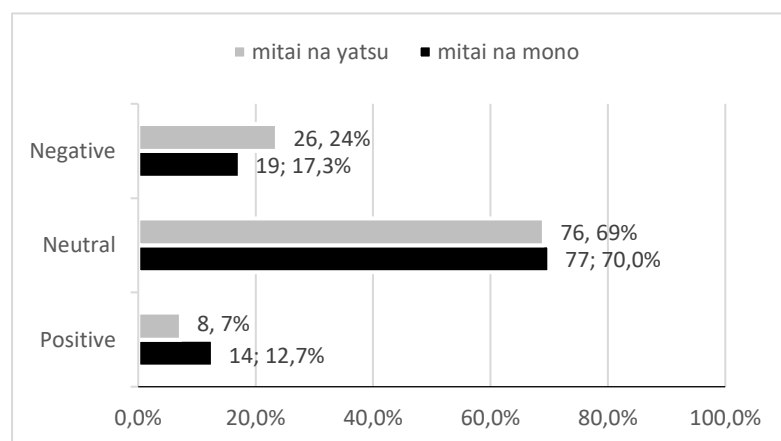

Figure 5: Comparrison between mitai na yatsu *and* mitai na mono

8 were positive, 76 were neutral, and 26 were negative (See Figure 5). In the case of *mono,* 14 were positive, 77 were neutral and 19 were negative[5] (See Figure 5). Even though a difference exists, this

...peared twice, which is why the total adds up to 110.

difference could simply relate to the randomised sample. As with *yoo*, for the neutral cases of *mitai*, a likeness is esatblished or explained. For example, jellyfish, film, and producer for *yatsu*, and goods, toothpick, and trousers for *mono*. The few cases where *yatsu* is used in a positive context with *yatsu*, *mitai* was connected to enhanced version, super-powerful version, Goldman, Prowrestler, and *senmame* (beans from the Manga/Anime Dragonball). For the negative cases of *yatsu*, stalker (*sutookaa*), feces (*kuso*), and monster (*obake*) among others appeared. For the negative cases of *mono*, *kikokushijo* (child who has teruned to Japan after living abroad), *zannenshoo* (consolation price), and (*nezumi no*) *sukashippe* ((a mouse's) silent fart). While *shukashippe* has a similar image to the negative words with appear together with *yatsu*, *zannenshoo* and *kikokishijo* are not as 'direct' as monster and stalker.

4.2. Discussion

Regarding RQ1, "To what extent is *yatsu* used compared to other nominalisers?", the results show that *yatsu* is not used as extensively as other nominalisers. Why this is the case could perhaps be explained by the notion that *yatsu* is considered an "abusive" version of *mono* (Martin, 1988, p. 718). Thus, one may opt to use *mono* rather than *yatsu* as to not sound rude. However, if this differs between written and spoken Japanese is unknown, as only data from a written corpus has been utilized in this study.

As discussed previously, *yatsu* acts only referentially (Iijima, 2012). Based on the results presented in the previous chapter, there is a tendency for *yatsu* to be used in more negative contexts. A similarity could perhaps be drawn to the study by Maynard (1997a), where she argued that the use of *no* or *koto* differed on whether the speaker wanted to be more inviting, as if talking with the listener, or to simply convey information. This could also be the case of *mono* and *yatsu*, but instead of *uchi/soto*, it can be argued that a choice is instead made of whether one is talking about something in a more general, neutral manner, or express it more strongly or negatively. As was shown by the data, when *yatsu* is used, there is a tendency for the word before it to be negative, or for the context in which it appears to be a negative one, while *mono* was in general either neutral or positive. This is however by no means absolute, as there were also cases in which *yatsu* was used positively, and *mono* was used negatively.

However, one must raise the question that *yatsu* may not inherently possess this connotation, but that it happens that it often occurs with other words which possess this connotation, as is argued by Horie (1997) regarding the assumed differing connotation of *no*

and *koto*. Nonetheless, based on the definition given by Martin (1988) and Morita (as cited in Iijima, 2012), it is likely that this connotation exists.

Furthermore, it may be that *yatsu* has different functions based on the context. As with the study on *kake*, where it was argued that *kake* possesses two different meaning based on the verb *kake* is attached to (Tsujimura & Iida, 1999), the definitions proposed by Iijima (2012) may not be sufficient, nor is the definition written by Martin (1988). As was observed in (14), both *yatsu* and *mono* was used in the same sentence, but as was discussed above, their usage is different; *yatsu* refers to the actor of the action (the one doing the leaking), while *mono* refers to the action as a whole (that there are those who are leaking information within the police). Furthermore, as has been mentioned earlier, both *yatsu* and *mono* can refer to both objects and people. However, by using *yatsu* in (12) instead of *mono* when referring to the people leaking information, the implications is that this action is something which is not favourable.

In onclusion, regarding RQ2, *yatsu* does appear to have a usage that is relatively negative, at least when compared with *mono*. While there were cases in which *yatsu* was used positively, that *yatsu* may possess a negative connotation was evident when paired with *yoo*, where no positive items where identified; the opposite of the results of *mono*, where no negative items were identified. Thus, it appears that, in some contexts, *yatsu* does possess a negative connotation. However, as has been mentioned previously, there are cases where only *yatsu* is the correct choice when compared to *mono;* making the choice of a selection, as one example (Iijima, 2012). Furthermore, as no consideration was taken into whether *yatsu* was referring to things or people, it cannot be stated whether this differs when people are referred to or items.

5. Conclusion, further studies, and limitations

In summary, there appears to be a tendency for *yatsu* to either be paired with a negative word or used in a negative context, at least when looking at adjectives. For the *i*-adjectives, while *yoi/ii* made up a large part of the most used adjectives, *nai* and *warui* was also used frequently. For *na*-adjectives, they tended to have negative connotation, such as *iya* and *hen*. When investigating Noun + *no yoo na yatsu* and comparing the results with Noun + *no yoo na mono*, a striking difference was found. For *yoo na yatsu*, the items where either considered negative or neutral, whereas for the case of *yoo na mono*, the items were either considered neutral or positive. While a small difference was found between Noun + *mitai na yatsu* and Noun + *mitai na mono*, because this could potentially depend on the random sample of *mitai na mono*, no conclusion can be drawn.

Concluding this paper, we can see that there is a difference regarding the contexts in which *yatsu* is used compared to *mono*, albeit modest. As defined by Iijima (2012), *yatsu* possesses certain functions which *mono* does not and vice versa. Because of this, we can see that there is more which separates these two nominalisers, other than *yatsu* being an abusive word for *mono*. Although a clear difference was found between *yoo na yatsu* and *yoo na mono*, because of the small sample size (n=23), a definitive answer cannot be made, but can act as an indication.

While no absolute conclusion can be made, the result in this thesis gives an insight into the usage of *yatsu*. Although not absolute, that *yatsu* acts as an "abusive version of *mono*" (Martin, 1988, p. 718) does seem to be in the least partly true. However, as was shown in (3), there are cases in which *yatsu* is the only correct choice, and only is used referentially. In other words, *yatsu* appears to have various use cases; when specifying choice after being presented a selection, or when showing one's disdain. Thus, as suggested by the title of this thesis, *yatsu* is a convenient one (*benri na yatsu*).

For further research, it would be fruitful to investigate if there is a difference between the written and spoken use of *yatsu*. Additionally, future research could investigate how *yatsu* is used when referring to a person compared to when it is referring to an object. While this notion was mentioned, this focus was outside the scope of this thesis and thus not expanded on. Lastly, in this study, only *yatsu* was considered. In future studies, a focus could be put on *koitsu (kono + yatsu, this + yatsu)*, *aitsu (ano + yatsu, that + yatsu)*, and *soitsu (sono + yatsu)*.

The main limitation of this study is that not all the words appearing in front of *yatsu* were considered, and instead only adjectives were considered. This makes generalisations of these findings difficult to make. Furthermore, more time could be spent on *mono* to accurately assess if the findings are relevant for *yatsu* alone, or if this is the pattern for all nominalisers. Additionally, among the adjectives found in the data, only the 10 most used were focused on, leaving out a large part of data.

References

Gries, S. Th., Newman, J. (2013). Creating and using corpora. In R. J. Podesva & D. Sharma (Ed.), *Research methods in linguistics* (pp. 257-287). Cambridge University Press.

Hara, Y., Kim, Y., Sakai, H., & Tamura, S. (2013). Projections of events and propositions in Japanese: A case study of koto-nominalized clauses in causal relations. *Lingua, 133*, 262–288. https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1016/j.lingua.2013.05.003

Hasegawa, Y. (2015). *Japanese: A linguistic introduction*. Cambridge University Press.

Horie, K. (1997). Three types of nominalization in modern Japanese: no, koto, and zero. *Linguistics: An Interdisciplinary Journal of the Language Sciences, 35*(5), 879–894.

Iijima, H. (2011). Keishiki meishi 「yatsu」 no youhou ni tsuite: 「mono」 to no soui o cyuushin ni [Regarding the use of the formal noun 'yatsu': a focus of the difference with 'mono']. *Gogaku to bungaku, 47*, 16–27.

Iijima, H. (2012). Revisiting linguistics function of formal noun "yatsu": Focusing on its genuinely substitutive nature. *Nihongo bunpou, 12*(02), 91–110.

Jones, C. & Waller, D. (2015). *Corpus linguistics for grammar: a guide for research.* Routledge.

Kishimoto, H. (2006). Japanese syntactic nominalization and VP-internal syntax. *Lingua, 116*(6), 771–810. https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1016/j.lingua.2005.03.005

Maekawa, K. (2015). Dai isshoo 「gendai nihongo kakikotoba kinkou koopasu」 nyuumon. [An introduction to the Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese Chapter 1]. In NINJAL. 「*Gendai nihongo kakikotoba kinkou koopasu*」 *riyoo no tebiki [Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese. User Manual] (pp. 1-18)* (v. 1.1). Retrieved May 10, 2023, from https://clrd.ninjal.ac.jp/bccwj/doc/manual/BCCWJ_Manual_01.pdf

Makino, S. & Tsutsui, M. (1986). *A dictionary of basic Japanese grammar: Nihon-go kihon bunpō jiten.* The Japan Times.

Martin, S.E. (1988). *A reference grammar of Japanese* (1. Tuttle ed.). C.E. Tuttle Co.

Maynard, S. K. (1997a). Shifting contexts: The sociolinguistic significance of nominalization in Japanese television news. *Language in Society, 26*(3), 381–399.

Maynard, S. K. (1997b). Synergistic strategies in grammar: A case of nominalization and commentary predicate in Japanese. *WORD: Journal of the International Linguistic Association, 48*(1), 15–40. https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1080/00437956.1997.11432460

Maynard, S. K. (1999). On rhetorical ricochet: expressivity of nominalization and da in Japanese discourse. *Discourse Studies, 1*(1), 57–81.

Seraku, T. (2021). Mi-nominalizations in Japanese wakamono kotoba "youth language." *Pragmatics, 31*(2), 278–302. https://doi-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/10.1075/prag.20006.ser

Shibatani, M. (2018). Nominalization. In Y. Hasegawa (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of Japanese linguistics* (pp. 431-462). Cambridge University Press.

Tsujimura, N., & Iida, M. (1999). Deverbal nominals and telicity in Japanese. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics, 8*(2), 107–130.

WWWJDIC. (2023). *Yatsu*. In Jpn-Eng General (EDICT). Retrieved May 8, 2023, from http://nihongo.monash.edu/cgi-bin/wwwjdic?1E