

Adaptation of Indonesian tourism services in the face of contemporary Japanese evolution

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Abstract - This study examines semantic changes in contemporary Japanese, especially in the use of slang, and examines their impact on the communication of tourism services. Through semi-structured interviews with Japanese language experts, tour guides, and hotel staff, as well as the distribution of questionnaires to Japanese tourists in Indonesia, the study highlights how social and generational factors contribute to the changing meanings of commonly used phrases such as やばい yabai, すごい sugoi, えらいガチ gachi, マジで majide、うざい uzai, 神ってる Kamitteru, 全然 Zenzen, まったく mattaku. The results suggest that understanding these linguistic changes is essential for tourism professionals to ensure effective and culturally appropriate communication. Tour guides and hotel staff should adapt their language to the age, context and composition of the travelers to avoid misunderstandings and improve the quality of service. The study concludes that mastering contemporary Japanese allows for better communication, promotes tourist satisfaction, and strengthens Indonesia's position in the competitive Japanese tourism market.

Keywords: Contemporary Slang, Customer Service, Cultural Competence, Japanese Language, Semantic Change, Tourism Communication

1. Introduction

Knowledge of the Japanese language plays a crucial role in improving the quality of tourist services for Japanese visitors to Indonesia. It is not just a means of communication, but a cultural bridge that allows for a more immersive and fulfilling tourist experience. Fluency in Japanese allows tour operators to communicate effectively with tourists. This includes not only providing basic information, but also the ability to explain the cultural nuances, history, and uniqueness of destinations in more depth (Darmastuti et al., 2021). Japanese travelers often appreciate detailed and precise explanations that are easier to convey in their native language. Japanese language skills help to better cope with emergencies or special requests. In situations that require a quick or empathetic response, smooth communication can be a crucial factor in solving problems and maintaining traveler satisfaction, third, mastering Japanese shows respect for the traveler's culture and customs. This creates a sense of comfort and value, which can improve the quality of the sightseeing experience. This is influenced by the tendency of Japanese travelers to be more open and responsive when they feel understood and respected, from a business perspective, Japanese language skills can be a competitive advantage. Tour operators who communicate in Japanese can attract more Japanese tourists and build a good reputation in the Japanese tourism market. Understanding languages also means cultural understanding. Tour operators who are familiar with Japanese are more likely to understand the etiquette, preferences, and expectations of Japanese travelers. This allows them to tailor services and travel experiences to the specific needs of Japanese travelers. Finally, Japanese language skills can allow for more accurate feedback from tourists (Putralisindra, 2017)

Tour operators can more easily understand submitted comments, suggestions or complaints, which allows for more targeted service improvements. So, investing in developing Japanese language skills for tour operators is not only about overcoming language barriers, but also about improving the quality of service, building better relationships with tourists, and ultimately promoting the growth of the Indonesian tourism sector in the Japanese market (Atiqah & Pd, n.d.)

In this decade, the meaning of Japanese words has changed a lot. It is important for tourism managers or tourism-related parties to know the changes in the changing meaning of Japanese words and to understand where this change in meaning occurs and is used by the Japanese millennial generation. (Andriani et al., 2022). These changes reflect Japan's social, cultural, and generational dynamics over the past few decades. One of the main factors for this change in meaning is the strong influence of youth culture. Young Japanese, who tend to be more expressive and less formal than previous generations, have begun to use these words differently. They take words with negative connotations and turn them into expressions of admiration or praise, creating a kind of interesting linguistic irony by turning negative meanings into positive ones (Nasution & Yusuf Siregar, 2023).

The mass media and popular culture have also played an important role in this change. Anime, manga, variety shows, and pop music often use these words in new contexts and make them known to a wider audience. The repeated use of these media contributes to the legitimation and dissemination of new meanings of words, as well as to the proliferation of technology and social media (Novianti, 2007). Platforms such as Twitter, Line, and Instagram enable the rapid spread of new language trends. Words with these changing meanings often go viral, especially when used by celebrities or influencers, which further reinforces the use of the new vocabulary. In addition, social changes in Japan also play a role in the development of this language. Traditionally known for its politeness and formality, Japanese society is beginning to evolve towards a more relaxed approach to social interactions. The use of these words with new meanings reflects a desire for more unbridled expression and is less bound by formal linguistic norms. This phenomenon can also be seen as a form of linguistic rebellion against rigid language norms. By transforming the meaning of initially negative words into a positive one, the younger generation ostensibly resists linguistic authority and creates its own linguistic identity (Oe & Weeks, 2020).

Psychological aspects also play a role in this change. Using initially negative words to express something positive creates a surprise and humor effect that makes communication more engaging, expressive, and a little more relaxed. It can also be seen as a way to reduce the intensity of negative emotions by transforming them into something positive or humorous (Boyd & Schwartz, 2021). Finally, globalization and the influence of foreign languages, especially English, have also influenced this change. Increased contact with other cultures has made the Japanese language more open to change and innovation. The use of these words in new ways reflects a global trend where slang and informal language are becoming more accepted in various social contexts. The changing meanings of these words show that language is a living entity that is constantly evolving, reflecting changes in the societies and cultures that use it. This phenomenon is interesting from a linguistic point of view and allows us to deepen the social and cultural dynamics of Japan (Vigliocco et al., 2014). This approach aims to provide valuable insights

into the changing meanings of contemporary Japanese words that affect communication in Japanese tourism services in Indonesia, as well as to get an idea of the extent to which an understanding of the changing meanings of contemporary Japanese words is necessary to improve the quality of Japanese tourism services in Indonesia.

Change or change in language consists of four centers of attention, namely 1) variation and change; 2) how the change is spreading; 3) how we examine the change in language that is taking place; and 4) the reasons why language change occurs. Regarding the change in meaning in Japanese (Iida & Takeyama, 2018), we explain that the word *Sugoi*, which originally meant "scary or intimidating", has become a reinforcing adjective meaning "great or cool". This change is particularly popular with young people. *やばい* (*yabai*) According to a study (Ota & Takano, 2014) the word originally meant "dangerous or risky", but can now have positive meanings such as "cool or great", especially among the younger generation. The use of katakana "デンジャラス/dangerous" also emphasises the informal and colloquial aspect of the word. *えらい* (*erai*), (Ota & Takano, 2014) underscore the shift from the meaning of "noble or honorable" to a word that can express admiration or informal praise, sometimes even used ironically. Tourism Frontliner should include this kind of change in the meaning of words. Understanding this process of changing meaning is important for:

1. Historical Linguistics
2. Language learning
3. Communication between generations
4. Development of teaching materials
5. Understanding the evolution of language

The above five points can be used as a guide for guides and hotel staff (front office, room attendants, restaurant waiters, etc.) in providing services to Japanese tourists. (Nguyen, 2020) explained that "Japanese tourists are known for their high standards of service, so tourism stakeholders (local governments, tourism organizations, hotel managers, destination managers, and others) need to provide services that pay attention to detail and quality in addition to the front of tourism. This is closely linked to the deep understanding that the frontline tourism players have for the culture and characteristics of visitors in order to be able to offer satisfactory tourist services. Another theory highlights the importance of providing guidebooks and informational materials in Japanese to overcome the language barrier (Renold et al., 2022). Japanese travelers, especially the younger generation, find it difficult to communicate with Indonesian travel service providers, who tend to use formal language due to the changing importance of modern Japanese. Excellent service and a pleasant travel experience can be compromised by this shortcoming. Tour guides and hotel staff in Indonesia learn Japanese through textbooks or formal methods. The language learned is usually still based on forms of *keigo* (respectful language) or standard language structures. However, Japanese travelers, especially the younger generation, are more likely to use contemporary language such as *やばい*, *ガチ*, *マジ*で, which can be confusing for service providers who are unfamiliar with these developments. The service seems less relevant or rigid, especially for younger Japanese travelers who are more relaxed and expressive in their language. In everyday communication, people can misinterpret or misunderstand what they say. For example, when tourists express their admiration with the words "*やばい!*", the local staff will take it as something bad.

In light of the reasons above, the author investigates the adaptation of Indonesia's tourism offerings in response to contemporary developments in Japan.

2. Method

This study uses a mixed approach that combines qualitative and quantitative techniques to investigate the evolutionary meanings of modern Japanese vocabulary in the tourism context. Specifically, it applies the method of comparative historical linguistics, which studies how linguistic elements change over time by comparing linguistic data from different eras and contexts (Jahdiah, 2018).

The data was collected using various methods, including in-depth interviews with Japanese language experts, tourism professionals, and frontline tourism workers such as tour guides, hotel staff, travel agencies, airport staff, transportation service providers, catering staff, and tourist information agents. In addition, recorded interactions on social media platforms were observed to capture actual language use. A quantitative survey was also conducted among Japanese tourists visiting Bali and Makassar to measure their communication experience and satisfaction with the tourist services. The questionnaire was designed by adding new indicators that specifically examined the respondents'

understanding of the contemporary Japanese language and communication culture of Japanese youth in order to align it with the goals of this study (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024).

The target audience was Japanese tourists between the ages of 18 and 45 who visited Bali and Makassar in their free time. Since the total size of the population is not known, a targeted sample was used, selecting participants who met certain criteria: Japanese nationality, in the specified age group, tourism, and willing to participate. A total of 30 respondents participated in the survey, which is sufficient for descriptive research focusing on the use of the contemporary Japanese language by young travelers

Structured interview guides were developed to examine perceptions of language use and changes in vocabulary in intercultural interactions (Azzahra & Samatan, 1917). The survey questionnaire measured satisfaction, understanding, and communication experiences using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), based on the principles described by (Sugiyono, 2020).

Qualitative data from interviews and observations on social media were analyzed by topic to identify trends in language use and changes in meaning over time, in line with comparative historical linguistic analysis. Quantitative survey data were analysed descriptively to reveal trends in tourism satisfaction and communication understanding (Martin, 2015)

The study ensured validity by triangulation of data sources and methods, and ethical considerations were taken into account by obtaining the consent of all participants prior to data collection (Dobakhti, 2020).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Altered meanings of contemporary Japanese words and Japanese tourism services

Information gathered from interviews with frontline tourism workers and Japanese language specialists, as well as from interactions on social media and relevant magazine articles, forms the basis for the results presented in Table 1. This study showed significant changes in the meaning of a number of modern Japanese words by conducting a thematic analysis of these data sources, especially among young people in casual contexts. This method has shown how social and cultural elements such as pop culture and communication in the travel industry influence the development of language and the use of words today.

Language is inherently arbitrary and can change over time. Semantic changes are taking place in almost all languages, often driven by younger generations popularizing new meanings. This phenomenon is evident in the Japanese language, where young people often use words that traditionally have negative or neutral meanings, but have since taken on positive or nuanced connotations in everyday social interaction. The following table illustrates a comparison between the ancient (traditional) meanings and today's customs commonly used by young Japanese speakers.

Table 1. Comparison of the meanings of words in modern Japanese

No	Contemporary Japanese Words	Meaning of Autrefois (traditional)	Current (contemporary) significance	Background
1	やばい (<i>yabai</i>)	やばい (<i>yabai</i>), dangerous, urgent, critical	Cool, surprising, surprising (positive/negative)	The context determines emotional nuances
2	すごい (<i>sugoi</i>)	すごい (<i>sugoi</i>) Great	Really, wow (used with an exaggerated style of speech)	Widespread in everyday slang
3	えらい (<i>erai</i>)	Honorable, tall, of high rank	Really Tired / Extraordinary (Sarcastic/Informal)	Used with a feeling of fatigue.
4	ガチ (<i>gachi</i>)	From ガチンコ (<i>gachinko</i>), a new form of slang	Seriously, really	Used to watch fierce games. Such as football, volleyball, etc.
5	マジで (<i>majide</i>)	By まじめ (<i>Majime</i>) diligent	Serious? Oh really?	Expression of surprise or astonishment
6	ウザイ (<i>uzai</i>)	From うるさい (<i>Urusai</i>)	Annoying, distracting	Is a form of slang

No	Contemporary Japanese Words	Meaning of Autrefois (traditional)	Current (contemporary) significance	Background
7	神てる (<i>kamitteru</i>)	From 神がかり (<i>kamigakari</i>) God's inspiration	Crazy, wonderful, divine	The language of young people popular on social networks
8	全然 (<i>Zenzen</i>)	全然 Adverbial forms that have negative meanings, such as:	Very, really	Related to Hyougen or expressions
9	まったく (<i>mattaku</i>)	まったく Adverbial forms that have negative meanings, such as:	Oh really	Affirmative function and expression

Source: Data prepared by the author on the basis of journal articles (2025)

Table 1 shows that there have been significant semantic changes in the Japanese lexicon, especially with regard to informal use and the younger generation. Some terms expand or change their meaning, from previously negative, formal, or neutral meanings to more positive, emotional, or hyperbolic meanings. For example, the word "yabai", which once meant "dangerous" or "precarious", is now often used to denote amazement or surprise, both in a positive and negative sense, depending on the context. The tendency to shorten words or create new ones has also influenced this semantic change. For example, the word ガチ (*gachi*) comes from ガチンコ (*gachinko*) and the word マジで (*majide*) from まじめ (*majime*). This shows how language has evolved economically and efficiently according to the needs of oral communication. The emergence of terms such as 神ってる (*kamitteru*) also shows the influence of pop culture and social media on the creation of new expressive and hyperbolic expressions. In modern interpretations of meaning, the context of use is very important. Many of these words, such as えらい (*erai*), ウザイ (*uzai*), 神ってる (*kamitteru*), 全然 (*zenzen*), まったく (*mattaku*) can only be interpreted correctly in specific contexts. This shows that social and cultural contexts increasingly determine the meaning of utterances in modern Japanese.

Table 2. Summary of the results of the interview with Japanese language experts

Date	Interviewee	Method	Main results
15 April 2024	Japanese linguist A	Semi-structured interview	Semantic change that occurs in words such as やばい (<i>yabai</i>), すごい (<i>sugoi</i>), ガチ (<i>gachi</i>), マジで (<i>majide</i>), 神ってる (<i>kamitteru</i>), えらい (<i>erai</i>), ウザイ (<i>uzai</i>), 神ってる (<i>kamitteru</i>), 全然 (<i>Zenzen</i>), まったく (<i>Mattaku</i>) in recent decades.
April 20, 2024	Japanese Linguist B	Semi-structured interview	Through pop culture and social media, it has been determined that the younger generation is mainly responsible for the change.
May 1, 2024	Japanese Language Specialist	Semi-structured interview	emphasized the importance of context in understanding meaning and the fact that appropriate use depends on the interlocutor and the social context.
20 May 2024	Sociolinguist (expert on Japanese youth)	Semi-structured interview	found that there is a generational difference in how certain slang terms are used and understood.
12 June 2024	Teacher of Japanese Language and Society	Semi-structured interview	believed that these changes reflected changes in Japanese society and were

a normal part of the evolution of the language.

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

Based on Table 2 interviews with Japanese language experts on changes in the meaning of Japanese, two main points can be analyzed: The results of this study confirm and expand previous research on the dynamic nature of the language, especially the semantic changes that occur in contemporary Japanese among the younger generation. In line with the observations of Iida and Takeyama (2018) and Ota and Takano (2014), this study highlights that words such as やばい (yabai), すごい (sugoi), えらい, (erai), ガチ (gachi), マジで (majide), 神ってる (kamitteru), えらい (erai), ウザイ (uzai), 全然 (Zenzen), まったく (Mattaku) have undergone significant semantic shifts, evolving from negative or formal meanings to more positive, informal, or intense uses. This is in line with (Sambuichi & Sambuichi, 2024) framework on language change, which emphasizes variation, diffusion, and the social motivations behind language evolution. On the other hand, the data in the table further suggest that the changes in contemporary use of the Japanese language are not only linguistic phenomena, but are also strongly related to social, generational, pop, and digital media. For this reason, understanding modern Japanese, especially in the context of education or tourism, must take into account the social and cultural factors that are compatible with it.

The researcher interviewed a Japanese-speaking tour guide and often takes Japanese guests of different ages to tourist attractions in South Sulawesi. The results of the interviews are presented in the Table 3.

Table 3. Results of the interview with a tour guide about changes in the meaning of Japanese

Key Point	Analysis
1. Language use in group travel	Due to possible misunderstandings in formal or group contexts, tour guides usually avoid Japanese terms that have undergone semantic changes. A diverse audience may misinterpret these altered meanings or find them inappropriate.
2. Examples and levels of courtesy	Vocabulary related to politeness, such as <i>Sonkeigo</i> , <i>Teineigo</i> , and <i>Tameguchi</i> , can be perceived differently by different age groups. When guiding younger solo travelers, tour guides often accept casual or trendy terms, but with older tourists or in groups, they tend to use more formal language.
3. Importance of consciousness	Tour guides should keep up to date with changes in the meaning of Japanese words to ensure effective and culturally appropriate communication. Lack of awareness, especially between generations, can lead to unintentional rudeness or miscommunication.

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

From the above analysis, it can be explained that changes in meaning in Japanese are very important for tour guides; This is to ensure proper and effective communication. These changes affect not only the choice of words, but also the degree of politeness in the language. Tour guides must have a thorough understanding of the changes in the meaning of certain words and use this knowledge to adapt their language to the social and demographic context of their travelers, whether they are large groups of travelers or individual travelers, as well as to take into account the age and social status of the travelers. Thus, a general overview of the change in meaning in Japanese becomes a communication skill that tour guides can use. The tour guides emphasized the important role of the youth culture, social media and pop culture to accelerate these changes, confirming the findings of Nasution and Yusuf Siregar (2023). The influence of mass media and digital platforms such as Twitter and Instagram facilitates the rapid dissemination and normalization of new meanings, a phenomenon also noted by Vigliocco et al. (2014). Importantly, this study shows practical implications for frontline tourism actors. A thorough understanding of the change in meaning allows guides to adapt their use of language to the social context, age and composition of the tour group, thus improving communication efficiency and cultural sensitivity. This finding supports the claim of Nguyen (2020) that high-quality services in tourism depend on in-depth cultural and linguistic skills. In addition, awareness of intergenerational levels of politeness and

language preferences helps avoid misunderstandings and promotes a positive experience for travelers, reflecting the principles of cultural communication discussed by Oe and Weeks (2020).

Social and cultural changes in Japan have contributed significantly to the development of the use of words such as *すごい* (Sugoi), *やばい* (Yabai), *ガチ* (Gachi), *マジで* (Majide), *えらい* (Erai), *Uzai* (Uzai), *神ってる* (Kamitteru), *全然* (Zenzen) and *まった* (Mattaku). One of the main factors is the shift from a highly formalized and hierarchical society to a more relaxed and egalitarian society, especially among the younger generations. This change has created space for more complementary and creative linguistic expression, allowing words with negative initial connotations to be used positively or neutrally.

Urbanization and changing family structures also play an important role. As more and more young people move to the big cities to work or study away from their families, new communities are forming that are less bound by traditional norms. In these more dynamic urban environments, informal language and slang thrive to build group identity and express itself.

Changes in the Japanese workplace have also contributed to the development of the language. The increase in the number of freelancers and start-ups has led to a more flexible and less hierarchical work culture than traditional Japanese companies. This encouraged the use of more relaxed and expressive language in professional contexts that were previously dominated by rigid and formal language.

Finally, changing social values in Japan, especially among the younger generation, have had an impact on the use of the language. There is a growing tendency to value individuality and self-expression, as opposed to traditional values that emphasize the uniformity and harmony of the group. The use of words in new and unconventional ways can be seen as an expression of the desire to express one's identity and to challenge established societal norms. The researchers interviewed five hotel employees from different hotels and offered services to Japanese tourists. In addition, they studied Japanese at vocational schools. The essence of the interviews of the five hotel employees is as follows: "Japanese tourists talk directly about the points they want, without jokes or taking too much time, so they have no problems understanding Japanese words, Japanese tourists especially in terms of hotel service, Japanese tourists rarely use words that are difficult to understand."

Table 4. Result of the interview with the hotel staff about communication with Japanese tourists

Date	Respondents	Method	Main results
July 2, 2024	Five hotel employees (different hotels)	Semi-structured interview	<p>a. Effectiveness of communication: Japanese visitors are known for eliminating unnecessary politeness and getting straight to the point, indicating that their culture places a lot of emphasis on openness and clarity.</p> <p>b. Easy language: When interacting with the hotel staff, Japanese visitors usually use clear and helpful language and avoid technical or unusual terms</p> <p>c. Training of staff: The learning of Japanese by the hotel staff in the polytechnics has enabled them to understand the cultural specificities as well as the language, which improves communication.</p> <p>d. Cultural influence on communication: Japanese conventions place a strong emphasis on brevity and clarity, which fits perfectly with the expectations and experiences of the workforce.</p> <p>e. Sufficient knowledge of the Japanese language: Hotel employees reported no major problems in understanding Japanese visitors, which shows adequate mastery of</p>

the practical use of the language as part of the service.

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

Based on the overall analysis, this interview emphasizes the effective communication between the hotel staff and the Japanese tourists, facilitated by several key factors:

1. Effective communication results from the correspondence between the direct and practical communication style of Japanese tourists and the language skills of the hotel staff.
2. The ability of hotel staff to understand both linguistic and cultural specifics facilitates effective interactions.
3. Efficiency, language skills and cultural understanding are essential elements in assessing the quality of international tourism services.

In conclusion, successful communication is strongly influenced by the compatibility between the direct communication style of Japanese tourists and the practical Japanese language skills of hotel staff.

According to qualitative information obtained from interviews with hotel staff, a quantitative approach was used to further investigate the communication experiences of Japanese tourists in Indonesia. A structured questionnaire was distributed to Japanese tourists visiting Bali and Makassar to measure their satisfaction, understanding and overall experience with the quality of communication and service. The questionnaire included questions on a Likert scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), with a focus on various aspects of effective communication, cultural understanding and service delivery. The results presented in Table 5 provide additional evidence for the qualitative results and generally show positive reactions of Japanese tourists to their interactions with the frontlines of Indonesian tourism.

Table 5. Results of the questionnaire using the likert scale

NO	Respondents answer	1 Very dissatisfied	2 Unsatisfied	3 Very satisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
Service satisfaction						
1	I am satisfied with the overall service provided.	4	0	4	18	4
2	The customer service staff is friendly and helpful.	0	4	4	21	1
3	The waiting time to receive the service was in line with my expectations.	0	4	3	21	2
4	My problem or question was solved efficiently.	0	0	9	15	6
Communication						
1	The information provided is clear and easy to understand.	2	0	10	15	3
2	The staff is able to communicate well and effectively.	0	0	3	24	3
3	I feel comfortable communicating with the service staff.	0	0	6	21	3
4	The language used is appropriate and easy to understand.	0	0	15	12	3
Understanding						
1	I have a clear understanding of the products/services offered.	0	0	5	23	2

NO	Respondents answer	1 Very dissatisfied	2 Unsatisfied	3 Very satisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
2	The explanation of the policies and procedures is easy to understand.	0	0	15	12	3
3	I feel like the staff understands my needs.	0	0	7	18	5
1	Overall, my experience with this service has been positive.	0	0	6	18	6
2	I feel valued as a customer.	0	0	5	20	5
3	The service I received was as promised.	0	0	6	19	5

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

The average score for each question and category is calculated using the data above. To determine the average score for each question, the following formula is used:

$$\text{Average rating} = \frac{\sum(\text{frequency} \times \text{weight})}{\text{Total number of respondents}}$$

Explanation:

1. Frequency: The number of respondents who chose the i-th category (e.g., the number of respondents who chose "Very Dissatisfied", "Dissatisfied", etc.).
2. Weighting: The numeric value assigned to each category (for example, 1 for "Very Dissatisfied", 2 for "Dissatisfied", up to 5 for "Very Satisfied").
3. Total number of respondents: The total number of respondents who responded to the question, i.e. \sum frequency.

Table 6. The average score for each question

Category	Respondents answer	Scor Medium
Service satisfaction	I am satisfied with the overall service provided.	3.60
Service satisfaction	The customer service staff is friendly and helpful.	3.63
Service satisfaction	The waiting time to receive the service was in line with my expectations.	3.70
Service satisfaction	My problem or question was solved efficiently.	3.90
Communication	The information provided is clear and easy to understand.	3.57
Communication	The staff is able to communicate well and effectively.	4.00
Communication	I feel comfortable communicating with the service staff.	3.90
Communication	The language used is appropriate and easy to understand.	3.60
Understanding	I have a clear understanding of the products/services offered.	3.90
Understanding	The explanation of the policies and procedures is easy to understand.	3.60
Understanding	I feel like the staff understands my needs.	3.93
Customer	Overall, my experience with this service has been positive.	4.00
Customer	I feel valued as a customer.	4.00
Customer	The service in Table 3 with average scores by ice category that I received was as promised.	4.76

Category	Respondents answer	Scor Medium
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Source: Data edited by the author (2025)

Table 7. Average scores by category

Category	Average rating
Service satisfaction	3,71
Communication	3,77
Understanding	3,81
Customer	4.25

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

Based on the averages in the table above, the highest score in the *Customer* with an average score of 4.25, indicating that overall customer satisfaction very positive. The second highest score, 3.81, was published in the *understanding*, suggesting that while respondents have positive perceptions, there is room for improvement in this area. All service categories received average scores above 3, indicating an overall trend towards moderate to high satisfaction with the quality of communication and service.

The shift in Japanese language use reflects broader socio-cultural changes in Japan, including a shift towards more egalitarian and expressive communication models, especially among the younger generation (Boyd & Schwartz, 2021). This linguistic flexibility, which is stimulated by urbanisation, changing family structures and changing workplace dynamics, poses challenges and opportunities for tourism service providers. As (Watkins & Gnoth, 2011) and (Imagawa & Harrison, 2021) point out, adapting tourist services to meet the expectations of contemporary Japanese tourists who value both cultural authenticity and practical convenience requires a nuanced understanding of these linguistic and societal trends.

By integrating the results of language and tourism studies, this research shows that mastering the nuances of modern Japanese not only allows for more effective communication but is also a strategic advantage for improving service quality. It allows tourism professionals to better interact with Japanese tourists, anticipate their needs and offer them personalized experiences that meet cultural expectations. Ultimately, such an approach contributes to higher tourist satisfaction, encourages repeat visits, and promotes positive word-of-mouth, thereby strengthening Indonesia's competitiveness in the Japanese tourism market. Based on the average calculations per category in the table above, the highest score was achieved in the customer category with an average score of 4.25, indicating that overall customer satisfaction is very positive. The second-highest score is in the Comprehension category, which is 3.81, indicating that this category needs improvement. In the category of all the above services, the scores are more than 3, indicating that respondents rate communication and satisfaction with the service in general quite positively to very positively.

The shift in Japanese language use reflects broader social changes in Japan, including the shift towards more egalitarian and expressive communication styles among the younger generations (Boyd & Schwartz, 2021). This linguistic flexibility, due to urbanisation, changing family structures and corporate cultures, creates challenges and opportunities for tourism managers. As Imagawa and Harrison (2021) point out, adapting services to the expectations of modern Japanese tourists who value cultural authenticity and convenience requires an understanding of these linguistic and social trends. By integrating the results of linguistic research and tourism research, this article shows that mastering the nuances of the contemporary Japanese language is a communication tool and a strategic advantage to improve the quality of service. It allows tour operators to connect with Japanese tourists in a more meaningful way, anticipate their needs and provide them with personalized experiences that respect cultural norms and preferences. This approach ultimately contributes to higher tourist satisfaction, repeat visits, and positive word-of-mouth, thus strengthening Indonesia's competitiveness in the Japanese tourism market.

Table 7. Results of the questionnaire on understanding contemporary Japanese culture

No	Respondents answer	1	2	3	4	5
1	I understand the language style of young Japanese travelers (e.g., slang, slang expressions).	0	1	7	17	5

2	I can adjust my use of Japanese depending on the age or background of the traveler.	0	0	6	18	6
3	I have sufficient knowledge of Japanese pop culture (anime, trends, social networks).	1	3	10	13	3
4	I understand that some Japanese words have different meanings depending on the context or generation.	0	1	8	17	4
5	The knowledge of modern Japanese helps me to provide better service.	0	0	5	20	5

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

Based on the above results, most respondents rated a medium to excellent understanding of modern Japanese culture and communication methods, including:

1. Change language usage based on visitors' background and age (76% gave a score of 4 or 5).
2. 74% of respondents said they understand jargon and more recent idioms.
3. Use this understanding to offer better services (83% scored 4 or 5 points).

However, there is a small gap in knowledge about Japanese pop culture, such as anime or social media trends, with only 53% of respondents giving a score of 4 or 5. This shows that while the general understanding of the language is good, the aspects of popular culture that strongly influence the development of word meanings have not been fully mastered.

Table 8. Average scores for additional indicators related to understanding contemporary Japanese culture

Category	Respondents answer	Average rating
Cultural Understanding	I understand contemporary Japanese slang and the expressions used by young Japanese tourists.	3.85
Cultural adaptation in the service sector	The staff effectively adapts communication styles to Japanese cultural contexts.	3.92
Awareness of the impact of social media	The staff is aware of the influence of Japanese pop culture and social media on the language of tourists.	3.75
Sensitivity to politeness	The staff adjusts the level of courtesy according to the age and social background of the tourists.	3.80

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

The additional indicators are designed to assess tourism service providers' understanding and adaptation to contemporary Japanese culture, including knowledge of slang, social media influences, and the appropriate level of courtesy. The averages for these indicators ranged from 3.75 to 3.92, reflecting a generally positive perception among respondents. An average score of over 3.5 indicates that most respondents believe that employees have a good cultural awareness and are able to adapt their communication style accordingly. For example, the highest score (3.92) in the category "Cultural Adaptation in the Service Sector" indicates that service personnel are effectively adapting their communication to the Japanese cultural context. Although these results show a satisfactory level of cultural competence, there is still room for improvement, especially in deepening the understanding of the influence of Japanese popular culture and social media on the language and behavior of tourists, who scored slightly less than 3.75 points.

Overall, these results underscore the importance of continuous cultural training and awareness raising of tourism workers to improve the quality of communication and provide services that meet the changing expectations of modern Japanese tourists.

4. Conclusion

This study shows significant semantic changes in contemporary use of the Japanese language, especially among younger generations who are heavily influenced by pop culture, social media, and changing social norms. Words that traditionally had formal or negative meanings have evolved into expressions with

positive, reinforcing or occasional connotations. These changes reflect broader societal changes in Japan, including a shift towards more egalitarian and expressive communication styles.

Interviews with Japanese language experts and frontline tourism workers confirm that understanding these changes is essential for effective communication in the tourism industry. Tour guides and hotel staff should be aware of these evolving meanings and adjust their use of language accordingly to maintain civility, clarity, and cultural sensitivity. This adaptation provides a better experience for Japanese tourists who expect clear, effective and culturally appropriate communication.

The results of the questionnaire indicate a generally positive satisfaction with service and communication, but also show areas where a deeper cultural understanding can improve interactions. Incorporating the knowledge of contemporary Japanese cultural nuances and linguistic changes into tourism services is a strategic advantage that can improve Indonesia's service quality, customer satisfaction, and competitiveness in attracting Japanese tourists.

In conclusion, mastering the nuances of contemporary Japanese language and cultural contexts is not only a linguistic necessity but also an important strategic advantage for tourism professionals. This knowledge encourages meaningful interaction with tourists, mitigates misunderstandings, and supports high-quality, culturally appropriate services that promote positive tourism experiences and repeat visits.

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