

Language Use in YOASOBI's Song Lyrics: A Psycholinguistic Study Based on Samuel Beckett's Theory of Pain

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Abstract

Mental health issues are one of the most significant topics in modern society and are often expressed through artistic works, including music. The songs in YOASOBI's albums highlight this theme through emotionally charged lyrics. This study aims to analyze the use of language in YOASOBI's song lyrics, specifically *Yoru ni Kakeru*, *Encore*, *Kaibutsu*, and *Idol* through a psycholinguistic approach, employing Samuel Beckett's theory of pain. The research focuses on integrated linguistic markers, specifically lexical choices (diction), figurative devices (metaphor, paradox, and chiasmus) as primary data to bridge the gap between lyrical construction and the psychological state of the subjects. This study applies a psycholinguistic analysis using a descriptive qualitative method, with data drawn from song lyrics, music videos, questionnaire responses, and YouTube listener comments. The findings reveal that the linguistic elements in the lyrics reflect inner experiences filled with emotional suffering, resonating with Beckett's philosophical view. These findings suggest that song lyrics can serve as a medium to articulate psychological struggles through deep linguistic constructions. However, this research remains limited to songs analyzed alongside YouTube comment responses. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to explore more works with similar themes to contribute further to the fields of language, psychology, and cultural studies.

Keywords: Mental Health; Psycholinguistics; Samuel Beckett; Song Lyrics; YOASOBI

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1. Introduction

Music plays a significant role in this context. Beyond entertainment, music can serve as a medium for emotional reflection and stress management (Akaishi et al., 2022; Putri et al., 2023). Song lyrics often represent the psychological conditions of individuals. Several studies show that lyrics can be used to interpret psychological phenomena experienced by listeners as well as the characters within the songs. Modern music carries both social and psychological

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functions in portraying human inner experiences, as seen in Kurniawan and Rizki's (2023) interpretation of Idris's "*Takut*" and Hasanah et al.'s (2023) study on Hindia's album. Similarly, Japanese music utilizes metaphorical diction, specific linguistic structures, and concepts like *honne* and *tatemae* to reflect complex internal states and distinction between true feelings and socially displayed attitudes (Palandi, 2020; Akaishi et al., 2022). Previous studies indicate that themes of loneliness, life pressure, and existential struggle appear strongly in modern *J-pop* (Japanese Pop), including songs with darker nuances related to depression, death, and escapism (Masui & Miyamoto, 2025; Pham, 2024).

J-Pop (Japanese Pop) music combines modern musical elements with strong narrative aesthetics, where lyrics play an essential role as poetic texts to convey emotions, inner experiences, and social reflections through distinctive diction and figurative choices (Hidayat & Sejati, 2023; Khopipah & Gunara, 2023). Musicians employ metaphors, symbolism, irony, and narrative structures to construct layers of meaning, express internal conflict, and reflect social phenomena such as life pressures, loneliness, and the search for meaning amid modernity (Darmawan, 2023). Integrated with visual media like anime or music videos, *J-Pop* serves as a representational space for collective emotions that influences affective states, reduces negative emotions, and reflects listeners' anxieties and hopes (Hidayat & Sejati, 2023; Akaishi et al., 2022).

YOASOBI represents one of the most prominent examples of modern *J-Pop* that places emotional expression at its core through their "novel into music" concept, adapting short stories into songs rich in narrative and emotion. Works such as *Yoru ni Kakeru*, *Encore*, *Kaibutsu*, and *Idol* demonstrate how *J-Pop* lyrics blend psychological themes with linguistic aesthetics through poetic diction and strong narrative characters, functioning as a meaningful medium for articulating inner conflict, existential conditions, and the psychological dynamics of modern Japanese society. Specifically, *Yoru ni Kakeru* highlights the struggle between the desire to live and the urge to give up (Tiwik & Tri, 2022); *Encore* portrays ambiguity between farewell and hope (Masui & Miyamoto, 2025); *Kaibutsu* presents identity conflict and the absurdity of modern existence (Li, 2024; Hassan, 2024); and *Idol* exposes the oppressive nature of idealized industry demands (Farisya & Dewanty, 2023). Encapsulating inner conflict and emotional pain, these four songs serve as relevant objects for psycholinguistic analysis.

The urgency of this study is reinforced by questionnaire data from respondents aged 18–30 (as of July 4, 2025), which show that 93% of listeners feel that YOASOBI's songs express inner pain that is difficult to articulate directly. Furthermore, 96% consider psychological analysis in song lyrics important, and 78% report that music helps them understand or cope with mental health issues. These findings indicate that YOASOBI's music carries strong psychological resonance for young audiences.

Psycholinguistics examines how individuals understand, produce, and process language through cognitive mechanisms, showing that linguistic behavior, word choices, and sentence structures reveal mental dynamics like inner conflict and emotional systems (Field, 2003; Carroll, 1999; Vygotsky, 1986). In literary works and song lyrics, diction and figurative devices such as metaphors, similes, hyperbole, and irony convey abstract concepts like pain, loneliness, or despair in concrete ways, enabling listeners to perceive emotional intensity and mental imagery (Kerap, 1991; Tarigan, 2009). Examining these linguistic elements alongside psycholinguistic perspectives allows researchers to uncover how lyrics represent emotional tension, loss, and how audience experiences influence meaning-making (Kurniawan & Rizki,

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2023; Akaishi et al., 2022). For YOASOBI's songs, rich in psychological narratives, this approach provides a comprehensive framework to identify how language portrays mental pressure, inner conflict, and the search for meaning in contemporary Japanese music (Hasanah, Mulyati, & Hadianto, 2023; Masui & Miyamoto, 2025).

Samuel Beckett places pain and suffering at the center of existential reflection, portraying human beings who endure amid emptiness, uncertainty, and absurdity (Gauvin, 2022). In his texts, suffering is an ontological condition and existential awareness of human limitation, alienation, and fragility viewed as inherent in life rather than an anomaly to be eliminated (Hassan, 2024; Tanaka, Tajiri, & Tsushima, 2012; McDonald, 2006). This “blurred universe” signifies identity instability, where chaos constructs the “fragmented self” shaped by conflict, loss of direction, and profound emotional pain (Habibi, 2023). Connective to trauma and mental health, disconnected interactions, silence, and incomplete communication represent psychological suffering, post-war conditions, and continuous efforts to find meaning where hope and despair coexist (Li, 2024). Ultimately, Beckett's framework views suffering as an inseparable part of human existence manifested through alienation and absurdity (Li, 2024; Hassan, 2024; Waham, 2023), serving as a theoretical foundation to analyze how YOASOBI's lyrics depict emotional and existential suffering through language.

Although research on Japanese song lyrics is extensive, studies connecting psycholinguistics, mental health issues, and Beckett's theory of pain remain limited, as previous research tends to emphasize social, cultural, or emotional aspects rather than linguistic mechanisms (Akaishi et al., 2022; Masui & Miyamoto, 2025). In fact, linguistic analysis can reveal how language reflects mental dynamics and internal experience (Hasanah et al., 2023; Kurniawan & Rizki, 2023). Addressing this research gap, the present study analyzes YOASOBI's lyrics through a psycholinguistic approach informed by Beckett's theory to explain how linguistic structures, figurative devices, and diction choices represent characters' psychological experiences and existential suffering.

2. Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method with content analysis through a psycholinguistic perspective to examine the use of language in four YOASOBI songs: *Yoru ni Kakeru*, *Encore*, *Kaibutsu*, and *Idol*. These songs were selected for their profound psychological themes and depictions of the inner conflict, aligning with Samuel Beckett's concept of existential pain. The Japanese versions of the lyrics are used as the primary data, while secondary data, including scholarly articles and listener comments from the official “Ayase / YOASOBI” YouTube channel, provide interpretive depth.

Table 1. Stages of the Data Collection Process.

Stage	Activity	Output/Focus
First	Transcription	Textual form of song lyrics
Second	Contextual Observation	Visual and narrative depth
Third	Identification	Metaphors
Fourth	Classification	Pain, mental pressure, and existential conflict

The data analysis is conducted through several stages: First, the primary data (lyrics) are analyzed to identify specific linguistic markers, that contain inherent meanings of pain. Second, the identified markers are then examined through the lens of Samuel Beckett's theory of pain. Third, lyric segments containing relevant linguistic features analyzed for their lexical and contextual meanings to determine how they function as signifiers of psychological distress. Fourth, interpretations from YouTube listener comments are analyzed as supplementary data. The data were then classified to determine which parts represented pain, mental pressure, and existential conflict.

The analysis stage was conducted using content analysis, focusing on uncovering implicit meanings within the lyrics and describing how language is used to represent psychological conditions. A psycholinguistic approach was employed to examine how listeners process the language in the lyrics and relate it to their own emotional experiences. The linguistic findings were then interpreted using Samuel Beckett's concept of existential pain to identify how suffering, emptiness, and life's absurdity are constructed through linguistic choices in the lyrics. The final stage of the study draws conclusions on how these four YOASOBI songs represent mental health issues and shape listeners' understanding of themes related to pain and despair.

3. Result and Discussion

In the results and discussion section, four selected YOASOBI songs are analyzed using a psycholinguistic perspective combined with Beckett's existential concept of pain to understand how linguistic choices construct psychological tension within the lyrics. The analysis focuses on how diction and figurative devices represent inner conflict and how listeners cognitively interpret and emotionally negotiate the suffering expressed in the songs. Through this approach, the study examines symbolic, emotive, and metaphorical elements, revealing how language shapes the portrayal of despair, hope, identity struggle, and the pressure of self-performance. Thus, the discussion explains how linguistic features reflect deeper psychological mechanisms and existential themes aligned with Beckett's view of pain as an inseparable part of human existence.

3.1 *Yoru ni Kakeru*: Death-Oriented Diction and the Paradox of a Never-Ending Night

Yoru ni Kakeru constructs a dense emotional landscape through highly loaded lexical choices and striking figures of speech that encode suicidal desire, exhaustion, and a fragile wish to keep living. From a psycholinguistic perspective, the lyrics show how language is used to soften, displace, and symbolically stage thoughts of death while still allowing listeners to recognize and emotionally process them.

One of the strongest examples of diction appears in the opening line:

(1) 沈むように溶けてゆくように

Shizumu you ni tokete yuku you ni

“As if sinking, as if melting away”

(*Yoru ni Kakeru*, YOASOBI, 2019)

In Japanese, 沈む (*shizumu*) means “to sink” or “to submerge”, referring to the transition from the surface of the water toward the bottom (Kikuo, 1988). Furthermore, 沈む (*shizumu*) is also employed when facing unpleasant situations, which leads to a somber and pessimistic state of mind (Shibata & Yamada, 2002). Rather than using the explicit verb 死ぬ (*shinu*, “to die”), the lyric opts for 沈む (*shizumu*, “to sink”) and 溶けてゆく (*tokete yuku*, “to melt away”), verbs that normally describe physical movement and dissolution. These choices function as a euphemistic way of talking about death and disappearance: sinking below the surface and gradually dissolving suggests a slow, quiet erasure from the world rather than a sudden, violent end.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, this choice of diction shifts the concept of “death” into a visual-imaginative domain, prompting listeners to process it through a slow, quiet image of disappearance rather than as a literal statement (Kikuo, 1988). Such indirect language reflects a mental strategy for expressing emotional experiences that are difficult to articulate explicitly, functioning as a symbolic representation of the desire to vanish. This aligns with Samuel Beckett’s perspective on the ‘inexpressibility’ of pain, where suffering is often conveyed through minimalist and indirect linguistic fragments because literal language fails to capture the depth of existential agony (Tanaka, Tajiri, & Tsushima, 2012).

Psycholinguistically, this kind of diction invites listeners to construct a mental image of “going under” and “fading out” without the need for direct mention of death. By utilizing such imagery, the lyrics reflect what Beckett describes as the ‘abyss of human existence’, a state where the persona seeks a release from psychological pressure through a quiet withdrawal from reality (Nasir et al., 2023). The emotional content is thus processed through vivid visual imagery rather than literal wording, allowing the song to represent suicidal ideation in a way that feels intimate and aesthetically “soft”, but still heavy. This aligns with how emotionally charged concepts are often encoded in more indirect, imagistic language so that they can be thought about and felt without being stated bluntly (Pambudi et al., 2021; Tarigan, 2009).

A central figure of speech that crystallizes the existential pain in *Yoru ni Kakeru* appears in the line:

(2) 明けない夜に落ちてゆく前に
Akenai yoru ni ochite yuku mae ni
“Before I fall into a night that will never dawn”

(*Yoru ni Kakeru*, YOASOBI, 2019)

The Japanese word 明ける (*akeru*) signifies the end of a specific period and the beginning of the next (Kikuo, 1988). Here, the expression 明けない夜 (*akenai yoru*, “a night that does not break”) functions as a metaphorical paradox within the lyrics. While in reality, every night is followed by morning, yet the lyric imagines a night that will never end. This contradiction between lived reality and the metaphorical ‘endless night’ captures the psychological feeling of being trapped in unending darkness as an emotional state where no “next day” or new beginning can be envisioned.

From a psycholinguistic angle, this paradox pushes listeners to hold two incompatible ideas at once (night as a normal cycle vs. night as permanent), mirroring the cognitive dissonance of someone who intellectually knows that time moves on, yet emotionally feels stuck. Symbolically, this “never-ending night” resonates strongly with Beckett’s notion of existential suffering: existence as a prolonged stay in an absurd, seemingly inescapable condition (Hassan, 2024; Nasir et al., 2023). This kind of paradox allows listeners to process two opposing concepts simultaneously, creating a cognitive tension that mirrors the experience of depression and existential crisis (Carroll, 1999; Gauvin, 2022). This idea aligns with Beckett’s view that human existence is fundamentally absurd, in which a person feels perpetually trapped in darkness with no certainty of a coming “morning” (Nasir et al., 2023). By combining death-oriented diction like “sinking” and “melting away” with the paradox of a night that never turns into morning, *Yoru ni Kakeru* constructs a linguistic space where despair, resignation, and a faint impulse to resist all coexist. These linguistic choices not only shape the inner world of the song’s narrator but also guide how listeners mentally simulate and emotionally inhabit that world.

The psycholinguistic analysis of *Yoru ni Kakeru* finds empirical validation through the responses of its listeners. While the primary analysis rests on Beckett’s existential framework, the interpretations from the audience serve as supplementary evidence of how these linguistic markers function in a real-world psychological context.

The comment on the official music video shows that the listener uses the song’s metaphors to make sense of psychological experiences related to suicide, despair, and empathy toward individuals who wish to end their lives. This resonance aligns with findings that emotional metaphors in Japanese songs effectively represent the inner conflict between hope and hopelessness (Pambudi et al., 2021; Tiwik & Tri, 2022). The listener’s perception aligns with the previously discussed theoretical findings, where the metaphor of pain is not merely a literary device but a reflection of what Beckett describes as the ‘suffering of being’, a state where existence itself becomes an inescapable burden (Nasir et al., 2023). Specific diction in Japanese lyrics represents the psychological distress of the characters (Ramadhan & Diner, 2025). In YOASOBI’s case, the metaphor of pain transcends the individual to become an absurd social reflection, consistent with Samuel Beckett’s existential philosophy (Tanaka, Tajiri, & Tsushima, 2012; Tiwik & Tri, 2022).

Furthermore, the listener’s comparison of mental distress to a ‘grim reaper’ echoes the Beckettian notion of the abyss, where human existence is caught in an absurd struggle against internal forces (Tanaka, Tajiri, & Tsushima, 2012). Thus, *Yoru ni Kakeru* functions not only as a musical work but also as a social interpretive space where listeners negotiate, express, and validate inner experiences that are difficult to articulate. The song forms a bridge between linguistic representation and real psychological experience, as emphasized in psycholinguistic perspectives on the social and emotional functions of language (Vygotsky, 1986; Akaishi et al., 2022).

3.2 *Encore: Between the End of the World and the Desire to Keep Living*

While *Yoru ni Kakeru* emphasizes the destructive impulse associated with thoughts of ending one’s life, *Encore* highlights the pain of realizing that time and the world will inevitably stop, yet today must still be lived. Diction In *Encore*, YOASOBI explores the theme of “the

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end of the world” not merely as total destruction, but as a contemplative moment that asks what is worth preserving when time is compressed. From a psycholinguistic perspective, the lyrics illustrate how language is used to negotiate the tension between resignation and hope through layered diction and contrasting structures (Carroll, 1999; Masui & Miyamoto, 2025).

The strongest dictional element in *Encore* appears in the opening line:

(3) 明日世界は終わるんだって

Ashita sekai wa owarun datte

“Apparently, the world will end tomorrow”

(*Encore*, YOASOBI, 2021)

The verb 終わる “*owaru*” (to end) lexically means “to finish” or “to cease to continue” (Kikuo, 1988), yet in this context it functions as a subtle representation of death. Not merely the end of a day, but the disappearance of existence itself. The use of 明日 “*ashita*” (tomorrow) adds another layer of meaning: culturally, “tomorrow” evokes ideas of the future and new possibilities. Thus, the phrase “the world will end tomorrow” fuses hope and destruction into a single piece of diction (Kikuo, 1988; Masui & Miyamoto, 2025). This linguistic construction closely reflects Samuel Beckett’s fascination with ‘the end’ as seen in *Endgame*, where the finality of life is portrayed not as a dramatic event, but as a tedious, lingering process of exhaustion (Li, 2024). In Beckett’s existential framework, the end is often paradoxically static; the world is always ending, yet the characters remain trapped in the debris of their existence (McDonald, 2006).

From a psycholinguistic viewpoint, this phrase activates mental schemas of time and ending, triggering emotions such as fear, anxiety, and anticipatory loss. Language here does not simply convey a hypothetical event; it models a way of thinking about impermanence and existential emptiness (Carroll, 1999). By stating that the world will end, the persona adopts a Beckettian ‘absurdist quest’, where the certainty of an ending becomes the only remaining meaning in a void-like reality (Hassan, 2024). Consequently, the diction “the world will end” serves as both a cognitive and emotional cue that places the lyrical persona in a “limited time” situation, one that closely mirrors the internal state of Beckettian existential characters.

The tension between destruction and hope is reinforced through the following chiasmic structure:

(4) 明日世界は終わるんだって

Ashita sekai wa owarun datte

“Apparently, the world will end tomorrow”

もしも世界が終わらなくて

Moshimo sekai ga owaranakutte

“Even if the world doesn’t end”

(*Encore*, YOASOBI, 2021)

In these lyrics, the verb 終わる (*owaru*) signifies an ‘end’ or ‘to finish’ (Miura, 2011). The repetition of the root 終わる (*owaru*, “to end”) and its negated form 終わらない (*owaranai*, “not end”) arranged in reversed order forms a chiasmus, an inversion of two opposing elements (Tarigan, 2009). This structure places listeners in two mental states

simultaneously: accepting the possibility that the world might truly end, while also imagining the scenario where “it might not” (Anggreani & Ridwan, 2023; Mulyadi, 2021).

Psycholinguistically, this chiasmus reflects how language compresses cognitive and emotional conflict into a concise yet highly suggestive form. Repetitive and contrasting patterns such as this enhance memorability while compelling listeners to process two contradictory possibilities at once, embracing the end while still leaving room for hope (Carroll, 1999). Here, figurative devices are not mere rhetorical ornamentation but expressions of psychological coping mechanisms: ways humans soothe themselves amid impending destruction by imagining a world that “does not end after all”. From Beckett’s perspective, this position resembles characters who “wait for something that will never save them,” yet continue to persist within that waiting (Gauvin, 2022; Li, 2024). The suffering in *Encore* is not merely fear of a final day, but the awareness that humans must continue their routines as remembering, playing music, loving even under the looming shadow of an inevitable end. This view aligns with the concept of existential suffering as an inseparable part of human existence as the suffering of being in which the awareness of the end paradoxically allows people to find new meaning in the time they have left (Nasir et al., 2023).

The psycholinguistic impact of these linguistic markers is further evidenced by audience responses, which serve as supplementary validation for the theoretical analysis. In the case of *Encore*, listener reflections demonstrate that the song’s portrayal of ‘the end’ functions as a space for psychological contemplation.

The comment on the official music video illustrates that *Encore* does not merely portray the end of the world as a metaphor for destruction, but also as a moment of pause in which the subject chooses to savor their “last day” and eventually delays the tragic decision. From Samuel Beckett’s perspective, this experience aligns with the idea that humans continue to “play their roles” amid absurdity and emptiness, even when death appears to be the most logical option (Nasir et al., 2023; Hassan, 2024). The pain in *Encore* is not simply about destruction; it becomes a point of existential awakening: recognizing the limits of life, acknowledging the “dirtiness” of one’s inner world, and still choosing to remain within it.

3.3 *Kaibutsu*: Identity Crisis and the Desire to Become Strong

YOASOBI presents a representation of pain rooted in identity conflict and social alienation in *Kaibutsu*. Unlike *Yoru ni Kakeru*, which depicts a drive toward self-destruction, and *Encore*, which emphasizes acceptance of life’s impermanence, *Kaibutsu* portrays the inner turmoil of an individual who sees themselves as a “monster” in a world that demands uniformity. The song illustrates the struggle to remain true to oneself amid social pressures filled with pretense, alongside a strong desire to endure and grow.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, *Kaibutsu* demonstrates how language is used to express identity crisis, fear, and the need for recognition. Meanwhile, through the lens of Samuel Beckett’s thought, the alienation depicted in the song reflects an unavoidable part of the human existential process as a continual struggle to understand one’s own existence. Therefore, the analysis of *Kaibutsu* focuses on how diction and figurative devices are employed to represent the lyrical persona’s inner conflict and the pain that emerges from the mismatch between the self and the surrounding world.

One of the clearest expressions of the identity crisis in *Kaibutsu* appears in the following line:

(5) 本当の僕は何者なんだ

Hontou no boku wa nanimono nan da

“Who am I truly?”

(*Kaibutsu*, YOASOBI, 2021)

This line presents strong diction related to identity crisis. The word 何者 (*nanimono*) is composed of 何 (*nani*, “what”) and 者 (*mono*, “person”), and in Japanese it refers to “someone whose identity is unclear” or “an unknown person” (Kikuo, 1988). The question expresses a confusion between the “self that appears outwardly” and the “true self”, prompting the lyrical persona to question their own existence. This crisis mirrors Samuel Beckett’s recurring theme of the fragmented identity, where individuals struggle to find a stable ‘I’ amidst the noise of external expectations (Habibi, 2023). In Beckett’s works, the self is often portrayed as a void or a series of masks, leading to an existential exhaustion because the persona can never truly grasp who they are (McDonald, 2006).

In psycholinguistic studies, language reflects how individuals construct meaning about themselves. This question signals a gap between self-concept (the ideal self one wishes to believe in) and self-perception (the way one evaluates oneself within social reality) (Vygotsky, 1986; Field, 2003). The persona in the song experiences social pressure and moral conflict to the point that they are no longer certain who they are, whether they are an “ordinary human” or a “monster” in the eyes of others. This state of being caught between two conflicting identities aligns with Beckett’s ‘abyss of human existence’, where the subject is forced to exist in a state of neither fully human nor fully vanished (Nasir et al., 2023). Thus, the diction 何者 (*nanimono*) illustrates that identity is not a fixed entity, but something continuously negotiated amid environmental demands and restrictive social norms.

Aside from diction, the lyrical persona’s inner conflict is also constructed through figurative devices that reinforce its emotional meaning, as seen in the following line:

(6) 僕の中の僕を超える

Boku no naka no boku wo koeru

“To surpass the me within me”

(*Kaibutsu*, YOASOBI, 2021)

The Japanese word 僕 (*boku*) signifies ‘I’ or ‘me’ (Kikuo, 1988). 僕 (*boku*) is typically used by males, most commonly by boys and young men (Miura, 2011). This line employs metaphor as its central figurative device. Literally, it is impossible for two versions of “me” to exist physically. The phrase symbolizes an older version of the self as fearful, weak, or bound by social norms that the persona wants to transcend. A metaphor is an implicit comparison between two different things without using comparative markers such as “like” or “as” (Tarigan, 2009). Here, “surpassing the me within me” maps a psychological transformation onto an image of physical movement, as if someone were leaping past their own shadow.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, metaphor helps individuals compress complex emotions and cognitive conflicts into imagery that is easier to process. This lyric implies the

persona's desire to overcome fear, inferiority, and the "monster" label attached to them. The metaphor highlights the internal dynamic: a version of the self-trapped in norms and guilt, and another striving to become stronger, braver, and more honest. The use of metaphor in music allows listeners not only to understand the message rationally but also to experience it emotionally (Pambudi et al., 2021). This choice of diction reveals a gap between self-concept and social perception, which in Samuel Beckett's theory of pain is identified as the 'suffering of being', a condition where the individual feels trapped in a fragmented existence that is out of sync with the world's demands (Gauvin, 2022; McDonald, 2006).

Kaibutsu portrays a character who sees themselves as a "monster" amid a world that appears "beautiful" on the surface yet is filled with falseness and social pressure. The "monster" identity becomes a symbol of alienation: the persona lives among others but never feels truly integrated (Waham, 2023; Gauvin, 2022). The pain arises from the mismatch between who they are and what the world demands of them between the desire to be honest with oneself and the need to "function" within a social system that is unfriendly to difference. This aligns with Beckett's principle of 'persistence within pain, where true strength is found not in the absence of suffering, but in the courage to 'go on' despite a broken condition (Tanaka, Tajiri, & Tsushima, 2012). By embracing the "monster" identity to protect what is precious, the persona reaches an existential awakening, a state Beckett describes as fully acknowledging the "dirtiness" of the world yet choosing to remain and persist within it with a resolute will (Nasir et al., 2023).

The psycholinguistic resonance of *Kaibutsu* is further validated by audience reflections, which serve as supplementary evidence of how the song's linguistic markers impact individuals in high-pressure social realities. While the primary analysis is rooted in Beckett's existential framework, listener testimonials demonstrate that the song's themes of endurance provide a medium for processing real-world exhaustion.

This reflection confirms that the song's narrative of 'becoming strong' resonates far beyond its immediate fictional context, reaching those on the front lines of existential crisis. The song provides language to articulate feelings that are often difficult to name: fear, fatigue, feeling different, yet still wanting to protect others and continue living. The listener's experience aligns with the Beckettian view that suffering is not an anomaly but an essential aspect of human existence (Tanaka, Tajiri, & Tsushima, 2012; Das, 2025). Humans constantly live in tension between the desire to stop and the obligation to keep "playing their role" in a world that is absurd and not always accommodating of vulnerability (Gauvin, 2022; Nasir et al., 2023). *Kaibutsu* captures the pain of having to remain "strong" under inhuman demands while acknowledging that beneath this facade of strength lies a heart that is fragile and fearful. Thus, the song becomes a medium through which existential suffering in alienation, social pressure, and the struggle to preserve one's identity can be recognized, shared, and collectively understood.

3.4 *Idol*: The Illusion of Perfection, Hidden Lies, and Concealed Pain

The song *Idol* by YOASOBI presents a sharp critique of the constructed image of perfection within Japanese entertainment culture. Unlike *Kaibutsu*, which highlights inner alienation, *Idol* exposes the paradox between the idealized public persona and the emotionally pressured reality behind it. The character in the song is portrayed as "perfect," yet this

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perfection is built upon lies continually maintained to satisfy the expectations of fans and the industry.

At a psycholinguistic level, the lyrics of *Idol* reveal how language is used to shape an idealized figure through praise-filled diction, while simultaneously exposing the character's fragility through words associated with deception, secrecy, and denial. Through Samuel Beckett's theory of pain, the character's experience reflects existential suffering that emerges when a person is forced to inhabit a role that is fundamentally misaligned with their true self. This suffering arises not only from external pressures but also from the internal effort required to sustain one's existence in a world that demands perfection without granting space for honesty. Therefore, the analysis of *Idol* focuses on how diction and figurative devices construct a portrait of a divided identity and the psychological pain concealed beneath an idol's idealized image.

One of the strongest dictional elements in *Idol* appears in the following lyric:

(7) 意の笑顔で沸かすメディア

Tokui no egao de wakasu media

“With my signature smile, I entertain the media”

(*Idol*, YOASOBI, 2023)

The lyrics feature the word 笑顔 (*egao*), which signifies a “smiling face”, and the term 沸かす (*wakasu*), meaning “to stir up” or “to kindle enthusiasm”, in the sense of arousing the audience's passion to create a lively and clamorous atmosphere (Kikuo, 1988). The “signature smile” is not used to depict genuine happiness, but rather a professional tool for maintaining a perfect public image. This performance of ‘happiness’ mirrors Samuel Beckett's exploration of the fictive self, where individuals are forced to perform scripted roles that alienate them from their true essence (Habibi, 2023). In Beckett's perspective, such a persona is a manifestation of existential dread, the more the subject ‘stirs up’ the outer world, the more they hollow out their inner reality, leading to a state of exhaustion where the self becomes nothing more than a series of artificial gestures (McDonald, 2006).

From a psycholinguistic perspective, this choice of diction illustrates how language can construct a social persona that differs from an individual's emotional reality (Field, 2003). This divided identity aligns with the Beckettian ‘abyss,’ where the persona is trapped in the ‘pain of being seen’, the necessity to remain visible and perfect for the audience while enduring internal fragmentation (Nasir et al., 2023). Ultimately, the diction reflects a defense mechanism under social pressure, where the lively atmosphere of 沸かす (*wakasu*) serves as a noisy distraction from the silent, existential void that Beckett frequently identifies as the core of the human condition (Hassan, 2024).

The most prominent figurative device in *Idol* appears in the following line:

(8) そう嘘はとびきりの愛だ

Sou uso wa tobikiri no ai da

“Yes, lies are the very best form of love”

(*Idol*, YOASOBI, 2023)

The Japanese word of 嘘 (*uso*) signifies a “lie” or “falsehood” (Kikuo, 1988). While the term 愛 (*ai*) means “love” (Miura, 2011). This line presents a paradox by placing two logically opposing concepts “*uso*” (lies) and “*ai*” (love) side by side. This line presents a paradox by placing two logically opposing concepts side by side. This linguistic paradox mirrors Samuel Beckett’s exploration of the inherent ‘failure of language’, where words are used not to reveal truth, but to mask the void and sustain an absurd existence (McDonald, 2006). In Beckett’s perspective, the persona’s reliance on lies to express love is a form of ‘existential role-playing’, where the subject is trapped in a scripted performance to avoid the pain of being truly known or, conversely, the pain of being forgotten (Habibi, 2023). The paradox reveals that in the idol world, honesty is perceived as something that could threaten the relationship with fans, making lies become the “truest” form of love the idol can offer. This paradox reflects a profound internal conflict in which the persona must continue performing an idealized role even when it contradicts their authentic identity.

Psycholinguistically, this paradox evokes cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) because the persona must accept lies as a legitimate part of their emotional relationship with the public. This internal conflict reflects what Beckett describes as the ‘abyss of human existence’, where the individual is forced to operate within a system of falseness just to maintain a semblance of connection with others (Nasir et al., 2023). Consequently, ‘love’ in this context is no longer a genuine emotion, but an ‘absurdist tool’ used to bridge the gap between the idol’s fragmented identity and the audience’s expectations, echoing Beckett’s view that human communication is often just a ‘noise’ meant to silence existential dread (Hassan, 2024). The psycholinguistic impact of the ‘idol paradox’ is further validated by audience responses, which serve as supplementary evidence of how these linguistic constructions resonate with the existential struggles of modern society. While the analytical foundation rests on Beckett’s theory of the fictive self, listener reflections provide empirical support for the study’s findings.

The listener’s experience aligns with the Beckettian framework, specifically the concept of humans as performers on a ‘stage’ who are compelled to carry out their roles despite inherent fragility and despair (Sabr, 2025). This shows that *Idol* does not merely depict the pressures faced by idols in the entertainment industry, but also reflects broader societal pressures to always appear strong, hide vulnerabilities, and maintain an ideal image even when fear and anxiety lie beneath the surface. Consequently, this proves that the “absurdist performance” described by Beckett is not merely a literary trope, but a functional survival mechanism used by individuals to navigate the exhausting demands of contemporary life (Hassan, 2024), illustrating how suffering arises not only from wounds or loss, but also from the inability to be one’s true self amid the absurdity of life.

4. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the four YOASOBI songs; *Yoru ni Kakeru*, *Encore*, *Kaibutsu*, and *Idol* present complex representations of pain through psycholinguistic analysis and Samuel Beckett’s theory of pain, revealing inner conflict, existential struggle, and social pressures. *Yoru ni Kakeru* depicts the tension between death and hope; *Encore* highlights acceptance of impermanence; *Kaibutsu* illustrates identity struggle and alienation; and *Idol*

exposes falsified roles from public expectations. Aligning with Beckett's perspective that suffering is inseparable from being, these findings are reinforced by listener interpretations, showing that these songs serve as psychological experiences validating feelings of fragility, pressure, or alienation. Listeners explain that they use this lyrical message to endure real life, particularly in work and social relationships. Thus, this study concludes that YOASOBI's works possess linguistic and emotional power capable of capturing human suffering in an absurd, demanding, and uncertain world.

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