

Informal Bilingual Practice through Japanese Anime: A Case Study on Private University Students in Bangladesh



Mahjabin Maria

221013067

Department of English and Humanities

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**Informal Bilingual Practice through Japanese Anime: A Case Study on Private University
Students in Bangladesh**

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Mahjabin Maria

221013067

Thesis Supervisor: Al Mahmud Rumman

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Al Mahmud Rumman', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Al Mahmud Rumman

Senior Lecturer

Department of English and Humanities

DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.



Mahjabin Maria

221013067

Department of English and Humanities

Dedication

There are two dedications for this research paper.

First, I dedicate this paper to my mother. Her endless support, encouragement, love and criticism have not only made me who I am today but have been the compass that is constantly guiding me in every single step. She is the backbone of my entire self and this achievement is as much hers as it is mine.

Second, I dedicate this to all the dreamers, the “Otakus”, and the language enthusiasts who like to know how we find pieces of ourselves in foreign languages. To those who believe words are not just spoken but lived. Who find fascination in every language of the world, whether it is the warmth of Bangla (বাংলা), the universality of English, the melody of Hangeo (한국어), the depth of Mandarin (汉语), or the expressiveness of Nihongo (日本語). Keep listening, keep watching the foreign entertainment media, and keep learning. Cheers to the world that we build with different words of this diverse language realm.

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Writing this paper often felt like a never-ending anime, dramatic, exhausting, sometimes boring, and very similar to watching “One Piece”, while wondering and questioning if it will ever end. Like Monkey D. Luffy sailing the Grand Line without knowing how long the journey would last, I kept moving forward with stubborn determination, frequent self-doubt, and the hope that the ending would eventually appear. And just like Luffy could never sail alone, I would not have made it this far without my own small crew, the four main characters who became the pillars of this paper.

First and foremost, my parents stand as the first pillar. Because of them, I am here today, breathing, standing and able to write this paper. Their constant and endless support gave me the foundation to come this far, even in moments when I doubted myself the most. They were like Roronoa Zoro: steady, reliable and always ready to back me up.

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Abstract

In recent years, informal digital media such as Japanese anime have provided Bangladeshi university students with Nihongo (Japanese) language exposures beyond the formal classrooms. Keeping this in mind, the aim of this study is to explore how watching anime contributes to the incidental learning of Nihongo and English vocabulary and collocations, and how Japanese honorifics speech styles and cultural references appear and being embedded in the bilingual practices of the Bangladeshi university students. The study follows a mixed-method approach, employing convenience sampling to recruit the participants for the survey (80 students) and purposive sampling to select the focus group participants (13 students), ensuring that all participants had prior exposure to anime. The findings show that the students acquire a wide range of high-frequency vocabulary and formulaic expressions incidentally through repeated exposure to anime and subtitles. Moreover, the learners were found to use Japanese honorifics, gestures, and speech styles in playful and context-appropriate ways with Bangla and English communication. The study suggests that anime functions as an effective informal language learning space that supports bilingual development, cultural awareness and learner motivation beyond the classroom.

Keywords: Informal bilingual practices; Incidental vocabulary acquisition; Anime; Bilingual practices; Japanese honorifics; Cultural awareness.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Japanese Anime Industry

Anime is a type of animation that comes from Japanese culture, which first started in 1917 (Anime World, 2016) with some simple drawings and cutouts during the “Silent Films” era (The Evolution of the Japanese Anime Industry, 2023). The first anime known to the audience was Namakura Gatana, which was created just by using chalk and lasted for less than five minutes (Sankari, 2024). The first anime studio, called Kitayama Movie Factory, was founded by Kitayama Seitaro in 1921 (Sankari, 2024). But the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923 destroyed the studio (The Evolution of the Japanese Anime Industry, 2023). Then, after World War II, the industry grew again as a medium of entertainment and a way of relief. As a result, the Japanese Animated Film industry was started in 1948 and later on, it became Toei Animation in 1956 (Eastern Arizona College, 2023). Osamu Tezuka, who is also known as the “God of Manga”, changed the whole spectrum of anime in the 1950s and 1960s through his works. Astro Boy in 1963 made by Osamu, was the first anime TV series in history. These animation works included characters with unique visuals, big eyes, and exciting stories (The seeds of anime: how Japanese animation arose, 2020; What is Anime - Definition, Evolution & Modern Examples, 2025), which made these artworks different from Western Animations or cartoons.

Anime added new types of stories in the 1970s and 1980s, that included mecha, magic, fiction, and action (Steen, 2023). However, films like Akira, Grave of the Fireflies, and My Neighbour Totoro in 1988 are what made anime popular worldwide (The Anime Phenomenon, 2025). Today, anime has become a big industry that earns billions of dollars and reaches fans globally through streaming platforms like Netflix, Crunchyroll, (The Evolution of the Japanese

Anime Industry, 2023) different TV channels such as Animex, or different dubbed versions of anime like Pokémon, Dragon Ball-Z, Doraemon, Shinchan, and Ninja Hattori-kun. Anime mixes the culture with elements like art, stories, and life lessons to make it entertaining. It often has Japanese voices with English subtitles for better reach to the audience, which helps non-Japanese viewers to learn the language, know the culture, and understand the story while enjoying the shows (Kilag et al., 2023; Shintaku, 2022).

1.2 Anime Culture in Bangladesh

Anime has recently become very popular in Bangladesh, especially among the young generation who have access to media and tv. With fast internet and streaming platforms like Netflix, Crunchyroll, and Aniwatch, more students watch anime nowadays. Shows like Naruto, One Piece, Jujutsu Kaisen, and Attack on Titan draw a big fan following for the anime community (Sharmin, 2021). Surveys indicate that anime and manga are extremely popular among young students who are exposed to media across the country (Hirok, 2023). Different social platforms like Facebook groups, YouTube channels, and Reddit platforms also help to spread the anime culture. It lets the fans share their own opinion, reviews, and perspectives through the posts on Facebook and different social media platforms. Cosplay events like Anime-Con have been happening at different malls and entertainment centers in Dhaka megacity, with popular Japanese Anime movies have been screening in Bangladeshi movie theatres for a few years now. For example, the “Anime Fest 2025: Limited Realm” is a big event organized for anime enthusiasts with cosplay and conversations, and Star Cineplex has screened Demon Slayer: Infinity Castle, Jujutsu Kaisen, and Chainsaw Man in the past three years.

Then again, anime influences daily life as well. “Otaku”, anime fans who love watching anime, use Nihongo (Japanese) words in their online and offline conversations. They make graffiti art from the inspiration of anime (Pokexel, 2024). It blends with local culture, such as incorporating Japanese terms into conversations, combining honorifics with Bangla names, and referencing different aspects in memes (Sharmin, 2021), which creates a fun way for students to learn about the country and its culture. But research on how it helps language learning in Bangladesh is still scarce (Mahbub, 2023).

1.3. Rationale of the Research

Previous studies show that anime is a strong source of incidental language learning, as learners acquire vocabulary and improve their listening skills simply by watching enjoyable, and comprehensible content (Junjie et al., 2018; Karakaş & Sariçoban, 2012; Karimah et al., 2019; Shintaku, 2022). This aligns with Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, which suggests that learners absorb information best when they are exposed to understandable content in a fun and low-anxiety setting. Examples from Indonesia show that learners naturally pick up Japanese words and expressions like "watashi" (I), “kanojo” (she), and “itadakimas” (thank you for the food), type of phrases by simply watching anime (Karimah et al., 2019).

Not only just vocabulary development, anime also provides access, like a doorway, to culture and pragmatic features of Japanese culture, such as honorifics like -san, -kun and speech styles (Demiyati et al., 2023; Okamoto, 1997) with culturally appropriate gestures and behavior like bowing down or politeness. This supports sociocultural perspectives on learning (Vygotsky,

1978) and Usage-based theory, which argues that repetition strengthens language acquisition (Bybee, 2010; Tomasello, 2004, as cited in Pine, 2005), which is happening in this case.

However, most of these research are from Japan, Indonesia, Iran, or the West (Singer, 2022; Kilag et al., 2023; Van Vu, 2025). Very little is known about the Bangladeshi situation right now even though Bangladesh has a huge fan base of anime. Bangladeshi students often face challenges in second-language practice, particularly in English and Nihongo as formal classrooms only prioritizes exam based activities and prepare students for formal settings, while neglecting the practical and real life application (Rahman, 2023). Anime specially with subtitles helps in this situation, and offers a promising alternative for incidental acquisition and the integration of Nihongo elements into bilingual discourse, nevertheless no study checks how it helps to improve the phenomena (Bhowmik, 2018; Anime's Impact on Language Skills, n.d.).

Therefore, this research addresses the gap by exploring how Bangladeshi private University students acquire linguistics and pragmatic elements from anime. Theoretically, it extends input-based and sociocultural frameworks (Krashen, 1985; Vygotsky, 1978) and highlights the role of media in language development (Nation, 2001; Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001). Practically, it demonstrates how anime can enhance motivation, vocabulary growth and intercultural awareness (Wisniawati et al., 2022).

1.4. Research Objective

The main objective is to examine how exposure to anime contributes to the incidental acquisition of English and Japanese (Nihongo) vocabulary and collocations, and to analyze how

Japanese honorifics, speech styles, and cultural references are embedded into the bilingual practices of Bangladeshi students.

1.5. Research Questions

1. How does watching anime contribute to the incidental acquisition of English and Japanese vocabulary and collocations among Bangladeshi students?
2. How do Japanese honorifics, speech styles, and cultural references become embedded in the bilingual practices of Bangladeshi students?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In recent years, language learning has moved beyond the four walls of the traditional classroom and has shifted into the digital world, where students learn new languages through everyday online activities. This transformation or shift in learning is often referred to the Informal Digital Learning of Languages (IDLL), a process, where learners pick up a new language through activities they enjoy, such as playing games, browsing through social media, or watching videos (Lee, 2017). Among these activities, watching Japanese anime has become one of the strongest, most powerful and influential ways for young people to learn a new language, especially the Nihongo language.

According to the 2023 Duolingo Language Report, interest in learning Japanese has grown the most in Bangladesh, China, Nepal, and more South Asian countries mainly because young people in these regions watch a lot of anime and developed a strong fascination with the language. The Japan Foundation (2021) reported a 54.5% increase in Japanese language learners in Bangladesh. The rise shows how much the habits of Bangladeshi students have changed in terms of learning foreign languages. For many of these learners, anime is not just entertainment or a form of distraction, rather a primary source of linguistic input to absorb new words, sentence patterns, and cultural expressions.

However, learning from anime is a complex process. It involves not just hearing words, but connecting them to visuals and reading subtitles, often in English, to understand the meaning and context. This literature review explores the theories and mechanisms behind this phenomenon. It begins with discussing incidental acquisition (Section 2.1) and how theories like Paivio's Dual Coding Theory explain how combining audio and visuals helps memory. It then

examines how learners build their vocabulary (Section 2.2) and collocations (Section 2.3) through repetitive exposure to authentic dialogue.

Furthermore, language is not just about words; it is about social rules as well. Therefore, this review also analyzes how anime exposes viewers to Japanese honorifics and speech styles (Section 2.4) through the lens of Language Socialization theory (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984), which explains how learners pick up cultural norms alongside grammar. Finally, the chapter concludes by identifying the Research Gap (Section 2.5), highlighting the lack of studies focusing specifically on the bilingual (Bangla-English-Japanese) context of Bangladeshi university students.

2.1 Anime and Incidental acquisition

Anime provides learners with rich, engaging input that can lead to incidental language learning, which happens without consciousness and outside a formal study setting (Karimah et al., 2019). Schmitt (2013) defines incidental acquisition as “accidental or unplanned learning that does not involve the intention to learn or analyze the language, rather only learning it through watching and listening” (Karimah et al., 2019). In other words, viewers pick up words, expressions, phrases, and other important elements of the language simply by enjoying the show. This idea also fits with Krashen’s comprehensible input hypothesis (1985). When learners learn a language while watching television or playing video games, they absorb the features of a language subconsciously (Karakaş & Sariçoban, 2012). Then again, in anime, new words and phrases often appear in interesting and lively situations, like a funny conversation between characters, fighting scenes between antagonists and protagonists, or emotional scenes. These

words are easier to understand because viewers can connect the conversation with scenes. For example, if a character is thanked for something in a formal setting, they will use “ありがとうございます (Arigatou Gozaimasu). For a deeper level of gratitude, they add Hontou ni (本当に) to the beginning, making it 本当にありがとうございます (Hontou ni arigatou gozaimasu) (Coto Japanese Academy, 2025). These phrases come in almost every anime series, which makes it a high-frequency vocabulary that helps the watchers to remember the word or phrase better. The same goes for hello (こんにちは(Konnichiwa)), sorry (ごめんなさい (Gomen nasai)), and Good Morning (おはよう(Ohayo)) type of higher frequency words.

According to Karakaş and Sariçoban (2012), when a new vocabulary is shown in animated contexts, learners can elicit the meanings from what is happening in the scene, which helps them to remember better. Moreover, repetition of certain words and phrases across episodes also strengthens memorization. In this way, anime supported incidental learning. Here, learners pick up words naturally without focusing on memorization. Empirical studies also support the idea. In 2012, Karakaş and Sariçoban found that English learners improved their vocabulary after watching cartoons, even if subtitles were not included in those media. Like Karakaş and Sariçoban, Singer (2022) also points out that cartoons help to capture learners' attention and memory due to its mixed media, making the process easier to learn new words naturally. Similarly, Mousavi and Gholami (2014) discovered that Iranian children remembered more new words when they watched subtitled animated stories compared to only reading the story or picture. Munir (2016) also showed that cartoons used in classrooms led to a clear increase in the number of words that students could recall, resulting in a better performance of the class.

In Bangladesh, recent studies show that the usage of informal media can help to improve the language skills of learners. Rahman in 2023 found that Bangladeshi university students who watched English movies, videos, series, and cartoons regularly showed a noticeable difference in English proficiency compared to the rest of the students who did not. The students shared how these media have helped them to improve their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, with subtitles helping them to understand new words and culture. Though the study focused on English media, it also outlined how enjoyable audiovisual input like anime can naturally expand a learner's vocabulary.

As anime combines Japanese and English, both languages (Japanese as dialogue and English as subtitles), it exposes the viewers to both languages at once. The visual storytelling element of the anime also supports comprehension. Karimah et al. (2019) found that a learner who regularly watched anime picked up new Japanese words incidentally through repetition, and anime also influenced her pronunciation and daily expression. Similarly, Kilag et al. (2023) described anime as a motivational learning tool in their “Anime-Inspired English Learning” concept (AIEL) where it is shown that anime's authentic dialogue exposes learners to real-life accents, dialects, and idioms.

Moreover, anime not only facilitates incidental acquisition but also increases intrinsic motivation, which refers to learning that happens because learners find the environment enjoyable and personally satisfying rather than looking for any external rewards or pressure (Ryan & Deci, 2000). For example, a lot of students want to learn Japanese to know the stories better and want to naturally understand the plots in anime that come from their curiosity, and personal interest. They want to learn Japanese without any external forces which goes perfectly with the concept of intrinsic motivation. The process of incidental learning observed here also

aligns with the Nativization and Acculturation models. As learners repeatedly engage with Japanese input through anime, they gradually nativize certain expressions to fit their own social contexts.

2.2 Vocabulary Development through Anime

According to Nation (2001), vocabulary learning depends on repetitive exposure with meaningful use of words and phrases. Anime, in this case, provides similar input to its viewers through stories, dialogues, and emotionally charged scenes. Uy et al. (2023) note that anime episodes are filled with rich and contextually relevant vocabulary, which allows learners to understand and remember the words and phrases through the storyline of the anime. Usage-based theories, for example, Tomasello's (2004) Usage-based theory of language acquisition (as cited in Pine, 2005), and Bybee's Cognitive and Frequency-based Model (2010), which focus on the idea that language learning happens through actual use and repeated exposure, also suggest that language develops through repeated encounters in real use. For example, "are you okay" (Daijōbu?), "Let's go" (Ikuze) are very common phrases in anime like Pokémon and Dragon Ball Z. The viewers, when they repeatedly hear these common phrases, begin to understand not only the meaning but also how to use these phrases in various emotional and social situations in different tones. Over time, such repeated and meaningful exposure helps the phrases become part of the learner's active vocabulary.

While Nation (2001) emphasizes that words are learned through multiple exposures in meaningful contexts, Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) proved that mental engagement improves word retention in their Involvement Load Hypothesis. As a lot of otaku rewatch the episodes, scenes,

and talk about it in online platforms among friend circles, the involvement works as informal learning. Karimah et al. (2019) found that an Indonesian learner picked up Japanese words such as “watashi” (I), “kanojo” (she), “itadakimas” (thank you for the food), and “arigatou” (thank you) through anime. This also reflects Webb’s (2014) findings that words are gradually learned through repeated encounters in context.

Anime also covers a broad range of lexical types. For example, learners are reported to acquire from conversational vocabulary to slang and special honorifics. The Indonesian learner could translate repeated items such as *watashi/boku/ore*, which stands for me/I, *kanojo* (she), and simple nouns like *keita denwa* (cell phone), *mizu* (water), with translating proper, easy, structured sentences in Bahasa Indonesia from Japanese without having any prior knowledge in Japanese (Karimah et al., 2019).

2.3 Collocations

Collocation is a natural combination of words that are often used together by native speakers. These word pairings sound “right” or “natural” in a language, while other combinations, even if they are grammatically correct, may not sound right. A collocation is when two or more words frequently appear together in a way that sounds natural to native speakers. For example, adjective + noun: strong coffee, heavy rain. Here, the strong word does not reflect the later word coffee, but sounds right. Then verb + noun: make a mistake, do the homework. Here, we say make a mistake, not do a mistake.

In English and Japanese, both the languages of this research, collocations are pervasive elements in fluent speech (Van Vu, 2025). According to Michael Lewis’s Lexical Approach, language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar, which means that these fixed or semi-fixed word groups are the foundation of communication. Then again, usage-based SLA theory suggests that learners acquire language by repeatedly encountering frequent patterns in real input. When learners see or hear common word pairings many times in context, they begin to process them as single units, known as forms of meaning mappings (Wulff & Ellis, 2018). In addition, collocational knowledge often portrays how strong the language proficiency is, as mastering collocations remains challenging even for advanced learners (Nation, 2013).

Animated media such as cartoons and anime provide ideal input for acquiring multi-word patterns. Anime, in particular, provides authentic conversational language, idioms, and collocations through natural dialogue. Van Vu (2025) notes that authentic television is “rich in Formulaic sequences compared to everyday speech,” which makes it a valuable source of learning collocations and idioms. Some of the most common collocations that the viewers come through are,

Verb+Noun: ご飯を食べる (*gohan-wo-taberu*, “eat rice/meal”) frequently paired with いただきます (*itadakimasu*) before eating scenes in anime.

Adjective+Noun: 激情 *Gekijō* (*Strong emotion/passion*) is often used to show determination in anime characters.

Adverb+Adjective: とてもかわいい (*totemo kawaii*, “very cute”) common in slice-of-life or romantic anime.

Phrasal/Verb Expressions: 頑張って (*ganbatte*, “do your best!”) encouragement before a challenge.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, collocations are stored and retrieved as whole units, which makes the speech production better, smoother, faster, and fluent. According to the classical hypothesis (Pawley & Syder, 1983; Wray, 2002), storing multiword expressions in single mental units saves working memory during speech production. Empirical evidence also supports this idea, where Asari (2021) found that Chinese EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners who used more formulaic sequences were rated as more fluent speakers. Segalowitz’s Triadic Model explains fluency as “the ability to efficiently coordinate the cognitive processes involved in speaking”. The proficiency of collocations enhances this coordination due to the familiar chunks that can be retrieved quickly, leaving more attention for meaning and communication.

2.4. Embedding Japanese Honorifics, Speech Style, and Cultural References

Anime functions as a rich socio-cultural input, exposing the learners of not only Bangladesh but also the world’s learners and viewers to Japanese politeness systems, honorifics, and cultural norms. Shintaku in 2022 found that media studies of popular cultures, like dramas, music, and anime, create extensive opportunities for incidental and informal language learning. Anime characters frequently use culturally marked expressions in natural context, allowing the watchers to internalize the norms, humility, respect, as well as how someone addresses others. Hwang, Sato and He (2023) found that learners’ out-of-class media engagement, such as

watching anime, strongly predicts growth in intercultural communicative competence, shaping their awareness of Japanese social hierarchy and relational sensitivity.

This reflects Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, where cultural tools mediate cognitive and linguistic development. In this sense, anime operates as a “living cultural encyclopedia” (*Japanese Anime Characters Help Teach Language, Culture Skills*, 2018), through which learners “observe and absorb” authentic speech patterns, such as how language use varies between children and elders, or between formal and intimate settings. Thus, anime provides a form of pragmatic apprenticeship in language learning (Duff, 2008), immersing the learners and viewers in the conventions of Japanese interaction.

The Japanese language is particularly rich in honorifics and speech styles, which casts a shadow on the anime dialogues too (Okamoto, 1997). For example, suffixes like -san, -kun, -chan, -sensei, and -senpai signal social distance, power, respect, and hierarchy. For instance, in a royal or aristocratic setting, as shown in *My Next Life as a Villainess*, characters employ “sonkeigo (尊敬語)” honorifics to acknowledge a higher social status (Demiyati et al., 2023). From the perspective of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, these honorifics enact positive politeness by attending to others' social “face”. Then again, learners who engage with such content, even casually, witness the pragmatic system of Japanese politeness in action. Ide's (2006) concept of *Wakimae* (わけ前) uses the contextually appropriate forms that appear vividly when anime characters shift between formal *desu/masu* speech and informal or slangy language in private scenes. Similarly, Cook (2008) argues that managing such a style in conversation shifts allows learners to socialize identities through language. Anime also highlights the gendered linguistic patterns, such as masculine particles (*yo, ze, ore*) and their feminine forms (*wa, atashi*), helping the viewers implicitly understand how Japanese indexes gender, identity, and intimacy.

Because anime characters frequently use greetings, interjections, and culturally rich terms, fans naturally absorb these expressions into their bilingual use. Carter's ethnographic study of "Gratuitous Japanese" shows that even casual anime viewers learn the gender address types, formal and informal and social norms through media exposures. Common phrases like *itadakimas* (before meals), *oyasumi* (good night), become familiar with the viewers and fans often post words like *kawaii* or *arigatou* in chats and conversations, mirroring the character's speech. These expressions act as indexical markers of fan identity (Okamoto, 1997), signalling belonging within the anime culture.

Anime fans also use Japanese terms playfully in code-mixing, and Stott (2006) noticed that English speakers sometimes use words like "sensei" or "baka" just to show solidarity and friendship with others who understand these references, which makes the conversations feel fun. Similarly, many fanfiction writers mix English with Japanese honorifics (-chan, -senpai, -sama) because it makes them feel more connected with the anime world that they love, and this can also be found in facebook group and Youtube channels names. This playful use of Japanese creates what Blommaert (2010) called fluid repertoires, in which words acquire new meanings in Bangla or English contexts.

Social media has made this trend stronger because online communities like Facebook groups, pages, TikTok, and Instagram handles serve as affinity spaces (Gardner, 2019) where honorifics and phrases circulate as memes. In Bangladesh, for instance, meme pages use "Notice Me, Senpai" or add -san to Bangali names to express a shared "weeb" identity, which Byram (1997) explains as a non-Japanese person who is obsessed with Japanese culture and expresses that passion through language. Meanwhile, watching anime again and again exposes learners to Japanese pragmatic and social norms and polite expressions, and through repetition, they

naturally learn when to use polite forms like *kudasai* (please) or *o-tsukaresama* (good work) (Duff, 2008).

Overall, anime works like an informal yet powerful pragmatic curriculum, exposing learners to politeness levels, honorifics, and culturally bound expressions without being in a formal classroom. Although some argue anime speech can be exaggerated, like Sevakis in 2016, researchers like Okamoto (1997) point out that even creative or “deviant” uses of honorifics carry social meaning that helps learners negotiate their identities and feel a sense of belonging within the community. These patterns of adapting Japanese expressions in playful or context-specific ways can be understood through Schumann’s Nativization Model (Schumann, 1986), which suggests that learners initially mimic native forms but gradually reshape them to fit their own social and cultural context. Additionally, the Acculturation Model (Schumann, 1986) highlights that learners’ engagement with Japanese language and culture, even indirectly through anime, facilitates language acquisition by fostering cultural awareness and alignment with the target community’s norms. Together, these models explain why Bangladeshi learners not only acquire vocabulary and phrases but also selectively adapt them into their bilingual practices, such as in social media interactions or fan communities.

2.5 Research Gap: Bangladeshi context

Despite the growing international research on incidental language acquisition via multimedia and anime (Shintaku, 2022; Karimah et al., 2019; Van Vu, 2025) there is little known about how these processes play out in Bangladesh. Most studies focus on learners in Japan (Demiyati et al., 2023), Indonesia (Karimah et al., 2019), Iran (Mousavi & Gholami, 2014), or

the Western context (Singer, 2022). Moreover, while some research has looked at the anime's role in vocabulary acquisition or motivation (Kilag et al., 2023; Karimah et al., 2019), few attention has been given to pragmatic features of this language such as collocations, Japanese honorifics, or speech-style variation in a bilingual/multilingual learner community. There is a clear lack of data on how these features are picked up through anime and then used informally, such as in social media or spontaneous speech, especially in code-mixed forms blending Japanese with Bangla or English.

In the Bangladeshi context, most researchers have focused on improving English through exposure to Western media (Rahman, 2023) but neglects how bilingual Japanese-English input influences wider linguistic practices, identity formation, and intercultural competence. For example, there is no systematic study of how Japanese honorifics, speech styles, and culturally loaded expressions from anime become embedded in Bangladeshi university students' social media interactions or everyday speech. Therefore, a research gap exists in understanding how anime functions not merely as entertainment but as an active and complex source of bilingual, bicultural expression among Bangladeshi youth.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Type

The research uses a mixed-method approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of how anime supports incidental language acquisition and cultural embedding. This design combines quantitative data for broader patterns and qualitative insights for the deeper data that makes sure that it aligns with Creswell and Plano Clark's (2018) convergent parallel mixed-methods strategy, where both strands are collected simultaneously and merged during analysis. The research also follows the ethical guidelines by taking informed consent from students and keeping their identities anonymous, which aligns with the standards of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018).

This method was best for this research because the goal is not only to count how many private university students in Bangladesh learn English or Japanese words, collocations (phrases), or cultural references from watching anime with subtitles, but also to understand why this happens, what attracts them to watch anime, and how they naturally mix the words and phrase in their daily conversations, like using Japanese words, phrases, honorifics, or cultural jokes along with English and Bangla. Also a mixed-methods design was necessary because RQ1 requires quantitative measurement of vocabulary and collocation acquisition patterns, while RQ2 requires qualitative exploration of honorifics, speech styles, and cultural references embedded in bilingual practices. Here the quantitative survey showed the big trends, such as how subtitles help in learning vocabulary or how often students use anime-influenced language, while the qualitative focus groups went deeper by letting students talk openly about their experiences, motivations, and the real-life reasons behind these habits. By combining these two methods, the

data got richer, clearer and more trustworthy, which would not have been possible, if only one method was used. The methods have helped to build a complete picture of how anime shapes the informal bilingual practices of these students.

3.2 Participants and Sampling Process

The target population for this study consists of private university students in Bangladesh aged between 19 and 28 years. Participants represented students from multiple private universities in Dhaka, across departments such as English, CSE, BBA, and EEE. This age group was selected because anime and manga are extremely popular among young students, especially those who are exposed to media and the internet across the country. Furthermore, with fast internet and streaming platforms, these students are the primary consumers of anime like *Naruto*, *One Piece*, *Attack on Titan* and *Jujutsu Kaisen* for a very long time.

For the quantitative phase of this study, convenience sampling (Creswell, 2014) was employed to recruit the participants. Eligibility was ensured through self-reported confirmation that participants were current university students and had prior exposure to anime. Participants filled the google survey form based on their accessibility and willingness which they got primarily through online platforms and social networks. This approach allowed them to reach the participants whose media consumption habits and language practices were directly relevant to the study. For the qualitative phase, purposive sampling (Creswell, 2014) was used to select focus group participants who regularly watched anime and could provide in-depth insights to the language usage and cultural engagement. This sampling strategy was appropriate as the study

aimed to explore the experiences of the individuals with substantial exposure to anime, aligning closely with the phenomena.

3.2.1 Participants Information

After completing the survey, participants who met the requirements of the study were mailed personally to have the focus group discussion. From the returned responses, 13 students were selected to ensure variation in exposure level, university, and gender. Here is detailed information about the participants with their pseudonyms.

Participant ID	Pseudonym	Age	Educational Background	Anime Habits (Duration)
Participant 1	Fariha	24	Undergraduate CSE student	17-18 Years: Started watching anime in 2007 or 2008; the first anime were Pokémon, and Doraemon.
Participant 2	Sadik	24	Undergraduate CSE	~18 Years: Started around 2007; the first anime was Doraemon.

Participant 3	Tamim	24	Undergraduate English	~19 Years: Started around 2006 (Age 5 or 6) with Dragon Ball Z.
Participant 4	Ifti	23	Undergraduate English	Since 5th Grade: Started reading manga first, then anime (Attack on Titan).
Participant 5	Nowshin	24	Undergraduate Media Studies and Journalism	~4 Years (Active): Started seriously in 2021 (Demon Slayer), watched Dragon Ball as a kid.
Participant 6	Proma	24	Undergraduate CSE	~9 Years: Started watching in 2016; the first anime was Tokyo Ghoul.
Participant 7	Shayan	22	Undergraduate management	~5 Years (Active): Started properly during the COVID pandemic (2020), though watched cartoons in Grade 1. Acquisition happened in his case the most.

Participant 8	Ayan	22	Undergraduate, Management	Unspecified Duration: Started at the time of the "Quota Reform Movement" via younger sister's suggestion.
Participant 9	Sanjida	23	Undergraduate BBA	Long-term (called herself the otaku queen) explicitly stated she is an "OG anime watcher" and has been watching since childhood.
Participant 10	Rahan	22	Undergraduate English	Since Class 4: Started around age 11 (approx. 2009); first anime was Kaichou wa Maid-sama!.
Participant 11	Muntasim	Not Stated	Undergraduate BBA	~5 Years: Started watching during COVID-19 (2020).
Participant 12	Shoikot	Not Stated	Undergraduate EEE	~15 Years: Started around 2010 via the channel "Animex".

Participant 13	Jyantu	Not Stated	Undergraduate EEE	Recent: Started recently after watching Dragon Ball reels on Facebook.
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Table 1: Participants Information

Description: Table 1 provides the details for the 13 focus group participants, including their Pseudonyms, Age, Educational Background, and Anime Habits (Duration).

3.3 Instruments

The two primary instruments used in this research are: 1. A structured survey and 2. semi-structured focus group discussions.

1. **Structured Survey (Quantitative):** This instrument was designed to find the research objectives and the questions, which included likert-scale questions, checklists, multiple choice questions and short questions about the students bilingual and incidental acquisition. It answered their frequency of anime consumption, self-perceived improvement in English and Japanese listening skills, and the recognition of high-frequency Japanese words (arigato, konnichiwa, kawaii) and collocations picked up through subtitles.
2. **Semi-Structured Focus Group Discussion (Qualitative):** This instrument was designed to explore the students' lived experiences, such as using Japanese honorifics in conversation or adopting cultural expressions like bowing down. The discussions

included 17 open ended questions, targeting to answer the research questions and fulfilling the objective. Probes were added to encourage personal stories and examples. The questions were translated in Bangla or were asked again in Bangla when the participants were facing difficulties to understand the questions. Each FGD lasted 32-86 minutes. Sessions were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim. The discussions followed a semi-structured protocol covering vocabulary exposure, honorific use, speech styles, and cultural influences. Triangulation was achieved by comparing survey-identified patterns such as vocabulary recall and honorific familiarity, with the thematic insights drawn from FGDs

Using both methods has increased the validity of the data and finding through triangulation (Denzin, 2017). Overall, the study is explanatory and descriptive, focusing on how anime is contributing to the informal learning of the students.

3.4 Data Collection

The data for this study were collected using two main instruments which are, a structured online survey and a series of semi-structured focus group discussions, that together made it possible to gather both broad numerical trends and more detailed personal experiences from anime-watching students. The online survey was created using Google Forms and remained open from November 15th to December 5th of 2025, during this time it was shared widely across anime communities such as different facebook groups, university networks, and friend circles so that it could reach students who actively watch anime. A total of 80 students from several private universities completed the survey, and their responses helped to identify the general patterns

related to vocabulary acquisition, recognition of collocations, and the use of Japanese expressions within bilingual communication.

Alongside the survey, four focus group discussions were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the student's experiences, and these discussions involved 13 participants (FGD 1 included 4 students, FGD 2, FGD 3 and FGD 4 all of them had 3 students per meetings) from four different private universities of Dhaka. Depending on the participants availability and comfort, some sessions were held in person while others took place online, over Google Meet, and each session followed a semi-structured question guide that allowed the conversation to remain open and flexible. This format encouraged the students to share real-life examples, discuss situations where they have used Japanese words, collocations or gestures, and reflect more personally on how anime influenced their language habits and cultural awareness.

Before each discussion, participants were clearly informed about the purpose of the research, assured that their identities would remain confidential, and asked for their consent, with informing them that they can choose to not answer any question if they are not comfortable, which helped to ensure that all ethical guidelines were properly followed. Together, the online survey and the focus group discussions helped to gather a well-balanced set of data that captured both the larger trends and the individual stories of anime-watching students in Bangladesh, which allowed the study to present a richer and more complete picture of their language practices.

3.5 Data Analysis Process

The study used a mixed-methods approach, where both the survey results and the focus group discussions were examined carefully so they could support each other and create a complete understanding of how anime influences vocabulary learning, collocations, honorifics, speech styles, and cultural practices. The quantitative data, collected through Google Forms was first exported into a Microsoft Excel sheet to organize the raw information systematically. Then using the Excel sheets, descriptive statistics were calculated, specifically the percentages and frequencies to identify big trends, such as how many students prefer subtitles over dubs or which Japanese words are most commonly recognized. This statistical analysis helped to create the charts and graphs in the Excel sheet that illustrate the general habits of the students.

For the qualitative data, all four focus group recordings were reviewed and the responses were coded manually using a thematic analysis approach. First, the conversations were transcribed then read several times and the repeated ideas, expressions, and examples shared by participants were manually pointed out in tables. These initial notes were then grouped into broader themes such as “vocabulary learned from repetition,” “collocations picked up from anime,” “use of honorifics in friend circles,” “imitating anime speech styles,” and “adopting cultural gestures”. By organizing the responses into themes, it became easier to understand how students described their experiences in their own words and how anime shaped their language habits beyond just recognizing isolated vocabulary. After both data sets were analyzed, the quantitative and qualitative findings were compared, combined, and interpreted side by side, following the convergent parallel mixed-method approach.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

The data analysis is organized around the two main research questions. 1. How anime contributes to the incidental acquisition of Japanese and English vocabulary and collocations and 2. How Japanese honorifics, speech styles and cultural references become embedded in the bilingual practices of Bangladeshi university students. This chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative findings derived from 80 survey responses and 13 focus group participants. The quantitative survey provided the data of recognition of Japanese culture, frequency of their usage of the Japanese words and phrases, and self-reported learning of the vocabulary, while semi-structured focus group discussion provided deeper understanding and exemplification. Throughout this chapter there are examples, as form of the quotations from the participants to illustrate emergent themes and link the findings to the theoretical frameworks. The quantitative patterns from survey data are supported by thematic interpretations from FGDs.

4.1 Anime Contributing in Incidental Acquisition of Japanese and English Vocabulary

Survey and semi-structure focus group discussion together show a very clear pattern which is, students pick up new Japanese and English vocabulary from anime almost without trying. This happens due to the hearing of the same word multiple times in different meaningful situations. For example, several participants mentioned using Japanese expressions in home or places where they feel comfortable. They use “Dattebayo” from Naruto, “Umai” (tasty) from Demon Slayer, “Sugoi”, “Itadakimasu”, “Kawaii”, “Yamete”, “Senpai”, “Sensei”, “Baka”, “Gomen ne”, more words and like these, exclaiming that “they are stuck in my head from anime”.

Most Frequently Recalled Japanese Words from Survey

Word/Phrase	Meaning	% Mentioning
Arigatou / Arigato	Thank you	64%
Kawaii	Cute	58%
Baka	Idiot	56%
Senpai	Senior	49%
Konnichiwa	Hello	45%
Yamete	Stop	41%
Sugoi	Amazing	39%
Onii-chan / Onee-chan	Older brother/sister	34%
Itadakimasu	Phrase before eating	29%
Nani?	What?	47%

Table 2: Most Frequently Recalled Words from Survey

Description: Table 2 lists the top 10 Japanese words or phrases incidentally acquired by students, their English Meaning, and the Percentage of participants mentioning them in the survey.

Across participants, 35-40 distinct Japanese lexical items were recalled, mostly from everyday expressions, greetings, and emotional interjections. These examples show how incidental vocabulary learning happens through repeated exposure in storylines and routines. As Karakaş and Sariçoban (2012) note, animated contexts give learners strong multimodal clues such as voice, situation, facial expression, visuals, as a result meaning becomes easy to guess and remember. Participants from focus group discussions like Sanjida, Shayan and Nowshin described how certain phrases such as *itadakimasu* (before eating) or *umai* (when something tastes good) moved directly from the screen into their own habits. Sanjida even pointed out that she now automatically says *itadakimasu* before every meal, even in a professional setting, stating that “because it feels natural after hearing it so many times in anime”. This fits well with Krashen’s Input Hypothesis (1985) which argues that learners acquire language when they receive comprehensible, interesting and repeated input. It also supports usage-based theories (Bybee, 2010; Tomasello, 2004, as cited in Pine, 2005), where high-frequency exposure leads to stronger mental entrenchment of forms. The incidental nature of vocabulary acquisition also appears to be closely related with intrinsic motivation. Participants consistently reported watching anime for enjoyment rather than for explicit learning purposes, indicating that language exposure occurs in a low-anxiety and self-driven environment

Students also picked up English vocabulary from subtitles. As most of the participants preferred Japanese audio with English subtitles, they frequently encountered natural, conversational English expressions. One of the participants said anime helped him notice idioms like “on top of the world”, “do your best”, “go for it” which they have never encountered before

in textbooks. Other participants stated that subtitles helped them understand how casual English sentences are formed which are also backed up by researches that shows subtitles help viewers notice new English vocabulary, collocations, and informal expressions in an enjoyable, and low affective filter surroundings (Peters, 2019; Webb & Nation, 2017; Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016).

Two more patterns can be seen consistently. First, the watchers mostly remembers the high frequency based, formulaic expressions such as simple greetings (konnichiwa, sayonara), emotional reactions (sugoi, baka, kawaii), gratitude forms (arigatou, bowing down) and honorifics related words (senpai, sensei). These words appear repeatedly across all anime genres as a result, the watchers hear them thousands of times. For example, Sanjida mentioned that she jokingly calls her friends and seniors senpai and uses sensei for her favourite teacher's contact number. Nowshin admitted that whenever she is annoyed at work, she quietly mutters "baka" under her breath because "no one else understands the meaning". These constant micro-uses show how deeply these items become embedded in the participants daily life. This also highlights a specific function of bilingual practice which is using Japanese as a "Secret code" for emotional venting

Second, there is a noticeable difference that can be seen in how deeply students internalize new vocabulary. Some only recognize the words when they hear them again, which is receptive knowledge. Other participants use the words and phrases in places where they feel comfortable, such as online communities, friend circles, fellow otakus and family/home, which is productive knowledge. Few participants mentioned using kawaii (cute, endearing, pretty) when complimenting their friends' pictures on social media, while few use the word sugoi (wow, incredible, amazing) under a post that they find interesting. This difference reflects Nation's (2001) and Hulstijn & Laufer's (2001) staged models of vocabulary learning, where

high-exposure but low-effort contexts encourage recognition first, and actual usage develops later if the learner finds the words meaningful or personally enjoyable.

The examples from survey and focus group discussions clearly shows that anime functions as a powerful source of incidental vocabulary acquisition. Students who watch anime are not consciously trying to study Japanese or English, yet through meaningful repetition, emotional scenes, humor, and visual context naturally support learning exactly like the conditions that research on incidental learning highlights as most effective.

4.2. Anime Contributing to the Incidental Acquisition of Japanese and English Collocations

The collected data from surveys and FGDs shows that anime not only helps learners pick up simple single words, but also helps to absorb full expressions and collocations which are the combination of few words that native speakers usually produce and use as ready-made chunks. Like in Bangla there is “Shuvo Shokal” (Good morning) or “Kemon Acho” (How are you), or “Onek Koshto” (So much pain). In English there is “make a mistake”, “have a shower”, “take a break”, “catch a cold”, “get a job”, “break a promise”, or “pay attention”. Similarly, in Japanese there is Ohayou gozaimasu (おはようございます) for Good morning, Arigatou gozaimasu (ありがとうございます) for thank you very much, Sumimasen (すみません) for excuse me, Gomen nasai (ごめんなさい) for I am sorry, and Onegai shimasu (お願いします) for please or if you would be so kind. When students watch anime on a regular or weekly basis, they begin to treat these multi-word expressions as one unit because they hear them again and again in emotional, humorous or dramatic contexts, which makes the language easy to remember.

4.2.1 Japanese collocations

Across the survey and FDGs students repeatedly mentioned Japanese expressions that appear in anime like catchphrases. For example, Arigatou gozaimasu (ありがとうございます) or thank you very much came frequently in the survey as one of the phrases learners remembered effortlessly as it appears in formal, respectful, and happy moments mostly in many shows, making it emotionally memorable. Many respondents also listed high-frequency greetings such as “Ohayou gozaimasu (おはようございます)” for good morning, “Sumimasen (すみません)” or excuse me, and “Gomen nasai (ごめんなさい)” or I am sorry, which they have encountered in different genres and began using naturally in their life. In the survey, 63% of respondents listed at least one multi-word phrase that they have learned from anime.

The focus group data adds more examples in this case. Instead of learning just single words like heart and dedicate they remembered the entire collocation “Shinzou wo Sasageyo” that stands for "Dedicate your hearts!" or "Offer your hearts!" from the Attack on Titan anime. One of the participants, Shayan explained how the delivery of the phrase by Commander Erwin made it unforgettable, phrasing it “Shinzou wo Sasageyo, the way he says it, you know, it just stays in your head” Because this phrase always appears in powerful motivational scenes, learners process it as a complete unit rather than separate words.

Food related collocations were also mentioned continuously. Multiple students repeatedly mentioned “Itadakimasu”, which is always said before eating in anime. Sanjida, for instance, shared that saying “Itadamimasu” has become such a habit that she sometimes says it automatically before meals, even outside anime-related contexts. This shows that learners are not

just memorizing the phrases, rather they also understand the cultural and situational rules attached to it, which reflects pragmatic competence.

Another participant added even more formulaic expressions such as “Ganbatte kudasai” and polite forms like “Onegaishimasu”, noting that these expressions make interactions “proper and perfect” showing how learners are internalizing the social meaning of collocations, not only their literal meaning. Similarly, “Daijoubu desu ka?” (Are you okay?) was widely recognized, mainly because the learner had heard it repeatedly across different shows.

It is evident that the collocations recalled by the participants fell into three main categories.

1. Polite expressions
2. Routine Daily Expressions
3. Emotional Expressions.

Altogether, these examples illustrate how anime presents Japanese collocations in ritualized, repeated scenes such as, greetings, emotional appeals, battle cries, or meal-time phrases, creating perfect conditions for incidental learning through frequency and context.

4.2.2 English Collocations

Through subtitles, learners of Japanese also pick up English collocations. Participants frequently come across natural English expressions because nearly all of them watch Japanese anime with English subtitles. For instance, one participant mentioned that they still remember the famous line from Madara Uchiha's scene, "Wake up to reality," which is one of the frequently used subtitles.

According to a number of focus group participants, subtitles made it easier for them to comprehend complete sentences as opposed to single words. Because certain emotional expressions like “calm down”, “do not give up”, “go, get it”, and “on top of the world” appear as translations for dramatic Japanese lines, Jyantu even mentioned that anime taught them how these expressions function in English.

Another participant said that reading the subtitles helped them understand how English sentences are naturally constructed, particularly conversational collocations like “take the responsibility”, “do not give up”, “hold yourself” and other phrases frequently used in action or sad scenes in anime.

A clear pattern can be noticed in both languages, students tend to remember phrases that carry emotional, cultural or narrative significance. Students do not learn the phrases like “Shinzou wo Sasageyo,” “Itadakimasu,” and “Yamete kudasai” by studying them formally. Instead, they learn them because anime shows them in meaningful situations with tone, gesture, and visuals in specific context and situation. Similarly collocations from English subtitles stay with learners because they are linked to important scenes and characters that they are emotionally attached with.

This finding supports the usage-based theory by Tomasello which argues that learners develop language competence through repeated exposure to meaningful, high-frequency chunks rather than memorizing the words alone. Anime naturally provides these types of chunks through its formulaic dialogue, expressions, emotional repetition, and consistent subtitle translation patterns. As a result learners pick up collocations in both Japanese and English without consciously trying to remember them.

4.3. Japanese Honorifics in Bilingual Practice

One of the most noticeable outcomes of anime exposure in this study is the way students start using Japanese honorifics, both in online and offline conversations, though they have never learned the forms formally. While not all of the participants use these forms in daily life, a significant portion reported that they naturally have picked up suffixes such as -san, -chan, -kun, specially senpai, and sensei from repeated exposure in anime. Many then started inserting these forms in Bangla-English conversations whenever the social situation or friendship circle made it feel appropriate. For example, one of the FGD participants, Sanjida mentioned that she uses senpai and sensei for her favourite seniors and teachers. They use it to save the contact numbers on their phones. Few even mentioned using the same honorifics in anime communities. Several participants like Proma, Nowshin and Ifti also mentioned playful uses of Onii-chan or Onee-chan, usually to tease friends or close seniors.

Honorific	% of Participants Who Use It
Senpai	49%
Sensei	38%
-san	21%
Onii-chan / Onee-chan	34%

Table 3: Honorific Usage Among Participants

Description: Table 3 lists the usage percentage for honorifics that the participants use.

These numbers show that a portion of learners are using these forms from anime into their real life communication, even if only in a playful way. Though the chart might not look much promising; however, almost every one of the participants did agree about bowing down a little when apologizing or saying thank you. Moreover, The high recall of senpai and sensei indicates that honorifics tied to social relationships and hierarchy were more easily internalised compared to more neutral forms like san

The students emphasized that they use honorifics mostly in circumstances where their interlocutors will understand them, such as anime clubs, group chats, gaming groups, or with close friends who also watch anime. Few individuals reported using honorifics around their parents or in formal public settings. That demonstrates that learners are context-sensitive, and that honorifics serve as flexible social aids rather than inflexible linguistic norms.

4.4. Speech Style

Anime also plays an important role in shaping how students understand and sometimes imitate Japanese speech styles. Because anime constantly shows characters shifting between polite forms (desu/masu), casual forms, rough masculine styles, soft feminine speech, and dramatic emotional tones, learners gradually become familiar with these expressions and styles simply through repeated exposure.

Several FDG participants explained that they now notice very clearly when a character switches between polite tone to casual tone even if they have not studied the language. Shayan said “I can understand that using *desu/masu* is more respectful”. He was not formally trained in Japanese, but through listening to the anime characters’ interaction over time, he developed an intuitive sense of when certain forms are appropriate.

Another participant, Tamim mentioned that, particularly when making jokes, they occasionally mimic informal endings or playful elements with friends. Proma, Nowshin and Ifti talked about stretching vowels in an exaggerated anime style to sound dramatic or humorous, or using sentence final tones like “hai”, “ne”, and “nai?”. Although these uses are not fully accurate Japanese, they show that students are developing awareness of how tones, expressions, and style work in interaction, even if their usage is more for fun than for communication.

4.4.1 Results from the Survey

68% of respondents claimed that anime had an impact on their emotional expression while 55% said they had unintentionally imitated intonation, gestures, or tones. Then Japanese-style interjections like “Ehhh?!”, “Nai?” were reported by 47% of respondents. 41% of respondents claimed to use anime-style facial expressions in online conversations like “Ara ara” or “Hai”. These percentages demonstrate how anime influences students’ vocabulary as well as their emotional speech patterns, reactions to situations, and expressions of surprise, amusement, or frustration. Participants also reported utilizing a variety of traits from anime they have developed organically.

4.4.2 Results from the FGDs

The collected data from the FGDs can be categorized into 5 sections.

Dramatic exclamations	Ehhhh, Kawaii, Sugoi?
Gentle or courteous phrases:	Sumimasen, Gomen
Exaggerated tones	Such as long vowels and high-pitched responses
Sound-symbolic expressions	Uwaaa, tsundere-like huffs, and Doki-Doki (heartbeat).
Emotional emphasis	Louder or more dramatic delivery mirroring anime characters

Table 4: Speech Style Characteristics Used by Students (FGD Results)

Description: Table 4 lists the characteristics reported in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) that are categorized in different themes such as dramatic exclamations, gentle phrases, and exaggerated tones.

The focus group participants have mentioned these characteristics as something they use frequently in playful, loving, or exuberant ways between friends who enjoy anime.

How These Speech Styles Are Used by Students:

It is clear from the FDG that the usage of Japanese speech-style depends on,

1. **Context-based:** Instead of using the Japanese speech styles with family or in formal settings, students typically use them with friends who are familiar with anime that makes the situation context based.
2. **Playful and expressive:** Students reported that they mimic tones or interjections, such as saying “yaaahh~” in jest or responding with “ehhh?!” in dramatic disbelief, primarily for amusement or camaraderie.
3. **Part of identity performance:** Using these characteristics indicates a person’s closeness to the community and identifies them as an anime fan. Because it fosters a common “anime vibe” in the space, a number of students said they like using anime tones.
4. **Prosody and emotion have an impact:** Students frequently expressed their admiration for the way anime characters exaggerate their voices when they are shocked, embarrassed, or excited, and they occasionally unintentionally mimic these patterns.
5. **Combining English and Bangla words:** Many students use multiple languages in a single sentence and anime has added a third layer to it, which blends Bangla-English speech with brief Japanese reactions. For instance:

“My heart went like Doki-Doki!”

“ehh, ki hoiche?” (ehh? What happened?)

“Sugoi, bro! This is crazy!”

These mixed expressions demonstrate how anime is extending bilingual practices into trilingual expressive behaviour, with Japanese contributing performative identity signals and emotional exposures. In general, anime encourages students to experiment with expressive tones and playful linguistic styles while raising their awareness of Japanese speech registers, emotional intonation, and politeness levels. However, it does not teach them full stylistic accuracy.

4.5 Cultural References

Anime does not just teach language; it also shapes how Bangladeshi students understand and perform Japanese culture, and the data shows that students are not only watching anime for fun but are quietly adopting gestures, habits, and even values that they repeatedly see on-screen. Through incidental learning, students have absorbed many cultural elements, which appear mainly in three areas: Japanese gestures and etiquette, food-related rituals, and the values or life philosophies shown in anime stories.

A distinct trend evident in both the survey and FDGs is that students frequently imitate gestures unintentionally with the survey revealing that 47% of participants confessed to copying gestures such as bowing. During the discussions, Fariha mentioned that she likes to use an understated bow rather than saying "hi" or offering salam and she stated, "I just spot them from a distance and give a gentle bow... for me offering salam or saying hi is simply a modest bow." The participants also mentioned that they recognize bowing mainly from anime scenes where characters apologize or greet others, and one participant said that they sometimes bow when saying "sorry" or "thank you," which creates a new type of bilingual body language where a Japanese gesture is mixed with Bangla or English speech.

Anime greatly impacts students' enthusiasm for cuisine and the survey reveals that 42.1% of respondents selected "food" as the top experience they wish to have in Japan. This fascination translates into practices when students adopt Japanese dining customs, particularly the expression *Itadakimasu* before meals. During discussions Sanjida referred to this as a "mood disorder" noting that she says *Itadakimasu* reflexively even at work or when dining alone as she feels a bond with the characters she views. Another participant, Shayan, said he uses the phrase with friends, and although it does not match their religious practices, it lets them share a cultural moment inspired by anime, showing how the phrase has become a friendly identity marker rather than a literal prayer.

Numerous participants explained how anime, the Shonen category influenced their perspectives on life, challenges and drive. Participant 2 referenced *Dragon Ball Z*, stating, "Power emerges from necessity not from want ". He further mentioned that anime encouraged him to trust that life goes on regardless of circumstances. Shayan also said that anime taught him to "hold his ground till the last breath," and he connects this message directly to dealing with university stress and career worries. These examples show that anime's "never give up" philosophy is not just entertainment but a real moral lesson that students use to guide themselves.

Moreover, hundreds of anime cosplaying programs are happening every year through different groups. Anime related shops and food stalls can be seen in shopping complexes. Few of the groups merge the Bangla culture with anime and try to make hybrid versions of entertainment. Anime movies are screened in the biggest cinema halls where famous food outlets like Chatime bring anime related foods or collaborate with them to promote. These incidents show how anime is making its way into the Bangladeshi people's life

4.6 Summary of Data Analysis

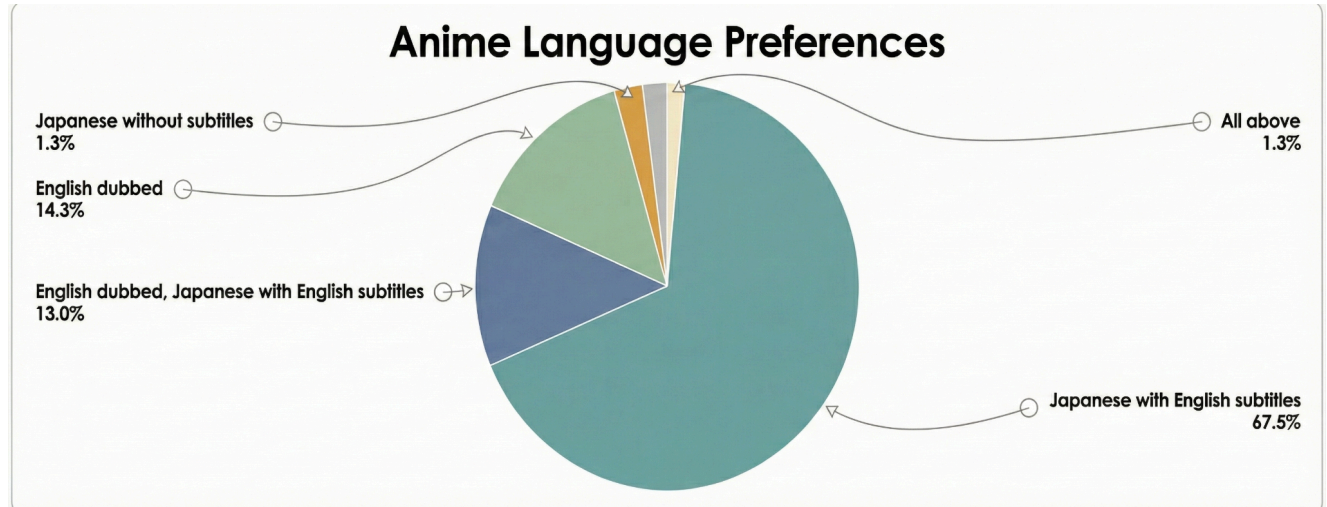
In conclusion, the survey and focus group results show that anime naturally helps students learn new Japanese and English words without any formal effort. As they watch their favorite shows, they repeatedly hear common vocabulary, greetings, and emotional expressions, which makes these phrases stay in their memory. Many students also pick up useful collocations and sentence patterns, often by listening to Japanese audio while following the English subtitles. The study also shows that this learning goes beyond language. Students start using Japanese honorifics like “senpai” and “sensei”, copying speech styles, and even adopting small cultural habits such as saying “Itadakimasu” before meals. These behaviors help them to express their identity as anime fans and bring a bit of the culture into their daily lives.

Chapter 5: Findings

This particular chapter includes and explains the findings of the study by combining all the data collected from the survey (80 responses) and the focus group discussions (4 groups, 13 participants). The findings are arranged according to research questions, and together they show how anime helps Bangladeshi university students learn Japanese and English vocabulary and collocations incidentally, and how it influences their use of Japanese honorifics, speech styles, and cultural expressions during bilingual communication.

5.1 Anime and incidental acquisition of Japanese and English Vocabulary

The pie chart is from the survey findings where participants talked about anime language preference.



Pie Chart 1: Language Settings Preference While Watching Anime

From the chart it can be seen that most of the students reported that they prefer watching anime in Japanese audio with English subtitles,, and the chart also portrays 67.5% chose this

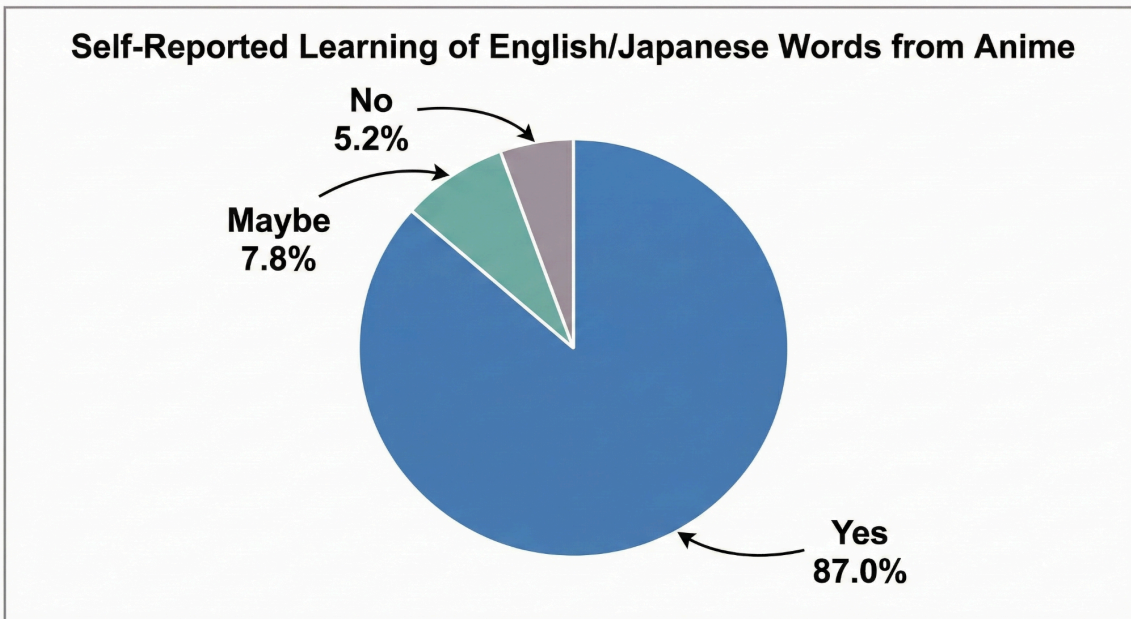
option, while 14.3% preferred English-dubbed versions solely, and the remaining participants switched between different modes depending on their comfort, availability or mood.

Reasons of preference

When asked the survey and FGD participants why they preferred this setting, across all the open ended responses, students repeatedly gave similar reasons, which are,

1. Authentic Japanese voice acting makes the emotional tone clearer. Sanjida even pointed out that “if you say “Ara-ara” in an English accent that won’t give you the same experience as the Japanese accent”.
2. Cultural immersion makes anime feel more original and expressive.
3. Comfort and habit because many have watched subtitled content since childhood.
4. Learning opportunity because the subtitles support learning Japanese and English together.
5. Faster release since subbed episodes come out earlier than dubbed ones.

Students consistently said that the original Japanese voices feel more expressive and meaningful according to them, and this preference naturally increases their exposure to Japanese vocabulary. Moreover, when asked if the participants learned any vocabulary from anime, around 87.0% said yes.



Pie chart 2: Learning of Japanese/English words from Anime

Participants were asked to give few examples of the words that they remember, and they recalled 300+ Japanese words and expressions, showing natural exposure to repeated vocabulary, which includes,

1. **Greetings and politeness expressions:** Konnichiwa, Ohayo, Arigatou, Sumimasen, Gomen nasai, Itadakimasu
2. **Casual daily expressions:** Nani, Baka, Kawaii, Sugoi, Daijoubu, Ganbatte, Yamete, Umai
3. **Anime-specific phrases:** Dattebayo, Tatakae, Getto da ze!

The collected words from the instruments can be categorized into 3 main categories.

Everyday expressions	55%
Emotional or interactional expressions	30%
Fandom catchphrases	15%

Table 5: Categorization of Recalled Japanese Words

Description: Table 5 categorizes the recalled Japanese words into Everyday expressions, Emotional expressions, and Fandom catchphrases.

These high recall percentages indicate that repeated exposure to frequently occurring Japanese expressions leads to strong incidental vocabulary retention, even without intentional learning.

5.2 Anime and Incidental Learning of Japanese and English Collocations

Students also remembered many multi-word expressions. Examples include:

Collocation	Meaning	% Mentioning (Survey)
Arigatou gozaimasu (ありがとうございます)	Thank you very much	64%
Ohayou gozaimasu (おはようございます)	Good morning	45%

Sumimasen (すみません)	Excuse me	~30%
Gomen nasai (ごめんなさい)	I am sorry	~32%
Itadakimasu (いただきます)	Said before eating	29%
Onegaishimasu (お願いします)	Please / Request politely	~22%
Daijoubu desu ka? (大丈夫ですか?)	Are you okay?	~18%
Ganbatte kudasai (頑張ってください)	Please do your best	~15%
Yamete kudasai (やめてください)	Please stop	41%
Shinzou wo Sasageyo (心臓を捧げよ)	Dedicate your hearts!	~8% (focus group discussion)

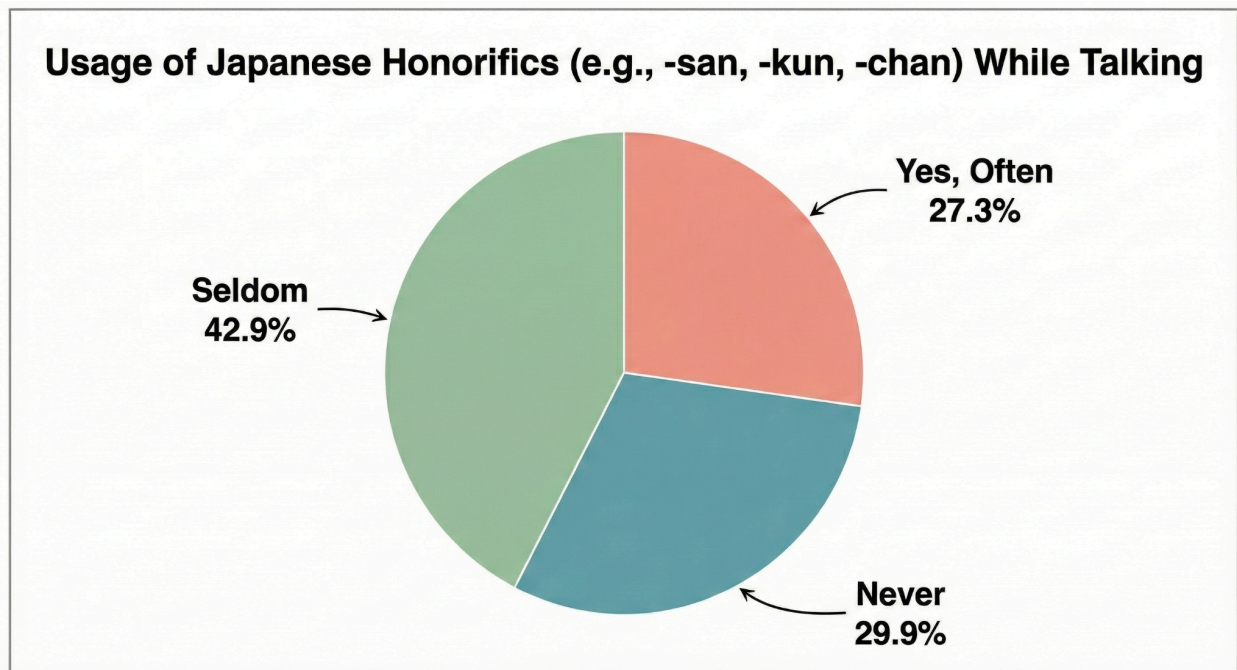
Table 6: Japanese Collocations and Acquisition Rate

Description: Table 6 lists various Japanese collocations, their meanings, and the percentage of survey participants who mentioned them.

The table shows the percentage of people using selected Japanese collocations. Even though the data collected few English collocations such as “on top of the world” or “do your best”, the results were far less than Japanese Collocations.

5.3 Use of Japanese Honorifics in Bilingual Practice

The pie chart is taken from the survey data that shows the usage of Japanese honorifics.



Pie Chart 3: Usage Frequency of Japanese Honorifics

From the chart it can be seen that about 40-45% use Japanese honorifics occasionally, mainly online or jokingly. The pie chart shows an almost equal split between those who use honorifics sometimes and those who do not use them at all. The FGDs show that Japanese honorifics are often used playfully rather than seriously, as they clash with local cultural norms in Bangladeshi context. For example, Shayan rarely employs honorifics in everyday life but occasionally calls close friends “senpai” for fun. Ayan and Sanjida jokingly refer to teachers as “sensei” with whom they are comfortable with, while Rahan avoids them altogether in formal communication. Muntasim finds terms like “chan” or “kun” too anime-inspired for real use, and

Shoikot sees them as markers of fandom identity, not daily speech. Jyantu reserves them for lighthearted chats where the references are mutually understood.

5.4 Speech Style and Cultural References

Anime influences how they express emotions	60%
Mimic gestures unconsciously	50%
Believes anime increases their cultural awareness.	70%

Table 7: Influence of Anime on Expression and Cultural Awareness

Description: Table 7 lists the survey findings on anime influence on emotional expression, mimicking gestures, and increased cultural awareness.

The table shows that anime has a visible influence on student's communication habits. 60% of the participants have mentioned that anime influences their way of expression, while 50% reported that they sometimes copy Japanese gestures without even realizing it. Additionally, 70% of the students believed that anime has increased their understanding of Japanese culture, which shows that anime plays a strong role in shaping their cultural perspectives. Several participants pointed out that Japanese politeness practices and emotional restraints are different from Bangladesh. For example, Fariha from FGD noted that "Bangladeshi people are not that polite like Japanese people" where Raiyan pointed out that in Japanese culture people usually

avoid using the first name and use the second name with -san, or chan, which differs from bangladeshi culture where the first name is mostly taken. Tamim added that copying the cute or overly sweet behavior seen in anime would feel awkward or “would be very embarrassing” in real life. Nowshin mentioned that she sometimes finds herself bowing slightly when apologizing. Priyoti talked about unintentionally copying anime-style reactions like saying “ehhhh?” in moments of surprise. While Rahan emphasized the importance of separating these stylized elements from actual Japanese culture. Muntasim, Shoikot, and Jyantu agreed that the exaggerated school life and heavily emotive expressions in anime don’t reflect the real society of Japan. The participants’ selective use of Japanese honorifics and culturally loaded expressions in online spaces reflects the Nativization Model, as they adapt these linguistic forms to their own social and cultural environments. Overall, the findings show that anime encourages cultural curiosity and awareness among students while also helping them distinguish between fictional portrayals and real-life Japanese culture.

Summary of Findings

Research Objective	Key Findings	
	Japanese	English
Vocabulary	Students remembered a large variety of Japanese words through repeated exposure, emotional scenes, and subtitle support.	They have also mentioned learning English words when watching anime in English dubbed or from the subtitles. However, they are less than Japanese words.
Collocations	Students learned multi-word expressions as single units because anime repeatedly uses them in meaningful contexts.	Few of the participants mentioned learning English collocations but the number of phrases are very less.

Honorifics	Honorifics are used symbolically and mostly for fun, not as part of serious communication.
Speech style & culture	Anime influences gestures, emotional expressions and cultural awareness, but students can distinguish exaggerated anime

	behavior from real Japanese culture.
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Table 8: The summary of the findings

Chapter 6: Limitation of the Research

Though the study provides a deep insight into how anime contributes to incidental bilingual practices among Bangladeshi university students, there are few limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the number of participants was few due to the shortage of time, where there are thousands of young people watching anime. Moreover this paper only focused on private university students. This limits a large number of students who are in public universities, schools, colleges and other educational sectors.

Second, the study relied on self-reported data from surveys and FGD. Because participants described their own learning habits and vocabulary recall, the results may include memory gaps, exaggerations, or personal bias. Some students may also have reported using Japanese expressions more (or less) frequently than they actually do in real life.

Third, only anime watchers were included, where there are people who watch Japanese dramas and other media. However, as they were not included in the study, it was not possible to compare their learning with students who do not watch anime, which makes it harder to know exactly how much anime alone has influenced vocabulary or cultural learning.

Fourth, the data could have been richer and more objective if a formal language proficiency test had been included, which was not feasible due to time constraints. Including such a test would have allowed for a more precise measurement of participants' vocabulary and language skills beyond self-reports.

Finally, anime often uses exaggerated or non-standard speech, which is also mentioned by the participants, so the language students pick up, sometimes may not match real-life Japanese or English, which limits how much the findings can be applied to real communication.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The study shows that Japanese anime has a strong influence on the informal bilingual practices of private university students in Bangladesh, because regular exposure to anime with English subtitles allows students to naturally learn new vocabulary (Japanese and English), collocations, honorifics, and different cultural expressions even though they are not studying these elements formally. More importantly, this influence is not universal, but is selective and domain-specific, which is affecting certain linguistic features more strongly than others. This confirms that watching anime actually does contribute to incidental language acquisition as learning occurs unintentionally while students watch anime for their enjoyment, emotional connection with the characters and their stories, and repeatedly hear the same words in emotional or meaningful scenes, that makes the vocabulary easier to remember and sometimes easier to even use in casual conversations.

The survey and focus group discussions clearly showed that most students learn high-frequency Japanese words because these expressions appear repeatedly in dramatic, humorous, or emotionally intense moments, which helps the students recall them naturally without consciously trying to memorize them. Students also reported that they learn English words and phrases from subtitles, especially expressions connected to important scenes. This suggests that incidental acquisition through anime is driven by frequency, repetition, and emotional resilience, rather than continuous study, which highlights anime as a meaningful site of informal language learning rather than a passive entertainment medium.

Beyond the vocabulary development, the study found that anime also affects the habits of the participants that includes their speech styles, and cultural awareness. Many students copy

small gestures like bowing when apologizing or saying thank you, while others use honorifics especially when interacting with friends who also watch anime. Though students have reported to use these honorifics playfully, however; their usage of these particular words shows that they do understand the social purpose behind the words and know when they are typically used in Japanese conversations. Many students also reported to copy the tone and emotional reactions they hear in anime often in their regular conversations. This shows that the influence of anime goes beyond only vocabulary development and extends to how the participants are embedding the Japanese pragmatic norms, and speech styles into their bilingual practices.

Another important point to be noted is that even though many students enjoy anime and love to identify themselves as “Otaku”, they can still separate exaggerated anime behaviors from real Japanese culture. They have agreed that anime introduces them to the culture of Japanese people, their idea about politeness, food habits, few work habits with certain values, but most of the participants also did admit that they realize that many things shown in anime are stylized or fictional for better entertainment. Despite that, it can not be denied that anime does spark their curiosity and make a way for deeper cultural interest about Japan, and encourage them to learn more about Japanese food, lifestyle, tradition, and most importantly the language.

Overall, the findings show that anime works as a strong tool for informal language learning because it helps the students to build vocabulary, pick up collocations, notice speech styles and become more aware of the cultural practices. Rather than replacing the formal language education, anime reshapes learners’ linguistic repertoires by expanding their exposure, confidence, and cultural awareness in low-pressure environments. While anime can not replace formal language classes, nevertheless, it does provide study exposure, repeated language input,

and genuine motivation, allowing the students to practice both English and Japanese in enjoyable and meaningful ways outside the formal, stressful classroom settings.

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Appendices

FDG questions

Part 1:

1. How old are you and which university and department are you from?
2. When did you first start watching anime? Can you remember what got you into it?
3. How often do you watch anime these days? Has your viewing habit changed over time?

Part 2: Anime and Language Learning (RQ1)

1. When you watch anime, what language setting do you usually prefer: English dub, subbed in English, or original Japanese with subtitles? Why that choice? What role do subtitles play for you?
2. Have you ever caught yourself saying a word or phrase in English or Japanese that you picked up from anime? What are your favorite examples?
3. Do you ever use anime-learned words or expressions when chatting with friends or online (for example, in memes, captions, or comments)?

Part 3: Culture and Identity through Anime (RQ2)

1. Do you use Japanese honorifics or words?
2. Do you feel using those words makes you part of an “anime community” or a special identity?
3. When you compare Japanese communication styles in anime with Bangladeshi ones, what stands out the most?
4. Do you think anime sometimes exaggerates how Japanese people talk or behave?

5. Have any Japanese expressions become a habit for you even outside anime conversations

Part 4: Personal Connection and Curiosity

1. Has anime ever made you curious to learn Japanese more seriously like taking a class or learning online?
2. If you had a chance to visit Japan, what would you most like to experience?
3. Do you think your interest in anime has changed the way you look at languages or cultures in general?
4. If you could describe how anime has influenced you in one sentence, what would you say?

Wrap-up Question

1. Anything funny, memorable, or unexpected you learned from anime that you still remember today?

Survey Questions:

1. Name
2. Age
3. Gender
4. Institution
5. Department
6. How many years have you been watching anime?
7. How often do you watch anime?

8. What language setting do you usually prefer while watching anime?
9. Why do you prefer watching in this setting?
10. Who introduced you to anime or inspired your interest in it?
11. Have you learned any English or Japanese words/phrases from anime?
12. How often do you notice new English or Japanese vocabulary while watching anime?
13. If you have learned any, please list a few Japanese words or phrases you remember
14. Select the option you most agree with or disagree with
 - a. I have learned new vocabulary through anime.
 - b. Subtitles help me understand both English and Japanese better.
 - c. Anime improves my listening and pronunciation skills.
 - d. I use anime-learned words in daily life or online.
 - e. I consciously try to learn language while watching anime.
15. Do you think your English (Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Listening) improved after watching anime regularly?
16. Have you ever used Japanese honorifics like -san, -kun, or -chan while talking?
17. What Japanese expressions do you or your friends mostly use?
18. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:
 - a. Using Japanese words makes me feel connected to anime culture.
 - b. Anime influences the way I express emotions or reactions.
 - c. I sometimes mimic Japanese gestures or expressions unconsciously.
 - d. I understand more about Japanese culture through anime.
 - e. Anime sometimes exaggerates Japanese behavior or language.
 - f. Have you ever dreamed of visiting Japan because of anime?

19. Have you ever thought about learning Japanese formally (through classes or self-study)?
20. What's the first thing you'd like to experience in Japan if you could visit?
21. In your opinion, how has anime influenced your language habits or cultural awareness overall?
22. If you could describe your relationship with anime in one line, what would it be?