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RESEARCH ARTICLE

REVISED Japanese sound-symbolic words in global contexts: from translation to hybridization [version 2; peer review: 2 approved]

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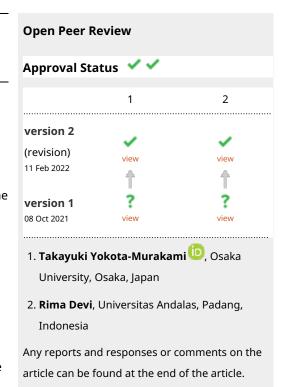Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Tsukuba, Tsukuba, Ibaraki, 3058571, Japan

Abstract

This paper explores the global reception and development of the artistic expression of onomatopoeia and mimetic words in modern and contemporary Japanese literary texts adopting the method of comparative literature. By analyzing sound-symbolic words and their translations in modern Japanese poetry and contemporary comics, the intercultural dialogues of these texts are examined and the emergence of hybrid onomatopoeia in global comic works is illuminated. The Japanese language is often noted for its richness of sound-symbolic words. In the literary world, modern poetry adopted and elaborated the use of these words from the late 19th century in its quest for a new style of poetry. In the early 20th century, poets developed the artistic expression of sound-symbolic words and succeeded in giving musicality to the "new-style poem". However, the translation of Japanese sound-symbolic words has always been problematic. Experimental uses of these words in modern poems were often untranslatable, making the translations incomprehensible or dull. Nevertheless, graphic narratives and their worldwide distribution changed that situation. Japanese comics (manga) has particularly developed the artistic expression of sound-symbolic words. Usually placed outside speech balloons, these words are elaborately depicted and are important elements of the panel/page layout. Notably, the global popularity of the genre developed a new phase of intercultural dialogue. As not every word has an equivalent or is translatable in the target language, translators have left sound-symbolic words untouched in the translated versions, putting translation aside. Thus, the combination of Japanese and the target language seems to influence the visual comprehension of sound effects among the readers. Through the examinations of some cases, this paper brings to light the emergence of some hybrid onomatopoeia and reveals that the "Third Space" formed by the translation and hybridization of manga is a dynamic field that creates a new culture.

Keywords

Sound-symbolic words, Modern Japanese poetry, Manga (Japanese comics), Translation, Hybridization, "Third Space"

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REVISED   **Amendments from Version 1**

Based on the reviewer's comments, additions and revisions have been made to the text regarding the following: the difference between characteristics of sound-symbolic words in modern Japanese poetry and those words in manga, the discussion on the hybridization of sound- symbolic words in the case studies, and the necessity and issues for future research.

There are no updated figures, tables, author lists, or additional data.

Any further responses from the reviewers can be found at the end of the article

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Introduction

Onomatopoeia and mimetic words have always colored our languages and literature. The Japanese language is often noted for its richness of these sound-symbolic words, and has around 4,500 of them (Ono, 2007). Sound-symbolic words are usually classified into three or five groups (Iwasaki, 2013: 69; Kindaichi, 1978: 5–8; Shibatani, 2006: 154) as follows:

1. Phonomimes (onomatopoeia)

   ➤ Animate phonomime (*giseigo*)

   voice-mimicking words: words that mimic sounds made by living things

   ➤ Inanimate phonomime (*giongo*)

   sound-mimicking words: words that mimic sounds made by inanimate objects

2. Phenomimes (mimetic words)

   ➤ Animate phenomime (*gitaigo*)

   manner-mimicking words for living things

   ➤ Inanimate phenomime (*giyōgo*)

   condition-mimicking words for inanimate objects

3. Psychomimes

   ➤ Psychological/physiological-state-mimicking words (*gijōgo*)

However, writers of the late twentieth century have not always appreciated this abundance of sound-symbolic words in the Japanese language. For instance, Yukio Mishima criticizes the use of onomatopoeia in fiction:

> Onomatopoeia brings daily conversation to life and gives it expressive power, but at the same time it typifies expression and makes it vulgar. (...) You will still find an onomatopoeia of laughter in popular literature, such as "All right, ha-ha…," but everyone would be aware of the childishness of this technique.
> (Mishima, 1995: 140–141)

Another Japanese writer, Saiichi Maruya, takes a more neutral position, yet he also admits "the childishness" of sound-symbolic words[1]:

> Japanese language is abundant with these phonomimes and phenomimes. If you abuse them, you will give an impression of being childish, whereas it would be cold and hollow if you reject them strictly. (Maruya, 1977: 221)

This paper explores the artistic expression of onomatopoeia and mimetic words in Japanese literary texts. Although the stigma that renowned writers have placed on the use of sound-symbolic words has influenced Japanese fiction in the 20th century,[2] modern Japanese poetry has cultivated such use of sound-symbolic words with a completely different attitude. Moreover, by considering sound-symbolic words in contemporary comics, this paper also reveals the contribution of sound-symbolic words to intercultural dialogue.

Regarding Japanese comics in global contexts, the polysystem theory developed by Itamar Even-Zohar has contributed to deepening the debate on this issue (Rampant, 2010; Sell, 2011). As for the sound-symbolic words transcending language and culture, the discussion of the "Third Space" in recent translation studies also has great implications. Homi Bhabha argues that translation, as "the performative aspect of cultural communication" (Bhabha, 2004: 326), creates a "Third Space", a boundary point where cultures collide and mix. Referring to Bhabha's theories, especially those of "hybridity" and "in-between", Michaela Wolf draws translation out of the bilingual problem into a different phase:

> If we consider the *Third Space* as the potential and starting point for interventionist translation strategies, we realize that such strategies go far beyond the traditional concepts of "original" and "translation", and the old dichotomy of "foreignizing" versus "domesticating" in all its implications. These strategies imply a shift toward the centre, where cultures encounter each other, and where meanings are effectively "remixed" (as shown in the example of *liget*). The place where cultures overlap and *hybridity* comes into being can already be considered as the locus of translation. This implies that culture is already itself translation. (Wolf, 2000: 141)

From this perspective, translation "no longer bridges a gap between two different cultures but becomes a strategy of intervention through which newness comes into the world, where

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[1] Valero Garcés (2008) introduces the argument of Michaela Schnetzer that "the use of onomatopoeia is associated with genres (e.g. comic books, cartoons, children's literature) that are still considered by a large sector of the general public as not 'serious' enough to be the subject of academic research."

[2] Notably, when Banana Yoshimoto made a striking debut in the 1980s, her style with abundant sound-symbolic words was undervalued by many critiques as "girls'-comic-like style." (Hara, 2012:53)

cultures are remixed" (Simon, 2000: 21). Adopting this point of view, this paper examines the intercultural dialogues of modern Japanese poetry and contemporary comics analyzing sound-symbolic words in these texts through translation, and argues for the emergence of some hybrid onomatopoeias in global comic works.

This study adopts the method of comparative literature, aiming to strike a balance between descriptive and interpretive case study approaches. The former approach implies historical and empirical knowledge, while the latter seeks to develop conceptual categories through close reading of the texts and to interpret the data. The paper, which is a series of case studies, does not allow us to draw any corpus-based conclusions, but it does allow us to identify the characteristics of each case and how it acquires meaning in different contexts. The data is extracted from published books, not from the first version published in magazines or other sources, except for the case of Indonesia, where several comic magazines have been published as a forum for the publication of original works.

"Poem" and "Song": The quest for musicality in modern poetry

Let us briefly review the quest for a new style of poetry in modern Japan. Since Japan opened its ports to Western countries in the 1860s, the Japanese had been immensely impressed with and influenced by Western culture. Japan's modernization was, as is often pointed out (e.g., Miyoshi, 1972), a cultural westernization. Art and literature played important roles in this process, sometimes prompting modifications and reconstructions of cultural memories, such can be seen in Japanese customs and the gap between the written and spoken languages. In the field of poetry, a movement to create a new form of Japanese poetry, abandoning the conventional Japanese formulas (5-7-5-7-7 and 5-7-5 syllable meters) and the Chinese-style, emerged under the influence of European literature. *Shintaishishō* (A Selection of Poems in the New Style), which sought to include some ideological and abstract content, incorporating stanzaic forms, rhymes and refrains, was published in August 1882. Translators who published translations of European poems also contributed to the development of shintaishi (new-style poem) as a new form of poetry.

It is worth noting that a fusion of poetry and western music was pursued in the process. Shūji Izawa introduced *Shōka,* a new word for song, to primary schools as an attempt to incorporate Western sounds into education. The three volumes of the *Shōgaku shōka shū* (Elementary School Shōka Collection) were published from 1881 to 1884, in which lyrics suitable to "cultivate virtue (Izawa)" (Tokyo University of the Arts and Centennial History Editorial Committee, 1987: 116) were put to the melody of hymns.

First Be Fragrant
1. Be fragrant, fragrant. Cherry tree of the garden.

2. Stop, rest. Firefly on wild flowers.

3. Wave, bend. Eulalia in the field.

4. Cry, fly. Plover at the shallows. (lyrics by Chikai Inagaki)

As the first song of the collection's first volume depicts the four seasons, its lyrics "incorporated plenty of poetic imagery of post-*Man'yōshū* (Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves) nature and human affairs in the Japanese islands" (Haga, 2002: 28). The lyrics follow the 2/4 time of the melody: ka/o/re/e, ni/o/e/e, so/no/u/no, sa/ku/ra/a.

In 1894, Tomoki Owada evaluated *A Selection of Poems in the New Style* and *Elementary School Shōka Collection*, stating that the former "pioneered the development of new-style poetry" (Santo, 2008: 150). He appreciated this work because it "tried to engender so-called *Poemu (poem)* in plain and simple words", while the *Elementary School Shōka Collection* "was a model of so-called *Songu (song)* with lyrics often antiquated and old-fashioned". Soon after this evaluation, *shōka* began to function as a device for "national education". Bimyō Yamada was a poet who devoted his life to create *shōka* in the movement to unify the written and spoken styles of Japanese. His most popular *shōka* turned out to be a military song called *Teki ha ikuman* (Tens of Thousands of Enemies, 1891), with the melody composed by a professor at Tokyo Music Academy. Meanwhile, *Omokage* (Vestiges, 1889), an anthology of translated poems by Ogai Mori, among others, greatly influenced the literary world. The literati who absorbed Western culture through this anthology soon began to consider "music and poetry as an art" and tried to pursue the musicality of modern poetry. In a letter to his brother on November 29, 1894, Chogyū Takayama shared that in a concert he attended at Ueno Music Academy, where "piano, violin, *shōka*, military songs, sword dance, etc." were played and performed, he was impressed with an art song called *Autumn Breeze* with lyrics by Bimyō Yamada:

> Until today I thought that the *shōka* was a boring thing, but when I heard this, I realized that *shōka* could be a refined and elegant genre compared to Japanese music. (Takayama, 1933: 58)

It seems that his preference toward "refined and elegant" songs, which meant songs composed to good poems, influenced the literary world. We can see the continuance of this inclination in the 20th century, in a popular novel serialized in *Yomiuri Newspaper* in 1905: Fūyo Oguri's *Seishun* (Youth). The novel starts with a recitation of a new-style poem, written by the main character, Kin'ya Seki. Praised highly by his friends, the poem was put to music and performed in a concert, which became a great success. Through the hero of this popular work of fiction depicted as a "new intellectual man", we see that new-style poets at the time longed to have a song composed to one of their poems.

Modern poetry and onomatopoeia
Let us now look at modern poets in this context. The movement to create a new form of Japanese poetry was also a quest for the prose poem, discarding or reorganizing the traditional

7-5 syllable meter. The reorganization of the 7-5 syllable meter was practiced by the early translators of European poems. Here is the first stanza of Paul Verlaine's poem, "Chanson d'automne (Autumn's Song, 1867)" and the Japanese version translated by Bin Ueda in 1905:

Les sanglots longs	Aki no hi no
Des violons	Violon no
De l'automne	Tameiki no
Blessent mon cœur	Mi ni shimite
D'une langueur	Hitaburu ni
Monotone.	Uraganashi. (Verlaine, 1962: 72, Ueda, 1978: 75)

Although Ueda's version is an adaptation rather than a translation, the rhythm of the poem is vivid in Japanese, using the repetition of a five syllabic meter. This version has been appreciated as a perfect example of "excellent translation" in the 20th century, with Donald Keene remarking: "But how much superior his Japanese version is to the English one!" (Keene, 1984: 227).

As a poet of keen senses, Hakushū Kitahara also applied his ingenuity to develop the sound and rhythm of his poems, adopting the meter of *Imayō* and *Kouta*. His first poem put to music was "*Sora ni Makka na* (In the Sky, Deep Red)" from his first collection *Jashūmon* (Heretical Faith) published in 1909.

In the sky, deep red are the clouds.	Sora ni makka na kumo no iro.
In my glass, deep red is the whiskey,	Hari ni makka na sake no iro.
Why do I feel so sad?	Nande kono mi ga kanashikaro.
In the sky, deep red are the clouds.	Sora ni makka na kumo no iro.

(Translated by Margaret Benton Fukasawa, 1993: 36–37, Kitahara, 1984:29)

It is said that the members of "Pan Society" had chorused this poem to the melody of *Rappa Bushi* (Trumpet Tune) that was prevalent in the streets at the time (Nakamura, 1993: 96). Notably, the first music that Kitahara adopted for his poem was a popular song. The repetition of the beat 3, 4 and 5 in the rhythm of *Imayō*—an ancient verse form consisting of four lines each divided into two parts of seven and five syllables—convinces us that Kitahara was a poet interested in "singing poetry" from the beginning.

Combining poetry and music, he made use of sound-symbolic words. Kitahara tried the artistic expression of sound-symbolic words in *Heretical Faith* and developed them in his later works, as a result of the achievement of musicality in poetry. In the poem "Sake to Tabako ni (With Wine and Cigarette)", he uses three mimetic words effectively—*uttori* (enchanted), *ukiuki* (happily excited), and *shikushiku* (whimper)—making the best use of the repetition of the 7-5 syllable meter. These mimetic words not only made it easier to keep the 7-5 syllable meter, but also gave the poems a lively rhythm

and a sense of visual dynamism through the use of hiragana script.[3] Kitahara was a pioneer in using sound-symbolic words in his poems.

However, the translation of sound-symbolic words has always been problematic, as the number and use of sound-symbolic words varies from language to language, and in many cases it is not possible to translate verbatim. Eugene Nida pointed out that in some languages "onomatopoeic expressions are considered equivalent to slang", whereas they are "not only highly developed, but are regarded as essential and becoming in any type of discourse" (Nida, 2003: 169). Lafcadio Hearn translated some parody poems from *Kyōka Hyaku Monogatari* (A Parodic Poetry on Japanese Ghosts and Goblins), edited by Rōjin Tenmei (Old Tenmei) and published in 1853, as "Goblin Poetry" in *The Romance of the Milky Way and Other Studies and Story* (1905). He chose one poem with a peculiar onomatopoeia:

> Tsuka-no-ma ni
>
> Hari we tsutawaru,
>
> Rokuro-Kubi
>
> Kéta-kéta warau—
>
> Kao no kowasa yo!
>
> Swiftly gliding along the roof-beam (and among the props of the roof), the Rokuro-Kubi laughs with the sound of "Kéta-kéta" —oh! the fearfulness of her face! (Hearn, 1905: 71)

The laughing sound of the long-neck goblin, Rokuro-Kubi, is not translated. Instead of translating the onomatopoeia, Hearn writes in the footnote: "'*Kéta*' means a cross-beam, but *Kéta-kéta warau* means to chuckle or laugh in a mocking way. Ghosts are said to laugh with the sound of Kéta-kéta".

The translators of modern Japanese poetry have often followed Hearn's way. Donald Keene translated Sakutarō Hagiwara's "Neko (Cats, 1917)" as follows:

> Two jet-black cats
>
> On a melancholy night roof:
>
> From the tips of their taut tails
>
> A threadlike crescent moon hangs hazily.
>
> "*Owaa*, good evening."
>
> "*Owaa*, good evening."
>
> "*Owaaa*, the master of this house is sick." (Keene, 1984: 268–269)

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[3] The Japanese writing system is a combination of the logographic kanji (Chinese characters) and the syllabic kana (hiragana and katakana). Katakana used to be the script for foreign words, loanwords, and onomatopoeia.

Here, two cats meowing is the transliteration of the Japanese sound. Although Keene points out that "Hagiwara experimented with the musical values of the colloquial and of onomatopoeia" (Keene, 1984:267, he does not mention that this "*Owaa*" is not a common Japanese onomatopoeia for a cat meowing. Moreover, he misses the second last sentence of the poem, "*Ogyaa, ogyaa, ogyaa,*" another strange sound for a cat.[4] It is questionable if English readers understand the quality of this poem. Although translators' efforts have always been enormous, experimental uses of sound-symbolic words by modern Japanese poets have often been untranslatable, making the translations incomprehensible or dull. Here is another example:

Circus (translated by Noriko Thunman)

There were several eras
There was a brown war

There were several eras
In winter the gales blew

There were several eras
A brief flourishing—here, tonight
A brief flourishing—here, tonight

The high rafters of the circus tent
    There, one swing
Not one you'd notice, a swing

With head upside down and hands hanging
    Below the dirty cotton roof
Yuaan, Yuyoon, Yuyayuyon.

And nearby, a white flame
    Exhaling sharply like a cheap ribbon

The spectators are all sardines
    Their throats whistle like the shells of oysters
Yuaan, Yuyoon, Yuyayuyon

    Outside it's pitch black, the darkness of darkness
    The long, long night deepens and deepens
    Along with the nostalgia of the guy
    with the parachute and
    Yuaan, Yuyoon, Yuyayuyon (Thunman, 1983: 75–76)

Chūya Nakahara's poem, "Circus", was written in 1929 and published in his anthology *Yagi no uta* (Goat Songs, 1934). In addition to the poet's particular attention to sentence layout (the translation follows the arrangement of the original), this poem is well-known for its experimental use of the phenomime "*Yuaan Yuyoon Yuyayuyon*", a word coined by the poet which mimics the swinging trapeze. Tōru Kitagawa points out the importance of this mimetic word:

The image of the trapeze, swaying back and forth with the onomatopoeia "*yuaan, yuyoon, yuyayuyon*" under

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[4] "*Ogyaa*" is usually used as an onomatopoeia for a baby's cry.

the dirty canvas of the tent, symbolizes the upset or crisis of Nakahara's obstructed self-consciousness. This intense onomatopoeia moves in response to the swaying of an insecure feeling, rather than arousing the nostalgia. (Kitagawa, 1968:86)

It should be noted that the typography of the sound-symbolic words is also important in this case. Using the hiragana script ゆあーん　ゆよーん　ゆやゆよん, the poet depicts the stretching body of thee flying trapeze performer. It is not only the sound that matters here: the script type, the shape, and the visual effect are also very important. Unfortunately, the transliteration is not able to convey this information. The Roman transcription "*yuaan, yuyoon, yuyayuyon*" might be seen as a strange enumeration of sound. Consequently, another translator, Christian Nagle, adopted a more target-oriented sound-symbolic wording in a 2013 version: "*see saw see and saw*".

Circus (translated by Christian Nagle)

for a number of eras
    there was a brown war

for a number of eras
a gale blew in winter

for a number of eras
here tonight a drinking party
here tonight a drinking party

there is a high beam in the circus tent
    just one trapeze
an invisible trapeze

under soiled canvas of the big top
  head down arms dangling
see saw see and saw

close to which white light
    exhales the words "cheap ribbon"

the audience are a bunch of sardines
throats gurgle oyster shells
see saw see and saw

outside is dark dark on dark
night waning forever
with nostalgia for the damned parachutes
 see saw see and saw   (Nakahara, 2013)

The eloquence of sound-symbolic words in manga
Perhaps the genre that best utilizes the visual appearance of sound-symbolic words in texts is comics. Onomatopoeia and mimetic words have always been a significant element of comics and graphic novels, because we read them as sound effects. As *Ka-Boom!: A Dictionary of Comic Book Words, Symbols & Onomatopoeia* (Taylor, 2007) shows, the comics genre has coined many new sound-symbolic words.

Japanese comics, or manga, have particularly developed the artistic expression of sound-symbolic words. Usually placed outside speech balloons, these words are depicted elaborately though varying shapes, sizes, and texture. Manga artists have always tried to figure out ways of expressing onomatopoeia and mimetic words; a phenomime which represents "silence" was even invented in the 1950s (Tezuka, 1977: 108). Fusanosuke Natsume coined a word *on'yu* for the rich sound-symbolic words in manga, and states as follows:

> As a result of diverse inventions and conversions, the ono-matopoeia and its group in the manga actually even exceed the category of onomatopoeia—*phonomimes/phenomimes/psychomimes*— contributing to the "multi-layering" and "differentiation" of manga's vocabulary. (Natsume, 1995:127)

Sound-symbolic words are considered one of the distinguishing features of manga. Figure 1 is from *Naruto*, Masashi Kishimoto's blockbuster work. In this scene, the protagonist (Naruto) succeeds in his mission to ring the bell during a training session at the Ninja School, catching the instructor from behind. It is notable that the biggest space in this two-page spread panel is spared for the onomatopoeia *ga!*, the grabbing sound. Hinata (1986: 57) compares onomatopoeia in manga to sound

effects in movies. Fukuma (1993: 190) points out that the "the size and font of hand-written onomatopoeia visually explain the volume of a sound, or the speed of an action". The strong presence of sound-symbolic words in the panel expresses the energy of this scene.

Although hiragana and katakana have been the main writing devices used for the sound-symbolic words in manga, the modern English alphabet has also been used. While the use of Roman letters is not common in major Japanese manga compared to the cases in other countries, discussed by Valero Garcés (2008), we can find the ingenuity of some Japanese artists in words such as "BOMB!" (the sound of an explosion in English) in Akira Toriyama's Dr. *Slump* (1981), or "FLOAT," "BOOOM," and "BOOO" in Kōhei Horikoshi's *Boku no Hero Academia* (My Hero Academia, 2015). Furthermore, the sound-symbolic words in manga have created characters that were not originally possible. Yōji Yamaguchi points out the expressions of vowels with two dots (voicing mark) are popular in manga (Yamaguchi, 2014). From the perspective of comparison with poetry, the following points are notable in this genre: In comics, the visual effect is the first thing to be considered. For this reason, Nakahara's ingenious use of the form of the letters to create an impression on the reader, as he did in "Circus", can be seen everywhere. On the other hand, Kitahara's

Figure 1. Masashi Kishimoto, *Naruto*, vol. 1 (2000). ©2000 Masashi Kishimoto/Shūeisha. This figure has been reproduced with permission from Shueisha.

sensitivity to sound seems to have been lost in the sound-symbolic words of manga. Unlike poetry, manga is not intended to be read aloud or recited. However, the choice of which "sound" to use for onomatopoeia, or the sound in psychomimes, deserves further consideration.

Notably, the global popularity of the genre by digital diffusion[5] developed a new phase of intercultural dialogues surrounding these words. It is easy to imagine that the translation of sound-symbolic words in manga can pose problems. However, various ways of translating have emerged, depending on target language and/or culture, or the policy of the publishers (Jüngst, 2008; Schodt, 2016: 7; Sell, 2011: 99–101). This paper hypothesizes that there are three ways thereof:

1. Translation of all sound-symbolic words

2. Preservation of the original expression and putting translation aside

3. Leaving Japanese original sound-symbolic words untranslated, without any explanation

Among the collected examples analyzed for this paper, the first method seems to be the most common in English translations. French translations tend to adopt the second method,[6] while the third method seems to apply with Chinese translations. However, further analysis and discussion is needed.[7]

Early examples from the last decade of the twentieth century show translators had found a way to translate phonomimes by changing their size, shape, font, and color. They often coined words as well. Heike E. Jüngst observes an intriguing case in German translation of Sadamoto and Gainax's *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (1999) and states: "The use of onomatopoeia in translation can be very creative" (Jüngst, 2008). The translation of phonomimes was more difficult. Translators belabored to devise methods, as they sometimes could not find an equivalent word in the target language. James Rampant conducted an analysis of the English translation of Rumiko Takahashi's *Ranma 1/2* published in 1993 by Viz Media, where the pages were mirrored to change the reading direction from right-to-left into left-to-right, and the translators (Gerald Jones and Matt Thorn were credited for "adaptation") sometimes changed or omitted the mimetic words. He pointed out that some phonomimes "have been translated with completely new

dialogue, *expansion*, which is an example of the adaptation process that takes place in the production of the translation" (Rampant, 2010: 225).

For psychomimes, explanations are often added instead of translated. Previous studies have clarified that *shōjo* manga (a manga subgenre for girls) have made "discoveries of the inner self" (Otsuka, 1994) and have used multiple layers of language for elaborate psychological descriptions (Natsume, 1995; Otsuka, 1994; Yoshimoto, 2009). We can also find all the elaborated psychomimes to explain the characters' feelings in this genre. In Karuho Shiina's *Kimi ni Todoke* volume 1 (Hope it Reaches You, 2006), the emotional chemistry of the silent heroine is often told through phenomimes and psychomimes. As she is not good at expressing her emotions, Sawako, the heroine, often stares at someone with a blank expression or is moved by someone in secret. *Ji,* the phenomime for her stare, and *jiin*, the psychomime for being moved, are used repeatedly (Shiina, 2006). In the English version *Kimi ni Todoke: From Me to You* (2009), *ji* turns to STARE (Shiina, 2009: 14, 40, 129, 130, 131), and *jiin* is changed to SO HAPPY (ibid: 17) or to OVERWHELMED (ibid.: 17, 77, 120, 122, 124, 156, 165). In the French version *Sawako* (2010), *ji* is translated to REGARD FIXE (fixed gaze, Shiina, 2010: 14, 40, 129, 130, 131), while *jiin* turns to ÉMOTION (ibid.:17, 77) for the first two cases and ÉMUE (moved) for the rest (ibid.: 120, 122, 124, 156,165).

It is also worth noting here the cases of transliteration.[8] In the French version of Gōshō Aoyama's *Meitantei Conan* (Detective Conan; English version title is *Case Closed*) volume 61 (2010), many sound-symbolic words are transliterated: *ban*, a banging on the desk turns to BAM (Aoyama, 2010: 7); *bin*, the sound of stretching a string is VIM (ibid.: 17); a rupture tone *pon* is POM (ibid.: 27). The sound of a door opening is expressed in several different ways. Translator Misato Raillard translates the bigger sound *gacha* to CLAC and the smaller sound *cha* to TCHAC (ibid.: 123). The transliteration of the sound of a house burning in a fire, *goooo* (ibid.: 80) and *dong* (ibid.: 96), the sound of heavy objects being put down, is also interesting. Although these transliterations are not always adopted, we can find similar cases in other works.[9] Moreover, French translations adopt the strategy to fit both the Japanese original text and the translation in the same panel. Japanese language learners may find this juxtaposition appealing.

Challenges of global comics: The emergence of hybrid sound-symbolic words

This combination of Japanese writings (especially hiragana and katakana), sound, and the target language seems to influence the visual comprehension of sound effects among readers worldwide. The global influence of Japanese manga has grown considerably in the last decades of the 20th century. There are currently many manga-styled comic works in various

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[5] See Robin E. Brenner (2007) *Understanding Manga and Anime*, Westport: Greenwood Publishing, Federico Zanettin (ed.) (2008) *Comics in Translation*, London: Routledge, Toni Johnson-Woods (ed.) (2010) *Manga: An Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspectives*, New York: Continuum. This situation has given rise to the important topic of "scanlation," but for reasons of space, this paper will not deal with this subject.

[6] Celotti (2008) observes a case of French translation of an Italian comic, where the onomatopoeia "is left unchanged".

[7] At this point, we have only analyzed a few cases and cannot determine if there are any differences due to language or culture. We are planning to proceed the research with more extensive data collection and analysis.

[8] Regardless of the subgenre (boys or girls, etc.), many translations in French have adopted this strategy.

[9] In *Sawako*, door-opening sound *gacha* turns to GATCHAK.

countries,[10] both in the form of magazines and books. In these works, we find some remarkable representations of sound-symbolic words, and some use Japanese sound-symbolic words. For example, Luca Molinaro and Giorgio Battisti juxtapose Japanese and Italian sound-symbolic words in their original Italian manga[11] (Molinaro & Battisti, 2018). Loanwords and their derivations are also impressive. Sell (2011) pointed out the use of OHOHO, a feminine haughty laugh common in Japanese fiction, in *Hollow Field* (2007–2009), a work created by an Australian artist, Madeline Rosca (Sell, 2011: 99–100). Let us explore these cases in more detail. *Odd Thomas* is a thriller novel series written by Dean Koontz, first published in the United States in 2003. The series is about a 21-year-old short-order cook named Odd Thomas, who has the power to see the lingering dead. Following the success of the novels, three graphic novels and a movie have been released. The first graphic novel, *In Odd We Trust* (2008) was a collaborative work of Koontz and Queenie Chan, an Australian based manga-style comic book artist. In this work, we see some sound-symbolic words in Japanese: PU, to show Odd is blowing out (Koontz & Chan, 2008: 7, Figure 2), and SHU, the sound of cooking (ibid.: 12, Figure 3). Another noteworthy aspect of the use of these onomatopoeias is the way they are drawn. The addition of prolonged sound marks, which indicates a long vowel of two morae in length in Japanese, and the vertical writing are characteristic of the manga style. It is important to note that these expressions are acceptable to readers of the *Odd* series, who may not be particularly fans of Japanese manga.

Jenny's *Pink Diary* was first published in 2005 as *shōjo*-manga styled BD in France, with the story set in Japan. The series won the 14th Anime & Manga Grand Prix of *Animeland* magazine, in the category "Best manga-styled BD" (Olivier, 2007). In volume 2 of this series, the sound of the classroom door opening is represented as CTHAC! (Jenny, 2006: 8, 15). This could be a derivative onomatopoeia of TCHAC as observed earlier. The volume shows another notable onomatopoeia: KIIYAAH (ibid.: 41, 72, 100) for a women's scream, which reminds us of *Kyaa,* a common phonomime for women's scream in Japanese. These examples anticipate the emergence of hybrid sound-symbolic words in the genre.

This hybridity of sound-symbolic words is also notable in Indonesia. Indonesia has a long history of comic works, and the influence of Japanese anime and manga on these works has grown in the late 20th century (Surajaya, 2010: 245). Manga-styled comic works in particular have developed in the country, with several magazines publishing original manga regularly.

Kyaa, the phonomime for a girl's scream which was used in the aforementioned *Pink Diary*, is often seen in Indonesian comics in the form of KYAA, or KYAAA (Fauziyyah & Kurniawan, 2017: 63; Kartika, 2016: 50; Nisfihani, 2015: 42). Furthermore, we can also find a different usage of *kyaa*, as a phenomime expressing a woman being happy and talkative, in Indonesia (Viyanriri, 2017: 123; Zulvikar, 2016: 113).

Another interesting example is the onomatopoeic word HIKS. Annisa Nisfihani is an artist who became popular with her work *Me vs. Big Slacker Baby*, which depicts the delicate sensibilities of teenage girls in *shōjo*-manga style. Nisfihani colors her work with abundant phenomimes and psychomimes which are typical of Japanese girls' comics. In chapter 6 of this work, published in 2016, we can see in the onomatopoeia HIKS HIKS to show a girl crying (Figure 4). This seems to be influenced by Japanese onomatopoeia *hick hick*, which usually depicts a child or female crying uncontrollably. What is noteworthy here is that HIKS seems popular in recent manga-styled Indonesian comics[12] despite it being non-existent in Indonesian onomatopoeia. Thus, HIKS can be considered a hybrid onomatopoeia emerging from the comic genre in Indonesia.

To understand the common usage of HIKS in this genre, we should consider the influence of the translation. Eriko Ono's *Kocchi Muite! Miiko* (Look at Me! Miiko, 1995) has become one of the most popular manga for Indonesian girls through its animation series. The Indonesian translation of Ono's manga was first published in 2002, and its long-lasting popularity led to the artist visiting Jakarta for a "meet and greet" event in 2013.[13] The Indonesian version, translated by Widya Anggaraeni Winarya, has some interesting features concerning the sound-symbolic words. Winarya uses some fixed forms of onomatopoeia and mimetic words borrowed from or similar to Japanese, including HIKS. In the two scenes where a girl cries, the onomatopoeia HIKS is used in both cases (Ono, 2002: 103, 125). However, the original Japanese does not use *hik* in any of the scenes: rather, one scene uses *gusu* (Ono, 1995: 103), a mimetic word describing crying and sniffling, and the other uses *jiwa* (Ono, 1995: 125), a phenomime used to describe when tears start to flow. It seems the translator chose HIKS as a fixed onomatopoeia for a crying girl. Another case is the sound of the wind. In this volume, the cold wind in winter is expressed HYUUU (Ono, 2002: 151, 161, 162, 165). Although *Hyu* is actually a Japanese phenomime for the wind, the sounds *byu* (Ono, 1995: 151)*, byooo* (Ono, ibid.: 161)*, byuu* (Ono, ibid.: 162, 165) are used in the original. These choices made by translators may have been the foundation for the creation and the diffusion of hybrid sound-symbolic words in Indonesian original comics. Furthermore, it is possible that the way sounds are heard in each language is also a criterion in deciding which onomatopoeic words to use. We do not have the space to

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[10] There are terms for the genre, such as "Original Non-Japanese Manga (ONJ manga)", (Sell, 2011: 94), and "pseudomanga" (Jüngst, 2008).

[11] The series is published in the category "manga."

[12] We've found the use of "hiks" in Anisah Fauziyyah and Adhi Kurniawan, The Witness Mirrors (2017:46), Gladys E (Gladys Elisabeth), My Dear Janitor (2017: 75), Thoma & Herrad (Thoma Prayoga and Herrad Syafrian), The Story about My Father (2017: 159, 169), and Archie the Redcat, Mulih (2017: 23).

[13] *Chao*, October 2013, p.104. https://www.antaranews.com/tag/hai-miiko

Figure 2. Dean Koontz and Queenie Chan, *In Odd We Trust* (2008) p.7. Illustration © 2008 Queenie Chan / Del Rey Books. These figures have been reproduced with permission from Queenie Chan.

discuss this point in this paper, though we would like to conduct further research on it, as well as on how much onomatopoeias such as HIKS have the potential to spread not only to manga readers but also to the general public.
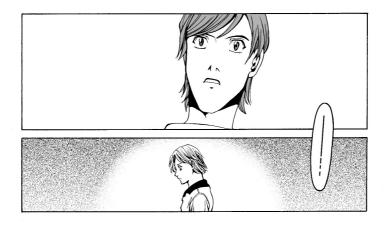
Figure 3. Dean Koontz and Queenie Chan, *In Odd We Trust* (2008) p.12. Illustration © 2008 Queenie Chan / Del Rey Books. These figures have been reproduced with permission from Queenie Chan.

The hybridization of the appearance of sound-symbolic words is also evident. In Hiro Nurhadi's *Ankala,* which was serialized in an Indonesian bi-monthly manga magazine, *Shonen Fight*, from 2015 to 2016,[14] the artist uses a distinctive font for the sound-symbolic words (Nurhadi, 2015: 222–245). The font reflects katakana-inspired fonts, such as Tokyosoft created by Shrine of Isis in 1998, or Electroharmonix published by Ray Larabie in 2015. The technique of using stylistic

fonts to design pages has also been adopted by French artist Tony Valente, in volume 8 of *Radiant* (2017).

Conclusion

Although Yukio Mishima denounced the use of onomatopoeia as a "childish technique" in the 1950s, modern Japanese texts have persistently developed the utilization of sound-symbolic words. Modern poetry played a leading role in this as poets in the early 20th century attempted to create new-style poetry. The pursuit of musicality in modern poetry inspired poets' artistic use of onomatopoeia and mimetic words. Mixing the scripts and sometimes inventing new sound-symbolic words, they succeeded in giving the new-styled poem a fresh rhythm and visual effect. However, the translation of Japanese

[14] In the course of this research, we learned that Mr. Hiro Nurhadi passed away on May 11, 2016. We will miss this young talent and pray for the repose of Mr. Nurhadi's soul.

Figure 4. Annisa Nisfihati, *Me vs. Big Slacker Baby*, chapter 6 (2016) p. 33. © 2016 Annisa Nisfihani/re:ON Comics. This figure has been reproduced with permission from re:ON Comics.

sound-symbolic words has always posed a challenge as experimental uses of these words in modern poems were often difficult to translate.

It was graphic narratives and their worldwide distribution that broke through that situation. In this genre, we recognize sound-symbolic words not only as sound effects but also part of the picture, an element inseparable from the story. This recognition invites the reader to take an interest in Japanese sound-symbolic words, and the ingenuity and challenges of the translators are widely appreciated with diffusion through the readership. The parallel notation of Japanese and target languages in the translation of sound-symbolic words deserves special mention. This method has influenced the visual comprehension of phonomime, phenomime, and psychomime among readers worldwide, and created novel expressions; hybrid sound-symbolic words. The cases of emerging hybrid onomatopoeia and mimetic words analyzed and discussed in this paper

clarified this process, pointing to the growing importance of sound-symbolic words in the genre, depicted in a variety of ways in comics around the world. They also reveal that the "Third Space" formed by translation and hybridization of manga is indeed a dynamic field that creates a new culture. It is worth examining these words in the genre as they continue to evolve, and we can expect more stimulating examples. We would like to shed more light on the reality of hybridization of the sound-symbolic words with further research and deeper reflection, taking into account the politics of the "third space".

Data availability

All data underlying the results are available as part of the article and no additional source data are required.

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Version 2

Reviewer Report 18 February 2022

https://doi.org/10.5256/f1000research.121137.r123350

✓ **Rima Devi**

Universitas Andalas, Padang, Indonesia

This article has been revised to become unified writing following the rules of scientific writing. The conclusion is following the data presented; namely, there has been hybridization in onomatopoeic translation from Japanese manga into the target language. The third space mentioned in this article is described as a hypothesis. The author can use the hypothesis as a research statement for further research.

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Literature, Japanese literature, and Japanese Language Education.

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Reviewer Report 14 February 2022

https://doi.org/10.5256/f1000research.121137.r123349

✓ **Takayuki Yokota-Murakami** (iD)

Graduate School of Language and Culture, Osaka University, Osaka, Japan

The revised manuscript highly successfully mends the shortcomings that the reviewer pointed out. It now connects the first part on the nature of onomatopoeia, the second part on their use in modern Japanese poetry, the third section on the relationship between onomatopoeia and the Western music (as introduced to modern Japan) and the final part treating the significance of

onomatopoeia in world comics logically and theoretically. The textual evidence that the author discovered him/herself were also largely added; the initial impression that the paper relies too heavily on preceding researches, giving a few new angles to the phenomenon has now proved to be misled. And the author has given a fully developed conclusion to confer the entire paper theoretical consistency. The manuscript deserves to be indexed.

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Comparative literature; Japanese popular culture

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Version 1

Reviewer Report 17 November 2021

https://doi.org/10.5256/f1000research.59131.r96578

?

Rima Devi
Universitas Andalas, Padang, Indonesia

In general, this article is interesting because it explains how the translator attempts to translate Japanese into the target language. The translation conveys messages from the source language to the target language: "Communicative translation is social, concentrates on the message and the main force of the text, tends to under-translate, to be simple, clear and brief, and is always written in a natural and resourceful style" (Newmark, 1988: 47-48). There will always be words from the source language that have no equivalent in the target language. Translators try to convey messages from the target language even by removing, adding, or creating new vocabulary in the target language. This translation process makes translators of literary works considered as creators of new works in the target language. In translating poetry and song lyrics, the creation of new words is considered normal because the authors of poetry and song lyrics have been accepted in society as a group that violates standard grammar rules. It can be seen in the poems of Shakespeare (English poet) and Khairil Anwar (Indonesian poet).

With the creation of new vocabulary by translators when translating the manga into Indonesian, for example, it cannot simply be said that there has been hybridization in translation. New vocabulary is created because there are no equivalent words for onomatopoeic and mimetic words in Indonesian. Meanwhile, in Japanese, there are many onomatopoeic and mimetic words.

The hybridization proposed by Bhabha (2004) occurred because of colonialization, and the colonized were marginalized and had no place to actualize themselves. Hybridity refers to the

creation of new transcultural that exist within the confluence area resulting from colonization: "One of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in postcolonial theory, hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. As used in horticulture, the term refers to the cross-breeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third, 'hybrid' species" (Ashcroft et al., 2013: 135-136). Meanwhile, in the translation from Japanese to Indonesian, has colonialization caused this translation? This matter needs further discussion.

It is too early to conclude that there has been hybridity in manga translation. More accurate data are needed to prove whether hybridization has occurred, and there needs to be adequate evidence and analysis that the third space is a means to publish translated works such as manga.

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Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?

Yes

Is the study design appropriate and is the work technically sound?

Yes

Are sufficient details of methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?

Partly

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?

Yes

Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full reproducibility?

Partly

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results?

Partly

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Literature, Japanese literature, and Japanese Language Education.

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard, however I have significant reservations, as outlined above.

Author Response 09 Feb 2022

Noriko Hiraishi, University of Tsukuba, Tsukuba, Japan

Thank you for your valuable comments. I will send you the revised manuscript.

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Report 10 November 2021

https://doi.org/10.5256/f1000research.59131.r96576

? **Takayuki Yokota-Murakami** (iD)

Graduate School of Language and Culture, Osaka University, Osaka, Japan

The paper gives an interesting account of the onomatopoeia in Japanese literature and comics and their significance in the instancing of "the Third Space" in the global world culture (in the case of comics). The author attempts to locate the problems with the contemporary theoretical framework, at the same time giving analyses of many intriguing cases in which onomatopoeia are negotiated and "translated" in the comic media. The paper deserves to be indexed, but for the shortcomings listed below, it needs extensive revision.

The shortcomings of the paper, to my view, are as follows:

1. The paper consists of three sections: a theoretical introduction to the problems of onomatopoeia in Japanese; their historical trajectory in the Japanese modern poetry (mostly from the Meiji period); and the analyses of "translational" use of onomatopoeia in the translation of Japanese manga in the global market. However, the connection among those sections is quite weak. The author mentions in the conclusion that translation of Japanese manga has demonstrated the creative and translational potential of onomatopoeia which was suggested by the poetic experiments in the modern Japanese literature, but the historical trajectory of such a development is not described, that is to say, the connection between them remains purely theoretical. But as the theoretical analyses of onomatopoeia remains under-developed and largely haphazard (for instance, the distinction among the various kinds of onomatopoeia in the linguistical study in the first section is almost neglected in the third section), readers might question the necessity of the first and the second sections. The concept of "musicality" presented in the second section is not fully fledged either (and the readers wonder why the concept has to be brought out).

2. The third section gives interesting and more or less convincing arguments on the various strategies of translating onomatopoeia in world comics. However, whether they constitute, as the author claims, "the Third Space" (which I might term "translational zone" following Emily Apter[1]) remains somewhat polemical. One might wonder if the cases given are those of adaptation or influence rather than the emergence of "the Third Space."

3. The case analyses given in the third section, quite stimulating though they are, are mostly

taken from the existing previous researches. The author should present more of their own research results.

4. Finally, occasional grammatical and stylistic errors such as "proceed (promote?) the research" (endnote 7).

References
1. Apter E: The Translational Zone: A New Comparative Literature. *Princeton: Princeton University Press*. 2006.

Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?
Yes

Is the study design appropriate and is the work technically sound?
Yes

Are sufficient details of methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?
Partly

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?
Not applicable

Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full reproducibility?
Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results?
Partly

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Comparative literature; Japanese popular culture

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard, however I have significant reservations, as outlined above.

Author Response 08 Feb 2022
Noriko Hiraishi, University of Tsukuba, Tsukuba, Japan

Thank you very much for your very useful comments.

I will keep your comments in mind for future work and will further deepen my research. Most of the case studies in the third section are the results of the author's own research, not the results of previous studies. I would appreciate your understanding on this point.

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