



HOW TO UNDERSTAND AND TRANSLATE JAPANESE EXPRESSIONS IN MANGA

Eli Ningsih
elIningsih@pasim.ac.id

PASIM - Nasional University
Bandung – Indonesia

ABSTRACT

The paper presents a research about Japanese expressions in manga as one of the sources of translation study from Japanese into Indonesian language. The difficulty in doing translations of various types of Japanese expressions in the Manga has been one of the background of research interest. The used Methodology in this research is Qualitative - Content Analysis. The result of the study shows that Manga has the level of syntactic and textual macro-level, which suggests general principles for presenting information via units such as sentence structure, i.e. syntax and combination of sentences into texts as well as pragmatic and contextual , and socio –cultural norms prevailing in the language. Examples taken from the Manga “Garasu no Kamen” (The Glass Mask) , are quoted in the analysis for each level of vocabulary learning. The objective of the research to explore a further alternative medium of translation study in advancing the Japanese education in Indonesia.

Keyword : Manga, Japanese expression, syntactic, pragmatic

I. INTRODUCTION

Manga (Japanese comics) to be one of the material in translation study has been done for a few years recently worldwide. It is parallel with the booming of Japanese cultural penetration spreading widely in all the ways including the reading materials, movies , anime, etc. Through my recent research on *Manga* (Japanese comics) , it was identified that *Manga* (Japanese comics) has its own characteristics as a medium. *Manga* distinguish from comics which are meant primarily for children . Underway a “graphic novels” , *Manga* draws attention to how this *communication* form engages Readers, specifically through iconic characters with whom a Reader can identify, environments that pull the Reader in, creation of a sense of refuge and silence by *using successive panels* to survey a whole scene, subjective motion, real world anchors, use of archetypes, and especially , through sophisticated issues of universal concerns.[1] Comics comprise pictorial and other images juxtaposed in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer. [2]



Reading *Manga* requires an active participation on the part of the Reader since parts of the story are omitted between the panels. Many *Manga* Reader construct their own “story arcs” about what happened “behind the scenes”. To what extent does communication in popular culture such as *Manga* able to give the influence the process of language learning ? *Manga* and anime in Indonesia tell us about some Japanese social factors ; home, community, occupation, school, religious meeting, radio, television, and other cultural matters. *Manga* contributes in language learning process by telling us about the *changing* meanings of culture. *Manga* are made so emotionally involved in both the form and content. Therefore, the attitudes and values associated with these uses in *Manga* become critical because those for whom and for what kind of context base words or expression are in . *Manga* has plenty of wording and language variations that may give a chance for the learner to learn a lot and apply it properly across the time and place.

Research on the efficient and effective Japanese learning is unquestionably exploding. Despite this situation, in Indonesia the study on effective Japanese learning particularly in vocabulary learning more emphasize in linguistics text book, which in focuses on the structures of languages, as for sociolinguistics, which is concerned with the ways in which people use language to accomplish various purposes is rarely included in foreign-language curricula in general and in Japanese – language program in particular, seldom in graduate programs, and to my knowledge, rarely in undergraduate programs. And *Manga* (Japanese comics) , comics or *Manga* as a major subject to enrich the vocabulary learning medium is still left behind. This is a regreatable aftereffect of the misleading information that comics are only for the entertainment and fun purposes, without value for scientific or practical purposes or application.

Expressions of language commonly identified as a word both in single and group words. In Single Word, the categories clearly were divided into dependent word (particle, adverb, conjunction,etc.) and independed word (noun,verb,adjective, etc).[3] Therefore, the approaching of Japanese expressions learning could be through the characteristics its “*dependency or independency*” (word category) with connection to interlink word each other. As the common notion about vocabulary learning is not only a matter of memorizing word by word but able to adopt it in social-context respectively. Furthermore, the term Japanese expressions learning is not separated from the theory of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) which in turn derived from theories of First language Acquisition (FLA) . In a longitudinal studies on developmental progression of FLA , there are four broad stages of development; (a) the first stage is characterized by a standard word order, irrespective of whether or not this is the word order of the target language structure; (b) in the second stage is variant word order, in this stage the Learner expands his propositions to include all or most of the constituents required, and also begins to vary the word order of utterances in accordance with the word order patterns of the target language; (c) in the third



stage, grammatically morphemes begin to be used systematically and meaningfully; (d) in the fourth stage, consists of the acquisition of complex sentence structures . Throughout the four stages, The Learner also acquires and uses unanalysed units to release the grammatical elements for use in creative speech. This may fuel the process of grammatical development. It should be emphasized that these stages are not clear cut, but rather blend into each other.[4] The best internalization of Japanese expressions comes from encounters (comprehension or production) with words within the context of surrounding discourse. Data from linguistic corpora can provide real-world actual language that has been printed or spoken. Rather than isolating words and/or focusing on dictionary definitions, learners can benefit from attending to vocabulary within a communicative framework in which items appear. Learner will then associate new words with a meaningful context to which they apply. [5] As a medium of language acquisition development progression stages , *Manga* able to be viewing in the structural perspective , and others emphasis in the perspective of function. Following a functional line of reasoning, namely that language is there to be used in texts (spoken or written), which are determined by a specific context, those are in the level of syntactic and textual macro-level, which suggests general principles for presenting information via units such as sentence structure, i.e. syntax and combination of sentences into texts .[6]

II. METHODOLOGY

The study were designed as a narrative – descriptive with qualitative – content analysis as the research approach. The aim using qualitative – content analysis is to delineate and explain units of analysis, step models, working with categories, validity and reliability. Procedure of Qualitative-Content Analysis was fundamented by quantitative content-analysis for a qualitative oriented procedure of text interpretation. [7]

A.Data, Data collecting, and Data Interpretation

Main data source are taken randomly as sampling from volume 1 of the comics series “*Garasu no Kamen*”(Glass Masks). [8] . The comics is categorized as lovely – teenagers genre comics. The reason of using *Manga “Garasu no Kamen”* because of the exclusivity of this *manga*. My first idea for the study was a self-analysis when I was reading the *manga* and collected problems I found hard to understand and memorize it, and then I grouped it into some categories which I would then analyze to find out what I would need to improve on.

STEP OF DATA INTERPRETATION :

- a) Reading the material twice , in order to know the story ;
- b) Conscientiously looking for things that might become vocabulary problems, and taking notes of them ;
- c) Collecting the vocabulary/expressions problems as they appeared;



- d) Re-noting and reducing data , when finding several problems that in the previous had not being noticed before were re-noted, and then something that in the previous were thought as problems but actually were not being omitted;
- e) Problems collected during the reading comprehension, were recorded, catagorized and managed by excell – data processor .Below the sample of data categorization;

III. RESULTS

Adapting the Qualitative – Content Analysis procedures , systematically the problems and its analysis formulated as follows :

Table 1: Translation units and problems categorized

Unit of Text	Text Category	Amount of unit (%)
Macro Level (syntactic and textual)	1) ellipsis sentences	1)113(22.9%)
	2) linguistical ambiguity in sencent	2)4(0.008%)
	3) interjection in sentence	3)62((12.57%)
	4) adverb in sentence	4)44(8.9%)
	5) conjunction in sentence	5)23(4.66%)
	6) final mood particle (postpositions) in sentence	6)85(17.24%)
	7) vernacular language	7)123(24.94%)
	8) register language	8)18(3.65%)
	9) gender related issues language	9)21(4.25%)
		493 (100%)

Each text categories detected has own techniques and methods to be understood depends on the situation and context encountered.

IV. DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of doing reading comprehension analysis by its units problems was to be more pedagogical purposes and to be more step-by-step interpretation to have an easier understanding.

Syntactic and Textual Level (Macro Level) :

- **Vocabulary in ellipsis sentence** : In fact, what may be expressed semantically or lexically in one language may be expressed via



grammar or syntax, by the use of inflected forms, for instance, or by the arrangement of words within phrases, clauses and sentences. The syntactic arrangement yields meaning relations on its own. Japanese and Indonesian language exhibit important differences in their way of presenting information within sentences and linking it across sentences. For example あきれたこんな時までまだ編み物を ... (Vol.1) *Akireta konna toki made mada amimono o.* (*she was not give up, still continuing doing knitting...*). This is the sample of Sentence ellipsis in Japanese. To understand the vocabulary “*akireta*” in this sentence have to be referred to the whole of sentence. This sentence in Indonesian language is sentence fragments, because they don't have subject – that is, they do not say who is doing the action, or what is being described or identified- and a native Indonesian speaker who spoke this way would rather silly, in Japanese, though, sentence like these sound perfectly normal. It often sounds quite unnatural to include the subject when it is already obvious from what came before in the conversation, or simply from the situations.[9] Another sample is ちわ！注文の年こそば...*chiwa*, *chuumon no to toshikoshi soba* (*Good afternoon ! new year eve noodle delivery coming !*).

- **Vocabulary in Sentence with Linguistical ambiguity** : もうけいこがはじまてるわよ ! *mou keiko ga hajimateru wa yo* (*exercise just starting ...*). Linguistically feature in comics speech seems to be more flexible はじまてる (*hajimateru..*) was composed grammatically loose ; Another sample ちさな声だぜ...*chisana koe daze* (*so low voice...*). The word “chisana” seems to be ambigu.
- **Interjection in sentence** : Interjections often occur at the beginning of a sentence, and they can telegraph a great deal about the speaker's frame of mind and where the sentence is going for example なんだ、あの人だ。 *Nanda*, *ano hito da* (*What a matter with that guy?*). The speaker said “nanda, ano hito da..” can be used either she wondered like “eagerness” or feeling “unhappy” with the action somebody. In real life, much of what an interjection conveys is in the speaker's tone and inflection, so you can often get an instant feel for what the word means even if it's your first encounter. In a comic book, where you can't hear the speaker's voice, you have to rely on the rest of the sentence and the context to help you get a feel for the word's usage and tone; another example だって...ほら例の子,,, 適役テストがあるんだろ *datte..hora rei no ko... tekiyaku tesuto ga aru n daro* (*there is an actress audience, isn't it?*).
- **Adverb in sentence** : A specific type of semantic coherence relation to the one created in the first sentence of a sentence pair by an argumentative marker such as in following examples ベス役として



適役どうかのテストまであと3日しかないっていうのに. . .
(Vol.2) *Besu yaku to shite tekiyaku douka no tesuto made ato mikka shika naitte iu noni...* (*only three days left for Beth performance text anyway*). This is the sample of adverb *どうか* (*douka*) in a sentence, indicating a polite yet very strong request.[10] As they are playing a fundamental role in conveying an overall argumentative coherence to a text; Other example *そろそろはじまる頃だ何してンだろあの子 soro soro hajimaru koro da nani shite n daro ano ko* (*What's is Maya doing..time will come any way..*).

- **Conjunction in sentence** : The sequencing of sentences in a specific order does not suffice to imply which relation to establish between them. In order to specify what type of semantic relation is to be created, the sender of a text can resort to the use of connectors. The connectors in Japanese builds the kind of relation that they specify between one sentence and others such as additive, contrastive, causal, consequential, temporal, text structuring, and conditional[10] for example *わたしこそ死んでしまいたい* (vol.1) *watashi koso shinde shimaitai* (*I just want to die*). In the example *こそ* (*koso*) is a conjunction in the sentence that emphasized a reason; another example *もしかしたら誰もはいれない自分だけの世界をもっていて* *moshikashitara dare mo hairenai jibun dake no sekai o motte ite* (*is it possible that nobody other than me in this world ?*); Other example *からかって声をかけたんだけど. . . 彼女. . .* *karakatte koe o kaketan dakedo....*(*she just laughing for teasing*).
- **Moods - final particle in sentence** : one of the grammatical character of Japanese is the use of postpositions or particle in the end of the sentence for mooding expressions, for example *よ* (*yo*), *ね* (*ne*), *な* (*na*), *かな* (*kana*), *かしら* (*kashira*), *わ* (*wa*), *ぜ* (*ze*), *ぞ* (*zo*). [11] Since the appearance are in conversations to express or emphasize the immediate emotional status of the speaker, the comics use them a lot. For example *そうよ* *sou yo* ...(*that it was!*); Other example *だから内気ではずかしがりやで人みしりするんだね...* (*therefore becoming shameful and silent*). In this case the particle – end mood sentence “*wa*” may show the producer of utterance ; Another example is *若草物語のベスはね. . .* (*Beth in “Young Girl” story*). An example is “*ne*”, which is expressed into the form of rethorical sentence in Japanese when it implies a request for consent from the listener. End Sentence - mood particle to mark in writing to express great anger, surprise, joy or other strong emotion . The creative speech of Learner in using the sentence with final particles is required otherwise the mood of the sentence may be lost.
- **Vernacular language** : The terminology of vernacular language is used to indicate that a language is used for everyday interaction,



without implying that it is appropriate only in informal domains. There are three components of the meaning of the term vernacular, then, the most basic refers to the fact that a vernacular is an uncodified or unstandardised variety. The second refers to the way it is acquired in the home, as a first variety. The third is the fact that it is used for relatively circumscribed functions. Term also refer to any language which is not the official language of the country.[12] Japanese is not exempt from this vernacular language for example そんなバカなあの子は与えられたこの一週間ベス役の演技練習はおろか台本すら読んでないのよ *sonna baka na ano ko wa ataerateta (how's idiot that girl ! one week to exercise the play , the script never been read at all)* , the noun-phrase *sonna baka na...* そんなバカなあの子は was shifted to become imperatif sentence in natural speech ; Another example *なんだとこのアマ ! nanda to kono ama (what did you say ?)*. The word “ama” アマ (*bitch/cunt/bad girl*) this dialogue occurred when a group of young man was shouting addressed to a poor girl when the girl was doing a thing that the group of young man did not expect to do that.

- **Register language** : in the perspective of language function in the society, the variation language such as register language, colloquial etc. must be analyzed and described from the very basic components why we don't all speak in the same way, and why we don't all speak in the same way all of the time. The social dimension : a) the solidarity – social distance scale; b) the status scale; c) the formality scale; d) two functional scale – purpose of topic of interaction and referential /affective function scale .[12] for example *ごらんなさ* *いあの子毎日ああやって遊んでばかり gorannasai ano ko mainichi aa yatte asonde bakari(look ! the girl just having play every day)*. The speaker can also show politeness and respect toward someone else by using the verbs that humble the speaker's own actions such as “*goran nasai* “ (please look at...) .This word in the category either humbling the speaker or exalt anyone else. Further, they represent a more general quality of politeness, formality and refinement. It can help the interpretation who is the speaker and listener, what is the relation of them. When it was reflected into Indonesian language , there is no utterance marker to show the level of social dimension as described above; for example *底知れぬ才能の持ち主なのかずぶとだけの (is she aware that she is talented or just a matter of her brave ?)*; Other example *おさっしのおりズブのしろうとですわ. (As you can guess, I am totally the beginner)* ; Other example *おう ! てめエなめちやあいけねエぜ ! Don't under estimate me!* . Some of the sample of register



language occurred, they are not common expressions for regular conversation.

- **Gender related issues** : Japanese, certainly, has a particular language system as an aspect of the norms of propositional linguistic structure. The problems encountered can be approached initially from three points of view; structural (grammatical) perspective, pragmatic perspective, and ideological perspective. [10][11] In the structural realm it may be obvious that a norm of categories of the linguistic form as these interact in a system of Japanese grammar, on the other hand in Indonesian language grammatical system is not available. In the pragmatic perspective, the particularities of an intersubjective communicative context and how “effective” linguistic forms occur in actual situations of communication in Japanese language function is very clear, not as in Indonesian language function. As for the ideological perspective, it considers the distinctness of purposivity in language use from indexical value and meaningfulness. In Japanese society explicitly formulated language use as a means to an end in interaction indicates that understanding of pragmatics (as of structure) can be at least implicitly reconstructed as rationalization in the paradigm of interested human social action. A great proportion of words or language forms are neutral. The use of different tones which help show femininity and masculinity in conversation. For example *だめだよ おまえさん。。。 dame da yo...omaesan.. (It's not allowable for you*). or the sample such as *こんにちはちょっとおたずねしますが。 . . . (sorry, may ask the question)*. We should mention that there are advantages to the status and formality markings as well in Japanese, in so far as they give us a good indication of who is the speaker (or addressee) in sentences where the subject has been left out. “*Omaesan*” is second person pronoun which means “*kamu*” in Indonesian language or “*you*” in English used to address someone in casual conversation, men often use to address their peers or Juniors, however, women do not use in general. In the second sample “*o*” in “*otajune..*” as a marker of polite or formal style of female speech form in Japanese. however, women do not use in general.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The Japanese expressions in *Manga* definitely workable to be the translation study object. *Manga* reading and understanding particularly becomes so challenging mainly caused by the differences in culture, habits, custom, language system between Japanese and Indonesian language. In certain part, the strategies in dealing with the *Manga*'s expressions could be different from the strategies in



dealing with the problems of other literatures such as novel, short stories, movies subtitle, drama scripts, articles, scientific text, news text, etc which is possible for them to use some common reading techniques. This restriction may be caused of the characteristics of *Manga* comics itself as the combination between text language and pictural language. The function of text in comics poses a wider function rather than conveying message such as complementing and strengthening the story reading imagination for example the romance comics as "*Garasu no Kamen*". The way of classifying exemplars of texts is to divide them according to a deeper structure, their basic structure, into types of text, which is affectuated on the basis of surface structures. They are bounded in Japanese sentence with mood end - particle, sentence in colloquial /slang, register language, gender related issues, sentence ellipsis, and sentence with linguistical ambiguity; The Reader does not only learn words but acquires the concepts of its understanding. This is a skill in applying specific techniques, strategies or procedures to deal with the comics reading.

REFERENCES

1. Donovan, Maureen, "*Framing Knowledge : Global Youth Culture as Knowledge Society*", USA : Ohio State University, 2012
2. Scott McCloud, "*Understanding Comics : The Invisible Art*", USA : Tundra Publishing., 1993.
3. Natsuko Tsujimura, "*An Introduction to : Japanese Linguistics*", UK: Blackwell Publisher, 2006.
4. Rod Ellis, "*Understanding Second Language Acquisition*", London: Oxford University, 2005.
5. H.Douglas Brown, "*Teaching by Principles ; An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*", USA : San Fransisco University, 2007.
6. Kristen Refsing and Lita Lundquist, "*Translating Japanese Texts*", Copenhagen : Museum Tusculanum Press, 2013.
7. Uwe Flick, et.all., "*A Companion to Qualitative Research : Phillip Mayring – Qualitative Content Analysis*", english edition, London : Sage Publication Ltd., 2004
8. Suzue Miuchi, "*Hana to Yume Comics : Garasu no Kamen*", series 1-48, Japan : Hakusensha, 1992 - 2000.
9. Yoko Hasegawa, "*The Routledge Course in Japanese Translation*", USA : Routledge, 2012.



10. Seichi Makino and Michio Tsutsui, “ *Intermediate Japanese Grammar*”, Japan : Japan Time Ltd, 1997.
11. Wayne P. Lammers, “*Japanese The Manga Way : An Illustrated Guide to Grammar & Structure*”, California : Stone Bridge Press, 2005.
12. Janet Holmes, “*An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*”, Second Edition, London: Longman, 2011.