

Translating into Japanese Mimetics: A case study of *Shōkōshi* (*Little Lord Fauntleroy*) in the Meiji era and the present time

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This paper presents our preliminary study on how Japanese mimetics or sound-symbolic expressions are used when translating from English. Previous research on translation between English and Japanese has focused more on how Japanese mimetics in source texts are dealt with in the English translation (Minashima 2004, Inose 2008, Toratani 2009); however, as far as we know, there are no studies dealing with the other direction: English into Japanese translation, in relation to mimetic expressions. Therefore, the present paper aims at providing a first stepping-stone in this particular topic, which we hope to guide more detailed future analyses in translation studies.

Two pieces of work we investigate are the very first as well as recent translations into Japanese of the novel *Little Lord Fauntleroy* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. These are *Shōkōshi* by Shizuko Wakamatsu in 1890-92 in the Meiji era, known as one of the most influential pieces of work that pioneered the vernacular movement (*genbun-icchi*), and the same novel translated by Asako Sakazaki in 1987. We would like to explore the following two research questions: 1) what sorts of linguistic items in English bring about mimetic expressions when translating into Japanese, and 2) whether any differences are observed between Wakamatsu's and Sakazaki's translation. The question in 1) is interesting in that it may reveal how and when Japanese translators choose a mimetic expression as opposed to non-mimetic, regular vocabulary that can easily replace it. Examining 2) leads us to consider lexical aspects of the two translations which are potentially influenced by distinct social settings that each of the translators were sensitive to at the time of translating the novel.

To answer 1) and 2), we analyze the three texts above based on the proportions of types of constructions or phrasal categories and the process of translation found in the target texts in light of the corresponding expressions in the source text. Our preliminary findings show that adjectival phrases in English, including nominal modifiers and secondary predicates, are most frequently translated into mimetics in Japanese (29.1%), followed by adverbial phrases (17.3%), manner-enriched verbal phrases (15.0%) and modal expressions (8.7%). Among those items, there are not many class shifts observed in adverbial phrases whereas adjectival/manner-enriched verbal phrases and modals often had their categories altered in the target texts. These facts can be explained relatively systematically through lexicalization patterns in English and Japanese (cf. Toratani 2009) and translation strategies.

Considering the differences between mimetics in Wakamatsu and Sakazaki, a) the frequency of mimetic expressions is higher in Sakazaki (71.7% of all potential mimetic items) compared to Wakamatsu (44.1%), and b) Sakazaki produces mimetics even when the source text does not contain any corresponding expression (11.8%) while Wakamatsu's translation is much more faithful to the original source (only 2.4% of such cases). These results indicate that at the time of Wakamatsu when the unification of spoken and written language styles was being promoted, not as many colloquial mimetics as those in the present day were established in written (but colloquial) Japanese, and that the recent translation by Sakazaki, in contrast, takes advantage of the opportunities to display its versatility and creativity in translation (Hasegawa 2012: 54).

We will further discuss qualitatively why some of the lexical choices of mimetics translated from English were displayed distinctly between the two translations from the viewpoint of the particular historical backgrounds and translators' roles in the society of the time.

Primary Sources:

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