

STEREOTYPES AND SPEECH ROLES IN JAPANESE POP CULTURE: A PRAGMALINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF *ARUYO* LANGUAGE IN *GINTAMA*

IOANA RUXANDRA TOȘU

Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca
ioana.tosu@ubbcluj.ro

DOI: 10.2478/saec-2025-0006

ORCID: 0009-0000-2846-1843

Title: Stereotypes and Speech Roles in Japanese Pop Culture: A Pragmalinguistic Analysis of *Aruyo* Language in *Gintama*

Abstract: This study offers a pragmalinguistic analysis of *aruyo kotoba* (ア ル ヨ 言葉), a stylized and stereotypical speech pattern associated with Chinese-speaking characters in Japanese pop culture. Focusing on Kagura, a central figure in Sorachi Hideaki's *manga Gintama*, the paper examines how *aruyo* speech functions as *yakuwarigo* – role-specific language that conveys alterity, social positioning, and humour. The research highlights the historical and sociolinguistic roots of *aruyo kotoba*, tracing its evolution from early 20th-century literary representations to its modern usage in *manga*. Through detailed linguistic and contextual analysis of selected utterances, the paper demonstrates how the pragmatic marker *aru* (ア ル) shapes Kagura's identity as a foreign and comedic figure. It also explores the challenges of rendering these linguistic and cultural nuances into Romanian, proposing a translation strategy that preserves stylistic tone and character uniqueness via the emphatic phrase 'chiar este'. The findings underscore how language in *manga* can perpetuate stereotypes while also functioning as a tool for stylization and character construction. Ultimately, this research contributes to broader discussions on fictional language, intercultural representation, and the translation of pragmalinguistic markers in pop culture narratives.

Keywords: *manga*, *aruyo kotoba*, *Yakuwarigo*, *pragmalinguistic analysis*, *translation strategies*;

Introduction

The present study explores the linguistic phenomenon known as *aruyo kotoba* (ア ル ヨ 言葉), a stereotypical speech style used in Japanese pop culture to represent Chinese-speaking foreigners. Focusing on the *manga Gintama* by Sorachi Hideaki, and particularly on the character Kagura, this analysis reveals how language becomes a vehicle for constructing alterity, perpetuating stereotypes, and shaping character identity through a specific form of *yakuwarigo* (role language). By examining Kagura's utterances, the study investigates how *aruyo kotoba* combines linguistic simplification and stylistic exaggeration, reflecting both historical prejudice and creative stylization. Drawing on pragmalinguistic principles and

sociolinguistic insights, the paper questions how faithfully such elements can be translated into Romanian while preserving the intended narrative and cultural impact.

Yakuwarigo and Stereotypical Speech in Manga

Manga, or Japanese comic books, have become a key element of contemporary culture, functioning as both art and a commercial product. Their global popularity reflects larger trends of consumerism, globalization, and pop culture. Once targeted primarily at youth as light entertainment, *manga* has evolved into a powerful cultural industry that shapes public perception and reflects modern Japanese identity (FRENȚIU 2023, 245–46).

Increasing academic interest in *manga* spans multiple disciplines – psychology, sociology, linguistics, and translation studies – due to its thematic variety and social commentary. While often imaginative, *manga* also addresses societal concerns, with readers interpreting content differently based on their cultural and professional backgrounds (MANOLESCU 2011: 16; PASFIELD-NEOFITOU ET AL. 2016, 14). The word *manga* combines the characters for “free-flowing” (漫) and “drawing” (画), often translated as “whimsical pictures”. In Japan, the term broadly includes all comics, but internationally it refers specifically to Japanese-style narratives (HERNANDEZ 2019, 7).

From a linguistic standpoint, *manga* is a multimodal medium combining text and imagery to convey meaning. Its hybrid format uses visual cues – such as fonts, layout, and symbols – to reflect speech features like tone and emphasis, creating a dynamic communicative environment. These devices also express characters’ emotions and social relationships, making *manga* a rich resource for discourse analysis (PASFIELD-NEOFITOU ET AL. 2016, 211).

One key concept in Japanese comic books linguistics is *yakuwarigo* or “role language”, introduced by Kinsui Satoshi in the early 2000s. *Yakuwarigo* refers to stylized speech patterns linked to specific character types – such as samurai, professors, or schoolgirls – which help readers instantly recognize a character’s identity, status, or personality. Rather than mimicking real-life speech, these patterns serve as narrative shortcuts that deepen character portrayal and guide reader interpretation (KINSUI 2003, 205).

In sum, *manga* is not only a cultural artifact but also a site of linguistic innovation. Its visual and verbal features work together to construct fictional worlds, while *yakuwarigo* offers valuable insight into how language conveys stereotypes, social roles, and narrative coherence.

A negative aspect of role-specific lexemes (*yakuwarigo*) is that the linguistic stereotypes they employ may at times promote prejudice and discrimination against certain social groups. *Manga*, as a medium, can be especially influential in this regard. An example of stereotypical speech with well-defined characteristics – developed independently from actual spoken language – is *aruyo kotoba* (アルヨ言葉), a speech register associated with foreigners (*ijin* 異人), particu-

larly the Chinese. This register consists of specific linguistic features that do not reflect authentic everyday speech but instead serve particular functions within narrative or character portrayal (KINSUI 2003, 175–203).

In the latter half of the 19th century, following Japan's opening to the world, a significant number of Chinese immigrants entered the country, alongside Westerners. Chinese people became intermediaries in trade between Japanese and foreign merchants, as well as street vendors and performers. To communicate with the Japanese, a simplified form of Japanese was used. This simplification, known as *pidgin* (ピジン), refers to a hybrid language developed to facilitate communication between speakers of different native tongues. Similar to a *lingua franca*, this *pidgin* was frequently employed in ports, trading posts, and plantations (KINSUI 2003, 178).

Although extant records do not provide detailed descriptions of this linguistic register, this suggests the existence of multiple variants. Nonetheless, one such variant endured in popular culture as a linguistic repertoire typical of Chinese characters. Japanese authors employed a stylistic strategy involving the addition of *aru* (ある) and *yoroshii* (よろしい) at the end of sentences – thus coining the term *aruyo kotoba*. The earliest instances of this speech style can be traced to a 1921 work by Miyazawa Kenji 宮沢 賢治, but it gained widespread popularity with its use in Tagawa Suihō's (田河 水泡) comic series *Norakuro* (のらくろ) during 1937–1938. The impact of *Norakuro* was so significant that many post-war *manga* artists, beginning with Tezuka Osamu (手塚 治虫), started incorporating *aruyo* speech into their works. Over time, this register acquired negative connotations and was used either to ridicule the speaking character or to imply their dubious nature (KINSUI 2003, 176).

The term *aruyo* is composed of the verb *aru* (ある), indicating the existence of inanimate objects, and the sentence-final particle *yo* (よ), which may be replaced by *ka* (か) in interrogative constructions (KINSUI 2003, 177). Grammatical characteristics of *aruyo* speech include:

- The use of *aru* immediately after a verb or adjective in dictionary form, the negative form *nai* (ない), or the root of an *-i* adjective;
- The use of *yoroshii* (よろしい) after the base form of a verb as a request or command.

The origin of *aruyo* speech can be traced to a simplified form of Japanese *pidgin* that emerged in the Yokohama area at the end of the Edo period (江戸時代, 1603–1867) and the beginning of the Meiji era (明治時代, 1868–1912). Yokohama, one of the ports opened under Western pressure, developed settlements for foreign residents. In such port cities, especially Yokohama, simplified Japanese *pidgin* facilitated communication among Westerners, Chinese, and Japanese. Expressions from this *pidgin* were recorded in various documents and began appearing in novels and theatrical works. Since *aruyo kotoba* is based on this simplified *pidgin*, it hinders audience identification with characters who use this speech style, restricting its use to secondary or stereotypical figures (KINSUI 2003, 200–201).

Although East Asian international relations have undergone dramatic changes, *aruyo* expressions continued to be associated with Chinese characters in post-war

films, *manga*, and *anime*. Typically, characters using *aruyo* were suspicious or comical adult males. This usage evokes a discriminatory attitude by the Japanese toward the Chinese, who had lived under Japanese occupation during the pre-war period. From the late 1970s to the 1980s, the fictional archetype of *aruyo*-speaking characters shifted toward young women dressed in traditional Chinese attire. Nevertheless, this change should be seen as a cultural preference rather than a reflection of social reality (TESHIGAWARA, KINSUI 2011, 46).

In *manga*, speakers of simplified Japanese *pidgin* are often portrayed both visually and behaviourally with specific traits:

- Visual characteristics: male characters with thin moustaches, often wearing Chinese-style clothing and hats, with braided hair and sometimes overweight.
- Behavioural traits: characters are portrayed as shady (e.g., involved in illegal businesses), calculating, stingy, foolish, shy, or cowardly.
- These attributes appear to reflect historical Japanese prejudices toward the Chinese. As previously mentioned, prejudice is the emotional manifestation of stereotypes. In this context, prejudice combines with an incomplete and distorted form of Japanese, contributing to the construction of a Chinese character perceived as strange or comical (KINSUI 2003, 178-180).

Linguistic Stereotypes in *Gintama* (銀魂 *Silver Soul*): The *Aruyo Kotoba* and the Character of Kagura

To illustrate and analyse *aruyo* speech (アルヨ言葉), I have selected a character who embodies most of the features previously discussed: she is a foreigner (*ijin* 異人), more specifically an extraterrestrial from the Yato tribe 夜兔 (Night Rabbits), often wears a traditional Chinese outfit, and has her hair styled in two side buns adorned with Chinese accessories. She is one of the main characters in the *manga Gintama* 銀魂 (Silver Soul), written and illustrated by Sorachi Hideaki 空知 英秋. The narrative unfolds in an alternate Edo period that has been conquered by extra-terrestrials known as the Amanto. The plot follows the life of a samurai, Sakata Gintoki 坂田 銀時, who works as a freelancer alongside his companions Shimura Shinpachi 志村 新八 and Kagura 神楽 in order to pay their monthly rent. Sorachi incorporated science fiction elements into the story at the suggestion of his editor, who had initially proposed a historical series. The *manga* was serialized in Shueisha's Weekly Shōnen Jump from 2003 to 2018, and subsequently continued in Jump Giga from 2018 to 2019.

The series was adapted into an original video animation (OVA) by Sunrise Studio and was first shown at the Jump Festa 2006 Anime Tour in 2005. This was followed by a full *anime* adaptation consisting of 367 television episodes, airing from April 2006 to October 2018 on TV Tokyo. Three animated films were also released: the first premiered in April 2010, the second in July 2013, and the third and final instalment in January 2021. In addition to the *anime* series, multiple light

novels and video games based on *Gintama* were published. A live-action film adaptation bearing the same title was released in July 2017 in Japan by Warner Bros. Pictures. In Japan, the *Gintama manga* enjoyed significant commercial success, with over 55 million copies in print, making it one of the best-selling series.

The story is set in an alternate Edo period, where humanity is attacked by extraterrestrial invaders called Amanto 天人 (Heavenly People). The samurai of Edo Japan attempt to defend Earth, but the shogun, realizing the overwhelming power of the aliens, capitulates. He agrees to an unequal treaty that prohibits the public carrying of swords and allows the invaders to enter the country. As a result, the samurai's swords are confiscated, and the shogunate becomes a puppet government.

The narrative focuses on the eccentric samurai Sakata Gintoki, who takes on various freelance jobs. He helps a teenager named Shimura Shinpachi rescue his sister, Tae, from a group of aliens intending to send her to a brothel. Impressed by Gintoki, Shinpachi becomes his apprentice in hopes of repaying debts and learning more about the enigmatic swordsman. When the two save a superpowered alien girl named Kagura from a yakuza gang, they welcome her into their freelance business. The trio becomes known as the Yorozuya 万事屋 (“We do everything” or, literally, “The Everything Shop”).

This narrative explores not only the humour and adventures of the three protagonists but also deeper themes such as friendship, honour, and resilience in the face of adversity. Their interactions with various characters and situations reflect the complexity of a world where traditional values collide with modern and extra-terrestrial influences.

Kagura is the central focus of this subchapter. Her first appearance in the *manga* occurs in Chapter 3, entitled *Lesson 3: Be Careful, Because JUMP Sometimes Comes Out on Saturdays* (*Janpu wa tokidoki doyōbi ni deru kara ki o tsukero* ジャンプは時々土曜日に出るから気を付けろ), from Volume 1, from which the analysed sequences are drawn. Kagura is the main female protagonist and a member of the Yato tribe, the daughter of Umibōzu and Kōka, and the younger sister of Kamui, one of the primary antagonists of the series. After a series of unfortunate events, Kagura travels to Earth in search of a new life. Her distinctive linguistic feature lies in the way she ends her sentences using the phrase *aruyo* (あるよ), or a variant thereof, both in the *manga* and *anime*. This stylistic choice by the *mangaka* (*manga* author) may be justified by her extraterrestrial origin, but it also serves as a strategy to give the character uniqueness and memorability. It contributes to the humour and satire for which *Gintama* is known, often parodying cultural norms and conventions.

All the selected panels exhibit the same linguistic manifestation of *aruyo* speech (アルヨ言葉), specifically the use of the lexical unit *aru* (ある) at the end of Kagura's utterances, functioning as a marker of *yakuwarigo* (role language). The aim is to illustrate as many grammatical features of this speech style as possible, including the use of the phrase *aru* (ある) immediately following the dictionary form of a verb or adjective, its negative form *nai* (ない), or the adjective root ending in *-i* (い).

The Linguistic Identity of the Character Kagura: A Pragmalinguistic Analysis of *Aruyo Kotoba*

At the outset of my pragmalinguistic analysis, I have selected an example (Fig. 1) in which the pragmatic marker *aru* (アル) appears after a common noun, in a context where Kagura has sustained an injury and is hiding from her attackers. The analysis of this frame aims to highlight the complexity of the register employed and to provide insight into the linguistic role played by the pragmatic marker *aru* (アル), as a component of *yakuwarigo* (role language), in the construction of the character's identity.



Fig. 1: *Gintama*, 2003–2019, vol. 1, cap. 3, p. 94

Ex. 1. Source language: コレ 奴らに撃たれた傷アル。

Transliteration: *Kore yatsura ni utareta kizu aru.*

Translation: ‘Asta este o rană provocată de ticăloșii ăia, chiar este!’

- コレ (*kore*) – functions as a demonstrative pronoun meaning “this” (masculine/ feminine/ plural), used to refer to something close to the speaker.
- 奴ら (*yatsura*) – is a colloquial and pejorative expression referring to a group of people, with Romanian equivalents such as “bastards” or “scoundrels.” It conveys disdain and a sense of superiority, indicating a hostile relationship between speaker and referent.
- に (*ni*) – is a postpositional particle marking the agent in passive constructions.
- 撃たれた (*utareta*) – is the passive form of the verb *utsu* (撃つ, “to shoot”).
- 傷 (*kizu*) – is a noun meaning “wound” or “injury”.
- アル (*aru*) – the dictionary form of the verb meaning “to be” or “to exist” (used with inanimate objects), appears here in katakana, a choice that suggests foreignness and adds a comic tone to Kagura’s speech. The use

of katakana in this context aligns with its broader function in Japanese to render foreign-origin words or to simulate a foreign accent, marking the speaker as linguistically “other.” In this instance, it underscores Kagura’s non-native speech, enhancing her alienness and contributing to her humorous and distinctive character portrayal.

Kagura is known for her brash and direct speech, frequently using colloquial and pejorative terms to express her feelings and judgments. This style reflects her bold and fearless personality, highlighting both her inner strength and disdain for her opponents.

From a pragmalinguistic perspective, the most functionally appropriate translation of *aru* (アル) within the *skopós* framework would be the juxtaposition of the intensifying adverb ‘chiar’ (“indeed” or “truly”) with the Romanian copula ‘este’ (“is”), yielding the rendering: ‘Asta este o rană provocată de ticăloșii ăia, chiar este!’ (“This is a wound caused by those scoundrels – it really is!”). Here, *aru* (アル), as a marker of *yakuwarigo*, contributes to the shaping of a distinct linguistic identity by constructing a discourse repertoire that evokes stereotypical representations of how Chinese speakers are perceived to use the Japanese language. This stylistic strategy lends Kagura a linguistically unique characterization, reflecting exoticism and stylization.

In translation, it becomes essential to preserve both the pragmatic value and stylistic effect of *aru* in order to offer Romanian readers an experience comparable to that of Japanese readers of the source text. Semantically, *aru* is a verb indicating the existence of inanimate objects. However, in its role as a *yakuwarigo* marker, it departs from this literal meaning, acquiring a function similar to that of sentence-final particles, contributing tonal and stylistic nuance specific to a character or situation. This stylistic adaptation introduces a unique pragmalinguistic texture, shaping the audience’s perception of the speaker.

By contrast, the Romanian verb “este” typically functions as a predicate, auxiliary, or copula, lacking the same semantic and stylistic flexibility as *aru* (アル). Therefore, the translation strategy deliberately mobilizes this verb in a way that artificially emulates Kagura’s tone and stylistic register. The stylistic decision is not solely driven by semantic equivalence but also by the need to reproduce the original’s pragmalinguistic nuance. Pragmatically, ending a sentence in Romanian with “este” can serve not only as a declarative predicate but also as an emphatic assertion. The use of the intensifying adverb ‘chiar’ before ‘este’ becomes crucial in mirroring the forcefulness implied by *aru* in Japanese. In this configuration, ‘chiar este’ conveys not merely a factual statement, but also an implicit imperative or assertion, reinforcing the speaker’s certainty and the rhetorical weight of the utterance.

This juxtaposition is by no means arbitrary; it is grounded in the communicative intention encoded in *aru* (アル) within the speech of *manga* characters. Although a verb of existential meaning, *aru*, in pragmalinguistic terms, assumes the function of conferring rhetorical force and resoluteness to affirmations. Similarly, in Romanian, the structure ‘chiar este’ introduces an intensifying layer that ap-

proximates the pragmatic effect of *aru*, asserting not only the reality of a situation, but the speaker's unwavering stance. Hence, the linguistic strategy accomplishes a dual purpose: it replicates the tone and style of the character while adhering to Romanian pragmalinguistic norms, subtly adapting the expressive subtleties of the Japanese original.

From a cultural perspective, *aru* (アル) invokes a linguistic stereotype that is inevitably lost in translation, as Romanian readers are unlikely to recognize or relate to the cultural and social connotations it carries in Japanese. While the translation attempts to preserve Kagura's unique voice and personality, the culturally specific semiotic value of the original marker remains largely inaccessible.

Turning now to the next analysed panel from the same *manga* (Fig. 2), the example involves the juxtaposition of *aru* (アル) with a colloquially conjugated verb form.

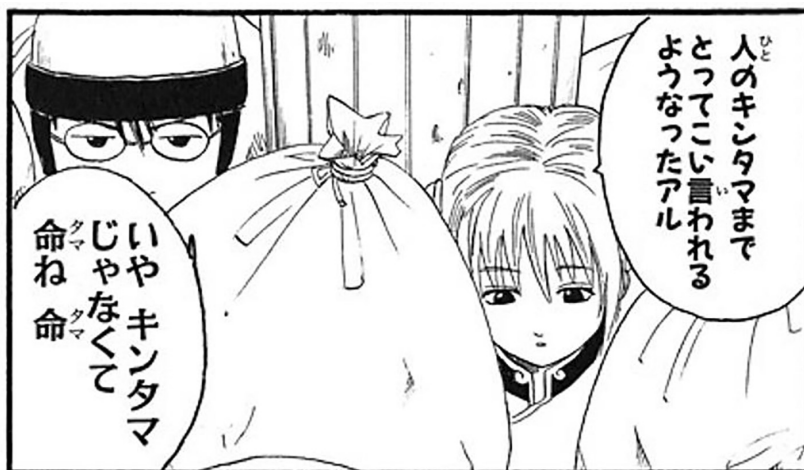


Fig. 2: *Gintama*, 2003–2019, vol. 1, cap. 3, p. 97

Ex. 2. Source language: 人のキンタマまでとってこい言われるようになったアル。

Transliteration: *Hito no kintama made totte koi iwareru yō natta aru.*

Translation: ‘Mi s-a spus chiar să aduc și testiculele omului, chiar este.’

- 人 (*hito*) – a common noun meaning “person” or “people”.
- の (*no*) – a connective postposition indicating possession or attribution.
- キンタマ (*kintama*) – a colloquial and vulgar term meaning “testicles”. Its use imparts a crude and confrontational tone to the sentence. The choice to write it in katakana highlights the distinctive speech style of the character, who does not shy away from indecent or impolite expressions, further distancing herself from the normative ideal of Japanese femininity.
- まで (*made*) – a postposition that translates as “up to” or “even”. It indicates the extent or extremity of an action or situation, thereby accentuat-

ing the absurdity of the utterance.

- とってこい (*totte koi*) – the imperative form of the verb *toru* (取る, “to bring” or “to fetch”). It expresses a firm command, implying a hierarchical dynamic of superiority and subordination, and imposes a specific course of action.
- 言われる (*iwareru*) – the passive form of *iu* (言う, “to say” or “to be told”). It indicates that the speaker was instructed or ordered to do something, thereby emphasizing a lack of agency or control over the situation.
- ようなった (*yō natta*) – a contracted form of *yō ni natta* (ようになった), which indicates a change of state, often conveying inevitability or resignation.
- アル (*aru*) – the dictionary form of the verb “to be” (used for inanimate existence). The use of katakana to write *aru* (アル) suggests a foreign-sounding speech and adds a comic or exaggerated tone to Kagura’s utterance. In Japanese, katakana is often used to render foreign loanwords or simulate non-native accents. In this context, it marks Kagura as a linguistically “othered” character, emphasizing her non-standard speech and possibly evoking perceptions of inferiority or comic distortion.

Kagura, a character known for her brash and confrontational speech, frequently resorts to vulgar and colloquial terms to express her thoughts and emotions. Her linguistic choices are consistent with her assertive and independent personality, reflecting a tendency toward dominance and superiority in her interactions with others.

In keeping with the translation strategy adopted in previous examples, I chose to render this instance of *yakuwarigo* in Romanian using the expression: ‘Mi s-a spus chiar să aduc și testiculele omului, chiar este’. This translation employs consistent terminology for the stereotyped language marker, thereby reinforcing its recognition among the target readership and gradually establishing it as a Romanian equivalent of the character’s *yakuwarigo*. While this solution may carry less pragmatic nuance than its Japanese counterpart, it prioritizes stylistic consistency and character authenticity, aiming to preserve the original’s tonal force and rhetorical effect.

As I proceed with the analysis, I will examine the final selected panel from *Gintama* (Fig. 3), where the complexity of Kagura’s speech and the pragmalinguistic strategies she employs will again be scrutinized in order to extract the defining features of her discourse.

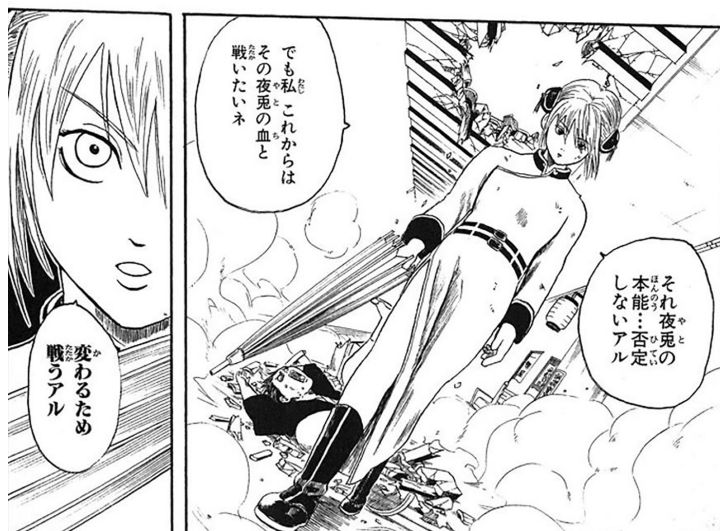


Fig. 3: *Gintama*, 2003–2019, vol. 1, cap. 3, p. 107

Ex. 3. Source language: それ夜兎の本能…否定しないアル。でも私これからはその夜兎の血と戦いたいネ。変わるため戦うアル。(s.n.)

Transliteration: *Sore yato no honnō...hitei shinai aru. Demo watashi kore kara wa sono yato no chi to tatakaitai ne. Kawaru tame tatakau aru.* (s.n.)

Translation: ‘Acesta este instinctul Yato... nu-l neg, chiar este! Dar de acum înainte, vreau să mă lupt împotriva sângelui Yato. Voi lupta pentru a mă schimba, chiar este!’ (s.n.)

- それ (*sore*) – functions similarly to a demonstrative pronoun, translated as “that” or “those,” and refers to an object or idea near the interlocutor but distant from the speaker. In the present linguistic context, it refers to something previously mentioned or evident from the situation.
- 夜兎 (*Yato*) – literally “night rabbit”; the name of the tribe to which Kagura belongs.
- 本能 (*honnō*) – “instinct”; refers to the innate impulses of the Yato race, frequently associated with strength and aggression.
- 否定しない (*hitei shinai*) – a present-tense negative form of the compound expression composed of the noun *hitei* (否定, “denial”) and the auxiliary verb *suru* (する, “to do”). It can be translated as “I do not deny,” expressing acceptance of a fact or trait without resistance.
- アル (*aru*) – a *yakuwarigo* marker (“role language” lexeme) specific to the character Kagura, as explained in earlier analyses.
- でも (*demo*) – a particle introducing contrast or opposition; “but”, “however”.
- 私 (*watashi*) – first-person singular pronoun, commonly used to refer to oneself. Among the variety of personal pronouns available in Japanese,

watashi is most frequently employed by women in contemporary contexts requiring neutral politeness (NKD Vol. 20, 1972-1976, 655).

- これから (*kore kara*) – “from now on”; indicates a future action or behavioural change.
- 血 (*chi*) – noun meaning “blood”.
- 戦いたい (*tatakaitai*) – volitional form of the verb *tatakau* (戦う, “to fight”); expresses the desire to confront or change an aspect of one’s own identity.
- ネ (*ne*) – a sentence-final particle that adds a tone of confirmation or empathy. Rendered in katakana, it takes on a stylistic effect here, functioning as a distinctive element of Kagura’s speech pattern.
- 変わる (*kawaru*) – verb meaning “to change”. In this context, it implies the character’s intention to undergo personal transformation.
- ため (*tame*) – a postposition indicating purpose or reason. Here, it links the character’s motivation (to change) with the action (to fight).

The Romanian translation, ‘Acesta este instinctul Yato... nu-l neg, chiar este! Dar de acum înainte, vreau să mă lupt împotriva sângelui Yato. Voi lupta pentru a mă schimba, chiar este!’, preserves the intended meaning and tone of the original Japanese utterance, reflecting Kagura’s determination to confront her own nature. The last two segments of the translation – ‘nu-l neg, chiar este!’ and ‘Voi lupta pentru a mă schimba, chiar este!’ – are designed to replicate the original rhythm and stylistic particularity of the Japanese sentence. The repeated use of the phrase ‘chiar este’ (“it really is”) at the end of the translated statements functions to conserve the pragmatic marker *aru* (アル), thus reproducing Kagura’s distinctive tone and reinforcing the stylistic consistency of her speech.

Conclusions

The pragmalinguistic analysis of selected utterances from the *manga Gintama* 銀魂 (Silver Soul) illustrates the distinctive manifestation of *aruyo* speech (アルヨ言葉) through the use of *aru* (アル) as a *yakuwarigo* marker (a lexical unit attributed to a particular role). This marker frequently appears at the end of Kagura’s lines, constructing a unique linguistic repertoire that evokes stereotypes associated with Chinese speakers of Japanese.

In the first example, the phrase “Kore yatsura ni utareta kizu aru” was translated as ‘Asta este o rană provocată de ticăloșii ăia, chiar este!’ (“This is a wound caused by those bastards, it really is!”). The Romanian version successfully preserves the author’s pragmatic intent, with the phrase ‘chiar este’ used to reflect the role of *aru* (アル). This strategy reproduces the original tone of the Japanese sentence, capturing its stylistic function and helping maintain the character’s authenticity and linguistic uniqueness. Nevertheless, from a cultural standpoint, the pragmatic equivalence is not entirely seamless, since ‘chiar este’ does not evoke the same linguistic stereotype embedded in the Japanese source.

In the second example, ‘Mi s-a spus chiar să aduc și testiculele omului, chiar este.’, the same strategy is observed – preserving the character’s distinctive linguistic

marker through the use of ‘chiar este’ at the end of the sentence. This approach helps Romanian readers familiarize themselves with Kagura’s unique speech style, even if the cultural connotations of the original marker may not be fully conveyed.

The consistent use of ‘chiar este’ in the translation contributes to constructing a unique linguistic identity for Kagura, offering Romanian readers a comparable experience to that of Japanese readers. This phrase artificially mimics the tone and stylistic register of the character’s speech, thus preserving the source text’s stylistic specificity and expressive impact. Although full cultural equivalence cannot be achieved, the translation succeeds in conserving the pragmatic meaning and stylistic function of the original lines, providing readers with an authentic perspective on Kagura’s personality.

The final panel selected from the same *manga* contains the phrase (Ex. 3) “Sore Yato no honnō... hitei shinai aru. Demo watashi kore kara wa sono Yato no chi to tatakaitai ne. Kawaru tame tatakau aru.”, rendered as ‘Acesta este instinctul Yato... nu-l neg, chiar este! Dar de acum înainte, vreau să mă lupt împotriva sânge-lui Yato. Voi lupta pentru a mă schimba, chiar este!’. This translation manages to preserve the author’s intended message from the original Japanese, reflecting Kagura’s firm resolve to confront her own nature.

Thus, the translations aim to retain Kagura’s individuality and uniqueness, despite cultural differences, succeeding in conveying the essence and communicative intent of the original author in a manner accessible and meaningful to Romanian readers.

Bibliografie / Bibliography:

Frențiu, Rodica. *Yasunari Kawabata. Visările lumii plutitoare*. Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană. 2023.

Hernandez, Manuel. *Japanese Media Cultures in Japan and Abroad: Transnational Consumption of Manga, Anime, and Media-Mixes*. Elveția: Basel-Perez. 2019.

Kinsui, Satoshi. *Vācharu nihongo: yakuwarigo no nazo* (ヴァーチャル日本語役割後の謎). Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten Publishers. 2003.

Manolescu, Ion. *Benzile desenate și canonul postmodern*. București: Cartea Românească. 2011.

Pasfield-Neofitou, Sarah, Sell, Cathy, Chan, Queenie (eds). *Manga Vision, Cultural and Communicative Perspectives*. Australia: Monash University Publishing. 2016.

Sorachi, Hideaki. *Gintama* (銀魂). Japonia: Shueisha. 2003–2019.

Teshigawara, Mihoko, Kinsui, Satoshi. “Modern Japanese ‘Role Language’. Yakuwarigo: fictionalised orality in Japanese literature and popular culture”. In *Socio-linguistic Studies*. Sheffield: Equinox Publishing. Vol. 5. Nr. 1. (2011): 37–58.

***NKD: *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten* (日本国語大辞典). Vol. 20. Japonia: Shogakukan. 1972–1976.