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Department of English Language and Literature

MA in Translation Studies and Interpreting

JAPANESE POPULAR CULTURE AND WESTERN AUDIENCES: TRANSLATING ENGLISH SCANLATED MANGA INTO GREEK

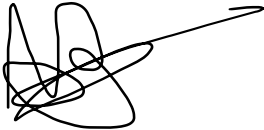Athanasios Vasileiadis
220008

Supervisor
Dr. Nikolaos Gogonas

Supervising Committee
Dr. Nikolaos Gogonas
Dr. Maria Sidiropoulou
Dr. Anna Hatzidaki

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Declaration

This submission is my own work. Any quotation from, or description of, work of others is acknowledged herein by reference to the sources, whether published or unpublished.

Athanasios Vasileiadis

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Abstract in English

"Manga", the so-called Japanese comics, have become an immensely popular entertainment medium not only within their home country but progressively all over the world. The multitude of riveting storylines and compelling characters that have been invented in the last decades has established manga as a considerable form of entertainment in the 21st century. The definition of manga and their unique characteristics, as well as a historical overview are presented in this paper. The major five demographic groups that they all fall into are explored, along with landmark examples of manga storylines. The reception and popular appeal of the medium is also reviewed. Additionally, the paper inspects the role of the manga translator as a cultural mediator, the practical affairs that rise during this procedure and the most popular fan-translation process in manga: "scanlation". A considerable gap was detected concerning the appearance of Greek translated manga, either from official publishing houses or fans. In the practical part of this paper, five English scanlated manga were translated into Greek and through the thematic analysis approach, the most prevalent translation challenges that occurred were categorized in broad thematic groups. After close analysis of these issues, specific translation decisions were made and methods were employed to overcome them, whereas a questionnaire given out to Greek readers was utilized to check their appreciation or dismissal of these methods, as well as the reasoning behind their choices. Finally, all of these findings were discussed and compared to those of other academics involved in manga translation. The overarching goal of this dissertation was to try and show whether the creation of decent Greek manga translations was enough to stir up the interest and excitement of a wide variety of readers and at the same time, provide incentive and motivation for them to further explore and discover this expansive, fascinating medium.

Keywords: manga, comics, translation, scanlation, Japanese, English, Greek

Abstract in Greek

Τα «μάνγκα», όπως αποκαλούνται τα ιαπωνικά κόμικς, αποτελούν ένα ιδιαίτερα δημοφιλές μέσο ψυχαγωγίας, όχι μόνο μέσα στην πατρίδα τους, αλλά προοδευτικά και σε ολόκληρο τον κόσμο. Η πληθώρα από καθηλωτικές ιστορίες και συναρπαστικούς χαρακτήρες που έχουν δημιουργηθεί τις τελευταίες δεκαετίες έχει καθιερώσει τα μάνγκα ως μια αξιόλογη μορφή διασκέδασης στον 21ο αιώνα. Ο ορισμός των μάνγκα και τα μοναδικά τους χαρακτηριστικά, καθώς και μια ιστορική αναδρομή παρουσιάζονται στην εργασία αυτή. Οι πέντε μεγάλες δημογραφικές ενότητες στις οποίες όλα τα μάνγκα εμπίπτουν εξερευνιούνται μαζί με αξιοσημείωτα παραδείγματα αντίστοιχων ιστοριών. Ταυτόχρονα, εξετάζεται η κριτική και η αξιολόγηση του είδους αυτού από τον κόσμο. Επιπρόσθετα, εξερευνάται ο ρόλος του μεταφραστή μάνγκα ως μεσάζοντας μεταξύ διαφορετικών πολιτισμών, τα πρακτικά θέματα που προκύπτουν κατά τη μετάφραση των μάνγκα, αλλά και η πιο δημοφιλής διαδικασία μετάφρασης από θαυμαστές: η «σκανάφραση». Ένα σημαντικό κενό παρατηρήθηκε στην παρουσία ελληνικών μεταφρασμένων μάνγκα, είτε από επαγγελματίες είτε από θαυμαστές. Στο πρακτικό κομμάτι της εργασίας αυτής, πέντε αγγλικά «σκαναφρασμένα» μάνγκα μεταφράστηκαν στα ελληνικά, ενώ μέσω της μεθόδου της θεματικής ανάλυσης, οι επικρατέστερες μεταφραστικές προκλήσεις που προέκυψαν, κατηγοριοποιήθηκαν σε ευρείες θεματικές ενότητες. Μετά από ενδελεχή ανάλυση των προκλήσεων αυτών, συγκεκριμένες μεταφραστικές επιλογές πάρθηκαν και μέθοδοι αξιοποιήθηκαν για την υπέρβασή τους. Ερωτηματολόγιο δόθηκε σε Έλληνες αναγνώστες ώστε να ελεγχθεί η εκτίμηση ή απόρριψη των επιλογών αυτών από εκείνους, καθώς και οι λόγοι για τις απαντήσεις τους. Τέλος, τα ευρήματα αυτά συζητήθηκαν και συγκρίθηκαν με εκείνα άλλων ακαδημαϊκών που έχουν εντρυφήσει στη μετάφραση μάνγκα. Ο πρωταρχικός στόχος της διπλωματικής αυτής εργασίας ήταν να επιχειρήσει να αποδείξει εάν η δημιουργία ικανοποιητικών ελληνικών μεταφράσεων μάνγκα ήταν αρκετή για να παρακινήσει το ενδιαφέρον και τον ενθουσιασμό μιας μεγάλης ποικιλίας αναγνωστών, ενώ παράλληλα να αποτελέσει κίνητρο και παρότρυνση για την περαιτέρω εξερεύνηση αυτού του εκτενούς και συναρπαστικού μέσου.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: μάνγκα, κόμικς, μετάφραση, σκανάφραση, ιαπωνικά, αγγλικά, ελληνικά

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Japanese comics (the so called "manga") have become an immensely popular entertainment format for Easterners and Westerners alike in the last few decades. Created from many, different and imaginative Japanese artists (mangaka), they emanate and radiate with aspects and sides of the vast Japanese culture. Manga are created with particular age groups in mind and their themes are usually adjacent and appropriate to the age group they are made for. Publishing houses that take up the task of translating and publishing manga for the western audiences are scarce, and they are mainly English. The lack of official translating is covered by various different fan groups (scanlators) which usually come from different linguistic backgrounds, English or else. In Greece, such fan translating groups are virtually non-existent and there is a big gap in the appearance of translated manga content in the Greek language.

This paper will attempt to present and showcase the defining traits of manga, their innate characteristics that constitute their originality and uniqueness. Moreover, as manga are allocated into specific categories according to the demographic groups they refer to, these categories will be extensively discussed and some distinctive and typical manga titles of certain acceptance from the public will then be mentioned and displayed.

These Japanese comics are full of Japanese society quirks, features and attributes; therefore, the translator is a crucial aspect of the bridging process between East and West. He is responsible for adequately transferring the certain peculiarities of Japanese culture and making them understood and palatable by people of other backgrounds. He is also responsible for creating a high-quality product which does not ruin the original and is also in concordance with the expectations of the fans and readers. It has been noted that manga fans are highly critical when they read them, whether they know Japanese or not. Manga pose to the translator the usual problems that arise when translating comics in general, but they also present additional ones due to the "complex semiotic structure" that is found in manga. (Jüngst 2008).

Schodt (2012) denoted that no-matter how well a manga is translated, it is always a Japanese cultural product and many people who haven't been initiated to Japanese culture find them to be confusing at first. That is why a new "visual and written vocabulary" need to be learned (Schodt 2012: 30). Finally, it is surmised that the huge number of storylines that is produced each and every year could well represent "the chatter of the collective unconscious – an articulation of the dream world", as reading manga is an immersion into the "unvarnished, unretouched reality of the Japanese mind" (Schodt 2012: 31). It is assumed that during the translation process, the translator will face difficulties, moments of doubt and uncertainty in what choices he should make to "immerse" non-Japanese people into that "unretouched reality". Such challenges will be mentioned as recorded and mentioned by academics and translators.

In the following chapters, English "scanlated" manga issues will be presented after being translated in Greek. The study will then attempt to trace and present the challenges and issues that the fan translators faced when translating the original Japanese text into English. Matters of Japanese culture, politeness and impoliteness issues, power distance, morphology and syntax will be explored. Then, my personal Greek "scanlation" of the issues will be analyzed, the various challenges I faced when converting an already "converted" text into a third language. The similarities and differences between the English and the Greek version will be discussed, taking into consideration the Japanese – English – Greek linguistic backgrounds. Finally, the opinion of translation specialists will be requested. Their appreciation of the English and Greek translations will be asked for and whether these texts sound natural and not artificial. These specialists will, therefore, compare the two translations and detect any linguistic abnormalities which may inhibit a coherent and cohesive understanding by readers.

There is a big rift when it comes to the Greek appearance of Japanese original content, and specifically manga. This study aims at raising awareness of the multitude of high-quality works of art of the Japanese people, while additionally trying to motivate Greek translators to get involved, immerse themselves into Japanese comics, take up the challenge and "fill the void" where little to none official or fan Greek translations of manga exist. I hope that the presentation and exposition of manga issues from all major demographic categories will become the catalyst for such a feat.

Chapter 2

Japanese manga: Identity and Chronology

2.1 Definition

The Japanese term "manga" (漫画) is a word consisting of two distinct Kanji characters. The first character roughly translates to "whimsical" or "impromptu" and the second one to "picture" (Webb 2006), therefore creating the meaning of "impulsive drawing". In Japan, this word is meant to describe all kinds, types and origins of cartoons and animations. In contrast, for non-Japanese speakers this word is used to refer to solely Japanese comics, ones written by Japanese authors ("mangaka") and published within the country, excluding all other nationalities and types of drawing.

Manga issues are usually printed in black and white. In Japan, manga magazines serialize these stories. The nature of the stories is episodic, and the next issue of the magazine continues from where the previous issue ended. When many such chapters of the story are serialized, they are then republished as a standalone "tankōbon" volume, which is "essentially the same as the trade paperbacks or graphic novels collected from U.S. comics originally printed in comic book form" (Brenner 2007: 305). When a manga achieves certain popularity and reception, it is often adapted into a television series ("anime series") at the same time it is serialized or even after its run. More scarcely, animation or live-action films or series become the basis for a manga.

The stories presented in manga cover a wide range of genres, such as action/adventure, drama, romance, science fiction, comedy, detective, erotica, sports, historical and many more. Some manga tend to conform to the norms of their specific genre, but it is quite frequent for some to blur the borders and mix and match themes and iconography from vastly different genres. In manga the specific elements of one genre are broken apart and fused with other ones in such a manner and frequency that it is unusual to find a title that is purely one specific genre (Brenner 2007: 107).

2.2 Characteristics and special traits

All comics, no matter their place of origin are based on the concept of sequential art in order to be understood by the human eye. It has been foretold (Eisner 1985) that to communicate concepts through words and pictures, certain items need to move throughout space. As for these events to exist within a complete narrative experience, they need to be broken and split up into sequenced segments. The artist puts a lot of care into creating these sequences, considering both "the commonality of human experience and the phenomenon of our perception of it, which seems to consist of frames or episodes" (Eisner 1985: 38) to create an easily comprehensible result. These frames are usually put one beside the other and up and down. The reader moves from up to bottom and left to right. Manga chapters differ in the way they are read; the reader needs to start from the right side and move towards the left one. This way of reading is aligned with traditional Japanese writing.

There is no definite answer as to why manga are read in this manner. Looking back in Japanese literary history might provide some valuable insight as to when sequential art first appeared. Many have considered scrolls created by Buddhist monks in the 12th century as the origins of sequential writing in Japan. These scrolls contained drawings of animals, ghost stories, religious narratives and so forth. They were quite long and they were read from right to left. It is quite important to note that these scrolls contained a "definite sequence across the page to tell their story and thus lay the pattern for the sequential storytelling to come" (Brenner 2007: 2).

Manga possess narrative cohesion, coherence and consummation. Western comic series, such as Spiderman, Batman, X-Men etc., are created with the aim of being released for years, even decades, by utilizing storyline plot holes, parallel universes and even total reimagining and reboots. For example, the Batman comic series first aired in 1940 and is still ongoing. At the time of writing these lines, the longest running manga series by number of published volumes (205 vol.) is "*Dokaben*" which was first serialized in 1972 and ended in 2018. It has been, therefore, suggested that manga series

are released with endings in the mind of the mangaka; it is a work with self-realisation as a goal (Thompson 2007).

Moreover, Thompson (2007) went on to suggest that one important trait of manga as compared to comics, is that the artist is more important in the writing and publishing process and has a much more prominent role than the one the comic artist possesses. He further denotes that most mangaka have in their property a part of the copyrights to their own work. American comics copyrights were owned almost solely by big corporations up until the 1990s and their artists were viewed as being expendable and replaceable.

Manga are special and discreet from other comics due to their unique artistic conventions, characteristics, style and iconography. The drawing of characters and backgrounds can range from realistic to extremely cartoonish. One commonplace convention is that manga characters are designed with big eyes, flat faces and small noses and mouths. Certain symbols have been extensively used in manga in order to portray emotion, sound, action. They usually appear on the face of characters to show their psychological state and feelings. These symbols are usually referred to as "manpu" (漫符, manga symbols).

As foretold, most manga titles show a degree of "genre hybridity" in the sense of blending different norms and traits that would seem unrelated or even opposed to each other at first sight. One such example that could be mentioned is Naoko Takeuchi's *Sailor Moon*. This manga series centered on the adventures of a schoolgirl called Usagi Tsukino, who was the ability to transform to hero-like entity called "Sailor Moon". During the course of the story, she and her allies, the Sailor Guardians, fight against multiple villains who attempt to disrupt peace and destroy the Solar System. It has been stated that even if other manga revolve around action stories with protagonists that are male, Sailor Moon broke this stereotypical convention by employing female characters as the main leads. These heroines aren't simply the good-looking, cute, archetypical personas which are found all over manga targeting the young girl audience; they are also strong, potent, with efficient fighting skills and lots of action-packed adventures (Allison 2006).

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2.3 A history

Trying to pinpoint the exact origin of manga in time and place within Japan is not an easy feat. The earliest evidence of drawings – albeit caricatures and not real works of art – which were discovered were those that some workers drew on ceiling beams during the restoration of the Horyu-ji Temple in Nara around 700 CE. In the 1100s, a Buddhist monk by the name of Toba Sojo created a series of picture scrolls showing various animals, like monkeys, frogs, and rats mimicking human activities. These scrolls are commonly known as "Chōjū-jinbutsu-giga" (鳥獣人物戯画 – Animal-Person Caricatures). "Chōjū-giga" is credited by many as the first work of manga in Japanese history. Even if it has been disputed that Toba Sojo is the sole creator of the scrolls to the different styles existing within them, these kinds of drawings became so popular during the period that this style became collectively known as "Toba-e", the Toba Pictures (Paine & Soper 1981, McCarthy 2014). Some of the early traits of manga are evident here, as within the scrolls the events flow in a sequential manner from right pane towards the left.

An important station for manga history was in the 16th-17th centuries. Japanese society was in a peaceful period after many decades of continuous battles and civil unrest. Artists had the peace of mind, tools and means to create more refined works of art that were meant to be embraced by the masses. Woodblock printing was the technique that flourished during this period in Japan. Vivid imagery with scenes, people, animals and objects with bright, vibrant colors from the surrounding world constituted a new style of illustration called "ukiyo-e", "Pictures of the Floating World". This drawing style's influence can be witnessed within contemporary manga. As Brenner (2007) noted, the tradition and act of observing life and converting it into stylized beauty, the whole essence of ukiyo-e, is evident within manga visuals.

The term "manga" is first used in 1798 (McCarthy 2014) and considered to be coined by Hokusai. Some of the first published works are Santō Kyōden's picturebook "*Shiji no yukikai*" (1798), Aikawa Minwa's "*Manga Hyakujo*" (1814) as well as the widely known "*Hokusai Manga*" (1814-1834). It is worth mentioning that even if the term is "manga", it is not so in the modern, contemporary manner, as most of these works were just series of sketches that did not have any narrative cohesion or in-frame dialogue (McCarthy 2014).

What played an integral part into the formation of manga in the way they are known now is Japan's opening up to the West and the great influence it harnessed in all aspects of Japanese culture and society. Cartoonists from overseas started pouring into Japan and popular comic strips from American newspapers are brought into the country. The advent of modern print technology made cartoons, comic strips and books part Japan's mass culture (Prohl & Nelson 2012). The Japanese cartoonists, even if being influenced by Western comics, managed to maintain the simplicity of layout and the traits of ukiyo-e in their works, creating a distinctly Japanese work of art (Brenner 2007).

World War II was a cornerstone and had a big impact on the Japanese world of cartooning and many other aspects of Japanese society. First, before the outbreak as well as during the War, artists were threatened and blackmailed by a highly tyrannical state in order to produce patriotic, militaristic and unifying works of art that would act as state propaganda. This caused many artists to flee the country and subsequently brought the comic industry to a halt; a halt it took time the Japanese manga industry to recover from (Schodt 1983). The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki would additionally provide a base for many themes, concepts and ideas that reverberate in manga, such as the relationship between human and technology, the danger of a post-apocalyptic world as well as strong anti-war messages (Brenner 2007).

After the end of the WWII, the manga industry quickly rose from its ashes. Artists would develop their own manga strips for pay libraries, others would draw for children's magazines in black and white due to the economic adversities of post-war economy. Popular issues were collected and reprinted as "tankōbon" (graphic novels). Many of today's manga conventions rose from this period, such as the traditional black and white drawing and publishing. While Japanese economy improved after the war, the manga business flourished alongside it. Weekly magazines were introduced, manga were licensed in order to be adapted as anime, toys and movies. At the same time, the medium started to attain critical consideration, the stories became more diverse and sales highly rose (Thomson 2007). Nowadays, manga have amassed cult followings both in Japan as well as outside the country, constituting a medium of entertainment recognized by the whole world.

Chapter 3

Different ages, different worlds; paradigms of manga and their acceptance by the public

3.1 Demographics and orientation

As previously mentioned, the stories in manga cover a wide spectrum of genres and themes, from action/adventure all the way to romance and slice of life and everything in between. This in itself is one way of sorting the stories according to their content. All the extensive and diverse stories are so many that they would seemingly be impossible to allocate and categorize in specific, distinct groups. Even so, in manga industry most titles fall under five major categories, according to the sex and age of the public they address. It should be made clear that even if these groups exist for the sake of categorization, there is no golden rule or prohibition as to who is able to read titles of another demographic group than the one they fall under; this distinction exists solely for the sake of sorting the vast array of manga. The five categories are:

a. "Kodomomuke" manga address young children, at times even younger than 10 years old. They contain cute, animal-like characters and they always have a moralistic character, imparting life lessons to children as to educate them on how to follow a righteous and ethical way of living. Some notable examples of such manga are *Doraemon* (1970), *Pokémon Adventures* (1997) and *Fluffy, Fluffy Cinnamoroll* (2005). Notable "kodomomuke magazines" are "CoroCoro Comic" and "Televi-Kun".

b. "Shonen" manga, which is the group containing the most manga out of all categories and some of the most famous and recognizable ones. These stories address young male elementary school students up until their late teenage years. Shonen manga usually revolve around a male protagonist who gets caught up in extreme adventures and action sequences, amassing great strength as the story progresses and finally concluding with a great act of saving the world. In all sense, these manga are a coming-of-age story. There are also occasional

humorous plots and heart-warming scenes of great emotional impact and intensity. The most prevalent genres of "shonen" manga are science fiction, fantasy, action, fighting and machines. Themes and morals found in these stories concern the power of friendship and family, self-improvement, sacrifice, honor and respect. Some of the most sold and widely known anime in this category are *One Piece* (1997), *Naruto* (1999), *Bleach* (2001), *Attack on Titan* (2009), *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba* (2016) and many more. "Shonen" manga are serialized in magazines such as "Weekly Shonen Jump", "Jump Square" and others, some of which sell over two million copies per week (Thompson 2007).

c. "Shojo" manga are those that target young female elementary students up until early adulthood. The genres of these manga range from fantasy, romance, historical and contemporary drama to science fiction. They usually feature a young female protagonist who falls in love, experiences first-time emotions, learns to cope and deal with them and eventually grow up and mature. It is frequent that "shojo" stories might blend adventure with romance or any other of the aforementioned genres. In stark contrast to "shonen" manga, "shojo" manga do not focus on high action and battles but on drama, the emotions and their complications. Most of these stories are also considered to be coming-of-age. An important feature of "shojo" manga is the perception and presentation of romance and love in their most idealized, wholesome way. Some famous manga in this group are *Itazura na Kiss* (1990), *Sailor Moon* (1991), *Fruits Basket* (1998) and *Maid Sama!* (2005). "Shojo" magazines where such manga are serialized are "Ciao", "Ribon", "Hana to Yume" among others.

d. "Seinen" manga are the ones that are marketed towards male adults over the age of 18. These stories are essentially grown-up, mature and explicit versions of "shonen" subject matters. Some genres are action/adventure, science fiction, sports, comedy, fantasy, politics etc. "Seinen" manga are characterized by the darker, more serious, sometimes grave tone that permeates the story. Additionally, adult content such as graphic violence, sexual encounters, drug usage and vulgar language appear. Manga that do not fulfil the criteria of the other categories are usually allocated within "seinen" manga. Protagonists are usually male and whereas "shonen" heroes are usually innocent, full of willfulness and naivety, their "seinen" counterparts are parts of the crude,

realistic universes they have to face, in which they do not always have the upper hand of the situation. Widely known "seinen" manga are *Akira* (1982), *Berserk* (1989), *Monster* (1994) and *Vinland Saga* (2005). Major magazines are "Weekly Young Magazine", "Ultra Jump" and "Big Comic Spirits".

e. "Josei" manga address female adults over 18 years old. Intended to portray realistic, mature and somewhat real-life stories, these manga differ from their "shojo" counterparts in regard to both narrative and content. "Josei" genres are usually drama, fantasy and romance. Protagonists are usually female and the story centers on their intimate and romantic relationships. In these manga, love is portrayed in a realistic manner, not idealized and aggrandized like in "shojo" manga. Sexually explicit content may sometimes be present in these stories, ranging from mild romantic scenes to all-out explicitly drawn erotic scenes. Some of the most exemplary manga in this category are *Paradise Kiss* (1999), *Honey and Clover* (2000), *Loveless* (2002) and *Perfect World* (2014). Famous "josei" magazines are "Cocohana", "Petit Comic", "Be Love" and "Kiss".

Magazines that publish manga usually contain stories that all target one demographic group, but it is sometimes possible they offer mixed stories for a wider audience, as the lines between demographics in some manga titles can be blurred and difficult to define. Therefore, there are magazines that publish "shonen" and "seinen" stories, "shonen" and "kodomomuke" stories as well as "shojo" and "josei" stories. This practice of including stories that mix different demographic group characteristics is in itself proof that these broad categories are meant to provide mere guidance and direction as to who should read what but not become impenetrable and imperative guidelines; a young boy might decide to read a "shojo" manga, a young girl a "shonen" manga, an adult might read a "kodomomuke" manga and so on and so forth. It all depends on the type of story one wants to read and the type of narrative he/she desires to indulge him/herself in.

3.2 Landmark examples of important manga stories

It should be pointed out that the number of published manga stories is so extensive that picking out some of the most landmark and characteristic ones is not an easy task. There

are so many different narratives with completely unique settings, characters and overarching and secondary plots. Consequently, choosing five "exemplary" manga out of some thousands in existence may be considered a subjective choice. For this reason, my criterion of manga choice is based on the number of sales both within and outside Japan.

It ought to be mentioned that the manga with the most sales are part of the "shonen" demographic group. The most sold manga in the world is a "shonen" manga, and that is Oda's *One Piece* (1997). This title has surpassed 490 million sales worldwide: over 400 million in Japan and more than 90 million in the rest of the world (Loo 2021).

One Piece is an all in all archetypical "shonen" story. It revolves around Monkey D. Luffy. Luffy is a young boy who, after being inspired by a legendary pirate he idolized, aspires to find the world's greatest pirate treasure of all time, the "One Piece" and then proclaim himself "the King of Pirates". Over the course of the story, he comes across many different people, some of whom join his pirate crew and form the main cast of the story. He gets caught up in many perilous, even hilarious adventures, through which he emerges victorious, more capable and even more willing to achieve his ulterior goal. *One Piece* is still ongoing and is expected to finish between 2024 and 2025 (Loo 2019).

What makes this title so popular and acclaimed by fans is stated by Sasada (2011) who cites an editor of a popular weekly manga magazine. That editor suggested five crucial characteristics to create a "fantasy battle manga". The first characteristic lies in creating a world that is accepted in a natural manner by the readers. The second characteristic is creating a reason for struggling that can be easily understood by the readers so that they can empathize with it. Thirdly, the battle sequences should be drawn out clearly to show exactly what is happening. As a fourth characteristic he mentions the existence of a pretty heroine and finally, the evoking of happiness and laughter as well as sadness and tears. *One Piece* includes all of the above factors, cementing it as "the epitome of a hero manga" (Sasada 2011: 201).

In addition, the reasons for *One Piece*'s popularity can be traced back to how it fulfills all the criteria of its demographic group as well as imposing certain values and themes as of utmost importance. Gavett (2004), as quoted in Sasada (2011: 201), suggests that "Shonen Jump", the magazine that serializes *One Piece*, is acclaimed and famous among the Japanese people because it promotes the notion that "friendship,

perseverance – and winning" are significant values. These values chime with the memories and teachings of post-World War II Japan, when its people tried to rebuild the country after its defeat; thus, Luffy as a "shonen" hero provides inspiration for the Japanese (Sasada 2011: 201).

In the "shojo" manga domain, a highly representative work is Takaya's *Fruits Basket* (1998). In *Fruits Basket*, which has been named after a popular elementary school game played in Japan, an orphan girl by the name of Tohru Honda gets involved with members of the Soma family. The twelve members she gets to know are seemingly possessed by the animals of the Chinese zodiac and they automatically transform into these animals whenever they feel weak, under stress or whenever they get hugged by a person of the opposite sex that is not possessed by a zodiac. During the course of the series, Tohru becomes aware of the difficulties and hardships these twelve people have faced because of their condition and thanks to her loving and caring nature she helps them to psychologically heal and overcome their problems. Meanwhile, she also discovers more about her own self and she learns that the love she feels for the Soma family is reciprocal and that they too embrace her as a member of their own. As of November 2018, *Fruits Basket* has achieved more than 30 million sales worldwide, making it one of the highest selling "shojo" series (Hodgkins 2018). Such success is not without a reason. Fans have suggested that even behind all the supernatural aspects of the story, *Fruits Basket* deals with real life issues and problems that anyone can actually relate to. The author depicted all kinds of psychological trauma that a teenager or an adult could face and then portrayed the characters healing and getting over them. The fairytale curse in this story was a "conduit for portraying relatable strife" and that is exactly what sets up "Takaya's genius" (Cimi 2020).

In the senior years' demographics, Yukimura's *Vinland Saga* (2005) is a good example of a "seinen" manga, which is still serialized today. *Vinland's Saga* is a mixture of historical and fictional characters and events. The story takes off in 1013 AD England, which at the time was controlled by the Danes, known as Vikings. The events follow Thorfinn, a real-life historical explorer and his adventures while being a member of a mercenary group. *Vinland Saga* is based on three stories (sagas), *The Falteyjarbók*, *The Saga of the Greenlanders* and *The Saga of Eric the Red* (Collins 2020). Danesin (2017) has argued that this manga deserves to be praised for "an outstanding revitalization of the Norse Literature, displaying new significations through the reconstruction of its

characters' lives and psychologies" while at the same time "it is a prime example of a new generation of books, which focuses on realism and rejects past stereotypes (that have been attributed to Vikings since the 19th century)" (Danesin 2017: 212-213). Finally, the value of this work is further praised in the way of giving readers the opportunity and prospect to delve into medieval literature unknown to them, thus gaining an insight into Norse history, while at the same time enjoying a fun fictional work that transfers them to another time and place (Danesin 2017: 214).

Ninomiya's *Nodame Cantabile* (2001) is one of the most characteristic examples of "josei" manga. Having sold over 37 million copies, it enjoys the status of the manga with the most sales in its demographic group. It is about the relationship that develops between two talented music college students. On one hand there is Shinichi Chiaki, who is a prodigy, the top student at college who aspires to become a world-class conductor. While he is extremely capable in both the piano and the violin, he is trapped within Japan due to a phobia of airplanes and the ocean he had since childhood. On the other hand, there is Megumi Noda, a piano student at the same college, who has a difficult character and she is known among her peers for her eccentricity. Even though she is talented, she plays by ear rather than by following the score, therefore being regarded as sloppy. As the story unfolds, the two eventually fall in love, help each other overcome their weaknesses and achieve their dreams.

Some academics have discussed the wide success of *Nodame Cantabile*. For instance, Tung (2009) has argued about the live action TV series adaptation of the manga whose success was based "on a subtle balance between conventions and innovations" (Tung 2009: 89). He further denoted that *Nodame Cantabile* had the power to be based on a subject such as Western art music and still become a "sensational success", creating unprecedented models for 21st century Japanese series (Tung 2009: 93). Of course, Tung discusses these positive aspects referring to the TV series, but since the series is based on the manga, some arguments may probably have merit for it too.

The last and probably most characteristic manga not only for its demographic group but for the whole medium is Fujiko's *Doraemon* (1970). Doraemon is a robot cat from the 22nd century who is sent back to the past by Sewashi Nobi. Sewashi tasks Doraemon with looking after his grandfather Nobita Nobi, so that his children have a better chance at life. Nobita is a weak elementary school student, prone to failure and misfortunes.

The stories are usually self-contained and they center on Doraemon helping out Nobita to overcome his problems. Doraemon, being an entity from the future, has a wide array of gadgets and tools that Nobita uses and often get him in more trouble than helping him out. Eventually, the duo develops a trusting friendship. *Doraemon*'s success is so wide it has also influenced more areas than simply popular culture. For example, it has garnered recognition in the technological and educational sectors worldwide (Tsukamoto 2015). Doraemon is a story that "gives hopes and dreams to children to instill positive change in themselves, the people and society around them and make the world itself a better place" (Tsukamoto 2015: 3728).

The above provide only a slight insight into the vast, endless world of Japanese manga. The stories mentioned are but a small speck of what has been conceived and manifested as original storytelling and what is still in the works. As discussed above, these stories are just some of the most influential ones that have received praise and amassed cult followings both in Japan as well as in the whole world. In the following section this appraisal and impact in pop culture will be further investigated.

3.3 Reception of manga as a popular medium

Manga have managed to create and hold a position within the hearts of the public and the critics alike in the last few decades. As discussed in the previous chapter, manga creation has been in a gradual and progressive course through literary history within Japan. Since early on, works of art and literature showcased the very first characteristics that manga still maintain today. It is thus safe to assume that manga are a considerably popular medium of significant commercial value within their home country. In addition, they have a large impact on popular opinion, while at the same time they form and promote values, ideas, themes and notions.

Manga have also become popular to people overseas and many of them have created big fanbases and "cult followings" across the world. A recent example of how influential manga has become as part of Japanese pop culture is through the market value of the anime industry. In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the global anime market shrank for the first time in 11 years. Even still, the overseas part of the market

grew by 3.2%, surpassing the domestic sales for the first time ever (Dudok de Wit 2021). It is important to highlight the link between anime and manga markets, since manga are the source material for the majority of anime adaptations. Characteristically, Nakano (2004), as quoted within O'Hagan (2007), states that "the importance of manga lies in their subsequent multiple use as a source material in the secondary market, which includes books, TV anime, films, direct-to-video anime and character merchandise" (O' Hagan 2007: 243).

Johnson-Woods has stated that over the past two decades manga has evolved to much more than just a "quirky style of comics". It has become the "new comic-book art format". She has further noted that while mangas appeared outside Japan in the 1970s, they came to the foreground through fan trading and anime (Johnson-Woods 2010). They were initially linked with the subculture of science fiction, but their rise in the eyes of the public made them a new part of mainstream culture and an established commercial product (Sell 2011).

This tendency of manga being a part of mainstream culture is not only visible in Asia or the US but also within Europe. Until 2010, Italy was considered the largest manga market in Europe, with France lagging a little bit behind, but seeing a 500% increase in offer between 2001 and 2005. Germany held the third place on European manga market share, while other important markets in Europe are those of Spain and Belgium (Bouissou, Pellitteri, Dolle-Weinkauf, Beldi 2010). Publishing houses in the aforementioned countries would translate manga in the national languages before selling them.

One point which should be made clear is that the above data amounts only to officially translated issues by publishers. A considerable – if not the most considerable – portion of manga translation and distribution outside of Japan happens through fans who voluntarily translate manga (the so-called "scanlators") in order for other fans who do not understand Japanese to be able to read them. Data is difficult to be found concerning fan translated manga chapters as the activity might be considered illegal or somewhere along these lines according to different regulations in different areas and regions; despite this, websites that offer fan translated English manga can be easily accessed through a Google search.

In Greece the data available is very limited and scarce. Official publishing houses apprehensively and only as of late have started recognizing the cultural value of manga and the large impact they have on the worldwide scene; and even this can be subjected to doubt. When searching through the official website of "Public", one of the largest stores that spans across the country and known for its large book collection, the results are disheartening. Even if there is a considerable number of English translated manga, the same cannot be said about the works translated in Greek, where only 84 volumes exist at the moment of writing. These volumes are mostly of entirely different manga. In some cases, more than one volumes of the same manga appear in the web store, but not the entire story. For example, Takaya's *Fruits Basket*, which was mentioned previously as one of the most known "shojo" manga, consists of 23 volumes. In the website store, only 5 of the 23 volumes are translated in Greek and are available. Additionally, only one official publisher, "Anubis Publications" is responsible for the 72 volumes which are Japanese original manga. The other 12 works are either manga adaptations of famous non-Japanese literary works or comics originating in Greece based on manga iconography, therefore being categorized under manga for the sake of convenience.

Departing from official translations and trying to find fan groups that translate into Greek yields very few results as well. Most websites and data found point to fan groups that mainly work by translating anime TV series and not the original manga counterparts. Even if some groups were found, their work was limited and incomplete in most cases. For example, a fansub group called "Greek Otaku Team" which appears to translate both anime and manga have not updated their website since 2019. Additionally, they have only 7 manga translation projects which are not recent. Oda's *One Piece* is currently in its 100th volume and "Greek Otaku Team" have only translated parts from volumes 73 - 78.

As mentioned above, there is a discrepancy between the enormous resonance of manga in pop culture worlwide and how this resonance appears and is easily accessible for the Greek readers and fans. There is a big absence of official and fan translators alike and even for the very few who do work on bringing manga to Greece in Greek, sluggishness and discontinuity are prevalent problems. Moreover, insight into the translation process which occurs and the challenges a translator faces when converting Japanese original content from English to Greek is virtually non-existent due to the above deficits

described. It is safe to assume that certain cultural issues arise in such a process; issues concerning the differences between the Japanese, the English-speaking and the Greek cultures and how the translator should bridge such differences in order to create a natural and cohesive manga in the target language. Additionally, in the translation process, certain lexical, grammatical or even structural features that originate in the Japanese text and sloppily translated into English might pose a challenge for the translator to transfer into Greek without altering the intended message. The above as well as others are unfortunately difficult to find and catalogue in the present, lacking situation of manga translation into the Greek language.

Chapter 4

The translator as a basic agent of the story

4.1 Weaver of an international tapestry

There is an abundant wealth of literature in the world. Every nation is responsible for the birth of important minds; shrewd, sharp-witted writers who have created poems, novels, plays, comics and many more literary types and genres. This richness is relished by people of the same language, they are able to savor the narrative and understand the deep, intricate network of meanings as intended by the author. When it comes to users of other languages, foreign to that of the written content, there is one person of utmost importance who is called upon to inaugurate these foreigners into the fray of the story: the translator.

The translation of a literary work and its overall quality are important – if not the most defining – factors which ensure that the foreign reader will receive the same experience, the same feelings and thoughts as those of the native one. In essence, a translation is a "communicative activity" that has to do with the transfer of information across linguistic boundaries and borders. A translator is more than just a "bilingual interpreter", s/he is thought to be a "mediator between cultures" (Bassnett 2011: 1). Therefore, it may be assumed that translators are, in a way, harbingers of internationalism. Through their quality work, people across many countries can appreciate other cultures and their traditions, different and entirely new processes of thought, a plurality of works meant for recreation, entertainment or education, the offspring of the collective social conscience. On that account, a translator may be considered the means of such facilitation, the "weaver" of an international tapestry of culture.

As vividly described by Carus (1980), progressively the walls between languages and human understanding are becoming smaller and less formidable. "The translators all over the world are picking up the shards of the broken Tower of Babel and fitting them together into a new and colorful mosaic. The more pieces they find and resurrect, the

more inspiring and powerful the new masterpiece will be. The tower will not reach to heaven, but as a work of art it may eventually reunite the speakers of this earth's different tongues" (Carus 1980: 178).

In manga, a translator might not have to work on a big bulk of paragraphs, but his/her work is challenging and demanding in its own way. The idiosyncrasies and quirks of the medium, as well as those of the Japanese culture need to be transferred in a natural, cohesive manner, one that will allow the readers to appreciate the flow of the story, feel a part of it. The interlocutory nature of comics, as a whole, is more direct than narration and the translator is constantly in a state of immediate representation of the characters. S/he does not simply translate words, but his/her work is a continuous study of manners, thoughts, reactions and psychology of the speaking characters.

4.2 Fans take action: "Scanlating" as an act of unofficial manga translation

Translation is an act that enables people not knowledgeable in one language to understand and take part in something otherwise unintelligible. Manga are a Japanese originating product, therefore a translation is vital for their sharing and wide distribution to the rest of the world, to the speakers of languages other than Japanese. Translations made by big or small publishing houses exist and they are found in many bookstores, but one could argue that official translations are not those most read and cherished by fans of the media; unofficial ones written by fans or fan groups called "scanlations" are an extremely popular translated form of manga that many people over the world consider as canon and authentic.

Scanlating as an activity entails one person or more often a group of people partaking in the following procedure. First comes the acquisition of an original printed manga chapter and its scanning and digitization through appropriate computer programs. Then, the clearing-up of blemishes and marks and the removal of the Japanese text. Subsequently, the group translates and inserts the target language text into the corresponding positions where the Japanese text lay. Finally, the re-encoded translated

text is published into affiliate manga distribution websites, where readers can easily find and read them.

The act of scanlating raises many questions and complications on whether it is illegal. Since it is an online activity different laws and regulations are involved and some of them might even appear self-contradictory. Initially, according to Japanese copyright law, scanlating is illegal as it consists of unauthorized translation and reproduction, but at the same time, problems on whether it is considered a "fair use" activity arise. Scanlations are products usually created by consumers and they are translated free of charge to be shared with other parts of the fan base. Therefore, there is currently an inveterate debate on the illegality of this activity. Lee (2009) argues that the industry is well aware of the existence of scanlation, it is regarded illegal but at the same time the aspects of fan culture, the individual and emotional impact are acknowledged. Additionally, the manga industry makes good use of scanlation as an indicator for potential new, popular manga projects to officially license and translate. A distinctive statement is that it is difficult to know whether scanlation actually harms official translated sales since "the series that are most scanlated have sold the best" and they have such immense popularity that "even people who are reading on scanlation would buy physical copies as well" (Lee 2009: 1019). Thus, it can be assumed that the industry shows a relative indecisiveness or even tolerance to scanlating, since there is no concise and sufficient data to indicate loss of profit; conversely, there are indications and suppositions of its good offices.

It is important to state and denote the importance and influence of the scanlated manga in the fan community. It has been argued that these translations are in reality more important than the official ones due to their accessibility and widespread distribution through relevant websites. More specifically, Douglass, Huber and Manovich (2011) hypothesize that the statistics for visits to scanlation websites show that more people outside Japan encounter manga in their scanlated form, rather than through their official translations offered by publishers.

Another possible factor for the predominance of scanlated content over officially translated one is that scanlators adapt, start working on manga titles and complete them in a much faster rate than publishing houses, allowing the fan base to experience new chapters soon after their initial publication in Japan. In addition, requests for certain

titles are more easily made by fans and accepted by scanlation groups that decide to undertake them. Publishing houses usually take longer to acquire licensing rights and that would probably be the case for titles they consider profitable, with high prospects and a big audience; fan groups do not work under such requirements.

Taking into consideration and overcoming the strange and peculiar relationship between the manga industry and the scanlating community, one must consider that the product of scanlation is in itself a translational process outcome. The people involved in this procedure take up the mantle of the translator, going through the same stages and concerns a professional has to face when dealing with similar content. That being the case, manga translation is a delicate process with its own special characteristics and ordeals, some of which are exposed later.

4.3 Practical affairs in manga translation

As a distinct entertainment medium with its own qualities and characteristics, manga give rise to special challenges for the translators. In turn, they decide to employ different techniques and methods that help in solving these issues. Academics have brought up such matters to the foreground.

Schodt (2012) wrote that for any translator, interpreter or nonnative speaker who wants to achieve true fluency in Japanese speaking, "reading manga is one of the best ways to keep up with the many changes that are constantly occurring in the Japanese language", because the Japanese written in those issues are much more alive and "closer to the street" than the language one can find in other printed texts.

Fan groups that translate mangas heavily influenced the evolution process of the translation strategies for the whole medium. For the readers, these translations are considered an overtly foreignized text, as they know that what they are reading is a translation and not an original text, a fact that makes the fanbase appreciate the text as more than a merely foreign import product, but as a "cultural possession" (Sell 2011). Sell states that translators increasingly prefer the use of foreignization strategies, so as to preserve the elements of the source culture, a fact that is not only preferred, but expected by the manga readers.

According to Furuhata-Turner (2019), translators can employ literal or non-literal translation. Literal translation is a direct, word-to-word transference of the original content to the target language with proper grammar and idiomatic nature. It is a kind of translation that might limit translation activities and it is quite useful when the source and target languages are members of the same linguistic family. In the case of manga, which are of a different family than English and Greek, translators need to switch to non-literal translation approaches. These approaches consist of the following procedures as mentioned by Furuhata-Turner (2019:78):

a. Transference, using a loan word to transfer a source word to the target language,
b. Transposition, changing a word class with another one, without changing the intended meaning,
c. Equivalence, translation by entirely different stylistic and structural methods, producing equivalent results,
d. Compensation, where content impossible to be translated in the same location is compensated in another location of the text,
e. Omission, when there is no correspondence between cultures or languages,
f. Adaptation, when the intended message is unfamiliar in the target culture, so a new situation needs to be created for it,
g. Paraphrasing, the restating or recomposing of phrases or passages to enhance clarification of meaning.

One of the issues Sell (2011) presented in manga translation is the reading direction and the complications it creates. Manga are read from right to left, whereas Western comics in the opposite way. Also, Japanese is frequently written vertically. The manga panels and artworks are designed with this idea in their essence, indicating the interdependency of image and text. That creates issues in translation, where speech bubbles are too narrow and the translated text is unable to fit in. The translator then must reduce his target text or widen the speech bubble. The reduction of the text usually consists of content omission. Moreover, switching from vertical to horizontal text may leave a lot of white space in the bubbles which might possibly make the images appear as if something was intentionally left out. In that case, the speech balloons are erased and redrawn from scratch (Sell 2011:103).

According to Forceville, Veale and Feyaerts (2010), deciding upon the typeface in comics is a significant choice on the ground of visual features. It is stated that even if there are no standardized regulations for such decisions, it is a common practice to use large, bold typefaces to indicate loudness. This practice is considered a manifestation of the notion that "big equals more" and in this case, size indicates volume.

Onomatopoeia words and mimetic expressions are another issue explored by Sell. Petersen (2009) has stated that sounds in manga are so rich with big variation in part due the nature of the Japanese language, which has a wider array of onomatopoeic expressions than most other languages. Even if onomatopoeic words exist in most languages, Japanese is special in the sense that "even events, actions and feelings that do not naturally produce sounds are given onomatopoeic expression". In addition, it is clearly noted that onomatopoeic sounds "enter daily discourse with much greater frequency than other languages, and they have played an important role in storytelling traditions in Japan". (Petersen 2009:166-167).

According to Inose (2008), "Kojien" which is one important Japanese dictionary, gives these discreet categories with their definitions. The first is "Giseigo", which contains words that imitate human and animal voices (such as *wanwan*, a dog barking). Next there is "Giongo", containing words that imitate real sounds (such as *zaazaa*, the sound of the falling rain). Finally, there is "Gitaigo", the group that contains words that describe visual, tactile and other non-auditory sensitive impressions (such as *furafura*, which is the state of being unable to walk in a steady manner). Inose went on to conclude that "Giseigo" is a type of "Giongo", which is what we refer to as onomatopoeic words. On the other hand, "Gitaigo", words that are created from states that do not produce any sounds, refers to mimetic words. It is then stated that while it is quite common for languages to contain forms of onomatopoeia, the mimetic words are a distinctive feature of the Japanese language, as very few other languages are known to contain such expressions (Inose 2008: 98). Sell also argues that there is even such vocabulary that is exclusive to manga, not spoken even by the Japanese speakers. It is also stated that in manga, these words are "more often than not physically part of the artwork, from both an aesthetic viewpoint and the fact that they are usually hand drawn, making it easy to see the interrelatedness of images and text, as they are literally both image and text" (Sell 2011:99).

Another important issue translators might face is the appearance of linguistic items and cultural terms that are specific to the source culture and are difficult to be presented through an equivalent term in the target text. Some of these examples in Japanese manga are the honorific suffixes. Fabbretti (2017) has noted that there are three main ways in which the Japanese linguistic items are preserved in English scanlations (Fabbretti 2017:465). These are:

a. Transliterating Japanese pronouns in the titles of Japanese manga into English,
b. Transliterating honorific suffixes in speech bubbles within manga pages,
c. Explaining the culture-bound references through translation notes inserted either in the margin of the manga page or at the end of the chapter.

Two other strategies that a translator can employ is either complete replacement, if functionality of the text is favored over the aesthetics, appendage with subtitles or notes when the word has an important semantic value and the translator does not wish to alter the artwork. It is clarified that these techniques help in making the translation accessible to a wider audience, but "they become problematic when there is no equivalent vocabulary in the target language" (Sell 2011: 99). Other strategies are the romanization of Japanese onomatopoeia, the appropriation of words and phrases which are of no mimetic nature or even the complete non translation of the onomatopoeia, leaving it as is in the target text. This has been attributed as being "respect of the source material" and "authentic" Japanese manga (Sell 2011: 100). It has been stated that the reader might be unable to read the onomatopoeic expression, but s/he is able to conjure up the intended sound from the context and the choice of font (Huang & Archer 2014:475).

Another strategy that translators widely employ in manga, but not other types of comics, is the use of translation notes. Translation notes are a valuable personal input from the translator, therefore deducing that the noted content was important and needed to be comprehended by the target audience. Fabretti (2016) argues that translation notes are an important technique that solves translation problems and is additionally a way of communication between the scanlator and the readership, becoming an indicator of their presence. In his research, he indicated four categories of content in scanlated manga that needed a translation note. Those were:

a. References to items of culture, institutions, sports and pastimes, food and drink, events, famous people and more, the extralinguistic references.

b. References to language variation, such as idiomatic language, derogatory language, forms of address and endearment, the intralinguistic references.

c. Content that lies somewhere between categories a and b, such as metaphors, idioms, songs, poetry, gestures, borderline features, as he named them,

d. Visual features which are highly culture-specific and need explanation for a person of another culture to understand.

Other than noting that translation notes are important in the sense that they remind the reader that s/he is reading a mediated text, Fabretti concludes that most readers of scanlated manga favor the inclusion of translation notes. This occurs due to the fact that readers enjoy the opportunity to learn more about Japanese culture and civilization, like history and tradition through the notes. The culture-specific content in manga is considered a translational chance to both impose the presence of the translator as a mediator between cultures, as well as offer valuable information to the readers to satisfy their curiosity about the source culture (Fabretti 2016:101). In addition, Zulawnick (2016) has mentioned that these notes are practical for explaining information that otherwise would have been ambiguous, elements which are exclusive to the source text culture or even contain nuances that are difficult or impossible to translate. Notes can be thought of as a means of bringing the reader of the TT closer to the ST, through "bridging of knowledge gaps". The notes provide to the readers an understanding which is closer to the one a source text reader has. (Zulawnick 2016:235).

4.4 Research questions

This paper seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What are the major thematic categories that emerge with regard to the challenges and difficulties involved in the procedure of translating English scanlated manga into Greek?

2. What are the methods a translator can employ in order to overcome these challenges/difficulties?

3. Are the methods employed by the translator to address such issues appreciated by the readership and why – why not?

4. Is the production of a Greek scanlated manga able to intrigue readers and arouse their interest?

5. Does the aforementioned production sufficiently encourage readers to further explore manga as an entertainment medium?

Chapter 5

Methodological Issues

5.1 Aims and Procedure

There is an important sparsity when it comes to translated manga into Greek. That essentially means there is a lack of knowledge concerning the challenges translators face when they attempt to work on such comics and the methods and workarounds they employ to achieve their goal. Therefore, it is quite difficult in the current situation to constitute guidelines or even catalogue the most common issues a translator might deal with in this genre.

Through the present research paper, I attempt to ignite further interest in translating manga and bringing them to the Greek audience. This endeavor consists of a personal translation of manga chapters and commentary on the challenges I faced when doing so. As it is difficult to locate original Japanese language manga during the COVID-19 pandemic era, I decided to translate English scanlated manga, which are readily available. This may be beneficial for the research, as looking into the alterations that an English-speaking amateur translator has done to the original Japanese work will facilitate easier translation and cataloguing of the points of interest in my personal translation attempt. By doing so, I get the chance to delve deep into the Japanese cultural background, which is responsible for the creation of the manga. The English language composes a medium, a lens through which I am able to trace the cultural significances of the Japanese that are spread all over the manga chapters I have selected. Additionally, translating an already translated text might better help into tracing and listing problems that arose when the scanlator first worked on the manga. At the same time, issues that arise when translating from English to Greek are more easily classified and presented.

For the research, I have collected and translated five extracts of different manga titles. So as to achieve universal and all-encompassing results, each of these titles falls under a different demographics group. I decided to include titles of all five groups in order to

make sure that the issues and the challenges I faced were representative of the entire medium and not exclusive to a certain type of manga that targets a certain group.

For the creation of the final Greek translated texts I created a "scanlation" using a photo editing application, Adobe Photoshop. It ought to be mentioned that I did not go through the entire "scanlating" process, such as scanning the original document or clearing up blemishes, as I already had the English "scanlated" document that had been edited in the right manner by the English fansubbing groups. First, I made use of Photoshop to extract the English text and I then substituted it with my Greek translation. The translated manga PDFs are available in the appendix.

My methodology consists of both an etic and an emic perspective of the objectives previously described and presented above. As my study focuses on distinct, different cultures, an emic approach is present, but the etic approach is also apparent due to the intracultural analysis of the translated work. It has been suggested that these two approaches should not be conceptualized as the opposite ends of one continuum. These two approaches together provide a thorough, full, three-dimensional understanding of culture (Pike 1967).

First, the specific extracts are analyzed in terms of linguistic accuracy and fluidity in English, while also taking into account the faithfulness to the original Japanese text. Afterwards, the English extracts are translated into Greek, thus creating a "bridge" amongst three languages and cultures, observing and detailing the various issues encountered from such a union.

With the completion of the translation, a questionnaire along with the manga extracts was distributed to native Greek speakers without having special requirements other than being able to comprehend Greek written text. Their answers were submitted anonymously. The questionnaire contained questions on how these speakers appreciate the translation methods employed to overcome the problems that arose during the translation process. Additionally, it required of the speakers to state whether they could deduce the text was a translated one. Finally, the questionnaire asked if the readers were intrigued by the few pages of the story they perused and if they wanted to read what happens next (or previously) and whether they became interested in reading more Greek translated manga after becoming involved in this study. The questionnaire that was given out is attached into the appendix.

Following the results of the questionnaire, I present my findings and analyze them qualitatively. I discuss the totality of the complications and obstacles I encountered while translating the five manga titles. These issues are categorized into two broad thematic groups, according to their point of origin. If they arise due to cultural differences between the Japanese, the English-speaking people or the Greeks, they are included in the *cultural issues* group. On the contrary, if the issues that occur are of linguistic nature, they are classified under the *linguistic issues* group. In this group are also issues that emerge due to the pictorial nature of the manga, like the inability to translate some words, phrases or expressions.

The informants provide a quantitative backbone to the research. Through their answers, I will try to reach conclusions on whether the translation techniques employed help in creating a comprehensible and cohesive text to the average Greek reader. In addition, the informants' answers verify whether they want or not to further explore the manga stories they read, hence vindicating the position and personal desire of mine that manga be more considered as worthy of recognition and translation by Greek official translators and amateurs alike. My ulterior aim for this study is to function as an incentive and motivation for the Greek translator community to get involved and deal with manga, further promoting them into the Greek literary scene.

5.2 Approaches to data analysis

The present study is divided into two distinct phases. In the first one, it makes use of qualitative data. This phase was designed and actualized as a narrative – descriptive case study. The primary data of the research are taken from the five different manga chapters, from five entirely different manga titles. The titles were chosen as to represent all manga demographic groups, while the chapters were selected randomly, but mainly from the initial or last chapters of a story. The translated pages are consecutive. Thematic analysis is the method employed in the case study part of the research. This type of analysis is quite useful in "capturing the complexities of meaning within a textual data set" while it is also the most common method of analysis in qualitative studies (Guest, MacQueen, Namey 2012). Thematic analysis consists of six distinct

phases, through which a researcher moves back and forth during her/his work. As mentioned in Esfehani and Walters (2018), these are:

a. Initial reading of texts to gain familiarity,
b. Repeated readings to code the texts,
c. Development of basic themes,
d. Consolidation into organizing themes,
e. Derivation of global themes and networks,
f. Description, exploration and analysis of networks.

The thematic analysis conducted on the manga chapters chosen led me to the realization that the major translational challenges I faced were common across all five chapters and they all pertained to two large, all-encompassing sources of origin: culture-related and linguistic-related.

Data analysis and interpretation, the process of assigning meaning to the collected information and determining the conclusions, significance and implications (Syracuse University 2014) was conducted following the aforementioned process.

More specifically, qualitative data interpretation occurred:

a. Reading the fansubbed material twice to understand the story and initially note peculiarities that might become an issue,
b. Translating the material,
c. Reading the translated content to code the texts and find the basic challenges,
d. These challenges were then associated to one of two major thematic categories according to their source of origin, and individually analyzed,
e. The translation methods, decisions and reasoning behind them were analyzed.

The second phase of the research is the presentation and discussion of the questionnaire findings; a quantitative compartment. The thematic analysis of the manga facilitated the tracing and foregrounding of the most important themes, issues and methods that are then presented to the informants for personal assessment and justification. Quantitative data interpretation entails the statistical analysis of the informants' answers to the questionnaire that was handed out. The use of quantitative methodology in this part promotes standardization (Scholl 2015), which is important in creating

percentages and numbers that can then be analyzed so as to be able to reach conclusions on whether the majority of respondents found the translation decisions made to be enjoyable and why among others discussed in later sections.

Chapter 6

Ushering scanlated manga into Greek reality

6.1 Data selection and procedure

My research focuses on translating manga into the Greek language while recording some of the most prevalent challenges and difficulties encountered, as well as some of the techniques employed to overcome them. For this attempt to be as representative for the whole medium as possible, I decided to translate five different manga chapters from different titles that fall into all five demographics groups; groups that were described in Chapter 3. The material I used is presented in the following table.

Table 1 Manga chapters used

Number	Title	Author	English Scanlator	Publication Years	Demographics group	Chapter
M1	*Doraemon*	Fujiko F. Fujio	"ocean" (Aku-Tenshi)	1970-1996	kodomomuke	1
M2	*Demon Slayer*	Koyoharu Gotouge	"Kingroyvii"	2016-2019	shonen	1
M3	*Fruits Basket*	Natsuki Takaya	"alohaboy" (MangaProject on Dalnet)	1998-2006	shojo	2
M4	*Monster*	Naoki Urasawa	"Stephen Paul" (MangaScreener)	1994-2001	seinen	161
M5	*NANA*	Ai Yazawa	"eternal darkness – shirokuro"	2000-2009	josei	83

Initial chapters were chosen for the first three titles, the next to last chapter was chosen for the fourth title and for the last title a chapter that lies somewhere at the middle of the story was worked upon. An important note for M5 is that chapter 83 is one of the last ones to have been published, before the title went into indefinite hiatus. The story is left incomplete but has not ended, even if chapter 83 appears to be one of the last published.

All the English chapters were retrieved from the manga distribution website "MangaFreak" and were processed through the same scanlation process as mentioned in Chapter 4: they were read twice in order for them to be comprehended as well as possible, then the English text was erased and at that time I proceeded with the translation. During the translation process, minor issues encountered were listed down on paper. These issues seemed like they followed a certain motif, in the sense that across all five chapters, some could be grouped together due to their similarities. After the completion of each translation, these issues were analyzed, upgraded into larger groups and these groups were then broadened into wide thematic categories on the basis of the thematic analysis procedure. The categories that resulted from this procedure were two: *linguistic issues* and *cultural issues*. These two categories will now be broken down into the subsequent major issues that arose during the translation of the scanlated content.

6.2 Linguistic issues

The large group of linguistic issues contains the problems that occurred during the translation of the five manga and concern features of the source language that were difficult to be transferred to the target language. The first of these major difficulties occurs due to the pictorial nature of manga as a genre. This difficulty that concerns not only manga, but comics as a whole, relates to how to adequately convey *intense moments* during the narrative, such as shouting, screaming, arguing and fighting. Due to the inexistence of motion and sound, translating scenes full of emotion or conflict proves a challenge in its own right. Let us now consider the five scenes that follow from each of the manga titles:

Figure 1 M1

Figure 2 M2

Figure 3 M3

Figure 4 M4

Figure 5 M5

In all the titles, more than one occurrence of intense scenes appears. The visual nature of manga copes with such scenes by overly emphasizing the expressions of characters, drawing straight lines meant to reproduce tension. M1, M2 and M3, which are text targeting younger audiences seem to all make use of such methods. M4 and M5 are more restrained, possibly due to their targeting adult audiences. The fact that is common for all five texts is the usage of acute, spiky bubbles that are meant to contain loud utterances. The accompanying text is also bold, larger than usual speech bubbles and it contains an array of punctuation marks, from exclamation marks to dashes and suspension points. In translation, the same adaptation needs to occur in order to enhance the visual aspect of the prevalent agitation. Thus, during the translation process, one has to be careful during such moments. Bold text, larger size and punctuation marks are crucial in maintaining the intended meaning.

The second major linguistic issue that arose is one that has to do with the Japanese language specificities and in particular with the *translation or non-translation of sounds, exclamations and onomatopoeias*. In my study, I found out that in all five texts, there was a plethora of sounds that the scanlators decided not to translate in English. Even more remarkably, they did not even attempt to hide them at all, leaving them in a prevalent position in all their translated works. This was a pattern that was visible across all five manga texts. Some notable examples from the texts follow:

Figure 6 M1

Figure 7 M2

Figure 8 M3

Figure 9 M4

Figure 10 M5

The number of sounds that were left untranslated in the texts can be seen in the following table:

Table 2 Untranslated sounds and onomatopoeias in texts

Text	Number of sounds
M1	7
M2	39
M3	27
M4	3
M5	17

In every manga title, sounds were mostly left untouched by the scanlators. It is worth mentioning that the texts that involved a lot of motion, fighting, external sounds and swiftness had the highest number of untranslated sounds. M2 contained a lot of action sequences and quick movements. M3 and M5 contained some highly emotional scenes as well as a fighting scene. M1 did not have any highly action-oriented scene, there were a few cases of external sounds that needed to be emphasized by the narrative. M4 being the text with the fewest onomatopoeic words, was a fairly peaceful chapter, with no action involved at all. As a matter of fact, the three instances in it were only ambient, background noises.

At this point it is important to denote that even if all five texts contained untranslated sounds, the scanlators involved followed different approaches with them. In M1, the translator decided to make use of translator notes to try and convey an equivalent sound of the English language.

In Figure 11, there is an untranslated sound, which is transcribed as *paku-paku*. The scanlator decided to implement a translator note that reads "sfx: munch, munch". Therefore, there was an attempt on "ocean's" behalf to somehow make the reader fully comprehend the meaning of the Japanese onomatopoeic word by explaining it through an English equivalent. The same is true for all the other six cases in M1.

Figure 11 M1

In M2, M3, M4 and M5 all the scanlators decided to simply leave the sounds as be. There was no visible attempt to transliterate, transcribe them, explain their meaning through a translator note or even make use of an equivalent word in the English language. There are some possible reasons for such a strategic choice that are going to be discussed in the following chapter. An important thing to mention here is that M4 and M5 contain some slight implications.

In M4, even if there were three onomatopoeic instances that were left untouched, the scanlator chose other sounds in the chapter which was translated into English. Looking at Figure 12, it appears that the scanlator made use of a speech bubble, in which s/he implemented the phrasing "fsh", probably as to indicate the sound of a person's foot touching the grass. Figure 13 follows the same logic, where there is a speech bubble containing "pommm", so as to indicate the ball's sound hitting the ground. Therefore, it appears as if the translator chose a double approach as to how to handle the title's sounds: either speech bubbles to incorporate letters that would seemingly reproduce a similar sound in English were used or some sounds were left completely untranslated as in Figure 9.

Figure 12 M4   *Figure 13 M4*

M5 had a different peculiarity. Even if all onomatopoeic words were left unaltered, there were pages where the scanlator had left entire phrases and sentences in Japanese intact; phrases that were not sounds, but pieces of text. In Figure 14 that follows, at the very left part there is a sentence that reads "*nanka chi ga deteru*". The translation of this phrase exists just above it in 'you're bleeding'. The same phenomenon happens multiple times in the same translation. Even if such a trend is one of the translator's

specific quirks, it needs to be noted that it could possibly create confusion for the reader, as these occurrences are not sounds per se, they actually convey linguistic meaning that is already translated and appears in the translation.

Figure 14 M5

It needs to be stated that the appearances of text outside of bubbles are quite prevalent in both M3 and M5. This is not the case for M1, M2 and M4 where there are no such circumstances. These texts, being outside speech bubbles can either be considered to be internal thoughts of the characters, whispers or silent commentary. It is crucial for the translator to somehow enhance differentiation between these and normal speech. Both scanlators decided to incorporate such text by breaking the norm of writing in capitals. They decided to translate this type of text using lower-case letters and making it smaller in size than normal speech. In the next chapter, I discuss in detail how I coped with the aforementioned issues.

6.3 Cultural issues

The second large thematic category of issues that arose during the translation process was that which revolved around culture. Bridging three widely different cultures is in no way an easy feat, and there were some major problems that occurred while I was reading the English scanlated content and thinking about how to translate it in Greek. First, the existence of *politeness structures* and more specifically the so-called *honorific suffixes*. Honorific suffixes are words that Japanese people attach after uttering a person's name in order to convey a certain sense of familiarity or distance. As Lakoff and Ide (2005) have described, the honorifics system - the *keigo* 'polite speech' - contains expressions that index aspects of the situational context, such as the relationship between speaker and addressee and their psychological distance.

The presence of honorific suffixes in the five texts is shown in Table 3.

Text	Number of honorific suffixes
M1	5 honorifics
M2	5 honorifics
M3	20 honorifics
M4	0 honorifics
M5	20 honorifics

Table 3 Number of honorific suffixes

The total absence of honorifics in M4 can be alluded to the fact that it is the only manga which does not take place in a Japanese society context. The setting of Monster is in Germany and the Czech Republic and the characters other than the main protagonist are not Japanese. Therefore, the use of honorific suffixes would be out of place in such a context. On the other hand, M1, M2, M3 and M5 contain a considerable number of them. All of these stories take place in contemporary or older period Japan. Such numbers are representative of Japanese culture interactions, where using such expressions is a highly important aspect of everyday conversation.

So how did the scanlators decide to cope with these cultural aspects that are specific to Japanese civilization and are completely unsuitable in an English text? The answer is that all of them decided to maintain them. In each of the four texts, the translator decided to transliterate the honorific suffix in the English language. That is an important translation decision that appears to be a trend, as four out of five texts' translations contain the suffixes and do not omit them by simply stating the name of the character. The possible reasons for such decision and what I did in my own translations will be presented subsequently.

Other than the issue described above, another important matter that needed to be addressed while analyzing the English scanlations was *the inclusion of culture-specific actions, items and content* in general. Japan is an overly different culture than the English and the Greek ones. Thus, certain aspects that have to do with tradition, culture, economy, gestures and many more might appear completely incomprehensible and senseless in the target culture and language.

One of the most striking examples can be witnessed in M2, as shown in Figure 15 below. In the utterance the word *oni* is unknown to an English speaker, as it is in reality a Japanese folklore creature. The translator here has decided to maintain the word as is, with no explanation. Subsequent scenes do not offer any type of explanation until a very later page. The reasoning of such choices, as to why a translator would decide to leave a highly cultural item unaltered will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Figure 15 M2

Other notable examples can be seen in Figures 16, 17 and 18.

Figure 18 M5

Figure 17 M3

Figure 16 M1

In Figure 16, one of the characters mentions the phrase "*Japanese battledore*". An English speaker might have a general notion of "battledore" being a progenitor to contemporary badminton, but the term "Japanese" implies that there are culture-specific details that differentiate it from the one known to him/her. In Figure 17, a delivery man brings a package for one of the story's characters. He is seen saying "A

total of 1600 Yen please…". 1600 Yen might seem a little shocking to an English-language speaker, as a commensurate value in Dollars or Pounds would be a fairly high amount of money. In reality, such an amount in Yen is not a high price at all; it is a price a delivery man could request for a package this small as seen in the story. Hence, translators ought to somehow clear such misinterpretations for their readers, so as not to leave them with wrong impressions concerning the differences between foreign currencies.

Finally, in Figure 18, one of the story's characters can be seen in front of a picture decorated with candles. He has joined his hands, seemingly in a praying stance and with his eyes closed he appears to be addressing the person in the picture. While somebody who has been following the story will be in a position to understand that the character, Shin, is "communicating" with his deceased friend, Ren, the very act of kneeling down in front of a shrine that exists within a house and talking regularly to a dead person in front of others might seem "absurd", "bizarre" or even "insane" for a person who is not knowledgeable in Japanese culture.

These and more cases need to be adequately transferred to the reader of the translated content who might not have experience with similar content before. All the aforementioned issues, linguistic and cultural, were addressed in my own translations. The translations were then given to informants and their opinion and appreciation of the solutions employed were recorded. In the next section, the formation and the findings of the questionnaire are presented in full.

6.4 Questionnaire structure and results

A questionnaire was created in order to collect the opinion of Greek readers exposed to the scanlations I created. Inside the questionnaire, there was a Google Drive link that led to my translated texts. There was a total of eleven questions within the form. The questions had to do with their appreciation of the techniques I employed to deal with the issues mentioned above, the overall quality of the translation, their viewpoint on the accessibility of Greek translated manga, as well as whether they were motivated by my translations to learn the rest of the story. Finally, they were asked if this research

experience made them more willing to see more manga translations published by Greek publishing houses. There was a total number of thirty-eight informants involved in this questionnaire. The following three pie charts show their demographic information (sex, age group and level of education).
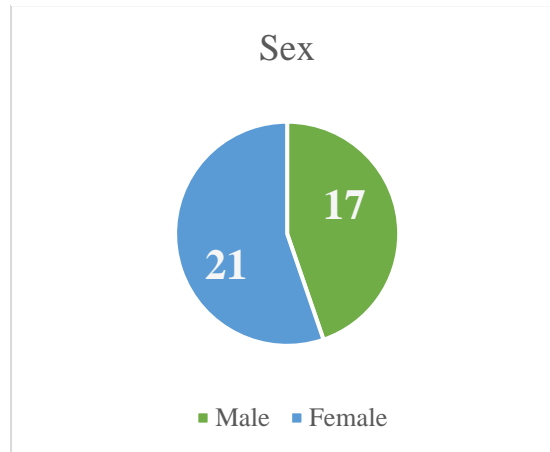
Figure 19 Respondents' sex
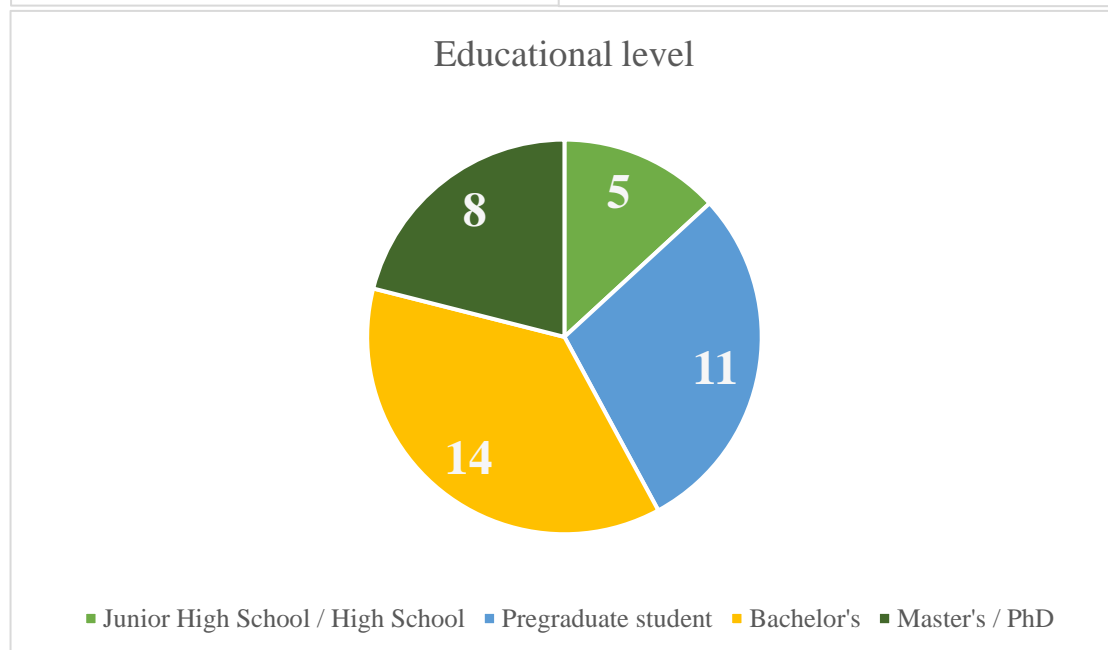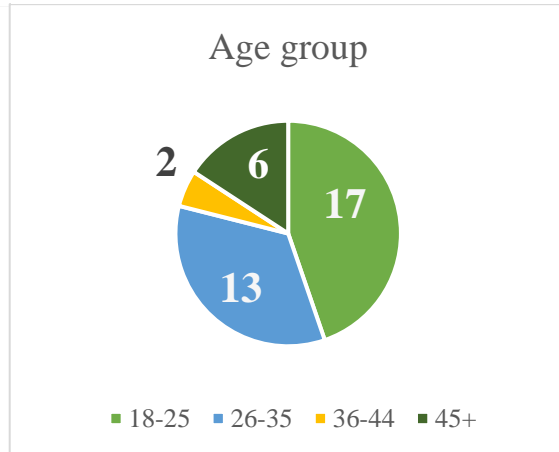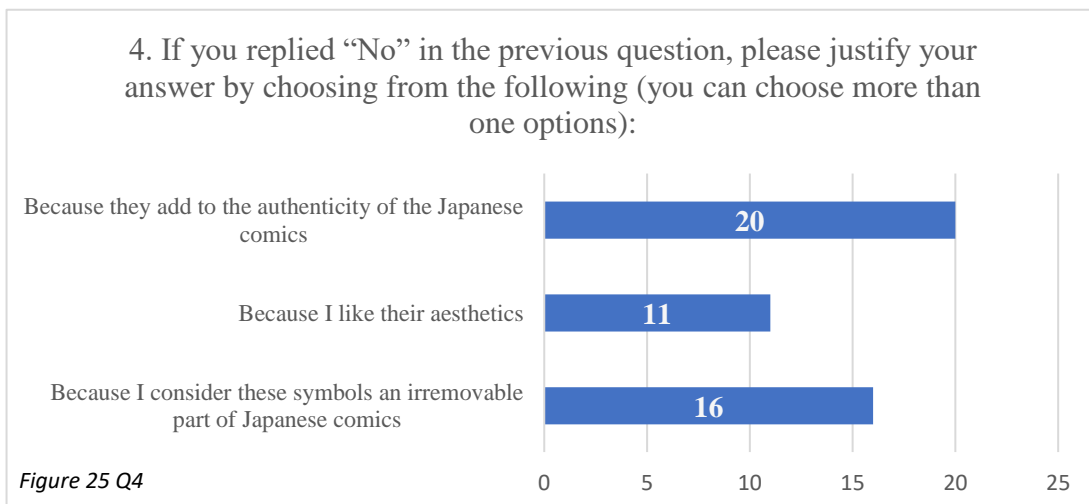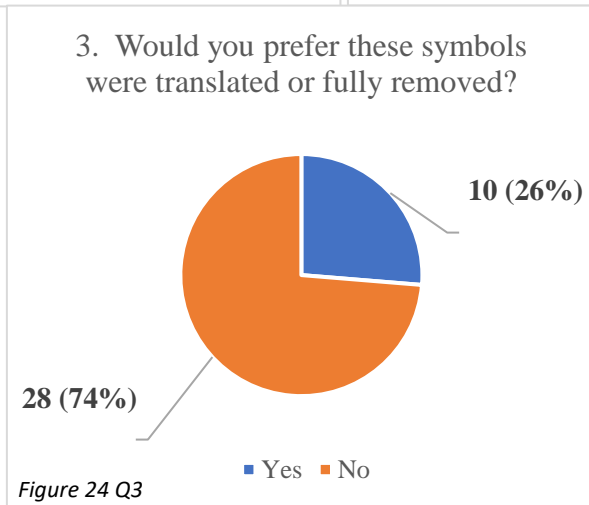
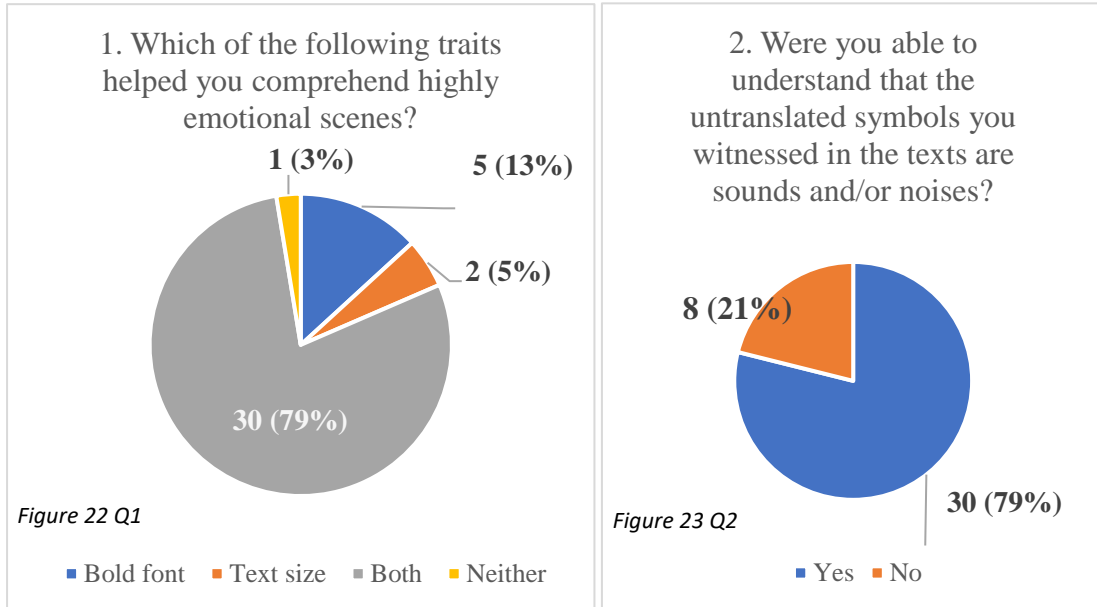*Figure 20 Respondents' age group*

Figure 21 Respondents' educational level

According to the three charts, 55% of the respondents were women and 45% were men. 45% were 18 – 25 years old, 34% were 26 – 35, 5% were 36 – 44 and 16% were 45 years and older. Finally, 13% were junior high school or high school graduates, 29% were pregraduate students, 37% had a bachelor's degree, while 21% had a master's or

a PhD degree. The following pie charts and graphs contain the English translation of the questions and answers to the questionnaire questions. There is an attempt to analyze the respondents' answers in the next chapter of this dissertation.

1. Which of the following traits helped you comprehend highly emotional scenes?

1 (3%) 5 (13%)
2 (5%)
30 (79%)

Figure 22 Q1

■ Bold font ■ Text size ■ Both ■ Neither

2. Were you able to understand that the untranslated symbols you witnessed in the texts are sounds and/or noises?

8 (21%)
30 (79%)

Figure 23 Q2

■ Yes ■ No

3. Would you prefer these symbols were translated or fully removed?

10 (26%)
28 (74%)

■ Yes ■ No

Figure 24 Q3

4. If you replied "No" in the previous question, please justify your answer by choosing from the following (you can choose more than one options):

Because they add to the authenticity of the Japanese comics — 20

Because I like their aesthetics — 11

Because I consider these symbols an irremovable part of Japanese comics — 16

Figure 25 Q4

0   5   10   15   20   25

5. While you were reading four out of five texts, you noticed special suffixes after the characters' names. Do you consider the existence of such suffixes in the translated text necessary?
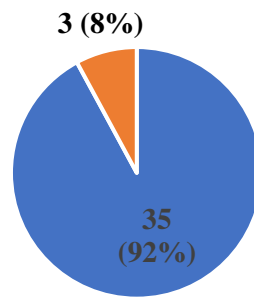
3 (8%)

35 (92%)

- ■ Yes ■ No

6. If you replied "Yes" in the previous question, please justify your answer by choosing from the following (you can choose more than one options):
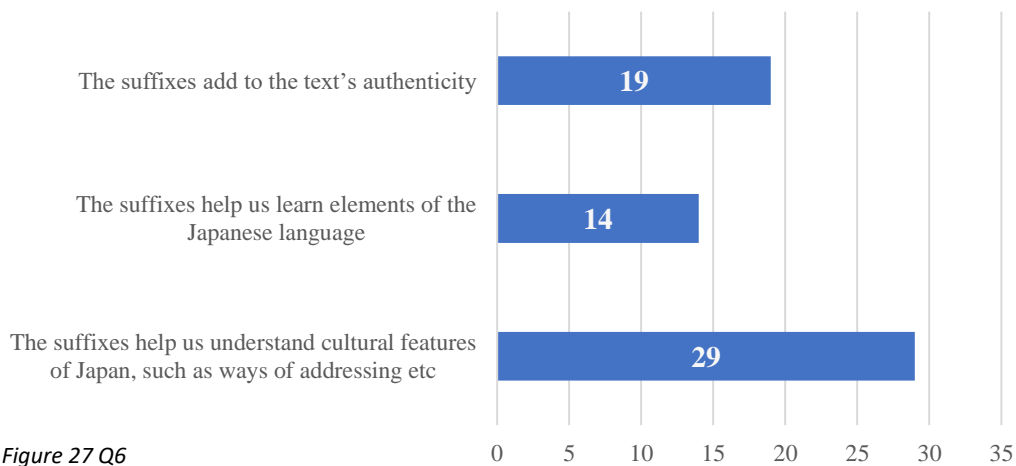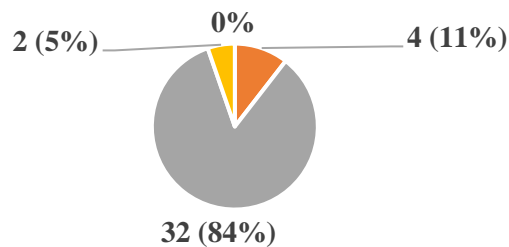
The suffixes add to the text's authenticity — **19**

The suffixes help us learn elements of the Japanese language — **14**

The suffixes help us understand cultural features of Japan, such as ways of addressing etc — **29**

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35

7. The existence of translation notes over or below the imagery helped you understand more about:

2 (5%) **0%** **4 (11%)**

32 (84%)

- ■ The use of the aforementioned suffixes in Japanese daily life
- ■ Specific practices, items or traditions of the Japanese culture
- ■ Both
- ■ Neither

8. The Greek translations you read:

1 (3%)

16 (42%)

21 (55%)
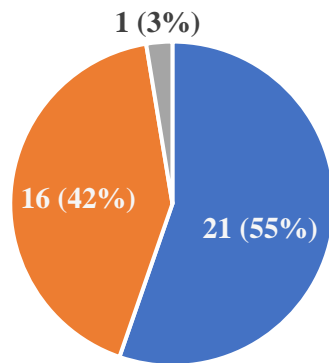
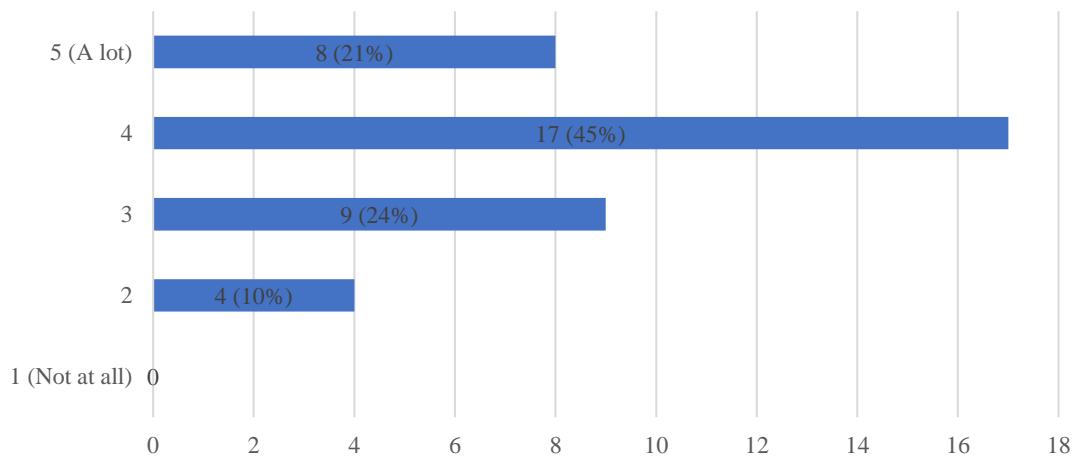- ■ Had a natural flow in Greek
- ■ Were a little artificial and it was evident they were translations
- ■ Were difficult to understand

9. After you completed reading the texts, did you feel interested to learn what happens next in the story (or previously)?

5 (A lot)	8 (21%)
4	17 (45%)
3	9 (24%)
2	4 (10%)
1 (Not at all)	0

0   2   4   6   8   10   12   14   16   18

10. Do you personally think that finding Greek translated manga is difficult?

3 (8%)

35 (92%)
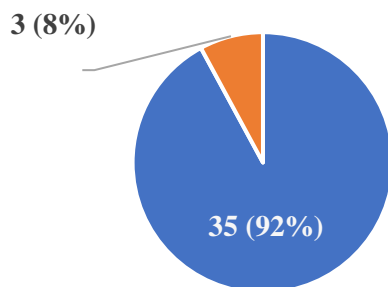
■ Yes ■ No

11. After the readings you were exposed to for the sake of this research, would you like to see more publishers releasing manga in Greek?
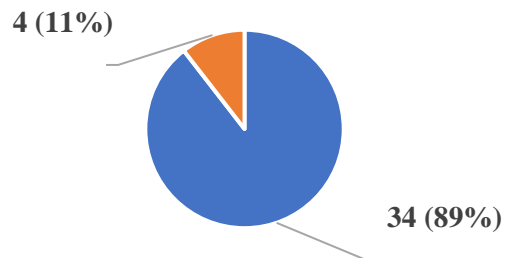
4 (11%)

34 (89%)

■ Yes ■ No

Chapter 7

Analysis of results: Addressing the challenges of translating English scanlated manga in Greek

7.1 Implemented strategies and rationale

As was showcased in the previous chapter, there is an array of issues translators might stumble upon when translating scanlated English manga into the Greek language. These issues were collectively categorized in two major thematic categories: problems that arise due to linguistic features of the original content and problems that occur because of the vast cultural differences between the target and the source cultures. In this section, I will attempt to justify the choices I made on how to overcome the issues that occurred during the translation process. In the following section, I discuss in depth my survey results in order to highlight the respondents' reactions to the translational strategies I decided to implement in my texts.

While reading the English scanlations, I could not help noticing the moments of intense emotional strain, especially in the characters' speech. The English scanlators maintained the original drawing of intense, sharp-edged bubbles, then substituted the Japanese text with the English one. They made sure that their text was written in bold type characters and in many cases, it was larger than texts of lower emotional tension. Moreover, punctuation points and more specifically exclamation marks were used frequently. In my personal translations, I decided to translate such sections in a similar manner: boldening and enlarging the Greek text. While in most bubbles I made use of 11 or 12 size font, in these speech bubbles I would often use 14, 16 or higher sized fonts. Thus, I decided to indicate loudness and emotion by stressing the Greek typeset, utilizing bold type and larger in size letters.

Additionally, I was called to solve another important linguistic problem, the implementation of sounds and onomatopoeic words. What made this matter so unique and challenging is the fact that even if the scanlators of the manga chapters I worked on had made a good effort to translate all of the most important narrative elements of

the stories, they had left a considerable number of sounds and Japanese onomatopoeias untranslated, in Japanese characters. In all of the five chapters I had to translate, only in M1 and M4 did the translators slightly deviate from this strategy. In M1 translation notes were used to indicate an equivalent English sound and the Japanese onomatopoeias were left intact. In M4 some sounds were translated to English onomatopoeias and some were left intact. It is also worth restating the peculiarity of M5, where entire sentences had already been translated in English, but the original Japanese phrasing also remained in place, without being erased by the scanlator.

A possible reason for the non-translation of sounds has to do with the objective difficulties. These instances usually appear in a big format, stretching over an entire panel and at times crossing over into another one. This would be a major difficulty for the scanlator, as it would be nearly impossible to erase these typesets without warping the background image, creating in the process a distorted, twisted narrative of images. An additional reason might have to do with the scanlator's appreciation of these symbols as an integral part of the Japanese culture, a part that they wish their readers to experience in its original form, without any alterations.

We cannot safely assume if the first, second or both of the aforementioned reasons are the explanation for the scanlators' non-translation of most sounds and onomatopoeias. It could also be something different altogether. Nevertheless, in my personal translations I decided to follow the very same approach, leaving all onomatopoeic expressions and characters untranslated. I personally believe that these utterances are a crucial aspect of the Japanese language, culture and tradition that should be left unaltered. Such a translation choice, I believe, adds originality and authenticity to the translated manga chapters, while at the same time it does not become an obstacle to the reader's comprehension of onomatopoeic symbols and expressions as being sounds that they can "hear" in some way within their minds, thanks to the imagery of the story and the context. In the two texts that varied slightly, I made alterations to conform to my major approach: in M1 I erased the translation notes and did not offer equivalent ones into Greek, simply leaving the Japanese sounds as they were. In M4, I had to erase the speech bubbles that contained the English sounds and offer nothing equivalent to the Greek reader. The choice of erasing content appears to be more radical, but I reached the conclusion that these English sounds should not have been within speech bubbles at all, as they are not actually *spoken*. Additionally, I personally decided that these

sounds could easily be deduced through the visual context and they were unnecessary in the translated text. The three onomatopoeias were left intact. Finally, in M5 I erased all instances of Japanese text that was not sound but entire sentences or phrases that had already been translated. Every sound and onomatopoeia was once again not altered. The analysis of the respondents' answers that will follow adds the readers' point of view.

Moving on, I will try to explain the approaches I took to cope with the cultural issues that occurred during the translation process. First of all, the existence of honorific suffixes at the end of character names was present in four out of five texts I had to translate. As was written previously, M4 took place outside the boundaries of Japanese society, so the usage of such honorifics would have been inappropriate. The four scanlators decided to transliterate the honorific suffixes into English. No explanation was given as to their nature and usage. This could be due to the fact that the scanlators might had have that the readership was already accustomed to the honorific suffixes and their societal value.

As was mentioned in Chapter 4, Fabbretti (2017) describes three ways through which Japanese linguistic items are preserved in English scanlations. Ways b and c have directly to do with honorific suffixes and they involve transliteration of the suffixes and explaining the culture-specific references through translation notes. The four scanlators of my research followed approach b. For my own translations, I decided to implement both strategies b and c. Consequently, I transliterated all the honorific suffixes into Greek and the first time they were encountered by the reader, I offered a translation note at the margin of the panel containing more information on the honorifics' usage and importance within the Japanese socio-cultural context. I decided to follow this double approach so as to make certain that the readers would be able to witness these important aspects of Japanese social interaction and realize their significance by reading the translation notes. Their appreciation – or lack thereof – is thoroughly investigated in the analysis of the questionnaire responses.

The second culture-related challenge refers to culture-specific content. The four stories that transpired in historical or contemporary Japan, contained an important number of items, notions, activities, currencies etc. It is quite possible that foreign readers are not familiar with such content and, even if they are, I believe that a translator should make

sure that these special instances are clearly explained and taken in by the readers. A very useful element for this is the inclusion of translation notes in the target text. The English scanlations of my research contained – to some extent – explanations of various culture-specific content in the form of translation notes. Even so, I personally found their application quite limited, as there were practices seen in the manga that would not make sense to the Greek readership. One such example was shown in Figure 18. The English scanlators did not offer any kind of explanation in this and other cases. Concerning my translations, I tried to deduce which sequences contained culture-specific content that would not be understood by Greek readers. Then, I created a translation note at the border of the panel that contained such content giving more information about the cultural background involving it. These translation notes were written in size 8 font so that they would not interfere with the main text within the panels. An asterisk was also incorporated at the end of the word referring to the culture-specific item as well as the start of the translation note. In the following section, the informants' answer on the value of the notes is discussed.

7.2 Analysis of the survey results

The questionnaire answers provide a useful input into how the average Greek reader perceived my translation attempts and techniques. Thirty-eight people took part in the procedure. One of my basic goals was to collect information from as many different types of people as possible, while at the same time maintaining a balance between them, not overly relying on one demographic group over the other. Twenty-one respondents were female while 17 were male, having achieved an almost equal standing between the informants' sexes (see Section 6.4 for additional demographical information). Due to the variety of different demographic statistics involved, it can be assumed that the inferences made below could be representative of a wide spectrum of Greek readers.

Q1 of the form had to do with one of the linguistic issues described above and more specifically the usage of bold and larger text as being helpful in understanding scenes full of emotion and loudness. The respondents were asked if bold text, text size, both or neither helped them in their comprehension of the aforesaid scenes. The results that

occured could indicate that the choice of boldening and enlarging texts was a useful one, as 30 people could in that way perceive the emotional tension and stress existing within the appropriate scenes.

Q2 to Q4 revolved around the appearance of the untranslated onomatopoeic words and sounds and whether the readers appreciated my decision to not alter them in any way. These three responses could denote that a considerable number of manga readers not only understands the onomatopoeic words, sounds and noises which are not translated in the target language, but s/he prefers it if they remain unaltered and untouched in the target text. Moreover, these readers consider these symbols as making manga authentic and distinct from other mediums, while they also believe them to be irremovable and integral for manga. Of course, some also like their aesthetic value. As a result, it appears that the readers enjoyed the non-translation choice of onomatopoeias and sounds.

Q5, Q6 and Q7 involved the cultural issues encountered and the solutions employed. The answers to these questions might provide some assumptions. It seems that a very significant number of readers wants honorific suffixes to be transliterated in Greek and not omitted. In addition, many believe that these suffixes promote understanding of the Japanese culture, while to some extent they also believe that they add authenticity and also help the reader learn elements of the language to some extent. Thus, the readers appeared to appreciate my translational decision of transliterating the honorific suffixes in Greek for the target text.

Q7 concerned the implementation of translation notes and whether they were helpful to the reader and specifically in what aspect: helpful for understanding the use of the aforementioned suffixes in Japanese daily life or for understanding specific practices, items or traditions of the Japanese culture. The responses seem to indicate that the implementation of translation notes is vital for the manga reader in order to understand both culture-specific elements as well as linguistic features that are also culture-dependent. Hence, these results seem to clarify that translation notes could indeed provide a valuable asset for the manga translator, so that the readers will be in a position to understand all utterances and items that would otherwise be foreign to them.

Q8 to Q11 were questions that were inserted so as to check the overall appreciation of the translations and whether they were able to create enthusiasm and appeal to the readers. These results could be indicative that fluent and native-like translations were

produced, ones that the readers enjoyed and understood quite easily. Even so, quite a considerable number also discerned that they were translated texts; this could be either due to personal slovenliness in the quality of my work or it could also indicate that the impact of the Japanese culture in manga as a medium is forceful to such an extent, that the reader is capable of perceiving the target text as a foreign import.

Q9 was on a scale of 1 to 5 basis, 1 being "Not at all" and 5 being "A lot", asking if the readers felt the interest to know what happens next (or previously) in the story. I believe the answers to these questions prove that the readers invested in the story of the titles. It can be assumed that as most people thought that the target texts were products with flow in Greek, the texts could intrigue and make them want to delve deeper into them. Of course, such an assumption is not universal, as it might be thanks to the specific storylines involved or the specific translations. Still, it is important to deduce that no matter how far-fetched or unknown a cultural, literal product might be, a decent translation seems to be able to create hype and investment for a wide range of readership.

In Q10, the bulk of respondents, 35 people (92%), replied that they find it difficult to procure Greek translated manga. This popular answer indicates that, as showcased in previous chapters, Greek readers indeed have difficulty in finding Japanese manga translated in their language. Q11 is the question designed with the goal of checking whether the *endgame* of my research was achieved: if readers were exposed to legible, quality translations of manga they would then be willing to read more, indulging and entertaining themselves through this Eastern popular medium. The respondents who were positive, stating they would like to see more publishers releasing manga in Greek were the overwhelming majority: 34 (89%) out of 38. Such a response could thus give real merit to the ultimate goal of this research attempt. Most of the people involved in my study appear to have enjoyed their time reading my scanlations and this process became a real motive for them to desire for more manga translations in their native language.

Chapter 8

Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of this dissertation paper was to investigate the translation of English scanlated manga into Greek, the challenges that occur during such a procedure and the methods employed to overcome them. Additionally, the appreciation – or disapproval – of such methods by the readership was analyzed, along with the prospect of such translated texts enhancing the readers' interest towards this literary medium.

Through the current research attempt, we are able to draw some conclusions concerning the issues previously raised. First, it appears that as Forceville et al. (2010) suggested, large and bold typefaces seem to indicate loudness and such a practice is recognized and appreciated by the readership. The responses to the questionnaire indicate that both size and boldness are features that facilitate understanding of loudness and emotional stress. Additionally, Japanese manga contained a considerable number of onomatopoeic words and expressions. More specifically, an array of mimetic words ("gitaigo") could be witnessed as they were initially drawn in all of the English scanlations as well as the Greek ones. It appears that the questionnaire's respondents recognized these expressions as being sounds or noises and integral parts of Japanese manga. This appears to confirm the statement of Huang & Archer (2014) that even if readers cannot read the onomatopoeia, they are able to conjure up the intended sound from context and font. The big number of these words and phrases in all the manga analyzed (93 in total) also seems to come in agreement with Petersen (2008), who stated that these types of linguistic expressions play an important role in storytelling traditions in Japan, as well as Inose (2008) who described "gitaigo" as a distinctive feature of Japanese. Moreover, as was seen in Chapter 7, Fabbretti's (2017) ways of Japanese linguistic item preservation in English scanlations can also be widely employed in Greek ones and create positive reaction in readers. Fabbretti (2016) had also concluded that readers of scanlated manga favor the inclusion of translation notes. My findings seem to validate such a position, as the translation notes I incorporated in my texts

provided needed information for the readers, both on Japanese culture and civilization as well as daily life.

The two major thematic categories of challenges and difficulties that appeared were *the linguistic issues* and *the cultural issues*. The two prevalent linguistic challenges involved were the manner of indication of loudness and intense moments as well as the appearance of onomatopoeic words and expressions. For the first challenge, enlarging and boldening of the font was employed and for the second one, the method of non-translation was used, transferring these occurrences in the target text as is. The two cultural issues were the existence of Japanese honorific suffixes and culture-specific Japanese content, items, traditions etc. For these two issues, the methods employed were transliteration of the suffixes into Greek and then the implementation of translation notes for the explanation and clarification of their usage in Japanese society. The translation notes were also utilized to provide input and information on the culture-specific occasions.

The readers involved in this research seemed to appreciate all of the aforementioned methods of translation. More specifically, they considered that both bold and large text helped them understand intense moments in the manga chapters, while they understood and enjoyed the untranslated onomatopoeias as marks of manga authenticity and integral parts of the medium. Some of them also enjoyed their aesthetics. In addition, transliteration of honorific suffixes was favored as the readers considered such suffixes important in helping understand Japanese cultural features, as well as marks of manga authenticity. Also, the use of translation notes appealed to them as these notes helped in understanding both the honorifics as well as the culture-specific content.

It also appears that the Greek scanlated manga were able to intrigue the vast majority of readers involved and arouse their interest with regard to the wide spectrum of storylines featured in the manga of the major five demographic groups. Finally, the production of these Greek texts appears to have the potential to encourage readers to become involved in them, make them consider searching for more stories and dive deep into the expansive, far-flung world of one of the most – if not the most – popular Eastern medium: Japanese manga.

Appendix: Questionnaire[1]

Japanese Popular Culture and Western Audiences: Translating English Scanlated Manga into Greek

Ερωτηματολόγιο

Το φύλο σας:

- Άνδρας
- Γυναίκα

Σε ποια ηλικιακή ομάδα ανήκετε;

- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-44
- 45+

Ποιο το μορφωτικό σας επίπεδο;

- Απόφοιτος Γυμνασίου/Λυκείου
- Φοιτητής/τρια
- Απόφοιτος τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης
- Μεταπτυχιακό/Διδακτορικό

Παρακαλώ ακολουθήστε τον παρακάτω σύνδεσμο, όπου θα βρείτε πέντε ελληνικές μεταφράσεις manga (ιαπωνικών κόμικ). Αφού τις διαβάσετε, απαντήστε στις παρακάτω ερωτήσεις. Σημείωση: Τα manga διαβάζονται από τα δεξιά προς τα αριστερά!

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1uguKwhjzPTvNl5n0_d4CXgslgHW3SuGn?usp=sharing

1. Ποια από τα παρακάτω χαρακτηριστικά σας βοήθησαν να αντιληφθείτε σκηνές με ιδιαίτερη συναισθηματική φόρτιση;

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[1] The questionnaire was distributed and submitted through Google Forms and is readily available for viewing in the link: https://forms.gle/fDwnef9jz8kCX7F77

- Έντονη σκίαση κειμένου.

- Μέγεθος κειμένου.

- Και τα δύο.

- Κανένα από τα δύο.

2. Ήσασταν σε θέση να αντιληφθείτε ότι τα αμετάφραστα σύμβολα που βλέπατε στα κείμενα αποτελούν ήχους ή/και θορύβους;

- Ναι

- Όχι

3. Θα προτιμούσατε αυτά τα σύμβολα να είχαν μεταφραστεί ή αφαιρεθεί πλήρως;

- Ναι

- Όχι

4. Αν απαντήσατε "Όχι" στην παραπάνω ερώτηση, παρακαλώ αιτιολογήστε την απάντηση σας επιλέγοντας από τα παρακάτω (μπορείτε να επιλέξετε πάνω από μία επιλογές):

- Επειδή θεωρώ τα παραπάνω σύμβολα αναπόσπαστο κομμάτι των ιαπωνικών κόμικ.

- Επειδή μου αρέσουν αισθητικά.

- Επειδή προσθέτουν στην αυθεντικότητα των ιαπωνικών κόμικ.

5. Όσο διαβάζατε τα τέσσερα εκ των πέντε κειμένων, παρατηρήσατε ειδικά επιθήματα (καταλήξεις) που τοποθετούνται μετά από τα ονόματα των χαρακτήρων. Θεωρείτε την ύπαρξη των επιθημάτων αυτών στο μεταφρασμένο κείμενο απαραίτητη;

- Ναι

- Όχι

6. Αν απαντήσατε "Ναι" στην παραπάνω ερώτηση, παρακαλώ αιτιολογήστε την απάντηση σας επιλέγοντας από τα παρακάτω (μπορείτε να επιλέξετε πάνω από μία επιλογές):

- Τα επιθήματα μας βοηθούν να καταλάβουμε πολιτιστικά στοιχεία της Ιαπωνίας, όπως τρόπους προσφώνησης, κλπ.
- Τα επιθήματα μας βοηθούν να μάθουμε στοιχεία της ιαπωνικής γλώσσας.
- Τα επιθήματα προσθέτουν στην αυθεντικότητα του κειμένου.

7. Η ύπαρξη των μεταφραστικών σημειώσεων πάνω ή κάτω από τις εικόνες σας βοήθησε να κατανοήσετε περισσότερα:
- Σχετικά με τη χρήση των παραπάνω επιθημάτων στην ιαπωνική καθημερινότητα;
- Σχετικά με συγκεκριμένες πρακτικές, αντικείμενα ή έθιμα της ιαπωνικής κουλτούρας;
- Και τα δύο.
- Κανένα από τα δύο.

8. Οι ελληνικές μεταφράσεις που διαβάσατε, σας φάνηκαν ότι:
- Είχαν φυσική ροή στα ελληνικά.
- Ήταν λίγο τεχνητές και ο λόγος φαινόταν ότι ήταν μεταφρασμένος.
- Ήταν δύσκολες στην κατανόηση.

9. Αφού ολοκληρώσατε την ανάγνωση των έργων, νιώσατε το ενδιαφέρον να μάθετε τι συμβαίνει στη συνέχεια της ιστορίας (ή τι συνέβη νωρίτερα σε αυτήν);
- 1 (Όχι ιδιαίτερα)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Πάρα πολύ)

10. Θεωρείτε προσωπικά ότι η πρόσβαση σε ελληνικά μεταφρασμένα manga είναι δύσκολη;
- Ναι
- Όχι

11. Μετά τα αναγνώσματα στα οποία εκτεθήκατε στην έρευνα αυτή, θα θέλατε να δείτε περισσότερους εκδοτικούς οίκους να κυκλοφορούν manga στα ελληνικά;

- Ναι
- Όχι

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