A Comparison of Human Translation and AI ChatGPT: Translation of The Onomatopoeia Giongo in The Manga *Kocchi Muite! Miiko* Volume 33

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Abstract

Onomatopoeia plays an important role in bringing atmosphere, action, and emotion to life in Japanese literature, particularly in manga. This study aims to compare the translation results of onomatopoeia, specifically *giongo* between human translation (the Indonesian-language translated version of the comic) and artificial intelligence (AI) translation using ChatGPT. The subject of this study is the *manga Kocchi Muite! Miiko* volume 33. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method with a comparative analysis approach. The results show that human translation is dominated by the cultural substitution strategy and successfully achieves the goal of comic translation by identifying *giongo* onomatopoeia as elements that must be rendered as short sound-mimicking equivalents in the target language, whereas ChatGPT's translation strategy—which largely involves paraphrasing using unrelated words—tends to process onomatopoeia based on semantic meaning rather than as comic sound effects. The conclusion of this study is that ChatGPT can serve as a tool for mapping initial meanings, but creativity in localization and a sense of language still require a human touch.

Keywords: *Onomatopoeia, Manga Kocchi Muite! Miiko, Translation, Artificial Intelligence*

1. Introduction

Comics, or manga, are one of Japan's cultural products that have achieved extraordinary global popularity, including in Indonesia. One of the crucial elements that build narrative and emotion in manga is onomatopoeia. Tamori (1993:4) classifies onomatopoeia in the Japanese language into two major groups: (擬音) giongo and (擬態語) gitaigo. *Giongo* are words used to describe sounds made by living creatures, sounds produced by inanimate objects, and sounds originating from nature. Meanwhile, gitaigo are words used to describe a specific movement, activity, or state. Tamori further subdivides giongo and gitaigo into several smaller groups. *Giongo* itself is divided into two types: (擬音語) *giongo* and (擬声語) *giseigo*. *Giongo* refers to onomatopoeic words that imitate sounds from nature and objects. Meanwhile, *giseigo* refers to onomatopoeic words that imitate sounds from living beings, such as human voices, animal sounds, and so on.

Translating giongo presents its own challenges because it is deeply rooted in culture and often lacks a direct equivalent in the target language, such as Indonesian. In this study, the researcher selected the Japanese *manga Kocchimuite! Miiko* and its Indonesian translation, Hai Miiko! Volume 33, by Eriko Ono, published by PT. Gramedia Media Pustaka-M&C!. In Hai Miiko! Volume 33, Miiko and her friends, who are in the 6th grade, discuss their worries about entering junior high school, which might mean they'll be attending different schools. This

manga features a rich use of *giongo* that enhances the expressive portrayal of the children's daily lives.

For years, the official translation of this comic in Indonesia has relied on professional human translators who take into account contextual aspects, readability, and the comfort of local readers. However, the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) technology has given rise to Large Language Models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT, which are now increasingly being used as automated translation tools. Although this technology facilitates cross-linguistic access to information, human translators remain essential because they can understand context and culture more accurately (Siregar et al., 2022). The quality of machine translation remains a subject of debate, particularly regarding its ability to handle literary or popular texts rich in cultural nuances and visual expressions such as *giongo* in *manga* which still need to be tested. Therefore, this study aims to compare the translations of *giongo* between the official (human) translation and the ChatGPT version to determine the extent to which AI can match the linguistic sensitivity of human translators.

Some previous studies relevant to this research include a study by Bertha Nursari & Zainur Fitri (2026) titled "A Comparison of Translation Results for Hokkaido Culinary Tourism Content on the Official Website, Google Translate, and DeepL." Based on Molina & Albir's (2002) translation theory and Machine Translation Theory, the results show that the official website's translation employs the techniques of description, modulation, borrowing, and established equivalents, resulting in the most accurate and natural translation. Google Translate tends to use literal translations, which are lexically accurate but often stiff. DeepL produces smoother and more communicative sentences, though some cultural terminology errors were still found. Another study, "ChatGPT as an AI Translation Tool for the Poem 'Hope is the Thing with Feathers': A Comparison with Human Translation" by Rahma Indah Pratiwi & Misyi Gusthini (2025). This study analyzes a comparison of translations of the English poem "Hope is the Thing with Feathers" by Emily Dickinson, one produced by an AI-based translation engine (ChatGPT) and the other by a human translator (Abdul Mukhid, through the poem "Asa"). The results of the study show that ChatGPT's translations tend to be accurate in terms of vocabulary and syntactic structure, but fail to capture the metaphorical nuances and implicit emotions of the source poem. In contrast, human translations are more successful at conveying connotative meaning and literary aesthetics, even though they contain lexical and structural deviations compared to the original text.

Based on the findings of previous studies, this research aims to compare the results of onomatopoeia translation by human translators and ChatGPT, as well as the translation strategies used in the comic *Kocchi Muite! Miiko* Volume 33. It also aims to evaluate the strengths and limitations of ChatGPT in translating creative texts tied to visual context, such as comics.

2. Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using a comparative method. This approach was chosen because the study aims to describe and compare the results of onomatopoeic text translations produced by human translators versus ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence-based translation tool. A descriptive qualitative approach allows researchers to capture meaning and nuance within their original context, as explained by (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998), who state that descriptive qualitative research seeks to provide a detailed picture of a situation or social relationship. The comparative method used in this study was employed to identify patterns, similarities, and differences between the two translation versions, in line with

the view of (Miles et al., n.d.), who state that the comparative method is useful for capturing patterns in various qualitative contexts.

The data collection method involved identifying onomatopoeic sounds classified as *giongo* in the manga *Kocchi Muite! Miiko* Volume 33 by Eriko Ono. The collected *giongo* were then translated by ChatGPT and compared with volume 33 of the manga Hai! Miiko, which is a human-translated version of the same manga. These two translations were then analyzed comparatively to examine differences in translation strategies based on Mona Baker's framework at the word level and how they were applied in the context of comic book translation. In the final step, the author interpreted the collected and analyzed data to draw conclusions regarding the accuracy of ChatGPT's translation of the onomatopoeic *giongo* compared to the human translation.

3. Result

Based on the onomatopoeic data found in the manga *Kocchi Muite! Miiko* Volume 33, six examples were identified as the primary samples of onomatopoeia representing the sounds of humans and objects.

Data 1

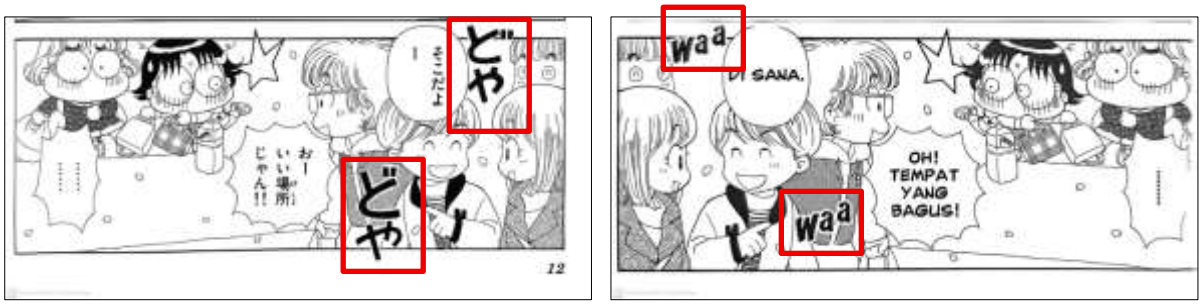


Figure 1: The Giongo "*doya doya*," which translates to "waa waa" (p. 12)

Source text :
そこだよー「どやどや」。おーいい場所じゃん!!
Soko dayo- (doya doya). O! Ii basho jan!!

Human translation :
Di sana. (Waa Waa). Oh! Tempat yang bagus!

ChatGPT translation :
"Di situ tuh! 'Doya-doya' (suara orang-orang berdatangan/berkerumun). Wah, tempatnya bagus banget!!

Miiko and her friends were heading to the park for *hanami*, a cultural tradition of picnicking in the park while enjoying the beauty of the cherry blossoms in full bloom. However, since it was the peak of cherry blossom season, the park was very crowded, and just as they were looking for a spot to picnic, a group of visitors suddenly took the spot they had their eyes on. According to the website ono.jepang.org, *giongo* "*doyadoya*" describes the sound of a lively, irregular patter of footsteps, typically heard when a crowd of people is entering, exiting, or gathering in a certain place.

Data 2

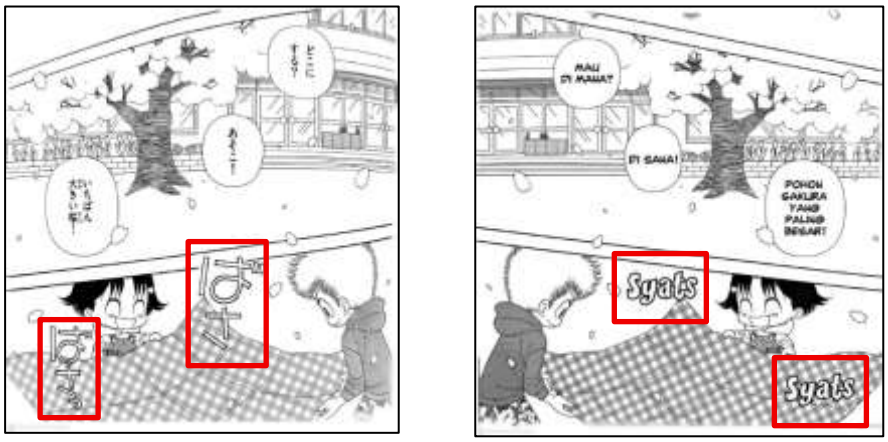


Figure 2. The word "basa basa," which is translated as "syats syats" (p. 17)

Source text :
達平　：どこにする？
みい子：あそこ！いちばん大きい桜！
「ばさばさ」
Tappei : Doko ni suru?
Miiko : Asoko! Ichiban ookii sakura!
(basabasa)

Human translation:
Tappei : Mau di mana?
Miiko : Di sana! Pohon sakura yang paling besar!
(syats syats)

ChatGPT translation :
Tappei: Kita di mana?
Miiko : Di sana! Di bawah pohon sakura yang paling besar!
("Sraash-sraash" / suara dedaunan bergesekan)

Miiko and her friends decided to have a hanami at their school because they could not find a spot in the park. They chose a spot under the largest cherry blossom tree on campus and spread out a mat for a picnic. The onomatopoeic term *giongo* "*basabasa*" is commonly used to imitate the sound or fluttering motion of wide, somewhat heavy objects, such as the wings of a large bird or a flag fluttering in the wind (ono.jepang.org). In the comic, the object depicted is a mat.

Data 3

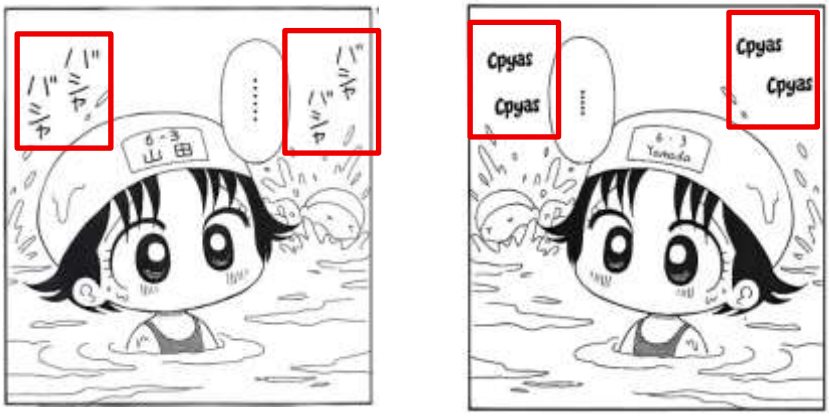


Figure 3. The Giongo "basha basha," which translates as "cpyas cpyas" (p. 49)

Source text :
「バシャバシャ」
(*bashabasha*)

Human translation :
"cpyas cpyas".

ChatGPT translation :
"splash-splash".

The figure above shows Miiko taking a swimming class at her school. *Giongo* "*bashabasha*" is an onomatopoeia used for two main situations: the sound of water splashing forcefully (such as when swimming or playing in a puddle) and the mechanical sound of a camera shutter continuously clicking. The comic artist uses the onomatopoeia "*bashabasha*" to depict the sound of water splashing from students who are swimming.

Data 4



Figure 4. The giongo "pachipachipachi," which translates to "plok plok plok" (p. 60)

Source text:
小川ゆう子と佐藤ケンタに決まり!!「パチパチパチパチ」
Ogawa Yuuko to Satou Kenta ni kimari!! (pachi pachi pachi pachi)

Human translation:
Yuko Ogawa dan Kenta Sato! Plok plok plok plok

ChatGPT translation:
Diputuskan bahwa yang terpilih adalah Yuko Ogawa dan Kenta Sato!!" *Tepuk tepuk tepuk tepuk* (suara tepuk tangan)

Ahead of the sports festival at Miiko's school, elections were held to choose class officers. Yuko and Kenta were elected as class representatives, prompting a round of applause from all the students in the class. "*pachipachi*" is an onomatopoeic term that describes a light, repetitive, and sharp sound, such as the crackling of a fire, the sound of clapping, or the blinking of eyes. In the text above, "*pachipachi*" is translated as "plok plok plok," which is the sound of clapping in Indonesian.

Data 5

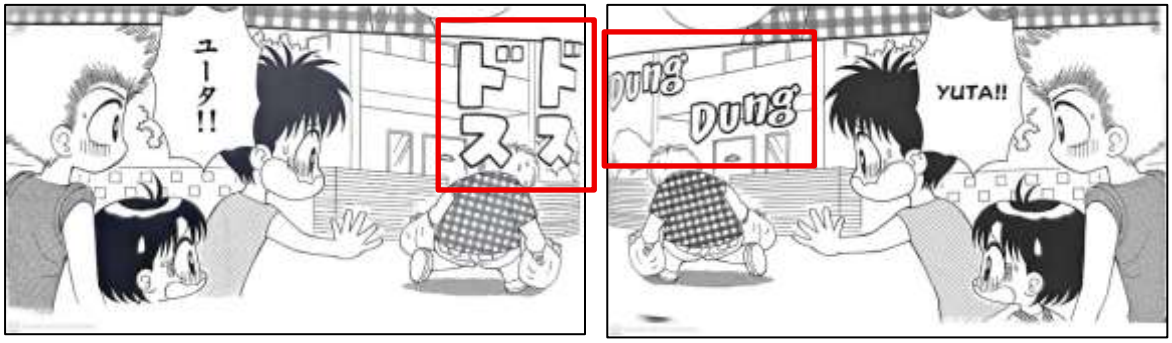


Figure 5. The giongo "*dosudosu*" which translates as "dung dung" (p. 67)

Source text:
ケンタ：ユータ!!
ユータ：「ドスドス」
Kenta : Yuta!!
Yuta : (dosudosu)

Human translation:
Kenta : Yuta!!
Yuta : (dung dung)

ChatGPT translation:
Kenta : Yuta!!
Yuta : "Duk duk duk..."

Miiko, Tappei, and Kenta saw Yuta on the street. He was carrying a bunch of snacks he did bought. Kenta, as the officer of the class marathon, was worried that their class might lose because Yuta, who was overweight, could not run. Kenta then said something that made Yuta sad, and Yuta immediately ran home. The onomatopoeia "*dosudosu*" describes the sound of heavy, loud footsteps that often come across as rough or angry.

Data 6



Figure 6. The sound "*goshigoshi*" is translated as "sret sret" (p. 137)

Source text:
吉田　：山田さん、それ書いちゃだめだよ。ないしょだから‼
みい子：あっ、そうか！「ゴシゴシ」
Yoshida : Yamada san, sore kaicha dame dayo. Naisho dakara!!
Miiko : A, souka! (goshi goshi)

Human translation:
Yoshida : Nggak boleh nulis soal itu, Yamada! 'kan, rahasia!
Miiko : Ah, benar juga! (sret sret)

ChatGPT translation:
Yoshida : Yamada, jangan ditulis! Itu rahasia, lho!!
Miiko : Oh, iya ya! (menghapus tulisan dengan menggosok-gosok).

Miiko and Yoshida were on class duty. Just as Miiko was about to write in the class diary, she ended up writing about their homeroom teacher giving gifts to all the students in her class. However, the teacher asked the students to keep it a secret from the other classes. Yoshida reminded Miiko not to write that in the class diary, so Miiko immediately erased what she had written. *Giongo* "*goshigoshi*" is an onomatopoeia that describes the sound and action of rubbing or scrubbing something vigorously and forcefully.

4. Discussion

Data 1

The Japanese word どやどや "*doyadoya*" describes the expression or sound of a group or crowd of people arriving in droves with a commotion. The human translator wisely chose the Indonesian onomatopoeia "waa waa" which instinctively and intuitively represents the commotion or sound of a crowd. This translation strategy is translation of cultural substitution, replacing the source language's onomatopoeia with a sound imitation commonly used in the target language's culture. In contrast, ChatGPT tends to use paraphrasing to explain the word rather than translating it into an onomatopoeia by describing the meaning of the situation or event associated with the word in parentheses as a narrative action note.

Data 2

The Japanese onomatopoeia ばさばさ "*basabasa*" imitates the sound of fluttering or rustling leaves or thick objects when they are spread out. This is evident in the comic panel showing Miiko and Tappei spreading out a mat to enjoy hanami. The human translator chose the equivalent "syats syats," which is highly intuitive and flexible, utilizing a sound-mimicking expression typical of Indonesian comic conventions, one that is brief, straightforward, and aesthetically conveys the motion of unfolding or friction without disrupting the visual appearance of the speech bubble. This translation strategy also translation of cultural substitution. The human translator devised the onomatopoeic sound "syats syats" to represent the friction of the mat being spread out in accordance with Indonesian comic conventions. In the *giongo* section, ChatGPT generated "sraash-sraash", the sound of leaves rustling. The spelling "sraash-sraash" indicates the influence of English phonotactic patterns (an English-influenced sound effect), rather than a sound imitation common in Indonesian. Additionally, the tendency to provide lexical explanations in parentheses is repeated by the AI. This illustrates a paraphrasing translation strategy using translation using unrelated words.

Data 3

The onomatopoeia バシャバシャ "*bashabasha*" is a sound effect used to mimic the sound of water being splashed with great force such as the sound of someone swimming. In this human translation, "*bashabasha*" is rendered as "cpyas cpyas", demonstrating a mastery of converting the distinctive sound effects found in Indonesian comics into written form. In the Indonesian comic tradition, double consonants such as "cp-," "by-," or "cr-" are often used to imitate the sound of splashing water in a dynamic and emotionally rich way. Human translators do not merely translate meaning but reconstruct the auditory impression to align with the phonotactic system and comic-reading traditions in Indonesia. This demonstrates a strategy of translation cultural substitution. ChatGPT's translation of Data 3 produced the equivalent "splash-splash." This result indicates the phenomenon of English serving as a pivot or bridge language, implicitly incorporated by the LLM. The word "splash" is the standard English equivalent of "*bashabasha*." Instead of transforming that meaning into a natural Indonesian onomatopoeia, ChatGPT directly adopted the English phonetic form "splash" and then duplicated it "splash-splash" following the Japanese reduplication pattern "*bashabasha*". Although the word "splash" is understood by some modern Indonesians, its use as a sound effect marker in Indonesian comics feels awkward and breaks with local conventions for comic translation.

Data 4

In the data, the onomatopoeia パチパチ "*pachipachi*" is used to describe small, light, repetitive clapping or popping sounds, such as the crackling of firewood in a fireplace, applause, or typing on a keyboard. Additionally, this word is also used visually to depict someone blinking repeatedly. In the comic Hai! Miiko, a scene depicts all the students clapping, so in the human translation, it was rendered as "plok plok." The choice of the lexeme "plok" preserves intuitive readability and a repetitive rhythm (the number of repetitions matches the source text), which is perfectly suited for comic speech bubbles. The human translator successfully demonstrated equivalence in emotional-acoustic function by reconstructing the original sound within the phonotactic system of the target language without altering the register of the main dialogue. ChatGPT's translation produces the output "tepuk tepuk tepuk tepuk (sound of clapping)," which contains a linguistic ambiguity. The word "tepuk" in Indonesian is the name of an action or a verb, not an onomatopoeia. Additionally, the inclusion of the

clause in parentheses "(suara tepuk tangan)" underline ChatGPT's uncertainty in conveying the meaning of the onomatopoeia, causing it to serve both as a sound imitation and an explanation.

Data 5

The human translator rendered the onomatopoeia ドスドス "*dosudosu*" as "dung dung". In Japanese, *dosudosu* represents the sound of heavy, loud, or hurried footsteps. This is appropriate for describing the stomping footsteps of Yuta, who is depicted as an overweight character in the comic. The human translator's choice of "dung dung" is highly precise because the back vowel /u/ followed by the nasal consonant /-ng/ represents the resonant echo of heavy footsteps on the ground. ChatGPT translates the onomatopoeia as "duk duk duk." Although it successfully avoided adding descriptive notes in parentheses, ChatGPT's translation exhibits a shift in sound intensity. The phoneme /k/ in the Indonesian word "duk" generally signifies the impact of a lighter solid object or a tap, not the resonant thud of heavy footsteps. Both translations in this data, the human translation and ChatGPT's employ a translation by cultural substitution strategy.

Data 6

Giongo ゴシゴシ "*goshigoshi*" is an onomatopoeia that describes the rhythmic sound or vigorous physical action of brushing, washing, or scrubbing something. It is most often used when cleaning stubborn dirt or scrubbing a part of the body, implying strong friction and considerable physical effort. In this case, the comic depicts a Miiko erasing writing on paper with a rubber eraser. The human translator chose the equivalent "sret sret," which is a characteristic onomatopoeic sound in Indonesian for the friction of a rubber eraser or a flat object against paper. This translation strategy employs translation cultural substitution. ChatGPT generated the translation "(erasing writing by rubbing back and forth)." In this example, ChatGPT does not present an onomatopoeic sound but instead translates giongo as a narrative instruction or description of the activity. ChatGPT treats "*goshigoshi*" not as a sound effect but as a verb phrase whose meaning must be explicitly explained.

5. Conclusion

A comparison of the translations of the onomatopoeia giongo in the comic *Kocchi Muite! Miiko* volume 33, shows that the human translator successfully achieved the goal of comic translation by identifying giongo as an element that must be rendered as a short sound-mimicking equivalent in the target language. The onomatopoeia was not merely translated for its meaning but was recreated as a sound-mimicking word. ChatGPT tends to process onomatopoeia based on semantic meaning rather than as a comic sound effect. ChatGPT replaces the sound imitation with a descriptive explanation of the action in parentheses. Human translators primarily use cultural substitution as a translation strategy, whereas ChatGPT employs a paraphrasing strategy using unrelated words. This demonstrates that ChatGPT cannot yet fully replace human translators in the genres of literature or popular comics. ChatGPT can serve as a tool to map initial meanings, but creativity in localization and a sense of language still require a human touch. Future researchers may expand the scope of analysis to include *gitaigo* and *giseigo*, as well as test the AI's performance on a wider variety of comic genres such as action (*shounen*), horror, or fantasy, which are rich in dramatic and abstract sound effects.

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