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## **Frame Models in Translation: Onomatopoeia Aspect in Haruki Murakami “Wind-Up Bird Chronicles”**

**Siatki ramowe w translacji: Aspekt onomatopei  
w „Kronice ptaka nakręcacza” Haruki Murakami**

### **Abstract**

The article offers an insight into the importance of frames and their features to convey the meaning of Japanese onomatopoeia in the translation process.

Based on the present scientific and practical research of the novel by Haruki Murakami “Wind-up Bird Chronicles” and its translation by Jay Rubin, there have been counted frequencies of use along with clarification of the semantic and stylistic peculiarities of onomatopoeia.

Frame analysis, which is used to convey the meaning of Japanese onomatopoeia in the context of the English translation, enables to identify the main characteristics of Japanese syntax, especially the use of particles. Since there is no grammar case in Japanese, onomatopoeic verbs are determined by particles, and predicate plays the main role in the sentence structure. In this case, particles may form additional grammar cases.

To visualize his inner world, Haruki Murakami uses onomatopoeias that convey emotions and feelings of the protagonist, as well as the descriptions of peculiar features and sounds of nature. It is the presence of mimetics that enables Murakami to create a complex frame net that intertwines the main storylines through the permanent repeating of some onomatopoeia.

**Key words:** *conceptual content, onomatopoeia, mimetics, frame, frame model, FrameNet system, adequate translation/translation techniques, dictionary and contextual equivalents.*

### Abstrakt

Artykuł oferuje wgląd w istotne siatki ramowe i ich cechy, aby przekazać znaczenie japońskiej onomatopei w procesie tłumaczenia. Na podstawie dotychczasowych badań naukowych i praktycznych powieści Haruki Murakami „Kronika ptaka nakręcacza” i jej przekładu autorstwa Jaya Rubina, policzono częstość użycia wraz z wyjaśnieniem semantycznych i stylistycznych osobliwości onomatopei.

Analiza ramowa, która służy do oddania znaczenia japońskiej onomatopei w kontekście przekładu angielskiego, pozwala zidentyfikować główne cechy składni japońskiej, zwłaszcza użycie partykuł. Ponieważ w języku japońskim nie ma przypadku gramatycznego, czasowniki onomatopeiczne są określane przez partykuły, a predykat odgrywa główną rolę w strukturze zdania. W takim przypadku cząstki mogą tworzyć dodatkowe przypadki gramatyczne.

Do wizualizacji swojego wewnętrznego świata Haruki Murakami wykorzystuje onomatopeje, które przekazują emocje i uczucia bohaterów, a także opisy osobliwych cech i dźwięków natury. To właśnie obecność mimetyków umożliwia Murakamiemu stworzenie złożonej siatki ramowej, która splata główne wątki poprzez ciągle powtarzanie pewnej określonej onomatopei.

**Słowa kluczowe:** *treść konceptualna, onomatopeja, mimetyka, rama, model ramy, system FrameNet, adekwatne tłumaczenia/techniki tłumaczenia, słownikowe i kontekstowe odpowiedniki.*

### Introduction

Onomatopoeia is the most common feature of Japanese fiction, that is why the translation of onomatopoeic units is a challenge for a translator in European linguistic and cultural tradition.

Language and the way of thinking have a mutual influence on the process of thought formation. Japanese worldview differs from the European one, and this is directly reflected in linguistic structures. Japanese perceive the world “through the eyes of an insect”, whereas Europeans view it from the bird’s perspective, so the way to conveying Japanese texts in translation will require a particular use of context equivalents. Differences in contextual thinking are the key factor in translation of Japanese literary texts into

English. Contextuality is a source of flexibility and mutual understanding of living beings, namely the worldview of the system determined by culture and language. (Ikegami, 2007) Different cultures produce different perceptions of the world. There are exo- and endosystems of perception. In the exosystem of perception, the observer is outside, so the interference in the process is minimal, while the endosystem involves direct participation of the transcoder (Nakashima, 2006). That is why the translation will always show a difference in worldview during the process of conveying of content and its logical meaning. For example, in the statement 窓の外はすっかり明るくなってきた (mado no soto ha sukkari akaruku natte kita) the reader will be identified with the protagonist, who watches a sunrise out of the window. The identification is made through the impersonal structure and the subject is expressed through the hidden “me” reader. In the English translation by Rubin “Full light of a day shone outside the window”, the reader is outside the room and watches this process from above, because the subject is “light” that shifts the focus to another location of the narrator.

It is obvious that in the original Japanese text there is no clear subject. A vaguely expressed predicate makes it possible to achieve an effect of transmitting the narrative “through the eyes of an insect”, while in the English text, it is a clearly expressed predicate that will transport the reader to the height of a bird’s flight. Verbs are important for the Japanese when transmitting information, and nouns are important for English speakers accordingly. (Kanaya, 2003)

The main line of the novel is a meaning of loneliness as a natural human condition at a certain periods of life. Loneliness occurs when an individual realizes a discrepancy between two factors: the desired and achieved level of his/her own social contacts. Loneliness in the works of Murakami is a constant characteristic of the protagonists.

## Research question

The central frame – LONELINESS of the novel, is implemented through a whole system of conceptual oppositions (lonely – in love, lonely – married, lonely – communicative, loneliness society, etc.) which are based on the divergence of moral and ethical, ideological guidelines and preferences of the main characters, who are representatives of different social subgroups/subcultures. These conceptual oppositions are related to the basic moral and ethical ideologues of humanity, which are usually understood as the key units of emotional discourse, through which the attitude of an individual or a group of individuals to reality, is understood and evaluated.

The protagonist of the novel, Toru Okada, is a thirty-year-old unemployed man who first loses his beloved cat Noboru Wataya, and then his wife Kumiko. At the beginning of the story, Murakami introduces the reader to the world of LONELINESS of the protagonist, who is in a state of SEARCH, the impetus for which is found in permanent LOSSES. These losses of Toru Okada create the reason for his state of loneliness against the background of the entire novel.

In the novel, the frame of LONELINESS is represented by numerous onomatopoeic words in combination with verbs that convey additional semantic components of the original onomatopoeia such as duration, multiplicity, singleness, and static action.

The Wind-up Bird Chronicles is a story of various characters who healed each other by telling their stories. Onomatopoeias will act as verbal explicators of the LONELINESS frame, intensifying the feeling of loneliness, worries and longing.

## Framework

For a detailed frame analysis based on the English and Japanese online linguistic resource FrameNet, there were created typical frame models of the LONELINESS, LOSS, and SEARCH frames. This made it possible to determine the influence of onomatopoeias in the slots while preserving the content of these frames in the English translation.

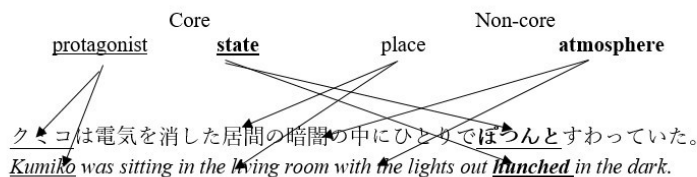
According to the structure in the FrameNet system, the LONELINESS, LOSS and SEARCH frame models will consist of the following units: Definition, Frame Elements (FEs), namely – Core Frame Elements (Core), Non-Core Frame Elements (Non-core), and Semantic Types of Communication (semantic types). In the mentioned above frame models, Japanese onomatopoeias will be viewed as a part of the Non-Core Frame Elements to determine manner, duration and time (Kimi, 2012).

## FRAME: LONELINESS

### *Definition*

Loneliness is understood as a socio-psychological phenomenon associated with the lack of close, positive emotional ties of an individual with people and/or with the fear of losing them because of forced or existing psychological reasons for social isolation.

## Frame elements

Core

Protagonist: クミコはすわっていた  
*Kumiko was sitting.*

State: クミコはひとりでぼつんとすわっていた。  
*Kumiko was sitting hunched.*

Non-core

Place:: クミコは居間の暗闇の中にすわっていた。  
*Kumiko was sitting in the living room.*

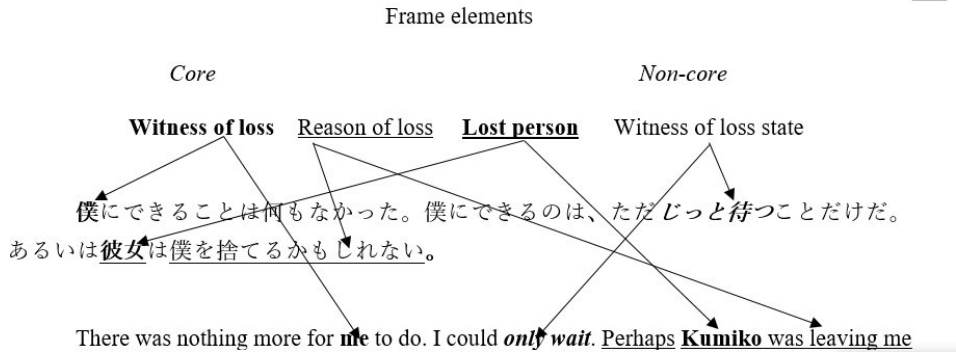
Atmosphere: クミコは電気を消した居間の暗闇の中にひとりでぼつんとすわっていた。  
*Kumiko was sitting in the living room with the lights out hunched in the dark.*

To convey the frame of LONELINESS, the author uses sound symbolism ぼつんと (potsunto) – *isolated, standing alone*, which in combination with the verb 座る (suwaru) – *to sit*, conveys the sense of mental loneliness and a sense of hopelessness. Jay Rubin conveys the sense of loneliness with the help of the connotatively colored verb *to hunch*. It is worth noting that the frame of LONELINESS in this fragment, receives direct causality with the frame of LOSS and the frame of unsuccessful SEARCH for the cat of the main character of the novel.

## FRAME: LOSS

**Definition**

The frame describes a victim who experiences the loss of another person through death. In the frame, there is a strong emotional connection between the person who lost and the one who disappeared.



In this statement, to convey the LOSS frame to describe the mental state of the protagonist, Murakami uses the sound symbolism *じっと* (*jitto*) – *to freeze* (freeze) in combination with the verb *待つ* (*matsu*) – *to wait*. Rubin also used the conjunction “only” to convey the meaning of the sound symbolism *じっと* (*jitto*), emphasizing the duration of the action.

Considering the theoretical and methodological principles of research on the use of frames in the translation of Japanese onomatopoeias into English, this article analyses the adequacy/inadequacy of reproduction onomatopoeic words during the translation process into English. Particular attention is paid to the key frames of LONELINESS, LOSS AND SEARCH which are realized throughout the whole novel by means of onomatopoeic words

## Results

To conduct the following research, 6 of the 72 chapters of the novel have been examined:

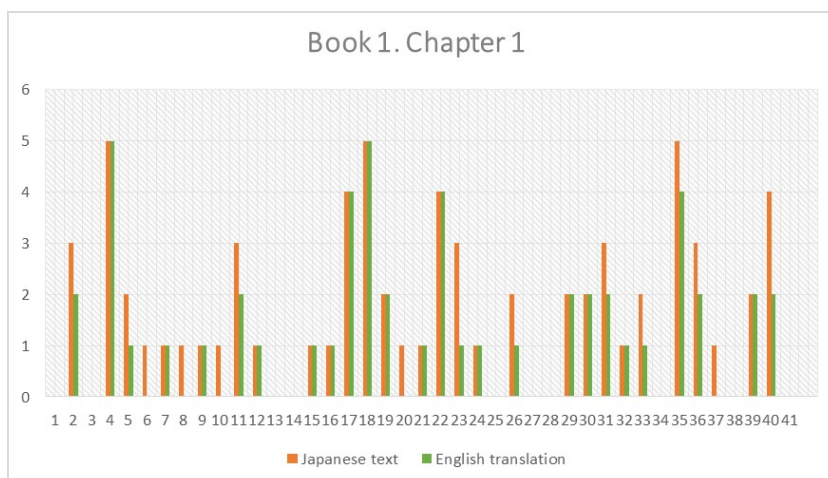
- *Book One*: Chapter 1 “Tuesday’s Wind-up Bird. Six fingers and four breasts”;  
Chapter 5 “Hooked on Lemon Drops. Flightless Bird and Waterless Well”;
- *Book Two*: Chapter 2 “No Good News in This Chapter”  
Chapter 6 “Inheriting Property. Inquiry of Jellyfish. Something Like a Sense of Detachment”  
Chapter 7 “Recollections and Dialogue about Pregnancy. Empirical Inquiry on Pain”;
- *Book Three*: Chapter 36 “The Story of the Duck People. Shadow and Tears (May Kasahara’s Point of View: 6)”, Chapter 39 “Goodbye”.

What is worth considering in the translation analysis of *Book Three*, is that it comprises the largest part of the novel, which, all together, is composed of 41 chapters; anyway, only 2 chapters, have been analyzed because, there, Murakami uses minimal number of onomatopoeic words in comparison with *Book One* and *Book Two*.

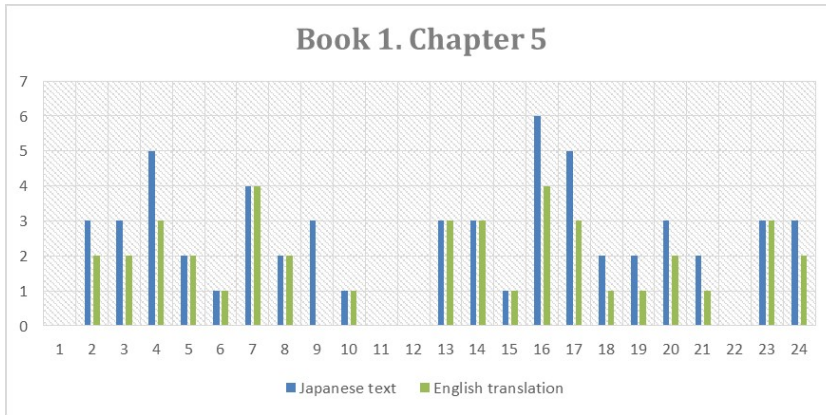
The results of this study are displayed in the histogram graphs, illustrating the translation analysis of Japanese onomatopoeias in the translation of *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* by Jay Rubin. The following graphs, are based on the following criteria:

- 1) the presence of loneliness topic in the title of each chapter;
- 2) the presence of sufficient number of onomatopoeias to convey the frame of LONELINESS in the source language text and its target language text;
- 3) translation methods of conveying onomatopoeias in the target language text;
- 4) reasons for mimetics omission and addition, during the translation process into the English version of the novel.

Having examined the onomatopoeic words used by Murakami in *Book One*, it comes out that in *Chapter 1* on 42 pages, he used 62 words, which is about 1.5 words per page, and in *Chapter 5* on 24 pages – 56 words, which is 2,5 words per page accordingly.



Graph 1: *Percentage of onomatopoeia reproduction in English and Japanese translations in Book 1, Chapter 1 “The Wind-up Bird Chronicle”*



Graph 2: *Percentage of onomatopoeia reproduction in English and Japanese translations in Book 1, Chapter 5 “The Wind-up Bird Chronicle”*

In these chapters, Murakami pays attention to the so called “musicalisation of the text flow”. One more peculiarity is a significant number of onomatopoeic words used for connotative coloring of the text. Murakami also relies on many sound symbols to detail the inner world and excitement of the protagonist:

「あなたに関係のないことでしょう。何時に何を何を食べようが僕の勝手だ」、僕はちょっとムツとして言った。

「それはそうね」、女の表情のない乾いた声で言った、ちょっとした感情の変化で声のトーンががらりと変わるのだ。「まあいいわ、あとでかけなおすから」。

To convey the ANXIETY frame in the given dialogue, Murakami uses simple syllabic symbolisms ムツと(する) (*mutto suru*) – to be offended, to get into a huff, ちょっとした (*chotto shita*) – to change a little, slightly and がらりと (*gararito*) – all of a sudden. Though Rubin has omitted mimetic ムツと(する) (*mutto*) in his translation:

*That is none of your business, I said. I decide what I eat and when I eat it.*

It can be noticed that *some of irritability* has been eliminated in the source language, suggesting that Rubin decided to omit sound symbolism in this case, replacing it by the set expression *That is none of your business*, which reveals the expressiveness of the protagonist’s statement.

Within the development of tragic events in the life of the protagonist, Murakami often uses one-syllable sound symbolism to convey the frame of LONELINESS, which emphasizes mental loneliness of the protagonist:



その間妻は台所のテーブルの前に座ってぼんやりといた。

*Kumiko sat at the kitchen table and vegged out.*

One-syllable sound symbolism ぼんやりと (bonyarito) – absence of mind, blockhead – Rubin has translated by means of a slang phrase **veg out**, based on a short version of the word **vegetable** to describe the inactive state of a human being, when he/she does nothing and becomes literary **like a vegetable**:

食事の後で僕は風呂から出てくると、クミコは電灯消した居間の暗闇の中に一人でぼ

つんと座っていた。クレイのシャツを着て暗闇の中にじっとうぞくまっていると、彼

女はまるで間違った場所に置き去りにされた荷物のように見えた。

*When I finished bathing after dinner, Kumiko was sitting in the living room with the lights out. Hunched in the dark with her grey shirt on, she looked like a piece of luggage that had been left in the wrong place.*

The above abstracts suggest that onomatopoeic words ぼつんと (potsunto) and じっと (jitto) were omitted in the English translation, which made the frame of LONELINESS broken, since the phrase *like a piece of luggage that was left in the wrong place* does not fully implement the information which is contained in these one-syllable sound symbols, creating the effect of “*silence and immersion in their own inner world*”.

Sound-symbolic words are often used to convey puns, linguistic characteristics of people and are often replaced by proverbs and set expressions. For example, 頭がぼんやりして (atama ga bonyari shite), Rubin conveyed by means of idiomatic expression “*fog over*”, creating the effect of “*condensate window*” in a figurative meaning to describe the state of the protagonist: *I felt my brain fogging over. The last thing I wanted to do was think.*

## Conclusion

Thus, this research has showed the importance of frames for Japanese onomatopoeia in the translation process and presents onomatopoeia as a valuable material for the construction of frame models. The study of the text of the three volumes of Murakami’s novel made it possible to discover that frame analysis is the most appropriate tool in the reproduction of frames conveyed by onomatopoeic vocabulary. It was found that onomatopoeic vocabulary in the composition of simulated frames in English and Japanese texts can be translated by using the repetition of adverbs, connotatively colored verbs, turns of phrase and separate conjunctions, without breaking these frames. The study sheds the light on the connection between onomato-

poeia, used in chapters, and titles of these chapters. Thus, there are lexical items in all the titles that are directly related to the key frames of the novel, which are conveyed by certain onomatopoeia and symbols.

So, the performed research showed the importance of frame use in the translation of Japanese onomatopoeic words, as well as presented the onomatopoeic vocabulary as a full-fledged material for building frame models. It also identified the main translation tools for achieving an adequate translation of Japanese onomatopoeia, using as an example the English version of Murakami's novel.

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